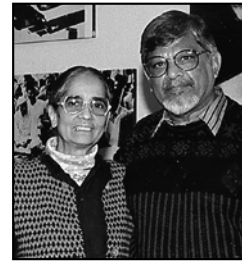




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JANUARY 22, 1999

Photo by J. HAYASHI



Daisaku Ikeda



Josei Toda

The Century of Soka Starts Now!

SGI President Ikeda's Essay

The start of this year is the start of the 21st century, the Century of Soka, President Ikeda believes. He shares New Year's memories of his mentor, President Toda, at this time of new departure.

By DAISAKU IKEDA

*The brilliance of the timeless sun
The light of the eternal moon
Fill the heavens.
Gazing at Mount Fuji
In its pristine white armor,
I enjoyed a magnificent New Year
Of glorious skies.*

On New Year's Day, I was traveling by car with my wife to the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji. As we passed the area of Mitaka on the Chuo Expressway, the serene form of Mount Fuji, blanketed in snow, seemed to step forward to greet us.

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, 6

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Price: \$2.00

WOW!


BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING

Bringing Joy to Others

By ULISSE GALLO
CHICAGO

I came across the following recently while reading *The New Human Revolution*: "Since Buddhism ensures the happiness of the entire human race, Shin'ichi knew that a Buddhist practitioner must pray and act for the happiness of all people" (July 18, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13). It woke me up to the fact that lately, people have been really aggravating me. They act as if the world revolves around them. As much as I try to be a "good Buddhist," I end up more irritated at people, unable to get beyond their annoying actions.

As I shared this with a leader, she reminded me of the mission we have as Buddhist practitioners: to bring happiness into people's lives. She also told me that SGI President Ikeda is a master at pinpointing the subtle things that cause individuals to suffer and always seeking to help them reveal their Buddha nature. I thought this was great — for President Ikeda. I was still developing, and maybe someday, when I felt more confident about my practice or when I was more capable, I would be able to do that also, but not today.

I reflected on why I felt this way and decided to try and encourage people who aggravated me. The opportunity finally came when I picked up my car from the shop. The manager, with whom I had argued in the past, was working, and he seemed bothered about something. I wanted to somehow try to encourage him and possibly make up for my hot temper, but I kept going back and forth in my mind between complaining about waiting so long or reaching out to him. Eventually my determination paid off, and I was able to apologize. He shook my hand and smiled, telling me not to worry about it. I wished him a Happy New Year and then we parted ways. At that moment I felt so liberated, having pushed myself beyond my lesser self and reached out to another person. My determination to go beyond my ego helped me understand how, through just a simple gesture, we are able to bring joy into people's lives. 

Live so that all the people of Kamakura will say in your praise that [Shijo Kingo] is diligent in the service of his lord, in the service of Buddhism, and in his concern for other people. ("The Three Kinds of Treasure," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 238).

By SHIN YATOMI

SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

When Shijo Kingo received this letter from Nichiren Daishonin in September 1277, he was in dire distress. Excellent both in martial arts and medicine, Kingo was trusted by his lord, Ema Mitsutoki. His colleagues, however, grew jealous and made a false report to Lord Ema that Kingo had violently disrupted a Buddhist debate between Sammi-bo, a disciple of the Daishonin, and Ryuzo-bo, a priest patronized by Ryokan, one of the most influential priests in Kamakura and a chief instigator of the government persecutions aimed at the Daishonin.

A devout follower of Ryokan, Lord Ema was outraged by the report and threatened that he would confiscate Kingo's fief unless he renounced his faith in the Daishonin's teaching. The consequences of Lord Ema's threat were serious: It meant that Kingo and his family (his wife and two children) could be driven off their land as outcasts. Soon Lord Ema fell seriously ill, and Kingo, in painful suspense, was charged with the care of his lord.

When Kingo received this letter, he was an object of hatred and jealousy among his fellow vassals, and his reputation, due to the false report, was marred with ignominy. It would have been so easy and tempting for Kingo to give up hope and disregard his job in despair. The Daishonin, however, encourages Kingo that this was the precise moment when he must demonstrate his sincerity at work and care for those around him. Here the Daishonin teaches us the importance of developing trust in society.

Our Buddhist practice is not separate from our lives in society. In this regard, the Daishonin states, "Regard your service to your lord as the practice of the Lotus Sutra"



(MW-3, 270). He also states, "A person of wisdom is not one who practices Buddhism apart from worldly affairs but, rather, one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world may be governed" (MW-6, 142). Contributing to society's improvement while leading a fulfilled life is, indeed, the goal of Buddhist practice.

Buddhism encourages our contribution to society, for it views our lives as interconnected with the environment. We are supported by those around us, and they need our support as much as we need theirs. This concept of dependent origination gives rise to our natural respect and appreciation for others. The Daishonin, in this sense, equates our personal well-being with the betterment of society: "If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquility throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not?" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 43).

Our interactions with society take place in many different ways, so our sense of community is diverse. It may extend from the neighborhood to the whole world, from the workplace to the SGI. We may also share a sense of community with those who have the same lifestyle or interests.

Whatever community we feel a part of, the Daishonin encourages us to give something back to it with appreciation. And the trust we thus gain in our respective communities is the concrete proof of our contribution.

The word community derives from the Latin *communis*, of which *com* means together and *munis* means bound or under obligation. In this sense, a community may be viewed as a fellowship of people with a sense of responsibility for their shared lives. As the notion of dependent origination suggests, such a sense of responsibility for the community stems naturally from appreciation. So the Daishonin constantly reminds Kingo of the support he has been receiving from his lord while encouraging him to do his utmost in his lord's service.

Needless to say, having appreciation for a hostile environment or situation is no easy task. It takes a dedicated practice of Buddhism to expand our capacity to embrace others under these circumstances.

But Kingo persevered in his faith and continued to do his best in his lord's service. Lord Ema eventually regained his health due to Kingo's care. As a result, his trust in Kingo was completely restored. Later he received from his lord a fief three times larger than what he used to own. Kingo's sincerity won over malicious rumors and false accusations.

His triumph shows us trust can be earned only through sincere action.

We can spread the Daishonin's teaching to the extent that we can gain trust in the community — whether in our workplace or neighborhood. As the Daishonin states, "All the various teachings of the Buddha are spread by persons" (MW-5, 31); people take faith in Buddhism only when they see its practitioners as trustworthy. In this sense, gaining trust in the community is not only an expression of our Buddhist practice but also the very foundation of the spread of this Buddhism.

Four in a series

Nov. 18 Meeting Reports — Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who sent us photos and reports of your Nov. 18 commemorative discussion meetings. We weren't able to print them all, due to space limitations, but they were all great!

We deeply appreciate all your efforts to contribute to the *World Tribune*, despite your busy schedules.

Any time that you want to report on what your district is doing, please send us photos (preferably in color) and a short report (about 200 words), and we'll do our best to include them in the *World Tribune*.

A 'Home of Harmony Within Diversity'

The SGI-USA Los Angeles Friendship Center held an open house last month. It is a major facility for SGI youth activities, as well as a site for public lectures and cultural exhibitions to which the community is invited. It houses a large auditorium, numerous meeting rooms, an atrium, as well as a regulation-size outdoor basketball court.

Photo by LONNIE SHEINART



Students from the Universal Dance Studio wow the open house audience.

Multicultural festivities and visits by neighborhood association and public officials highlighted the SGI-USA Los Angeles Friendship Center Open House held Dec. 12, 1998. On hand to enjoy the festivities were Los Angeles City Councilman Nate Holden, Edward R. Johnson, field deputy for U.S. Congressman Julian C. Dixon, and Hattie Stewart, who in honor of the occasion presented, on behalf of U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol. Former State Senator Diane Watson congratulated the SGI-USA "for building this facility in the very center of the city of Los Angeles." Annie Jo Robertson, 98, a

community activist and treasured senior in the neighborhood who had delighted the audience at the Friendship Center's groundbreaking a year ago, also attended.

Los Angeles City Councilman Nate Holden attended a meeting of the Pico-Fairfax Neighborhood Association at the center during the open house. He fielded questions from among some 100 representatives and then briefly toured the facility.

Following the formal program and a welcome by SGI-USA General Director Fred Zaitzu, a multi-ethnic program of live music, dance and poetry, along with video presentations about the center's aims to become a home of "harmony within diversity," gave the guests a bird's eye view of the SGI-USA.

A highlight of the three-hour stage show was selections by the Universal Dance Studio, a young people's tap troupe that was recently featured in the Los Angeles Times after winning accolades for its show-stopping performances in Cuba. The Zenith Dance Coterie and California Dance Theater also performed, and choreographer Lulu Washington led dancers from her Contemporary Dance Theater in a selection from her dazzling Kwanza show. Outdoor games, indoor crafts and clowns provided further entertainment for the younger children.

— NANCY SIMMS



Photo by LONNIE SHEINART

Los Angeles City Councilman Nate Holden (center) takes a commemorative photo at the Los Angeles Friendship Center Open House, Dec. 12, 1998.



Photo by LONNIE SHEINART

Field Deputy Hattie Stewart (far right) presented to the Los Angeles Friendship Center, on behalf of U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol.

Strengthening Ties to the Community

Photo by EILEEN BOWMAN



The Philadelphia Region's Freedom Chorus sings at a community event in New Jersey last year.

As a part of the Philadelphia Region's ongoing effort to strengthen its ties to the community, the region's Freedom Chorus opened Pennsauken, New Jersey's Unity Day celebration by performing three songs. Named by SGI President Ikeda two weeks earlier, the 33-person, four-division chorus set a positive tone for the day's festivities. The event attracted nearly 2,000 residents from Pennsauken and surrounding communities. Its purpose was to promote unity through culture and education, matching nicely with the SGI's own goals. — PATRICIA DANIELS

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Propagation: Focus of the First Quarter of 1999

The World Tribune asked four national SGI-USA leaders to share their thoughts on the topic of propagation, SGI-USA's focus during the first quarter of 1999 (December 1998–February 1999).

Renu Jiandani: At the Central Executive Conference in December, the youth leaders from around the nation made a determination to support the focus on propagation by helping to create joyful monthly discussion meetings and holding youth-sponsored introductory meetings to commemorate March 16.

If we look around us, there are many examples of youth who are suffering or dissatisfied with daily life. I remember a friend who called me with a problem nine years ago. At that time she had two young children, was pregnant with her third child and was having family problems. She wanted to leave. I had no experience with such matters and didn't know how or what I could do to help her. There was only one thing I could say with confidence — I told her about the Gohonzon and shared my own experience. She began to practice. Today she and her children are active in their district. She always expresses deep appreciation for that period during which she was able to encounter the SGI. In watching the growth in her life, I have gained even greater confidence and conviction in my practice and can approach any personal struggle or feeling of dissatisfaction with hope and optimism.

Through this experience, I really came to understand what President Ikeda means in the poem "Sun of *Jiyu* Over a New Land," where he writes: "People can only live fully / by helping others to live. / When you give life to friends / you truly live."

At first I didn't associate this experience of propagation with March 16, but the more I thought about sharing this practice with others, I realize that March 16, 1958, is the day that the mentor handed the baton to his disciples. These 6,000 disciples made a pledge to carry on kosen-rufu. Kosen-rufu since then has expanded into a worldwide movement based on many tremendous efforts to share this practice with friends, family and community.

In another portion of the poem, President Ikeda writes: "My beloved friends, / Bodhisattvas of the Earth / Readying yourselves / for the new century's dawn! / With your own efforts / bring about a renaissance here, / in this 'magnetic land'!"

This is the last March 16 of this century. Like the 6,000 youth in 1958, let's make this March 16 an expression of our solid determination and commitment to usher in the new millennium together with our mentor.

Wendy Clark: It's important to keep in mind that the will of Nichiren Daishonin is to share this Buddhism with as many people as possible. Propagation is an essential part of our personal practice in faith, and it is the mission of our organization to help individuals achieve indestructible happiness through their practice.

An introductory meeting has the components that make an activity successful. First, the most powerful ingredient is prayer. Our united prayer enhances our ability to communicate the Daishonin's Buddhism to others. This is the first step from which all planning and preparation follows. Through each person's prayer (chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo), we can create a warm and comfortable atmosphere in which guests can feel at ease to engage in dialogue.

In these meetings many details have to be taken care of, but most crucial are experiences. The quality of experiences and the members' ability to relate their experiences back to their practice make the real difference. The content can vary from a simple realization about life to overcoming a major obstacle — the key is connecting it to our faith in the Gohonzon and the chanting of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. In a closed, cold world, sharing your heart is what moves people. Guests will be able to identify with the struggles of everyday life. It is also helpful to include explanations of the basic practice and the SGI organization on a global scale. There are many ways to present this material, including the use of video. It is natural to conduct a question-and-answer portion. Make sure answers are clear and concise so that guests feel satisfied and inspired. I find that some guests ask about this Buddhism in relation to other re-

ligions. Honesty and openness are much appreciated by them.

As *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (vol. 1, p. 23) states: "When you are so united, even the great hope for kosen-rufu can be fulfilled without fail."

James Herrmann: In 1986, I was stationed on a U.S. naval ship in the Persian Gulf. This was the height of the Libya crisis. I was 19 at the time, and it was the first time I experienced practicing Buddhism on my own away from home. I was afraid and feared that I wouldn't see my family and SGI friends ever again.

My practice became extremely difficult. My ship had a crew of 5,000 and I was the only practitioner of this Buddhism. I would often do gongyo in my bed or somewhere on the ship. This continued for about four months at sea. One day after finishing gongyo, I came up with the idea that I wanted to enshrine the Gohonzon in the ship's chapel. So I went to the ship's chaplain and explained all about our practice and my desire to enshrine the Gohonzon. He seemed sympathetic to my situation and asked how many practitioners were among the ship's crew.

When I said that I was the only one, he said that he could not allow every person who had a different religion to enshrine their objects of devotion in the chapel. He said that according to ship's policy, there must be at least eight practitioners of a certain religion to justify use of the chapel. Eight? Why eight? He then explained why it was eight and restated that it was ship's policy. At the conclusion of our meeting, he mentioned that I was welcome to attend any of the other religious services that were available in the ship's chapel.

Needless to say, I was disappointed and felt hopeless. So that night, searching for comfort, I wrote a long letter to my mother explaining in great detail my meeting with the chaplain. I shared my feelings of hopelessness and how difficult it was to practice on my own. I mailed the letter to my mom and a couple weeks later I received her reply. It was only a postcard that read: "Stop complaining. Do *shakubuku!* Love, Mom." Although this letter was not quite the comfort



(L-r) Renu Jiandani, SGI-USA young women's leader; Wendy Clark, SGI-USA women's leader; James Herrmann, SGI-USA young men's leader; Richard Sasaki, SGI-USA men's leader.

that I was searching for from my mother, it was exactly what I needed to hear at that time.

