



NEWS
Chinese New Year's
Gongyo Meeting
held in Los Angeles.
page 3



NEWS
A Micronesia celebra-
tion of SGI Day.
page 5

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FEBRUARY 26, 1999

DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

The Three Levels of Friendship

IN THIS DISCUSSION, SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA OUTLINES WHAT HE CALLS THE THREE LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP: 1) PEOPLE SEEKING TO ENJOY THEIR LIVES TOGETHER; 2) PEOPLE ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER AS THEY WORK TOWARD THEIR INDIVIDUAL DREAMS; AND 3) PEOPLE SHARING THE SAME IDEALS AS TRUE COMRADES, TRUSTING ONE ANOTHER COMPLETELY.

SATORU MIURA: One student writes: "I like to be by myself. I really don't enjoy doing everything in a group. Is that all right?"

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA: Yes, of course. You're free to enjoy your own company, if you wish. Being together with many people and friendship are two different things. It's perfectly all right to make friends in your own way, with people whom with you can share your thoughts and feelings.

Please remember that friendship remains one of the most important foundations of life. There are many famous sayings about it all around the world. Cicero says: "Friendship is closer than kinship." "A life without friendship is like a

PLEASE SEE DIALOGUE, 4

SGI President Ikeda's message to the SGI-USA women's division general meetings taking place this month.

Photo by LISA HOLLIS



The Purpose of Life: To Become Happy

My sincere congratulations on your SGI-USA women's division general meetings, gatherings of smiling mothers nobly dedicated to kosen-rufu.

Each of you who gather today has been challenging your limitations and creating a new history through your splendid victory.

The purpose of life is to become happy. Our faith also exists to en-

able us to build a truly happy life-condition that can neither be defeated nor destroyed, whatever may happen.

I ask that, no matter what, all SGI-USA women's division members please continue to chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo to the Gohonzon with strong hope and confidence. Then, you will bring forth your wisdom and courage, and

enjoy