Most of my friends already knew about my practice, many respected it, some made fun of it. Either way I began to chant to have the courage to introduce them to Buddhism. Amazingly the more I chanted this way, the more my friends would ask me about this practice. In a month's time, I had introduced seven of my friends to this practice. I then made an appointment with the chaplain again and told him that we now had eight practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism on our ship and provided him a list of our names. No doubt he was astonished and somewhat skeptical. But he provided me with a key to the ship's chapel and granted our use of it. From then on every morning and evening the crew members throughout the ship would hear the public announcement "Morning gongyo will be held in the ship's chapel, evening gongyo will be held in the ship's chapel."

Through this experience I realized I had forgotten that the key to our safe navigation to happiness is nothing other than to introduce our friends to this wonderful practice. This fundamental compassionate action will not only help us overcome our own suffering, but will provide our friends with a vessel to reach the shore of their own dreams.

Richard Sasaki: The discussion meeting is the main arena in our organization where we can carry out efforts to share this Buddhism with others. In his "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" titled, "Our Courageous Propagation of Buddhism," SGI President Ikeda writes: "Propagation is the lifeblood of religion. A religion without propagation efforts has abandoned the basic function of religion — to

reach out to people and help them." As he mentions, the spirit to help those who are struggling and suffering is an important part of our practice, one that we must always keep in mind.

The successive presidents of the Soka Gakkai have all been champions of propagation. In the same article, President Ikeda mentions: "When Mr. Toda became the second president of the Soka Gakkai and made his vow to attain a membership of 750,000 households, I pledged, 'Mr. Toda is my mentor in propagation; as his disciple, I vow to become a true champion of propagation.' And having made that pledge, I threw myself wholeheartedly into this challenge, creating the groundswell for unprecedented propagation in Kamata, in Bunkyo, in Osaka, in Yamaguchi."

Under Mr. Toda's leadership, President Ikeda created an amazing victory of propagation in every area for which he assumed responsibility. He knew that the heart of his mentor was to share this Buddhism with all those people who were suffering in society, and he made this his heart also. Since Mr. Toda's death, President Ikeda has led the worldwide spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, again responding to the expectations of his mentor.

The history of the Soka Gakkai is one of propagation — an effort to help people in society. In SGI-USA, let's similarly create a history of propagation where we reach out to our friends and family and share this Buddhism with them so that they can become happy. I myself was able to introduce a new member to this practice last year and I was so happy to see his excitement and the growth in his life. I believe if each of us starts with the spirit of propagation first, we can all create a great victory in 1999. TTT

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

a novelized history of the soka gakkai

'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 23-24

At the America West General Meeting, the main event of Shin'ichi Yamamoto's Los Angeles visit, a Seattle women's division member shares her experience of coping with the death of her husband. 'Personal experiences of overcoming life's travails are testimonies of human triumph, laurels that adorn the lives of those who advance on the sure path of kosen-rufu,' President Ikeda writes.

By DAISAKU IKEDA
SGI PRESIDENT

At the two exam sites, in Los Angeles and San Diego, lectures were held on Nichiren Daishonin's writings after the exams were finished.

The next day, Jan. 12, Shin'ichi Yamamoto and the other leaders from Japan finalized their selection of leadership candidates and devoted most of their time to giving personal guidance.

That evening, they attended the America West General Meeting—the main event of their Los Angeles visit—at the Embassy Hall downtown.

Members from San Francisco and Seattle made their way to the meeting on buses chartered for the occasion. Close to a thousand people filled the meeting place, and the air buzzed with excitement and anticipation.

When Shin'ichi entered, the members welcomed him with loud applause. The First America West General Meeting was declared open, and a member came to the microphone to relate her experience in practicing Buddhism.

Personal experiences of overcoming life's travails are testimonies of human triumph, laurels that adorn the lives of those who advance on the sure path of kosen-rufu. What we must do, then, is resolve to always make propagating the Daishonin's teaching the path we follow in life. We must rise with all our might to the challenge of our Gakkai activities, regarding each activity

as an opportunity to transform our destiny for the better.

Sharing her experience on stage was Masako Clarke, the Seattle District leader. When Shin'ichi visited Los Angeles the first time, a little more than two years earlier, she told him after the inaugural chapter meeting that she would have to move to Seattle shortly because her husband was being transferred there for work. At that time, Shin'ichi wrote her a short poem, wishing her a bright future, on the inside cover of a book she was carrying. It read: "Illuminated by the Mystic Law / May you soar / Like a queen."

She now told her story. Masako's husband, Harry, was a U.S. army officer. He was exposed to radioactive ash during an atomic bomb test blast. As a result, he suffered from poor health and was told by doctors that he would probably be sterile as a result.

Masako had joined the Soka Gakkai in Japan in 1955, but her husband remained a non-member. About two years later, Harry fell seriously ill with a stomach ulcer. The doctors' prognosis was grim; there was nothing more they could do.

But Masako continued to chant fervently for her husband. Her prayers were answered, for her husband made a miraculous recovery.

Then, in 1959, her husband was transferred back to the United States, and they took up residence in San Diego. Masako's English was still poor, but, intent on changing her karma, she devoted herself energetically to propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism. A short time later, she found that she was pregnant, and in July 1960, the following year, she gave birth to a baby girl.

Harry was away in Japan on business when the baby came,

and she informed him by letter, sharing her joy at the baby's birth. Upon reading the news, Harry was profoundly moved.

The birth of his child marked a turning point for Harry, and he began practicing Buddhism.

Three months later, Shin'ichi visited America for the first time and, after the meeting establishing Los Angeles Chapter, he encouraged Masako. A little while later, she and her husband moved from San Diego to Seattle.

Masako became the Seattle district women's division leader, but the woman who was the district leader left the organization a short time later. With the district chief position unfilled, Masako had to effectively take on all the leadership responsibilities for the district.

She would tell herself: "Don't even think of leaning on anyone else, because the moment you do, you're done. If you don't stand up, who else will? And if you don't stand up now, then when will you? Doesn't the Gakkai's path of mentor and disciple mean taking full responsibility for kosen-rufu?"

Inspired by President Yamamoto's warm words of encouragement and the poem he had written her, Masako set to work building the district in Seattle. She was convinced that the courage of pioneers of the Mystic Law would definitely open a way forward.

Day in and day out, she visited friends at home, talking with them and passionately explaining the validity and justness of the Soka Gakkai's aims, as well as the truth of the Daishonin's teachings. When eventually she was appointed district leader, Seattle District grew by leaps and bounds.

In 1962, she became pregnant with her second child. Her husband Harry, too, had gained

a deep appreciation of the unfathomable power of the Mystic Law. In December that year, Masako gave birth to a baby boy.

Harry, who was at the hospital with his wife, was overjoyed. He quickly ran out to buy some orchids for his wife. But that same day, he collapsed again with a stomach ulcer. He was placed in the same hospital as his wife, where he lay in a coma for several days.

When he regained consciousness, he told his wife that he wanted to do gongyo with her. In his hospital room, they did gongyo and chanted daimoku together. Then, peacefully, he drew his last breath.

Masako was grief-stricken at the sudden death of her husband, whom she had loved so much. She felt stunned, at an utter loss.

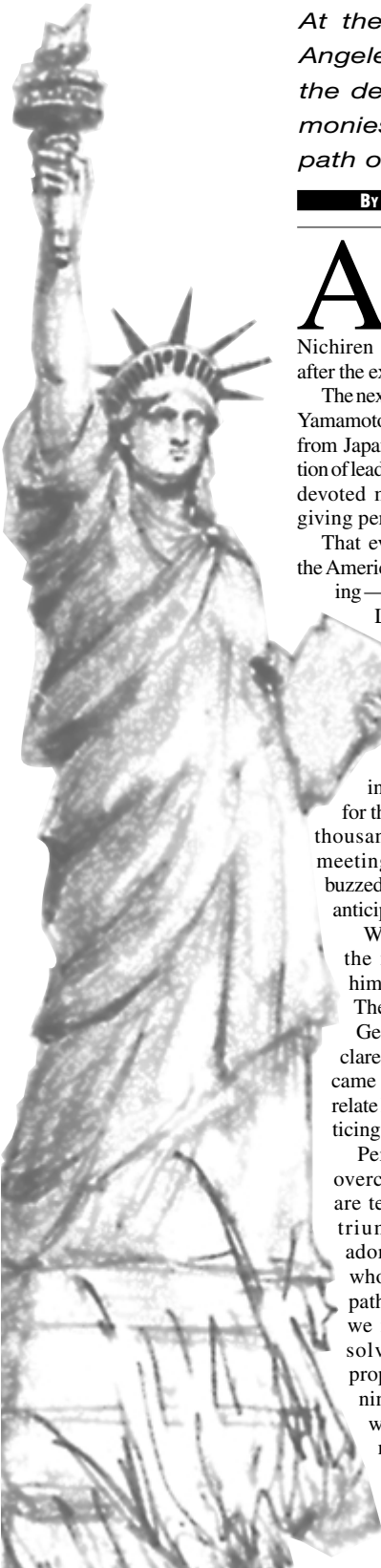
Nevertheless, she did not suffer financially. What her husband left her was more than enough to raise their two children, and she also was to receive a widow's pension, ensuring that her life would be financially secure and comfortable.

As she related this sequence of events to the audience at the America West General Meeting, her voiced choked with emotion, and she could go no further. Tears filled her eyes.

It was only a little more than 10 days since her husband died. The eyes of many in the audience moistened, too, as their hearts reached out to hers.

To be continued

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



ESSAY, FROM PAGE 1

It is indeed a beautiful mountain, solemn and majestic and, at the same time, emanating an aura of joy, grace and steadfastness. Shining with a calm and quiet light, standing valiant and resolute, it seems to gaze down sternly on the folly of humankind.

From Tokyo, it is rare to have a clear, unobstructed view of Mount Fuji day after day in succession. But since the start of the new year, we have been able to see its regal form every day, as breathtaking as a master painting. It is as if the mountain were taking the immortal lead in proclaiming the start of the Century of Soka.

I pray that in the momentous year that lies before us, not a single one of our precious comrades in faith will find themselves alone or isolated; not a single one will stray from the front lines of our struggle for the Law; and that each and every person will infuse their lives with infinite benefit and vitality.

*When you stand
Then Soka will stand
With jubilant cheers*

The ethereal glow of the full moon adorned the heavens over New Year's, embracing our hopes and prayers in its gentle light and filling impassioned hearts with peace and tranquillity.

To celebrate the New Year, I sent many Japanese poems to my precious fellow members, my dear friends. And before I knew it, I had written more than 100.

At New Year's, I am always strongly reminded of the New Year's that I spent together with Mr. Toda. He would always recite a poem he had specially composed to celebrate the year's start. When I recall those poems, his voice reverberates again in my heart. In 1957, the year before he died, he sent this New Year's poem to the youth division:

*Like gallant whales forging ahead
Through stormy seas
This gathering of youth
Dedicated to propagating Buddhism
How inspiring!*

Nor could I ever forget the poem he composed at the start of 1955:

*The journey to propagate
The Mystic Law
Is long
Let us encourage each other
And advance as one*

In the predawn hours of that New Year's Day in 1955, I left with other representatives of the youth division, my dearest friends and inseparable comrades, for the head temple, Taiseki-ji. Mr. Toda arrived later, toward evening. At a young men's and young women's division leaders meeting held that night, Mr. Toda called upon each person to stand up and recite the above New Year's poem aloud.

Gazing at the young people as they did so, Mr. Toda could clearly tell which of them would remain at his side, constant in faith, holding fast to the spirit of mentor and disciple, and complete the long journey of kosen-rufu, and which would not.

Incidentally, when Mr. Toda reprimanded his disciples, he could be harsh. Several rebellious disciples were angered by his censure and turned against him, leaving the Gakkai.

This principle is just as true today as it was then. Strict admonitions on the part of the mentor actually constitute critical guidance in faith that has the effect of sorting the genuine from the counterfeit in terms of faith and commitment; they represent a moment of profound importance that can decide the entire direction of the disciple's life in this and future existences. But all too often the disciple fails to realize this crucial fact.

Mr. Toda earnestly sought selfless and invincible disciples who could endure scorn and insult and who would share his concern for humanity and the world.

And he found one such disciple—a disciple who could walk by his side along the lofty path of the oneness of mentor and disciple. He knew exactly who it was and went on to train that person to become a disciple of the firmest commitment, a person who could achieve the impossible. He forged that individual into a disciple who could withstand even the onslaughts of a million powerful enemies.

When the meeting on Jan. 1, 1955 came to an end, I discerned tears of emotion glistening in Mr. Toda's eyes.

Around 1955, the Soka Gakkai's membership had grown to some 170,000 households. In response to the surging growth of

this bold new people's movement based on the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, the "three powerful enemies" had already begun to reveal their insidious presence as predicted in the Lotus Sutra. Mr. Toda realized that the Soka Gakkai's path would be increasingly fraught with peril and difficulty, and he resolved to foster disciples of iron conviction and to create a network of people solidly united in purpose.

In the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," Nichiren Daishonin writes, "The word together means that when one is together with Nichiren, one will reach the place where the treasure is" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 734). Always together with the Gakkai, the organization that is in complete accord with the Buddha's wish and decree, always together with our wonderful fellow members—this is the unforgettable Gakkai spirit, indeed, the Gakkai spirit that we must ensure is never, ever forgotten. The year that I personally began to compose and dedicate New Year's poems annually to my fellow members was 1980—the year after I became honorary president of the Soka Gakkai and just after the completion of the seventh of the seven seven-year periods of the Gakkai's development since its inception. (These seven-year periods were known as the Seven Bells.)

On New Year's Day of that year—in which we could celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding—just as Mr. Toda had predicted would someday happen after his death, a number of treacherous disciples began to make their move, and a group of corrupt, self-serving priests launched a plot to gain control over the Gakkai. These individuals formed an unholy alliance with the most unscrupulous elements of the mass media, and on that New Year's Day in 1980, I was confronted with their base scheme to bring me down and a raging storm of persecution they had engineered against me.

Nevertheless, I wanted to encourage and reassure our members, even if with just a few words, and I took up my pen and wrote:

*Let us once more cross
Countless mountains and rivers
Together
Holding the banner of kosen-rufu
Bravely aloft.*

Twenty five years had passed since Mr.

Toda had written, "The journey to propagate / The Mystic Law / Is long...."

Another poem by Mr. Toda that I can never forget is:

*To the people of Asia
Who pray for a glimpse of the moon
Through the parting clouds
Let us send them, instead,
The light of the sun.*

When I heard that poem in 1956, I engraved it in my heart as Mr. Toda's will and testament to me. I have since devoted my life to propagating Buddhism throughout Asia, throughout the entire world. Forty-three years have passed. I have built one golden road after another, establishing a firm and solid base for the development of worldwide kosen-rufu in the new century.

Over the years, many people of note around the globe have praised our noble movement. And our members, through their valiant struggle and selfless efforts, have forged lives of indestructible happiness.

Buddhism teaches that wherever such endeavors to spread the Law are found, that place is itself the land of Eternally Tranquil Light. Here, the joyous song of kosen-rufu has begun to resound, transcending time and space, and the cheers of jubilation have begun to ring out above the rainbow of peace, high into the sky.

We have broken through the angry waves of the raging storm; we have crossed the perilous peaks and rushing torrents. We have faced and triumphed over every tempest. Now our great procession of victory and honor marches forward with the morning sun, advancing with dignity and joy.

*Thinking always of my fellow members
The light of their noble mission
shining in their eyes.*

— With my palms pressed together in reverence.

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

INFORMAL GATHERING

Benefit As High As Mount Everest

SGI President Ikeda attended an informal gathering with representatives from France, the United States, Hong Kong, Luxembourg and regions throughout Japan on the evening of Dec. 28, 1998, in Shinjuku, Tokyo. He expressed his deep appreciation to the members, praising the momentous accomplishments SGI organizations around the world had achieved in 1998, surmounting all obstacles.

He said: "All these achievements are the result of the dedicated efforts of sincere SGI members, who enjoy little recognition or fame, but who are the true

Bodhisattvas of the Earth. These are people working earnestly to protect the SGI and support the kosen-rufu movement. They are more praiseworthy than any celebrity or notable."

The SGI leader then cited a passage found Nichiren Daishonin's writings by the Great Teacher Dengyo: "Those who praise him [the votary of the Lotus Sutra] will receive blessings that will pile up as high as Mount Sumeru, while those who slander him will be committing a fault that will condemn them to the hell of incessant suffering" (*The Major*

Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 6, p. 281). These words, President Ikeda declared, attest that all who strive ceaselessly for the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law will accumulate benefit that piles as high as Mount Sumeru or as high as Mount Everest—benefit to be gazed upon with wonder by all.

In offering his best wishes for the coming year to those present, the SGI leader said: "I am earnestly praying each day for the health and happiness of all my fellow members throughout the world. Please have a really wonderful new year!"

More New Year's Poems from the SGI President

*Let us win throughout
This joyous year
And create a realm
Of happiness and peace
Based on the king of
philosophies*

*The triumphant march of Soka
Continues gaily on its way
Under the sun
Of unsurpassed brilliance
Of the Mystic Law*

*The New Year has begun!
Lead a life
Of victory and hope
Fulfilling the Buddha's
decree —
Our pride across the three
existences*

To the Young Women's Division

*— With my prayers for the good health and
growth of the young women's division members*

*Dedicating your youth to kosen-
rufu
And gaining immense good
fortune
Regard each day
As yours in which to shine*

*Accumulating vast benefit
Infinite and immeasurable
Stride out onto the stage of
today
With invincible resolve*

To the Youth Division

*My worthy young friends!
In these dark times
Of kaleidoscopic change
Illuminate the way
To the new century*

*Youth of boundless mission!
May you win in all endeavors
Holding high
The golden sword of justice
In your heart*

*Write a proud history
In your youth
Convinced that the benefit
Of living the greatest of lives
Will endure throughout the three
existences*

To the Young Men's Division

*Be pillars of society
And your country
Inspiring all with your
presence
As champions of kosen-rufu*

*Heroes of Soka
Stand firm and resolute
Then neither storms
Nor billowing waves
Will daunt you*

By DAISAKU IKEDA
SGI PRESIDENT

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY



THE TRUE REWARD OF LIFE

The SGI president recalls the many great writers he has known, sharing their perspective on life and death, and their determination to contribute to humanity through writing. 'The only true way to live, the true reward of life, is to accept the challenge of dedication and commitment to one's beliefs,' President Ikeda writes.

In one of my recent essays (Dec. 18 & 25, 1998, *World Tribune*), I wrote about writers and illustrators I met in my youth. Since then, I have received many requests to write something about the people I met later on, so I want to say a bit about some of the literary figures who left an especially deep impression on me, figures whom I met in my 30s and 40s.

But first, I want to mention Eiji Yoshikawa, a writer whom I very much admire but unfortunately did not have the pleasure of ever meeting. Mr. Yoshikawa died in 1962, two years after I became Soka Gakkai president.

My barber in those days, a Gakkai member, told me that while hospitalized at Keio Hospital in Shinanomachi (where the Soka Gakkai Headquarters is located), Mr. Yoshikawa came a couple of times to his shop, which was just across the street. According to the barber, Mr. Yoshikawa was very much interested in the Soka Gakkai, read our publications and had heard much about our organization from his friends.

Twenty-five years after his death, in May 1987, I visited the Eiji Yoshikawa Memorial Hall in Ome, on Tokyo's outskirts, and met his wife, Mrs. Fumiko Yoshikawa. I saw on display there a piece of his calligraphy: "All others are my teachers." I was deeply impressed by those words and by Mr. Yoshikawa's profound dedication to seeking the truth throughout his life.

With that in my heart, I composed a poem about him, "Like Mount Fuji," and presented it to Mrs. Yoshikawa.

.....

Sawako Ariyoshi was another writer with a strong commitment to seek the truth. I first met her in the mid-60s. She told me that she had participated in a Soka Gakkai meeting in the United States and was very moved to witness the bonds uniting the members, bonds that transcended cultures.

Mrs. Ariyoshi was also well acquainted with many leading Chinese writers, including Ba Jin, and helped forge the initial links between the Soka Gakkai and China.

She was by no means physically strong, and she used to collapse from exhaustion every time that she finished a novel — she had poured her entire life and being into it. Yet she would invariably spend her convalescence working on the plot for her next book.

I will never forget how she once said to me, when we were having a dialogue for a magazine, that she hoped I would continue to be Soka Gakkai president for another 50 years.

Another time, she told me that we were entering the age of the comic book novel. She sent

me about 20 such works. Among them was the famous *Tomorrow's Joe* with story by Asao Takamori and illustrations by Tetsuya Chiba. The hero, Joe, dedicates his youth to boxing, and he is determined to keep fighting "until he is burned down to white ash." I couldn't help being struck by the similarity of Joe's fighting spirit to Mrs. Ariyoshi's.

She died at 53, but she continued writing to the end. In her last years, she authored several works dealing with social problems like the graying of society and environmental pollution.

No doubt, she was aware that she didn't have long to live. That motivated her to her writing as her mission — a mission to which she had to devote every ounce of her energy, as long as it would last.

.....

Great writers face death head on.

Hideo Kobayashi, known as one of Japan's foremost literary critics, once confessed, "Since 60, I have been preparing for death." I met Mr. Kobayashi in the

spring of 1971, when he was 68. We had a pleasant, interesting talk over lunch with the writers Ton Satomi and Mitsuo Nakamura. Mr. Kobayashi said that he was attracted to Tendai Buddhism and had read T'ien-t'ai's *Great Concentration and Insight*.

.....

The writer Yasushi Inoue also said that it is only when we take a hard look at death that we really see life for what it is.

Mr. Inoue and I exchanged letters for a year, starting in April 1975, which were later published as *Letters of Four Seasons*. At the time, Mr. Inoue was in his late 60s.

In one letter, I expressed the hope that he wouldn't find the fierce summer heat too trying. But in his reply, which actually came during the hottest part of summer, he said that since entering his 60s he found himself developing an ever-greater fondness for the blazing sun.

He also wrote, "When one is my age, the only things that remain bright and distinct in the memory are times when one has

burned to accomplish something, those past times that prove one has lived" (*Letters of Four Seasons*, p. 43).

.....

The only true way to live, the true fruit and reward of life, is to accept the challenge of dedication and commitment to one's beliefs.

The Nobel Prize-winning writer Mikhail Sholokhov, whom I met in 1974 on my first trip to the Soviet Union, said: "A person without beliefs can accomplish nothing. We are, all of us, forgers of happiness. The strong of spirit, believe, no matter what circumstances may befall them, they are to a certain extent master of their own lives."

At the time he told me this, Mr. Sholokhov was 69. Although he was ill, he heartily welcomed me, insisting that I drink cognac with him. I can't drink at all, and I still remember with some nostalgia the quandary his kind invitation put me in.

.....

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "First study death, then study other matters" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1404). Once you have properly understood death, you will naturally live a life that is fully, completely alive. You will continue moving forward, facing challenge after challenge your entire life.

At 71, I, too, am determined to keep up my efforts and burn as bright as the blazing sun, day after day.

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

EDITORIAL

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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.

Interview

@ Nonviolent Lifestyle

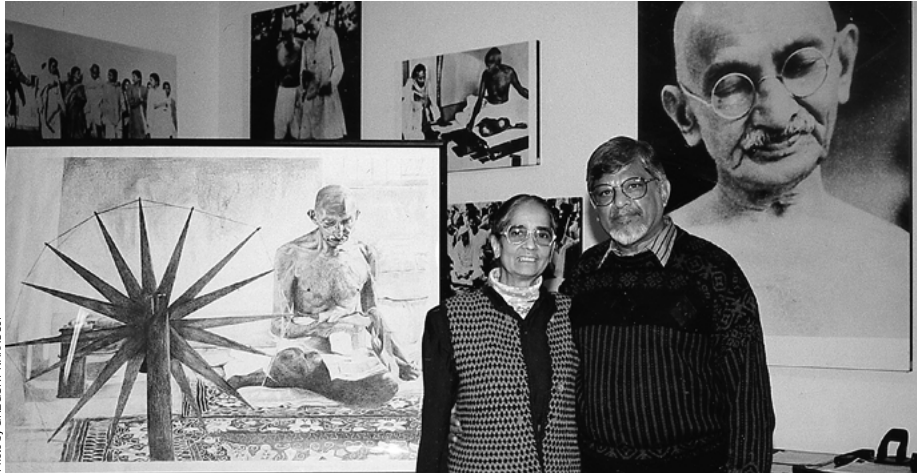


Photo by GREGORY MAKASUJI

Arun Gandhi and his wife, Sunanda, chose Memphis, Tenn., as the base for the M. K. Gandhi Institute they founded.

Arun Gandhi is the founder of the M. K. Gandhi Institute for Non-violence and the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. Yoshi Nagaoka, a staff writer for the Seikyo Shim-bun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper in Japan, did this interview with him.

Yoshi Nagaoka: Almost a whole century has passed since your grandfather started the non-violence movement. How do you view the world situation today, based on your activities for peace?

Arun Gandhi: I have many opportunities to visit not only the United States but other countries to meet many adults and children. Through those trips, I have found commonality among those countries about the spiritual aspects, which are a foundation for peace and humanity. The fact that we don't give children spiritual values, which is the foundation to build their future, is a commonality I often see.

By spiritual values, I mean understanding, love, education, values, morals and ethics. That is the same in developed and underdeveloped countries. When you see so much violence in young people, in countries like the States and a few other countries, it's because of the anguish and pain that they are unable to relate to others. They are unable to relate to the older generation. They don't know what's going on, and they show their anger with violence.

This was part of capitalism, because capitalism requires that you make money the best way

you can by any means necessary, and profit becomes the most important thing in life. People don't matter anymore. You only have to respect people to get rid of them, and you have to make a maximum profit. That is the principal way rich capitalism works.

It generates a lot of self-centeredness and selfishness, because everyone is thinking only about themselves. This is the tragedy that I've seen in many countries. Materialism is their goal and life. Then there is no morality. The devilish power of desire is hard to stop.

We need to rediscover autonomy to understand other people's pain and to respect others. That's why the Gandhi Institute puts the main focal point on education.

Nagaoka: Why did you open your institute in Memphis, Tenn.?

Gandhi: I moved to the States in 1987 and started my study in Mississippi. Until then, I had spent my youth doing many activities with my father in South Africa and learned the reality of the prejudice there. After I married, I moved to India. For 30 years, I dedicated myself to social activities against poverty — centering in the Bombay area — and I learned the reality of prejudice in India.

These experiences directed my eyes to the States to study about the prejudice here. Actually, prejudice in the States has a different background and history compared to South Africa or India. However, I remained confident that the nonviolent philo-

sophy of my grandfather could be a valid solution for this country. That is the reason I opened my institute in the States.

There are three reasons why I opened the institute in Memphis. First, a university in Memphis first offered a space for us. Second of all, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated there, and it has a commemorative meaning and appeal about humanism to the world. And finally, this location makes travel in the States convenient.

When we opened this institute, we did not have enough money in our savings. So we had to sell memorial relics of my grandfather. This institute was established by three generations of my family.

Nagaoka: Can you share some memories of your father, a successor of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa?

Gandhi: Mahatma had four sons, and my father was the second. When my grandfather returned to India, all his work in South Africa was taken care of by my father, who was only 23 years old. Now I understand my father's struggle.

He lived with the pledge that he made to his father. That caused a deep inner struggle to fight the weaknesses of his mind. It would have been much easier to live if he had followed the government, white people or authority, but he didn't. For 16 years, he was imprisoned, and severe persecution damaged his physical health and shortened his life. But he will always re-

main a winner in our minds.

I'd like to share one episode. One day, we drove to Durban, and I was supposed to take our car for a check and get it fixed, while my father was attending a meeting. I was only 16 and excited to be in a town. So I went to a movie theater and was late to pick him up. I made some false excuses, but he had already called the repair shop and knew the truth.

He said: "It is my fault in the way I raised you that you didn't have enough courage to tell me the truth. I must take responsibility, so I can't get in the car and let you drive me home." He walked back home 18 miles late at night. I drove behind my father, lighting the way on the rough dirt road. The five-and-a-half hours watching him struggle were unforgettable, and I determined never to lie again in my life. This is the power of non-violence.

It would have been easier for him to yell at me. But that is how he taught me what he had learned from his father.

Nagaoka: What is the essence of nonviolent education?

Gandhi: In one word, it's to show the example. Both my grandfather and my father always took initiative in every aspect of their activities. This is one of the dilemmas that many societies have fallen into: If we want our children to do something, we've got to do it ourselves first. So I think it's a process of learning that starts with children but that has to continue all through life. Their minds are very sensitive and honest. They will see the reality of adults' minds, even though we try to hide it. If adults don't take action for nonviolence, children will never learn a nonviolent lifestyle. This is the root of modern society's problems.

Nagaoka: Religion must play a very important role, right?

Gandhi: Exactly. My grandfather said that "we will be really free only when we liberate ourselves of the fear that controls us." I wholeheartedly believe that true religious activities, peace movements and humanitarian activities must be used to educate people and free their minds. ☐

Earth Charter *Makes Us Think*

EDITORIAL

Al Albergate's trip to the Earth Charter Conference in Brazil proved that the charter brings people together 'to discuss how we're going to create a better world. It makes people think.'

By AL ALBERGATE

SGI-USA DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Imagine this: You are thousands of miles away from home, seated around a table with five virtual strangers. These people come from four different countries — the United States, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Brazil. Fortunately for you, everybody speaks some English, and Portuguese and Spanish are very similar. Your mission as a

group: Come up with suggestions for a universal document to guide the people of planet Earth to a safer, healthier, more just and peaceful future.

I recently found myself in just such a situation as SGI-USA's official representative at the Earth Charter Continental Conference of the Americas in Cuiaba, Brazil. I was among a half-dozen delegates from the States out of 90 from 24 countries, mostly in Central and South America, and the Caribbean. SGI President Ikeda often enlightens us about the power of dialogue and the importance of education and cultural exchange to peace — my experience in Cuiaba showed that it works. My small group had to overcome differences of language and culture, age and gender, experience and attitude, but we made it work and enjoyed the process.

The process of the Earth Charter: While it's in draft form, still being molded into shape, the *process* is one of the most important aspects of the Earth Charter movement. It's



this process that is bringing people together to discuss how we're going to create a better world. It makes people think.

For example, one section of the current charter draft reads, "Reduce unnecessary wants and promote the equitable distribution of wealth." During an Earth Charter discussion at an SGI-USA community center in California last year, this point excited one woman to ask with real concern, "Am I going to have to give up my dream to have a five-bedroom house?"

That the Earth Charter covers a lot more ground than what we might expect of an

environmental campaign became clear at the Cuiaba conference. One man from Honduras, who is fighting to eliminate corruption there, cited the importance of the Earth Charter to his country's development. Another man, representing the Brazil Indigenous Movement, spoke about the need to establish an alliance with the white man, so that Indians can share their knowledge of nature for the good of all.

The charter not only has the power to pull together diverse people and stimulate dialogue on a broad range of issues, but it resonates with Buddhist philosophy. At the Cuiaba conference, a representative of a therapists trade union called for a "human ecology" to heal our inner lives. The world is just a mirror of our souls, he explained. Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff addressed the ethical implications of the Earth Charter, saying, "All things have to do with each other." We are interdependent, he declared, "essential links in a chain that sustains Earth."

The Earth Charter continues to present SGI-USA members with an opportunity to bring Buddhist practice and principles to bear in discussions with a variety of people about problems that affect all of us. Not that we haven't done a lot already: Since we first became involved in mid-1997, SGI-USA members have sponsored 22 Earth Charter consultations involving approximately 1,300 of their fellow members and friends. This is more than any other organization in the United States!

In what figures to be the final year of opportunity to give input to the international drafting committee before it presents a final version to the United Nations in 2000, it has been suggested that each of our regions hold at least one such activity. The networking possibilities are endless. But more important, it is an opportunity for each one of us to think about how we live, change what no longer makes sense about our lifestyles and help others to do the same. **W**

Jan. 26, SGI Day

How Can We Achieve **THE SGI'S GREAT GOALS?**

SIGNIFICANT DATES

ON MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND THE SGI

By JOHN KASAHARA

NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

On Jan. 26, we commemorate the 24th anniversary of the formation of the Soka Gakkai International. When we look at the SGI organization and its history, we start to see the grand view that SGI President Ikeda has for the worldwide propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

In 1947, Daisaku Ikeda first made the acquaintance of Josei Toda, who would become his mentor in life. Through the years that Daisaku Ikeda was able to be side by side with Toda, he grasped Toda's

vision for the future: for the Soka Gakkai to spread this Buddhism to all corners of the world. The Soka Gakkai was to work on a worldwide scale to promote peace, culture, and education based upon the Daishonin's teachings.

After taking the helm as third Soka Gakkai president, President Ikeda embarked in 1960 on a trip to America, his first trip overseas, which proved to be the beginning of the fulfillment of his mentor's dream. Fifteen years later, on Jan. 26, 1975, the SGI was formed in Guam with Daisaku Ikeda as president. The formation of this international organization was for no other reason than to engage in activities that would create a peaceful world.

President Ikeda has said that the objective of the SGI is "working for peace by opposing all forms of violence and contributing to the welfare of humankind

by pursuing humanistic culture and education." The SGI exists only to help people realize absolute happiness and the happiness of the places in which they live.

The SGI also works together with other organizations aiming toward the same goals, such as the United Nations. The SGI and the Soka Gakkai in Japan are registered with the United Nations as a non-governmental organization. Because the world has experienced the most intense negative effects of science and technology in the 20th century, with world wars and atomic bombs, this correlation between the SGI and all the organizations that it works together with becomes very crucial to assure that those same mistakes are not repeated again.

Since 1975, the SGI has grown to approximately 12 million members in 128 countries. Centering around President Ikeda's leadership, members throughout

the world are contributing their efforts in every aspect of their lives to improve the world. By becoming good world citizens, we can lead a grass-roots movement of dialogue and exchange that leads to understanding and respect among the people of the world.

I constantly find myself thinking about what the 21st century will bring. But President Ikeda has said recently that now it's already the 21st century! With this spirit in mind, I try to remind myself that all the efforts we are making now will bear fruit in the new millennium and last for thousands of years. I believe that the only way to reach our noble goals is to continue to have dialogue with each individual member about anything that they want to speak about and to base our lives on the Daishonin's teachings. I am confident that our efforts will continue to unite the people of the world. **W**

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Conquering Self-Doubt

Without a doubt, that was the most encouraging experience in the *World Tribune* (Jan. 8) to date!

— LYNETTE BRAWER,
Pianist/Vocalist/Composer
Arlington, Va.

Regarding Three Articles

To the *World Tribune* staff, thank you so much for the "new" *World Tribune*! I have made a new determination to share this wonderful Buddhist newspaper with my family and friends.

I want to comment on three articles from the Dec. 18 & 25, 1998, *World Tribune*.

I am very impressed with the article "A Physical and Spiritual Wasteland," written by the Prometheus Group (in the "Seize the Day" pullout section). I thank them for a common sense perspective in considering their question "Can doing human revolution really save the world?" The comment that I liked the best was "World peace is not a passive undertaking, and neither is one's daily life!"

I want to respond to Rita Willoughby's request for study articles about other American Buddhist sects. In today's climate of cooperation between religious organizations, I think that to study and compare other current religious sects in our publications would appear to be a form of intolerance. However, there are at least two sources of study available: Nichiren Daishonin's *Major Writings* and local bookstores. It was also hard for me at first to be able to answer my friend's questions about other types of Buddhism, so I can relate!

Dan Dewey wrote that political views need to be discussed with fellow members at discussion meetings, as an expression of democracy (and because of the importance of the political process). I like his idea, except that I wouldn't want to promote disunity. He suggested that we might form FOR and AGAINST groups on specific issues. However, rather than see disunity pro-

moted through political discussion, I suggest that we discuss our views openly, but that we practice tolerance and respect for different opinions. By not taking sides, we can learn from each other and possibly discover new answers. People can have different opinions and be in complete unity. There is such a thing as the Middle Way...

— SUNNY MIKA,
Spokane, Wash.

In Response to Other Letters

Regarding the letter about compiling people's experiences into a book, I think that would be most encouraging and appeal to a wide variety of people. Regarding the response to the letter "Speak English," I agree that guests and we, as members, respond to each other's hearts more than words. However, I also feel that we live in America, and we should make efforts to use English words for terms whenever possible.

I've been practicing in the SGI since 1973, and having experienced the overlay of the Japanese culture in our organization, I think it's best that we try to use words and customs that most people use in our country. I have not heard of a movement afoot to translate gongyo or Nam-myoho-renge-kyo into English and I don't think we'd allow that to happen! Perhaps people today only hear the surface of words, but I think it's indicative of a larger problem having to do with life-condition rather than simply what language we use.

Regarding the many letters and dialogue produced by Lisa Jones' article "Bell, Book, Candles and Saxophone," I suspect that, like many things, the answer to how meaningful rituals or formality is in our lives can be quite personal — just as I do not relate to the Go-honzon in exactly the same way someone else does.

I agree with President Ikeda that emphasis be placed on substance and formality needs to be viewed in conjunction with substance. As Sandi

Johnson described in her reply, asking the right questions (and taking the appropriate action) will advance our personal power, our movement, our dialogue, our knowledge and our joy of this practice.

— JANE KALLANDER,
Alexandria, Va.

Reproductive Rights

I cannot say I was shocked to read Jennifer Benson's comments about being an "unabashed Buddhist abortion counselor" (Dec. 11, 1998, *World Tribune*) for this is the effect of failing to view ourselves ONLY as bodhisattvas whose behavior reflects the wisdom of a Buddha. We are not women FIRST or minorities FIRST or gays or feminists FIRST. The whole point of our human revolution is to get BEYOND anything that threatens to limit our mission.

Only the expansive life-condition of the Bodhisattva can see that always front and center what is immutable is respect for the innate dignity of life. To fail to manifest the towering self of our Buddha nature is to perpetuate the suffering of the people. I am grateful to the Daishonin for his profound teachings. I am repaying my debts of gratitude to him and the SGI by my efforts to show wisdom in my behavior.

But that was not always the case. I wish I had known about this philosophy 20 years ago. In my youthful, deluded state (Marxist, atheist), I fought for every rights issue imaginable. I marched, picketed, protested and proclaimed my "freedom," my "right of self-determination for my own body." I hardly flinched when I terminated not one but three pregnancies in the span of 11 years.

I urge all of my fellow members to re-read President Ikeda's thoughts on abortion in *Human Values in a Changing World* (pp. 246-49). He clarifies abortion "rights" from many angles: for population growth, for economic reasons, in cases of rape and incest and for dealing with genetic defects. Today, I fully

agree with his words: "From the standpoint of respect for life, I am totally opposed to it in most instances, since I consider it wrong to terminate artificially an already initiated life and thus to condemn it to darkness before it has ever seen the light. Furthermore, abortion is physically and mentally cruel to the mother...." These last 10 words especially haunt me, as I know their truth firsthand. I try not to wallow in my pain and guilt.

Thanks to my Buddhist practice, I have grown to understand value and anti-value, cause and effect and above all the importance of the ONLY revolution that matters, a human revolution. I want to live a life of no (more!) regrets, so I struggle daily to share this magnificent philosophy for living with others.

— BLANCA SANCHEZ-MUILLEN,
Received via e-mail

P.S. Sorry it took me so long to find the courage to send this!

Appreciation

Add my voice to those expressing appreciation for the evolution and remarkable improvement of the *World Tribune*, the "Mailbox," Lisa Jones' articles (the image of red ink in the jacuzzi of white paint is permanently lodged in my consciousness), and members' experiences too numerous to mention — except for Pascual Olivera's "Conquering Self-Doubt." I thank him profusely for describing the process of his self-healing in such precise and understandable psychological detail and for relating it so clearly to the practice of faith and personal growth.

Kudos to you all.
— ARLENE TERRAS,
Philadelphia

Correction:

In the Jan. 15 issue, on p. 4, we omitted a photo credit. Martin Cohen took the photograph of the America Rainbow Chorus.



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PROPAGATION

Words to the Wise

The *Hosshi* chapter states, "If there is someone, whether man or woman, who secretly teaches to one person even a single phrase of the Lotus Sutra, let it be known that he is the envoy of the Buddha, sent to carry out the Buddha's work." Who else but us can this possibly refer to? ("The True Entity of Life," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 92)

From SGI President Daisaku Ikeda:

Attaining Buddhahood in one's present form means developing in oneself the Buddha's strong spirit to unhesitatingly lead all suffering people to happiness. It is to take action cheerfully and with composure to help those who are suffering, even though one might be subject to ridicule or discrimination. Those who carry out such a practice shine as Buddhas just as they are. (July 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 35)



The essence of Buddhism lies in living out one's life as a great common mortal. To completely dedicate one's life to others, to thoroughly exert oneself for the Law and for society, and to die having fully expended oneself — that is the way of life of a bodhisattva and a Buddha. It's a matter of laying down one's life; of fearlessly speaking out on behalf of justice; of exhausting one's energy to bring people true happiness. Where this spirit is lacking, Buddhism does not exist.... Fundamentally, the Soka movement exists only where people manifest the spirit to dedicate their lives to spreading the Law. (August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 33)



We have to shed light on people, to give people light. We must also bathe ourselves in light. We must never remain in darkness, nor can we allow others to remain in the dark. Flowers will not bloom, the lotus will not blossom, in darkness. We have to send the light of the Mystic Law to all those we share a bond with. Doing so also increases our own light. (November 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 44)



Even when we are spreading the Law without concern for our lives, we absolutely must not do anything that would reflect badly on the Law. Because we have the highest concern for the Law, we need to fully exercise our wisdom in propagating it.... While teaching his followers the *shakubuku* spirit of not begrudging one's life, Nichiren Daishonin also emphasized the importance of showing people genuine courtesy and respect, and of conducting oneself with wisdom. (September 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 34)



The greater the degree to which attachments are upset and doubt aroused, the greater the difficulties that will arise. Since we are upsetting attachments and arousing doubts in order to fundamentally improve the lives of all people, it is impossible for us not to face tremendous obstacles. Also, our efforts have the world as their focus. We are implementing the principle of upsetting attachments and arousing doubts on the global stage. While spreading peace and culture, education and friendship, we are steadily changing people's views about Buddhism and about what it means to be human. (October 1997 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 45–46)



Working to overcome misunderstandings and prejudices is a large part of our Buddhist practice in the Latter Day of the Law. Actively discussing and conveying the truth to others constitute the practice of *shakubuku*. It is not easy to overturn an image or accepted belief once it has taken root. But a new, better age can only be brought about by breaking down such

misconceptions and opening people's eyes to the truth. (Aug. 22, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)



"Basically," said Shin'ichi Yamamoto, "all of society, all phenomena and events are Buddhism, so that whether discussing history, politics or life in general, I can't help expressing the Buddhist point of view. If you really make Buddhism and faith the bases of your life and have pride and confidence in that, your discussions will just naturally become dialogues on Buddhism. If you find yourself unable to do so, it is because you have somehow built a fence around Buddhism in your mind. It hasn't permeated every aspect of your life and thought. If every time you talk about Buddhism you become defensive, tense up and look severe, people won't be receptive to what you say. For us, Buddhist dialogue is the most natural, effortless expression of our humanity." (July 4, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 5)



Shin'ichi responded to each question with utmost courtesy and sincerity, encouraging everyone, whether members or not. He simply did not divide people into members and non-members. He believed in the humanity common to all, that every person was a potential friend. And so he encouraged whomever he met, with all his heart, to become happy and creative. Since Buddhism ensures the happiness of the entire human race, Shin'ichi knew that a Buddhist practitioner must pray and act for the happiness of all people. (July 18, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 13)



MATERIAL DE ESTUDIO

Enero-Febrero

Disertación del Presidente Ikeda: *Aprendamos del Gosho, La eterna enseñanza de Nichiren Daishonin.*

“Carta a la madre de Oto Gozen”¹

Ya que usted, como mujer. Venera el Sutra del Loto, es seguro que llegará a ser un buda. Aunque en mis circunstancias actuales me encuentre mal predispuesto para escribir,² a usted le envío cartas con frecuencia. También sé que está cuidando a los creyentes [de Kamakura]. No sé cómo agradecerle debidamente. Por sobre todas las cosas, el hecho de que usted haya venido hasta aquí, a pesar de su condición de mujer, expresa cuán profunda es su actitud hacia la fe. En cambio, en lo que a mí concierne, estoy aquí porque hay razones que me han hecho venir hasta este sitio. Me siento profundamente obligado hacia usted.

(*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1222)

La persona de fe genuina brilla cuando se enfrenta a tremendos obstáculos

Fue una travesía inconcebible; una mujer atravesó con su hija a costas la difícil ruta entre Kamakura y la isla de Sado. A través de pasos montañosos, de laderas escarpadas, a través incluso del mar, llegó sin aliento ante Nichiren Daishonin, quien sufría estoicamente la dura suerte del exilio.

“Era demasiado increíble para ser cierto”, dice el Daishonin. Ante esta aparición inesperada de una de sus seguidoras de Kamakura, el Daishonin probablemente haya dudado de lo que veían sus ojos. A un lugar al que nadie llegaba, no sólo venía una persona, sino que en realidad eran dos: ¡una mujer con una niña!

Su sorpresa inicial enseguida se tornó profunda preocupación. “¿Cómo fue su viaje? ¿No tuvo ningún contratiempo durante el camino? ¿Y la niña? ¿Está bien? No puedo creer que mis ojos las estén viendo. ¡Es la mayor alegría que podrían haberme dado!”

Ella era una persona de fe pura y sincera. Y, sin duda, venía albergando desde hacía tiempo la determinación de visitar al Daishonin en Sado. “No puedo quedarme aquí sentada, en estos momentos, cuando el Daishonin está enfrentando las peores persecuciones”, probablemente

haya sentido. Habrá querido hacer cualquier cosa en sus manos con tal de aliviar el peso de la adversidad que sobrellevaba el Daishonin, aun mínimamente.

Esta carta a la madre de Oto Gozen, nombre de la pequeña, elogía a una madre por su espíritu de búsqueda; una madre, que setecientos años atrás, avanzó sin especulaciones y de a un paso por vez, tras las huellas de su mentor.

La fecha de la carta sólo habla del tercer día del undécimo mes. Las investigaciones recientes respaldan la idea de que fue escrita en Sado, en 1273.

En mayo del año anterior, el Daishonin escribió la “Carta a Nichimyo Shonin”. (MW-3, 43-53). Esa carta también estaba dirigida a una mujer que, como la madre de Oto Gozen, había viajado a Kamakura para visitar al Daishonin en Sado en compañía de una hija de corta edad. El Daishonin elogió a la

destinataria sin reservas y llegó a concederle el apelativo budista Nichimyo Shonin.

En general, hoy se cree que Nichimyo Shonin y la madre de Oto Gozen fueron una misma persona. Y esta disertación se fundará en dicho supuesto.

A la madre de Oto Gozen:

Ya que usted, como mujer, venera el Sutra del Loto, es seguro que llegará a ser un buda. Aunque en mis circunstancias actuales me encuentre mal predispuesto para escribir, a usted le envío cartas con frecuencia. También se que está cuidando a los creyentes (de Kamakura). No sé cómo agradecerle debidamente. (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1222)

“Si usted no puede llegar a ser un buda, ¿quién, entonces?”, es como si le dijera. “Si usted no puede ser feliz, ¿qué sentido tiene entonces el Budismo?”. Este es el corazón del Daishonin.

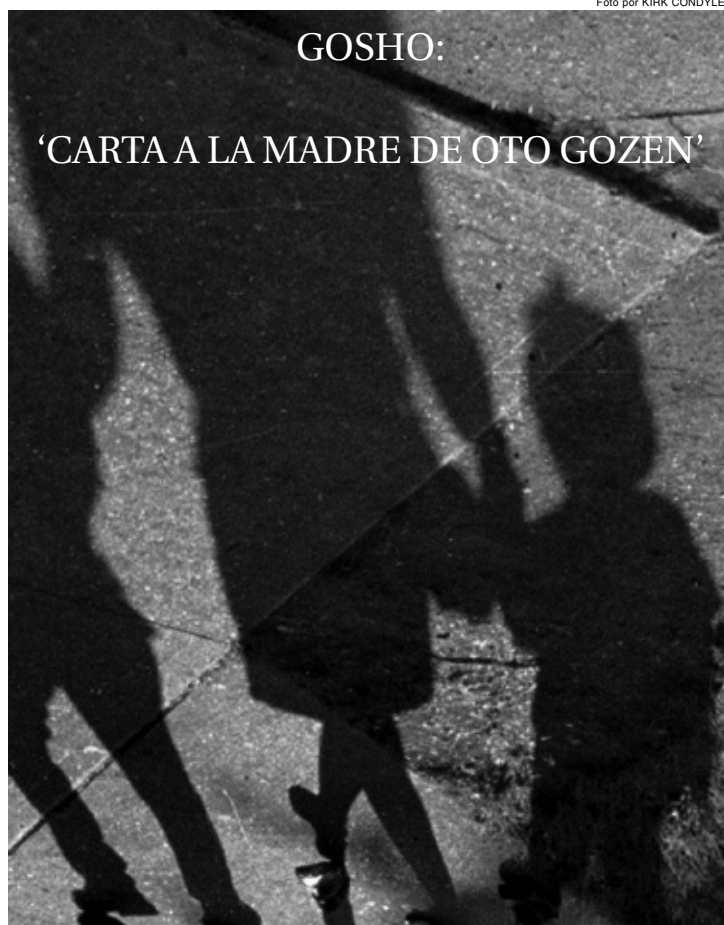


Foto por KIRK CONDYLES

garon a abandonar la fe, pero anteriormente se dejaron derrotar. Y algunos, además de repudiar su propia fe, tornaron a hablar malicioso y denigrantemente del Daishonin.

Sin duda, hubo gente mezquina que traicionó a sus camaradas y pensó sólo en su propia preservación. En última instancia, las personas de esta calaña terminan perdiendo la confianza de todas las partes en juego. Y lo peor de todo es que no consiguen confiar en sí mismas. Desprovistos de apoyo, exterior e interior, marchan hacia un fin lastimoso.

Pero no había tempestad capaz de apagar el fuego ardiente que bramaba en la vida del Buda original. Por el contrario, durante su exilio en Sado—que fue la persecución más dura de su existencia—, el Daishonin pudo decir, con calma impertertable en “La apertura de los ojos”: “Yo, Nichiren, soy el hombre más rico del Japón actual”, (MW-2, 151) y logró dejar, como legado, una trayectoria monumental.

“La llama de mi corazón, ávida de salvar del sufrimiento a las personas, arde con más brío que nunca”, anuncia. “La apertura de los ojos” es una declaración donde el Daishonin comunica a todos los creyentes su victoria esperitual. Este “mensaje de luz” sin duda iluminó el corazón de sus seguidores, que apretaban los dientes ante el embiste de tremendas persecuciones y luchaban para protegerse unos a otros.

Una fogata de poca magnitud puede extinguirse fácilmente: basta con una ráfaga momentánea. Pero con un fuego imponente sucede lo contrario; las ráfagas sólo consiguen alimentar las llamas y hacerles cobrar altura. Las grandes dificultades son un viento impulsor que hace avanzar el kosen-rufu.

Shijo Kingo, a quien el Daishonin le encomendó en custodia “La apertura de los ojos”, no pudo quedarse quieto en Kamakura. Por eso, salió enseguida rumbo a la lejana isla de Sado. La madre de Oto Gozen inició la misma travesía. Si bien el país se hallaba peso de una convulsión, ella buscó al Daishonin sin vacilar ni especular con su seguridad personal.

“¿Cómo podría usted dejar de manifestar la Budeidad?”, (MW-3, 199) le dice, en alabanza a su espíritu de búsqueda, que la había hecho viajar para saldar, de algún modo, la deuda de gratitud que la ligaba al Dai-

En épocas de adversidad, podemos descubrir el verdadero valor de una persona. Hay un brillo eterno en las acciones de la madre de Oto Gozen, Nichimyo Shonin, en las horas culminantes del hostigamiento contra el Daishonin, cuando “999 de cada mil abandonaban la fe”.⁴ Esta creyente es ejemplo eterno para todas las mujeres, en los diez mil años y más que durará el período conocido como Último Día de la Ley.

En el otoño de 1271, cuando el Daishonin estuvo a punto de ser decapitado en Tatsunokuchi y terminó exiliado en la isla de Sado, también estalló una tormenta de persecuciones contra sus discípulos y seguidores. Algunos fueron a la cárcel; a otros les confiscaron las propiedades; varios debieron abandonar Kamakura, expulsados por el gobierno.

A raíz de esta ola de ataques, muchos de los discípulos y creyentes laicos del Daishonin descartaron la fe. Otros no lle-

Foto por KIRK CONDYLES

GOSHO, DE PÁG. A

shonin. “En este momento, ¿qué puedo hacer yo?”, se habrá preguntado la señora. Al parecer, también estaba cuidando con esmero a los creyentes de la región de Kamakura. Y el Daishonin se sentía más que agradecido. “No sé cómo agradecerle debidamente”. Le dice. En esta sola frase se percibe su sincero corazón.

Sin embargo, en años recientes hemos visto muchos sacerdotes arrogantes que dieron por sentado el esfuerzo de los demás. Estos prelado traicionaron al Daishonin.

Por sobre todas las cosas, el hecho de que usted haya venido hasta aquí, a pesar de su condición de mujer, expresa cuán profunda es su actitud hacia la fe. En cambio, en lo que a mí concierne, estoy aquí porque hay razones que me han hecho venir hasta este sitio. Me siento profundamente obligado hacia usted. (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1222).

Las acciones de Nichimyo Shonin expresaban su fe sincera. Lo que determina todas las cosas es aquello en lo cual ponemos nuestro corazón.

Desde luego, las circunstancias de ella tampoco eran favorables. Al parecer, llevaba ya cierto tiempo separada de su esposo. Y la hija, Oto Gozen, todavía era una “niña”. A juzgar por las palabras del Daishonin. (MW-3, 53).

Con la pequeña asida de la mano, emprendió la travesía. En ese momento, no era infrecuente que las mujeres viajaran solas. Pero, a diferencia de los caminos llanos y seguros que había entre Kamakura y Kyoto, por ejemplo, la ruta a Sado estaba sembrada de dificultades; implicaba cruzar a través de montañas y del mar.

A un hombre en pleno uso de sus fuerzas, la travesía podía llevarle, como mínimo, tres semanas. Uno advierte el grado de dificultad del viaje cuando considera que el trayecto de Kamakura a Kyoto, que es mucho mayor, llevaba unas dos semanas. A su vez, el tramo de mar que debía cruzarse para llegar a la isla de Sado era conocido por la inclemencia del oleaje. En ocasiones, las personas debían aguardar varias semanas hasta que las aguas se calmaran, para intentar el cruce. El viaje en bote era una odisea que, según los criterios actuales, uno ni siquiera podría imaginar.

El Daishonin no exagera cuando describe un viaje “sobre

montañas traicioneras y a través del mar enfurecido”. “El viento y la lluvia”, agrega, “descerrajan su azote en el momento más inesperado”. (MW-3, 52).

¿Qué difícil expedición habrá sido, para una mujer acompañada de una criatura tan pequeña! Esta creyente se abrió camino cuando comenzaba el verano, con la niña cargada a las espaldas, secándose el sudor del rostro.

La actitud del espíritu es lo que determina todas las cosas

Por otro lado, esto sucedió inmediatamente después de un incidente de revuelta interna dentro del clan gobernante Hojo.⁵ Se vivían horas de gran inestabilidad. El Daishonin afirma: “Las personas [...] se comportan de un modo bestial, como perros y tigres”. (MW-3, 52). Las montañas se hallaban plagadas de bandidos; en el mar, acechaban piratas.

Muchas veces, para no pasar la noche a la intemperie, la madre habrá pedido a personas desconocidas que las alojaran durante la noche. Probablemente, el llanto haya sido su compañero constante a lo largo de esos días. De solo pensar, uno siente que se le parte de pena el corazón. “Habrá sentido como si estuviese pasando por el sufrimiento de los tres malos caminos”, (MW-3, 52) dice el Daishonin. Así de difícil fue su travesía. Pero la madre no se dejó rendir.

¿Por qué? Porque estaba resuelta a transitar el mismo camino a Sado que había recorrido el Daishonin. Quería superar las mismas dificultades que su maestro. ¡Qué admirable! ¡Qué noble y qué hermoso!

La fe fortalece a las personas. Y la gente de fe genuina brilla por sobre todas las cosas en el momento de enfrentar las mayores dificultades. Por cierto, es mejor no tener obstáculos. Pero, desde otro punto de vista, las dificultades son un beneficio, porque en la contienda por superarlas y dejarlas atrás, uno consigue forjar una personalidad de oro puro e incorruptible.

Aunque todas las hojas de los árboles cayeran bajo el embate de un vendaval, mientras las ramas y el tronco se mantengan indemnes, con el tiempo volverán a llenarse de flores. Del mismo modo, la propagación del Budismo siempre continuará, mientras existan personas de fe genuina. Por eso, lo importante es forjar aunque sea a una sola per-



sona de fe auténtica.

El Daishonin elogia a la madre de Oto Gozen con estas palabras: “Usted es, sin duda, la devota del Sutra del Loto más eminente entre todas las personas del Japón”; (MW-3, 52). Le dio, entonces, el nombre budista de Nichimyo Shonin.

Nichi, el mismo ideograma de la palabra ‘Nichiren’, significa ‘sabia’ o ‘venerable’. En esta clase de expresiones vemos que al Daishonin no le interesaban en absoluto las diferencias entre sacerdotes y laicos, hombres y mujeres. Sólo observaba el corazón y la postura del espíritu de la gente.

“Postura” se refiere al estado interior de la vida, al *ichinen* albergado en los estratos más profundos del ser. Esto es lo que decide a qué habremos de consagrar la existencia, cuál será la oración fundamental en la cual basamos la vida. La postura de una persona es invisible, pero se manifiesta en el momento crucial. Y no sólo eso, sino que controla todos los aspectos de un individuo, a cada instante del día, todos los días. Es el determinante fundamental de nuestra vida.

El Sutra Keron señala: “El corazón es como un pintor magistral”, como un pintor ilustre, el corazón crea libremente sus representaciones de todas las cosas. El corazón de ustedes es el diseñador, el pintor, el escultor, el arquitecto de todo su ser.

El gran maestro T’ien-t’ai cita este fragmento para explicar la doctrina del *ichinen sanzen* (tres mil estados a cada instante de la vida). Utiliza la imagen de un gran pintor para explicar que el corazón o la postura (*ichinen*) se manifiesta en los tres mil aspectos de todos los fenómenos (*sanzen*).

Lo que cuenta es la actitud básica que domina el interior, el

“instante vital” de nuestra vida. Es la oración y son las esperanzas. Y también se la puede identificar con el subconsciente.

“¿Qué clase de futuro vislumbro para mí mismo? ¿Cuál es la identidad que quiero desarrollar? ¿Qué quiero lograr en la vida?” Lo importante es plasmar en el corazón esa imagen lo más clara y específicamente posible. Ese “retrato” se convierte, en sí mismo, en el diseño de su futuro. La fuerza de la postura nos permite interpretar, con nuestra vida, una espléndida obra maestra de acuerdo con ese diseño. Esta es la doctrina de los tres mil estados contenidos en cada momento de la vida.

Cuanto más específico y detallado sea el plano de nuestro corazón, tanto mejor será. La clave está en seguir pintando vívidamente el objetivo que nos hemos trazado en nuestro corazón y en seguir avanzando hacia esa meta sin especulaciones. Entonces, a cada instante, la realidad de nuestra vida gradualmente se irá acercando a esa pintura que es nuestra aspiración.

Todo depende de lo que pueble nuestro corazón. La oración sincera, sin falta, recibe respuesta. Si uno decide que algo será imposible, en total coherencia con esa decisión interior, hasta las cosas más sencillas nunca logran concretarse. Por otro lado, cuando uno tiene la convicción de poder hacer algo, sin falta, ya está un paso más cerca de hacerlo realidad.

De acuerdo con el principio de los tres mil estados contenidos en cada instante de la vida, los pensamientos y sentimientos negativos cobran forma en la realidad, con esa naturaleza, y producen resultados negativos, las personas que albergan pensamientos negativos crean, en su propia vida, efectos que concuerdan perfectamente con su forma de pensar.

Poreso, es importante ser optimistas. En el Budismo, el pesimismo no existe. El Budismo, la enseñanza del Sutra del Loto, nos da la clave que nos permite abrir un caudal de convicción y arder de esperanza, aun en situaciones que parecen ser desesperantes. Nichiren Daishonin lo demostró con su propia vida.

Aun en las condiciones desoladas de Sado, el Daishonin dice que siente “gran regocijo”. (MW-2, 188). Con estas palabras él concluye “La apertura de los ojos”.

En una carta dirigida a su seguidor Sairembo, también escrita durante su exilio en Sado,

el Daishonin promete con serenidad: “Aunque el señor feudal de Kamakura siga negándose a perdonar a Nichiren, yo exhortaré a las funciones protectoras del universo y regresaré a la ciudad”. (MW-7, 27). Fiel a sus palabras, el Daishonin concretó un retorno triunfal a Kamakura. Su victoria, por sobre adversidades inenarrables, demuestra claramente el principio de *ichinen sanzen*.

Por sobre todas las cosas, siento que la decisión del Daishonin con respecto al kosen-rufu mundial en los diez mil y más años el Último Día es la causa que hoy ha provocado la aparición de la SGI y que ha convocado a tantos Bodhisattvas de la tierra en el mundo entero.

El poder de nuestro corazón es inmenso. La postura de Nichimyo Shonin estaba enfocada en el Daishonin. Y, del Daishonin, ella aprendió a compartir el ideal del Sutra del Loto; hacer que todas las personas puedan ser felices.

En su fuero interno, estaba decidida a viajar hasta la remota isla de Sado, aunque ello le significara cruzar montañas y aguas traicioneras. Espero que todos ustedes avancen firmemente, de a un paso por vez, hacia un ideal de grandeza, a través de caminos, montañas y mares, si ello fuese necesario, hasta llegar a la meta.

El Daishonin proclama: “Los hombres y mujeres comunes pueden manifestar la Budeidad si atesoran una cosa: La fe sincera”. (MW-1, 274).

Necesitamos enfocar nuestro espíritu, nuestro corazón más profundo, en el kosen-rufu. Lograr la Budeidad depende de que atesoremos esta determinación. Cuando poseemos esta actitud, nuestra vida destella, enjorada de buena fortuna y de felicidad. Y podemos emprender una espléndida travesía por la vida; una travesía donde todos nuestros sueños, uno tras otro, se vuelven realidad.

Continuará

- 1) “Oto Gozen no Haha Gosho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, págs. 1222-23). Se cree que esta carta data de noviembre de 1273, y que, en consecuencia, el Daishonin la escribió a los cincuenta y dos años.
- 2) El original en japonés admite otra interpretación: “Aunque no soy un asiduo corresponsal...”.
- 3) *The Major Writings of Nichiren daishonin*, vol. 3, pág. 197.
- 4) MW-3, 69.
- 5) En 1272, Hojo Tokisuke, medio hermano mayor del regente en ejercicio, Hojo Tokimune, conspiró para tomar el poder. Pero Tokimune descubrió el ardor y reprimió enseguida el intento, haciendo asesinar a su hermanastro.

Mensaje de Año Nuevo del Presidente Ikeda Unir el Corazón de la Gente con Miras al Tercer Milenio

Año Nuevo de 1999...El portal de la historia está por cerrarse sobre el viejo siglo para dar paso al tercer milenio, vasto escenario de una cultura y una civilización nuevas.

La historia está escrita por los pueblos. En particular, sus protagonistas deben ser las personas comunes que integran la ciudadanía.

¿Por qué triunfó la revolución filipina impulsada por el lema "el pueblo al poder"? El ex presidente de ese país, Fidel Ramos, atribuye la causa, sin ninguna duda, a la confianza que se tuvieron los ciudadanos filipinos y a la gran fuerza espiritual que fueron capaces de desplegar.

Hacia una época en que el pueblo asuma el papel protagonista. Hacia un mundo donde los ciudadanos, desde su diversidad, puedan comunicarse ampliamente entre sí. Estos serán, para mí, los rumbos esenciales que deberá plantearse la sociedad humana en el siglo XXI.

Me pregunto cuántas personas habrá realmente convencidas de que podemos cambiar el mundo mediante el poder de los valores espirituales.

Unir a los pueblos, unir sus filosofías...En esta labor portentosa yace el significado profundo del movimiento popular que la SGI viene desplegando en todos los rincones del orbe.

Examinemos el mundo por un instante...

En este planeta, cubierto de bosques, montañas y desiertos, hay tantos sitios y comunidades de los que sabemos tan poco... Sitios y comunidades que han sido cuna de culturas únicas, religiones particulares y pueblos irrepetibles..

En el nivel más esencial y profundo. ¿qué es lo que liga y vincula semejante constelación de diversidad que casi parece desafiar la idea misma de la cohesión?

Ni más ni menos que nuestra pertenencia común al género humano.

Todo comienza por respetar la dignidad humana, por apreciar el valor inherente a la vida de cada persona y reconocer el prodigio de la existencia humana.

Por lo tanto, ahora tenemos que iniciar nuestra búsqueda interior.

“¿Cómo deberíamos vivir?”

“¿Cuáles son los auténticos valores de la vida?”

“¿Cuál es el propósito de nuestra existencia?”

Debemos decirle adiós a un mundo en el que estas preguntas no han tenido cabida ni sentido.

Las enseñanzas humanísticas del Budismo forjan ciudadanos de pensamiento independiente, capaces de confiar en sus propios recursos,

Los buenos ciudadanos son aquellos que aman su tierra en la misma medida en que aman el mundo. Lo que logrará transformar el mundo, entonces, será una firme alianza de ciudadanos mundiales, dotados de una sólida filosofía humanística.

Por eso sostengo que el desarrollo del pueblo es, a la vez, el cimiento y el marco de todo progreso humano.

El veloz proceso de globalización hace que las diferencias geográficas se tornen cada vez más relativas y menos relevantes, nos es posible pensar el mundo como una sola cosa.

Pero la globalización externa ha traído consigo graves males sociales, que se traducen en situaciones de caos, estancamiento y deterioro de los valores culturales autóctonos.

Nuestro movimiento aspira a la globalización interna...es decir, a la transformación nacida en el interior del ser humano...; apunta al desarrollo de una inmensa red de personas basadas en su motivación interna.

Extendamos en lo más profundo de nuestra vida, firmes y profundas raíces de la fe, mientras seguimos buscando el despliegue de nuestro ilimitado potencial humano, no desde afuera, sino desde adentro y sembremos la semilla de la paz en cada corazón, en todos los corazones, porque de esa forma cultivaremos el vergel florido y exuberante de la paz en el siglo XXI.

Estoy absolutamente convencido de que el trabajo incansable de ustedes, día y noche con miras a ese fin, ejercerá un impacto de profundidad insospechada en la futura historia de la humanidad.

En esta encrucijada decisiva, mientras construimos los importantes basamentos del tercer milenio, sigamos dándonos aliento mutuo y apoyo mutuo, para avanzar juntos hacia la paz y la felicidad de todos los pueblos...Con mi sincera oración por la felicidad, las enérgicas actividades y la larga vida de todos mis preciados compañeros de la SGI, en ciento veintiocho países del mundo.



Daisaku Ikeda

Determinaciones de Miembros de Grupos de Estudio en Español

En este año 1999, año de la victoria en la comunidad para el nuevo siglo. Los miembros del grupo de estudio en Español de nueva jersey, determinamos mostrar prueba real en nuestras vidas y ganar el respeto y confianza de nuestra comunidad.

Nuestras metas son:

- 1) Convertirnos en un grupo activo y decisivo en pos del kosen-rufu de las Americas.
- 2) 100% de miembros en el Departamento de Estudio.
- 3) Incrementar la asistencia a las reuniones de estudio
- 4) Promover la lectura y suscripciones del *World Tribune*.

NUEVA JERSEY

*

El Grupo Latino de Denver extiende sus lazos de amistad y apoyo a todos los miembros de Colorado y del mundo, enviándonos nuestros mejores deseos de salud y felicidad. En 1999, seguiremos desarrollándonos como individuos capaces, fuertes y felices. Y unidos por la fe, estudio y práctica del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin, avanzaremos el legado de sus enseñanzas.

DENVER

*

Nuestra determinación es crear reuniones de estudio significativas para profundizar nuestra fe. Compartir

este Budismo con nuestras familias, amistades y alentar a los miembros a asistir al seminario de FNCC.

FILADELFIA

*

Saludos y un próspero Año Nuevo a todos los miembros de San Antonio. Los miembros hispanos están decididos a compartir este tremendo Budismo con nuevas amistades en el 1999. Así vamos a doblar el número de miembros latinos antes del nuevo milenio. Juntos vamos a continuar avanzando hacia el kosen-rufu de San Antonio.

SAN ANTONIO

*

Nosotros los responsables del distrito Palmetto en Miami, Florida nos comprometemos a cultivarlos retoños de la juventud, pulir y desarrollar nuestro carácter y de esta manera demostraremos prueba real en la comunidad. Este nuevo año hacemos un compromiso profundo de levantar nuevos responsables de grupo y juntos apoyaremos el movimiento de kosen-rufu junto a nuestro maestro, Ikeda. Esperamos concretar nuestros objetivos llevando a cabo reuniones que motiven los miembros a luchar y a ganar, enfataremos: Nuestras publicaciones, daimoku y shakubuku.

MIAMI

¡MUCHÍSIMAS GRACIAS SENSEI! Miembros Hispanos en los Estados Unidos de America expresan su agradecimiento y reafirman su determinación para kosen-rufu



Nueva Jersey



Filadelfia



Miami

“Por favor avancen jubilosamente y en armonía, unidos solidamente en espíritu y propósito despleguemos cada uno una presentación poderosa en nuestros respectivos papeles [de teatro] a la vez que actuamos la epopeya, el verdadero drama de la vida de kosen-rufu en este mundo.”

(Fragmento del mensaje del Presidente Ikeda para las reuniones de Gongyo de Año Nuevo. Vea traducción de éste en la próxima edición de las Páginas en Español)



San Juan, Puerto Rico



Denver

Seattle

San Antonio, Texas



SGI 이케다 회장의 신년 메시지

- 세계 시민을 향한 포부 -

1999년 새해 첫날 - 낡은 시대를 간직한 역사의 문은 닫혀 버리고 제 3의 천년이 열리는 - 신세기, 새로운 문명을 위하여 드디어 더없이 넓은 무대가 펼쳐지려 하고 있습니다.

인간이 역사를 만듭니다. 그리고 평민이 주역을 맡아야 합니다. 왜 "민중의 힘"이 필리핀혁명을 성공시켰는가? 필리핀의 전대통령이었던 피델라모스는 거침없이 말합니다. "그것은 민중은 그들 스스로를 믿기 때문입니다"라고.

민중이 주역이 되는 시대를 향하여... 다인종으로 이루어진 시민들 사이에 폭넓은 교류가 이루어지는 세계를 향하여...

이것이, 이 방향으로 가는 것이 나의 생각으로는 21세기를 살아가는 인간사회에 있어 가장 중요한 일이라고 여겨집니다.

도대체 몇사람이나 "정신의 힘"으로 이 세계를 바꿀 수 있다는 그 진실을 믿고 있겠습니까? 철학과 인간이 같이 하는 것 - 지금 세계 각처에

서 추진되고 있는 이 평판 좋은 SGI운동은 예를 찾아볼 수 없는 의미심장한 쾌거입니다.

손을 멈추고 잠시 이 세상을 돌아봅시다. 이 지상에는 수많은 장소와 지역사회가 있습니다. - 삼림으로 덮여있으며, 산들이 있고, 사막이 있고 - 우리들이 알고 있는 것들은 그들 중 겨우 몇에 불과합니다. 장소와 지역사회는 독특한 문화, 종교 그리고 인간을 만들어 냅니다. 무엇이 그들을 서로 연결시켜 합치게 할까요? 깊은 근저를 밝혀보면 거기에는 일만무수의 다양성들이 서로 싸우듯 결합되어 있습니다. 인간으로 태어나 인간사회를 이루고 있는 우리들도 조금도 다를 바 없습니다.

우리들이 인간의 존엄성을 서로 존중할 때, 각자가 지니고 있는 인간으로서의 존재 가치에 감사를 느낄 때, 인간으로 살아가는 것에 대하여 경이로움으로 가득할 때, 만사는 풀려지기 시작합니다. 어디 우리들 스스로에게 질문해 봅시다. - 어떻게 살아

야 되는가? 인생의 진정한 가치는 무엇인가? 삶의 목적은 도대체 무엇인가? - 우리들은 그러한 질문에 대하여 곧 바이라고 대답할 수 있어야 합니다.

불법의 인간적인 가르침은 독립심 강한 시민들처럼 자신을 믿게 하는데 바탕을 둥니다. 훌륭한 시민이란 자신의 조국은 물론 이 인간세계를 사랑할 수 있는 사람을 말합니다. 건전한 인간철학을 소지한 세계시민으로서의 강한 연대감은 자연스럽게 이 세상을 변화시켜 갈 것입니다. 인간의 향상은 바로 인류의 발전을 위한 초석과 골격을 만들기 때문입니다. 급히 변모해가는 이 지구촌의 양상은 지리적인 차이점을 뛰어넘어 세계를 하나로 만들고 있습니다. 그러나 외형적인 지구촌의 변화는 혼돈, 정체 그리고 고유의 문화를 퇴보시키는 사회적인 문제를 안겨주었습니다. 우리들의 평화운동은 내면적으로 세계 시민이 되고져 열망하는 운동입니다. - 인간의 내면적인 변화는 이윽고 수많은 이들

의 가슴으로 점화되어 갈 것입니다. 우리들의 인생에 신심의 강한 뿌리를 내려 인간으로서의 무한한 가능성을 깨달아 찾아 열어갔으면 합니다. - 외형적이 아니라 내면적으로부터, 그리고 한사람 한사람의 가슴에 평화의 씨앗을 심어갑시다. 그리하여 21세기에는 화려한 평화의 꽃을 피우도록 합시다. 여러분들께서 오늘날까지 낮밤을 가리지 않고 쌓아오신 노고는 인류의 미래를 열어갈 한없이 고귀한 행위라고 확신하는 바입니다.

제 3의 천년을 열어갈 초석으로서 단호한 결정을 내려야 할 이시점에서, 서로가 서로를 격려하고 도와서 모든 인류의 평화와 행복을 위하여 전진해 주십시오.

- 전세계 128개국에 계시는 나의 소중한 SGI회원들의 행복과 활기찬 노고와 장수를 진심으로 기원드리면서 -

1999년 1월 1일
다이사쿠 이케다

SGI의 1999년 세가지 목표

SGI의 1999년 테마인 "신세기를 향한 지역승리의 해"를 달성하기 위하여 세가지 목표를 소개합니다.

첫째, 나날의 생활을 착실한 승리로

우리들이 직면하는 매일의 어려움에 진실된 신심과 실천으로서 난관을 극복하여 승리의 나날을 만들어 갑시다.

둘째, 신뢰와 우호의 네트워크를 지역사회로 넓혀 갑시다.

지역사회로부터 호응받을 수 있는 활동을 통하여 불법의 원리를 전해주면서 신뢰와 우호를 쌓아갑시다.

셋째, 광선유포를 방해하는 불인인 계속 싸워갑시다.

"니켄종의 불법왜곡"을 예의 주시하면서 SGI의 안과 밖에 걸쳐 친우들에게 이 사실을 알려갑시다.

(월드 트리뷴 1월 1일)



제 1회 와싱턴 D. C. 방면 한국인 총회

- 10월 17일 1998년 -

지난 2월에 플로리다 문화회관(FNCC)에서는 제 1회 한국어 연수회가 열렸었습니다. 그 연수회에 참석할 수 있었던 우리들은 와싱턴 D. C. 방면의 한국인 총회를 구상하였고 모든 회원님들의 협조아래 지난 10월 17일 제 1회 총회를 대성공리에 개최할 수 있었습니다.

총회를 위해 8월 초부터 준비작업에 들어가면서 각 지역별로 제목 투쟁을 시작하였습니다. 볼티모어 지역에서는 부인부 2명과 여자부 1명이 총회공연을 준비하기 위하여 매주 2번씩이나 무용학원에 다녔고, 몽고메리 지역에서는 어른들이 제목 올리는 동안 미래부는 합창연습에 바빴습니다. 북 버지니아 지역에서도 매주 회관에 모여 제목 투쟁과 부인부 합창연습을 했습니다. 동남 버지니아 지역에서는 자행화타가 주제인 연극연습과 SGI 삼색리본 250개를 만들어 총회에 참석하셨던 모든 분들께 달아드렸습니다. 또 늘스 캐롤라이나에서는 종이전등을 250개 만들었는데 일본 부인부들이 가르쳐 주었다고 합니다.

사우스 캐롤라이나에서 와싱턴 D. C.까지는 버스로 10시간 이상 걸리는 먼 지역인데도 불구하고 미래부를 중

심으로 십계 모임을 발표하면서 부인부 몇 분을 발심시켜 총 25명이나 참석하여 모두들 고마워하고 있습니다. 자매지역인 필라델피아, 피츠버그와 뉴저지로부터 20명 이상 회원님들이 운전을 하며 참석해 주셨습니다.

총회 자체의 성공과 실패는 그 총회를 위하여 얼마만큼 정성껏 준비했느냐에 달렸다는 회장 선생님의 지도말씀을 가슴깊이 새겨 우리들 회원 한분한분이 온 마음과 정성을 다 쏟아서 준비한 결과 200명 결집 목표에서 251명이 참석하는 대승리를 이루어냈습니다.

또, 멀리 로스앤젤레스로부터 조용완 부인 부장님이 참석해 주셔서 교학강연, 개인 지도 그리고 그룹지도 등 온몸과 마음을 바쳐 일본도 쉬지 않으시고 격려해주신 결과 미국 생활 몇십 년 동안 제대로 지도를 받아보지 못했던 많은 분들의 가슴을 사막에 비가 내리듯 흥뻑 적시면서 귀중한 격려의 말씀을 들을 수 있었습니다.

어느 회원 한 분은 그동안 이젠본존을 바꾸지 않고 있었는데 조용완 부인 부장님께 지도를 받고 종문의 역사를 설명들은 뒤 1주일 후에 본존님을 교환했습니다. 또, 6년동안 좌담회 참석을 안하



시던 가족이 총회에 참석하신 후 용기백배하여 지구 좌담회에 신래자를 모시고 참석하신다는 기쁜 소식도 들려옵니다. 총회가 진행되는 동안 일본 부인부들은 음식 및 보리차를 준비해 도와주셨고 청년부 Soka Group은 의자, 테이블, Set-Up을 도와주셨고 백련Group과 Gajo-kai 역시 밤늦도록 헌신적으로 도와주셨습니다. 참으로 훌륭한 4부가 뭉쳐진 모습이었으며, 이 단결의 힘을 만끽하며 앞으로 해마다 즐겁고 화목한 총회를 열 수 있기를 바랍니다.

이 모두가 이케다 회장님의 배려로 개최되었던 FNCC 한국어 연수회 덕분이며 또 지역 간부님들과 한국인 회원 모두에게 감사의 말씀을 전하고 싶습니다.

환영사에서 와싱턴 D. C. 방면부인부장 Jean Rosenberg는 다음과 같이 말씀해 주셨습니다. "제가 바라는 것이 있다면 여러분들이 SGI-USA 회원으로서 미국을 내 나라로 생각하시며 한국 회원의 정신인 절복과 제목, 이케다 회장님의 학회정신제일, 사회복지제일을 앞세워 각자의 지구에, 가정에, 더 나아가

가서는 미국사회 전체로 여러분들의 마음을 넓혀가 주셨으면하는 마음이 간절합니다."라고.

우리들 회원 한분 한분은 이 말씀을 가슴에 새기며 평소 회장 선생님께서 제창하시는 "세계시민"의 일원으로서 미국과 세계광포에 앞장서서 뛰리라고 굳게 다짐하였습니다. (와싱턴 D. C. 김남수 제공)

法華經의 지혜

제 32회 테마: 아래수량품 ⑦

SGI회장: 세상에는 '마음의 상처를 입은 사람'이 무수하게 있습니다. 그러한 사람들에게 치유의 손길을 뻗어주어야만 합니다. 그렇게 함으로써 그들은 자신이 치유되어 가는 것입니다. 사람은 무슨 일이 있으면 자기만큼 불행한 인간은 없다고 생각하기 쉽습니다. 스스로를 불쌍히 여기고 자기 일 이외에는 아무것도 생각하기 쉽습니다. 자신의 괴로움에 사로잡혀 불평과 실망을 하는 가운데 생명력을 쇠퇴하게 하고 맙니다. 그때 사람들에게 '살아가는 힘을 주는 것은 무엇인가. 그것은 자기 이외의 누군가를 위하여 살아가려는 '인간의 연대'가 아닐까요. 예고이즘에 갇혀 있어서는 행복이 없습니다. 떨치고 나와 '사람들을 위하여 행동할 때 그때 자기생명의 색도 소생하는 법입니다.

엔도: 심리학적으로도 '배려'가 자신의 마음을 치유하는 것이 강조되고 있습니다. 스트레스나 불안으로 괴로워하는 사람들은 자신의 괴로움을 '공유'하여 생각하며 시간을 보내고 맙니다. 그것을 집단의 장을 설치하여 타인을 생각하거나 도와주자 에너지가 향하게 한다는 요법도 있습니다.

사이토: 자기와 마찬가지로 괴로워하는 사람을 보살펴준다는 것이요.

엔도: 그렇습니다. 그 사람의 이야기를 들어주거나 서로 이야기할 수 있는 분위기를 만들어 갑니다. 그렇게 함으로써 보살핌을 받는 쪽은 물론 보살피는 쪽도 이전보다 훨씬 '살아가는 힘'이 강해진다는 것입니다.

스다: 학회활동에서도 남을 격려하면 자신도 힘이 솟아나니까요. (웃음)

SGI회장: 학회는 고마운 곳이지요. 남을 보살펴 준 만큼 - 즉 남에게 '살아가는 힘'을 끄집어 내준만큼 자신도 '살아가는 힘'이 증가한다. 남의 생명을 확대해 준만큼 자신의 생명도 확대한다. 이것이 보살도의 묘법입니다. '이타'와 '자리'의 일치입니다. 이타만을 말하면 오만해집니다. 남을 구해준다고 하는 위선이 됩니다. 자신을 위하는 것도 됨을 자각해야 비로소 '자신을 수행시켜 주었다'는 겸허함이 나옵니다. 자타불이입니다. 그러므로 보살도밖에 없는 것입니다.

엔도: '남을 돕는 것이 자신을 돕게 된다'는 것이군요. 나치의 강제수용소에서의 이야기입니다. 저 지옥에서 살아남은 사람들은 하나의 규칙에

따라 살고 있었다고 합니다. '우리를 그룹은 모든 것을 다 함께 공유하고 있었습니다. 그리고 그룹의 멤버가 홀로 음식을 먹기 시작했을 때 그 것으로 그 사람의 죽음이 시작된다'는 것을 알고 있었습니다.' (줄리어스 시겔 저 『살아남는 힘』)

SGI회장: 대단한 말이군요. 이해됩니다. 극한 상황 속에서 진짜의 인간이 내는 소리입니다.

사이토: 남과 서로 나누어 가지는 마음을 없애버린 순간 - '죽음'이 시작되고 있습니다. 무서운 진실을 증언하고 있습니다.

SGI회장: 물론 강제수용소에서의 체험은 체험하지 않은 인간이 가늠해 낼 수 있는 성질의 것은 아닙니다. 그만큼 무제가 있는 체험입니다. 그렇기에 인류에게 보물과 같은 증언이 되는 것도 또한 사실이었지요.

엔도: 이러한 체험들을 소개한 심리학자(J. 시겔)는 현대는 나르시시즘(자기애)이라는 함정에 빠져 버리고 있다고 경고합니다. 자신을 만족시키는 것만이 인생의 목적이고 '다른 사람의 일을 생각하는 것은 지금 시대에 뒤쳐짐'이 되고 있다고 말합니다. 사람들은 '즐거워 느끼지 않으면 안된다' 자신이 기쁨을 느끼지 않으면 안된다'는 강요를 받고 받은 명령을 받고 있습니다. 그러나 문화가 되고 있습니다. 자신을 회개하고 타인에게 진력하는 일 등은 '건강하지 못하고 잘못된 관점'이라고 생각하기에 이르렀다는 분석입니다.

SGI회장: 남득되는 이야기군요. 문제는 그 결과보다 행복한 사회가 되었는가 하는 것입니다. 그렇지는 않지요.

엔도: 네. 더욱더 사람들은 고독해지고 서로 격려하는 일은 잊어버리고 살아가는 힘이 쇠약해지고 있습니다.

사이토: 그렇기에 더욱더 '더 길지만 일은 없는'가 하며 욕망을 비대하게 만든다는 악순환이 일어나는군요.

SGI회장: 그 악순환의 '점'은 사물을 끌어내는 것이 '보살'입니다. '넘버 나인(십계의 아홉 번째)의 삶입니다. 유명한 이야기로 어느 사람이 지옥에 갔습니다. 그러자 모든 사람들이 진수성찬을 앞에 두고 먹어 버렸어요. 그래서 먹을 수 없어요 괴로워하고 있다. 어째서 먹을 수 없는가. 그것은 것가락이 자기 손보다 길어 입에 먹을 것을 집어넣을 수 없기 때문입니다. 다음은 불토국에 갔다. 거기서도 모든 사람들의 것가락은 손보

다 길다. 그런데도 모든 사람들이 만족하면서 먹고 있었다. 어째서인가. 서로 상대의 입에 넣어주고 있었기 때문입니다.

사이토: 지옥과 불국토의 차이는 환경의 차이가 아니라 '마음'의 차이였다는 것이군요.

스다: 풍부한 가운데 무슨 이유에서인지 괴로워하는 현대. 그 원인이 어디에 있는가를 보여주는 이야기라고 생각합니다.

SGI회장: 여하튼 사회는 변합니다. 시시각각 변해갑니다. 정치도 경제도 유행도 이 세상 모든 것이 변해갑니다. 그 가운데 변하지 않는 부동의 일점. 그것을 가지고 있는 것이 우리가입니다. 그것은 '묘법'입니다. 묘법이야말로 부동의 원점이며 그리고 모든 것을 보다 좋은 방향으로 변화시켜 가는 근본의 힘입니다. 사람은 변합니다. 그러나 법은 변하지 않습니다. 사람은 속임 수 있습니다. 그러나 법은 속임 수 없습니다. 속임 수는 통용되지 않습니다. 이 불변하고 절대적인 '법'을 중심으로 해야만 인생도 사회도 영원히 변영할 수 있습니다. 그것은 '모두 환영과 같은 것'입니다. 결론으로 말하면 광선유포에 끝까지 살아가는 지용의 보살의 인생이야말로 최고입니다. 이 이상의 인생은 없는 것입니다. 그것을 자각하는가 아닌가는 신심의 문제입니다.

사이토: 보살이란 것은 '상구보리 화하중생' <위로는 보리를 구하고 아래로는 중생을 화(化)한다.>이라고 합니다. 우리들이 말한다면 '자행화타'이군요.

SGI회장: 자신도 행복해지고 남도 행복하게 하는 것입니다. 자전을 하면서 공전해가는 것입니다. 그것이 우주의 법칙입니다. 신심은 싸움입니다. 인생은 싸움입니다. 불법은 싸움이며 보살계 불계라는 것은 용감하게 악과 싸워가는 행동에서밖에 나오지 않습니다. 이 우주는 계속전의 마왕이 지배하는 세계입니다. '불행의 장군' '불행의 왕'이 이끄는 것입니다. 그렇기에 행복한 인간을 질투하는 것입니다. 중요합니다. 파괴하고자 합니다. 이것과 싸우는 분이 대성인이시고 석존입니다.

스다: '사자왕의 마음'으로 하는 신심이 불계라고 해야 할까요. 불계란 무슨 일이 있어도 무너지지 않는 행복경에'라고 합니다만.....

SGI회장: 절대적인 행복의 경에입니다. '절대적'이라는 것은 무슨 일이 있어도 그것을 분명하게 보아갈 수 있기 때문입니다. 지혜입니다. 그리고 무슨 일이 있어도 흔들리지 않기 때문입니다. 마음의 강함입니다. 그 지혜와 강함을 어떠한 때에도 생명의 오저에서 피울릴 수 있기 때문에 절대적인 행복인 것입니다. 그 지혜와 강함을 어떠한 때에도 생명의 오저에서 피울릴 수 있기 때문에 절대적인 행복인 것입니다. 결코 아무런 괴로움이나 고난이 없는 것은 아닙니다. 그러한 인생은 있을 수 없습니다. 모든 것이 순조롭다는 것은 그 자체가 환영이며 거짓입니다. 괴로움이 있는 것이 실상입니다. 대성인은 '번뇌즉보리'라고 말씀하십니다. 괴로움이 있기에 행복을 맛볼 수 있는 것입니다. 고난이 있기에 성불할 수 있는 것입니다. 괴로움이 없는 인생이란 사실은 조금도 행복하지 않습니다. 그것이 불법의 관점입니다. 그러면 '불계'란 무엇인가. 그것은 우리들로 말하자면 '신심' 이외에는 없는 것입니다. 도다 선생님은 이렇게 말씀하셨다. '성불이란 부처가 된다. 부처가 되고 하는 것은 아니다. 대성인답의 범부즉극, 계법실상이라는 말씀을 있는 그대로 받아들인데 이 몸 그대로 영원한 옛날부터 영겁의 미래를 향하여 부처임을 각오하는 일이다.' '신심'이며 '각오'입니다. '자각'입니다.

SGI회장: 수량품에서는 '구원의 부처'가 설해됩니다. 그 부처란 누구를 말하는가. 대성인은 '나 실로 성불한 이래 무량무백천만억나유타겁이 나'라(개결 96쪽)의 '나'란 '법계의 중생'이며 십계 각각을 가리켜서 '아(我)라고 하느니라(어서 753쪽)고 말씀하셨습니다. 수량품의 '구원의 부처'란 일체중생을 말합니다. 우리들을 말합니다. 범부는 범부인 그대로 부처인 것입니다. 생명에는 차별은 없습니다. 평등합니다. 평등하게 부처입니다. 다른 것은 그것을 자각하는가 아닌가. 그 '마음'의 차이일 뿐입니다. 32상 80 중호로 몸을 장식하는 것이 부처는 아닙니다. 나의 생명 그 자체가 본래 부처입니다. 우주 그 자체가 본래 부처인 것입니다. 태양이 떠오르는 것도 자비, 달이 비추는 것도 자비, 푸르른 나무가 아름답게 호흡하고 있는 것도 자비입니다. 우주 전체가 무수무

종에 걸쳐 자비의 활동을 계속하는 대생명체인 것입니다. 그 대생명을 구원의 부처라고 합니다. 그리고 십계의 그 어느 생명도 이 수량품의 부처와 일체인 것입니다. 그 본래의 생명으로 되돌아가는 열쇠가 신심입니다.

사이토: 본래의 생명으로 되돌아간다 - 그것이 본문이군요.

SGI회장: 맞습니다. 대성인은 '수량품'이란 십계의 중생의 본명입니다. 이 품을 본문이라고 하는 것은 본에 들어가'는 문이라고 하는 것이니라(어서 799쪽)고 명쾌하게 말씀하시고 계십니다.

스다: '구원의 본불'의 대생명이야말로 십계의 중생의 '본명'이다. 그 본래의 명으로 들어가는 것이 본문인 연유이군요.

엔도: 본래 자신의 것이기에 얼마든지 본불의 힘을 받을 수 있다는 것이군요.

SGI회장: 전우주 자신의 은행구좌와 같은 것이지요.(웃음) '신심'에 따라 얼마든지 보물을 꺼낼 수 있습니다. 그리고 '신심'이란 '마'와 '싸우는' 것 이외에는 없습니다. 정의란 악과 싸우는 것이며 불법이란 난과 싸우는 것입니다.

SGI회장: 우리들은 기원할 때 '합장'합니다. 양손바닥을 합침으로써 '불계즉구제'를 나타냅니다. 또 '묘법'을 나타냅니다. <'어의구전'에 '합이람 妙法蓮華經이요 장이란 이심 팔품이니라(어서 722쪽)고 있다' 즉 무슨 일이 있어도 신심근본으로 제목을 올려가는데 불계가 있습니다. 구제의 괴로움이 어떠한 강하고 강한 신심에 의해 구계즉불계, 불계즉구제의 인생이 되어 갑니다. 제목을 올리고 곧 기원이 이루어지는 경우도 있는가하면 곧 이루어지지 않는 경우도 있습니다. 그래도 기원을 계속해가는 것입니다. 제목을 올려가는 것입니다. 행동해가는 것입니다. 그 신심이 즉 '불계'입니다. 그 신심이 즉 '승리'인 것입니다. 그 신심을 인생의 최후의 최후까지 불태워간다면 수량품의 '구원의 부처'와 일체가 되어 삼세의 여로를 갈 수 있는 것입니다. (리빙 부디즘 98년 10월, 법연 97년 11월)

21세기는 진짜가 빛나는 세기

제 27회 본부간부회(10.22)

간담하듯 이야기 하고 싶다. -나는 늘 그렇게 생각하고 있다. 긴장, 긴장만 해서는 모두가 불쌍하다. 학회에 올 때는 틀어박힌 듯한 형식은 전혀 필요 없다. 자연스럽게, 자유분방한 것이 좋다. 그것이 우리들의 인간주의 세계다. 조금전에 연락이 왔다. 나는 현재 전 세계로부터 55개의 명예 박사 학위와 명예교수의 칭호를 받았다. 그런 것이 이번에 다시 새로운 통지로 결정된 것까지 포함하여 71개가 되었다(대박수) <중국 서북 대학의 명예교수로 결정> 여러분의 '대표'로서 받는 것이기 때문에 삼가보고를 드린다. 여러분이 수여받는 것과 같은 의의를 가지고 있기 때문이다(대박수)

오늘 10월 22일은 토인비 박사의 기일이다. 1975년 86세로 서거하셨다. 박사와 나의 대답은 72년과 다음 해, 통틀어 약 10일만에 걸쳐 이루어졌다. 박사도 정말로 기뻐해주셨다. 매일 아침부터 저녁까지 진지하게 이야기를 나누었다. 오후에는 '차를 마시는 시간'. 비서분이 살머시 과자를 갖다 주셔서 박사 내외분과 함께 화기에애한 한 때를 보낸 적이 그렇기만 하다. 걸으면서도 대화를 했다. 어느 날 박사의 아파트 현관에서 박사가 말씀하셨다. "당신은 반드시 전 세계로부터 명예박사 학위를 받을 겁니다. 나 이상으로 많이 받을지도 모릅니다." 지금도 선명하게 기억하고 있다.

만반에 걸친 문제를 서로 논하는 가운데 박사가 한층 더 엄하게 말씀하셨던 장면이 있었다. 그것은 '허틀러에 의한 홀로코스트(유대인 대량학살)'가 사상이란 문제에 대해서만 큼은 이야기가 다릅니다. 이에 관해서는 공평무사라는 것은 있을 수도 없다고 나는 생각했습니다. 만약 이 유대인 대량학살을 마치 일기에보라도 하는 방식으로 감정을 섞지 않은 채 썼다고 하면, 그것은 이 학살문제를 공정하게 기록하지 않게 됩니다. 도의적인 문제를 무시하고 유대인 학살은 목인되기 때문입니다." 따라서 박사는 노여워하며 나치의 악을 규탄했다. 악은 악이다! 그렇게 부르짖는 것이 진짜의 인간성이다. 진짜의 자비다. 박사는 또한 '이것이 내게 있어서의 중도였습니다.'라고 말씀하셨다. '중도'란 '인간주의'를 말하는 것이다. 위대한 박사이었다. 세월이 지나면 지날수록 그 말씀을 잘 알 수 있다.

왜 인류는 나치의 포악함을 제멋대로 내버려 둔 것인가. 그 '교훈'을 박사는 이렇게 이야기 했다. "문명을 그대로 방치해도 끄떡없다고 생각해서. '대승불교를 진정으로 실천하고 있는 이케다씨와 꼭 만나고 싶다' 나는 젊고 또한 언제나 편견으로 인한 공격을 받고 있었다. 하지만 세계 최고의 철학자, 역사가는 정사안으로 보아주셨다. 가장 올바르게 가장 필요로 하는 '21세기의 세계종교'는 창가학회이다. 우리들은 그 확신으로 나아가고 싶다(대박수)

토인비 박사는 이렇게 말씀하셨다. "인간의 혼은 결국 선과 악이 지배권을 다투며 끊임없이 싸우고 있는 정신적인 전장이다." 선과 악이 싸우는 전장 - '이것이 인간의 마음이다'라고. 불멸에도 통하는 통찰이다. "영원히 부처와 마의 투쟁"이라고 불멸은 설한다. 따라서 이기기 않으면 안된다. 마에 진다면 신심이 아니다. '이기기 위한 신심'이다. 박사와 나는 이야기를 나누었다. "새로운 문명을 낳고 그것을 유지해 가는 미래의 종교"란 어떠한 종교인가. 박사는 말씀하셨다. "인류의 생존을 지금 심각하게 위협하고 있는 여러가지 악 - '탐욕'이나 '전쟁' '사회적 불공정'이라는 악과 대결하여 이들을 극복하는 힘을 인류에게 부여하는 것이어야 한다." 이것이 박사가 대망하는 종교였다. 악과 대결하라. 악과는 절단코 타협하지 말라. 악에게 이겨라! 그러한 종교가 '새로운 문명'을 만드는 것이었다. 박사는 창가학회의 '이념'과 '행동'에 주목하셨다. '제 3 문명'을 표방하는 우리들의 운동에. 그리고 박사쪽에서 먼저 나와야 할 대담을 희망하셨다. '대승불교를 진정으로 실천하고 있는 이케다씨와 꼭 만나고 싶다' 나는 젊고 또한 언제나 편견으로 인한 공격을 받고 있었다. 하지만 세계 최고의 철학자, 역사가는 정사안으로 보아주셨다. 가장 올바르게 가장 필요로 하는 '21세기의 세계종교'는 창가학회이다. 우리들은 그 확신으로 나아가고 싶다(대박수)

남겨두면 안된다. 니치렌 대성인도 「나쁜 제자를 모아 두어서는 안된다.」 「악우를 가까이 하지 말라」고 강하게 말씀하셨기 때문이다. 또 낮고 상인은 오노승을 의절하셨다. 그렇게 하지 않으면 '정의'는 지켜지지 않는다. 크나큰 광포의 길도 열리지 않기 때문이다. 모든 것에는 의미가 있다. 역사는 눈앞의 것에만 사로잡히지 말고 길고 긴 안목으로 보지 않으면 모른다. 토인비 박사도 그러한 견해이었다. 인간도 폭풍우 속의 어려운 때야말로 '나쁜 인간' '비겁한 인간' '신심이 없는 인간'이 점점 뚜렷하게 나타난다. 그러한 인간은 청정한 학회에 나갈 수 밖에 없다. 그렇게 하는 편이 좋은 것이다. 그러므로 우리들은 상쾌하게 가슴을 펴고 '부처의 군세'로서 전진합시다!

니치렌 대성인은 여성을 칭찬하신 어서를 많이 남기셨다. 진지하게 신심에 면려하는 여성, 다기차게 신심을 관철하는 미망인. 대성인은 언제나 "훌륭한 일입니다." "감사합니다"라고 계속 찬탄하셨다. 남존여비적인 당시에 「남녀를 가리지 말지니라(남녀의 차별이 있어서는 안된다)」(어서 1360쪽)고 동등한 권리를 주장하셨다. 어느 여성에게는 이렇게 말씀하고 계신다. 사도에 유배되신 대성인 곁에 멀리서 찾아뵈러 온 '오토님의 어머니'에게 주신 편지이다. 니치렌이 사도에 유배된 것은 이유가 있어 그런 것인데, (여성의 몸으로 사도까지 찾아오신 당신의 모습을 접하니 내가 사도에 유배된 것은) '당신의 두터운 뜻이 나타나기 위함이었다'라고 오로지 고맙게 생각할 뿐입니다. <「여기까지 유배된 것은 그렇다손 치고 신심이 나타나기 위함이었다는가 하고 고맙게 여겨집니다」(어서 1222쪽)> "당신의 신심이 얼마나 훌륭한가 - 그 훌륭함이 나타나기 위해서 나는 사도에 유배되었을 겁니다." 정말 잘 여기까지 와 주셨다! 그저 그저 감사하다. 결코 잊지 않겠습니다. '세세생생, 영원히 행복해질 것은 틀림없습니다.'라는 마음이 실 것으로 생각한다. 상당히 의미깊은 어문이다. 난이 있기 때문에 진짜 신심을 할 수 있다. 실은 고마운 일인 것이다. 그리고 창가학회만이 경문과 어서에 설해진 대로 '삼장사마'와 싸워왔다. 학회만이 진짜의 '광선유포의 단계'라는 증거이다. 불적으로부터 박해받는 사람만이 진짜인 것이다. 어쨌든 학회도 난이 있을 때마다 '부인부의 용기'가 빛나고 있었다. 다기차다고 할까, 신심이 강성하다고 할까, 배짱이 있음인가(웃음), 어서에 찬연히 빛나는 '여성의 용기' 그대로다(대박수) 아무리 남성이 잘난 체해도 투쟁한 공덕은 투쟁한 여성성의 것이라고 말씀드려 두고 싶다.(대박수) 21세기를 세계적으로도 '여성의 세기'다. 아무쪼록 여러분의 힘으로 '창가여성의 세기'로 빛내주시길 바랍니다.(대박수)

마지막으로 한국의 명언을 보내드리겠다. "공든 탑이 무너지라" 즉 '심혈을 쏟아 쌓은 탑 - 사업은 영원히 무너지지 않는다'는 의미다. 창가학회도 마찬가지다. 하나하나에 심혈을 쏟는다. 따라서 무너지지 않는다. 한가지 더. "가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다"는 것이다. 아무쪼록 '후배에게 벗에게 따뜻하게 「고운말」로 이야기해 주세요'라고 부탁드리며 오늘 나의 스피치를 끝내겠습니다(대박수) 장시간, 감사합니다! 추워졌기 때문에 감기 드시지 않도록! (대박수) <희망의 21세기로, 98년 10월>

토인비 박사는 이렇게 말씀하셨다. "인간의 혼은 결국 선과 악이 지배권을 다투며 끊임없이 싸우고 있는 정신적인 전장이다." 선과 악이 싸우는 전장 - '이것이 인간의 마음이다'라고. 불멸에도 통하는 통찰이다. "영원히 부처와 마의 투쟁"이라고 불멸은 설한다. 따라서 이기기 않으면 안된다. 마에 진다면 신심이 아니다. '이기기 위한 신심'이다. 박사와 나는 이야기를 나누었다. "새로운 문명을 낳고 그것을 유지해 가는 미래의 종교"란 어떠한 종교인가. 박사는 말씀하셨다. "인류의 생존을 지금 심각하게 위협하고 있는 여러가지 악 - '탐욕'이나 '전쟁' '사회적 불공정'이라는 악과 대결하여 이들을 극복하는 힘을 인류에게 부여하는 것이어야 한다." 이것이 박사가 대망하는 종교였다. 악과 대결하라. 악과는 절단코 타협하지 말라. 악에게 이겨라! 그러한 종교가 '새로운 문명'을 만드는 것이었다. 박사는 창가학회의 '이념'과 '행동'에 주목하셨다. '제 3 문명'을 표방하는 우리들의 운동에. 그리고 박사쪽에서 먼저 나와야 할 대담을 희망하셨다. '대승불교를 진정으로 실천하고 있는 이케다씨와 꼭 만나고 싶다' 나는 젊고 또한 언제나 편견으로 인한 공격을 받고 있었다. 하지만 세계 최고의 철학자, 역사가는 정사안으로 보아주셨다. 가장 올바르게 가장 필요로 하는 '21세기의 세계종교'는 창가학회이다. 우리들은 그 확신으로 나아가고 싶다(대박수)

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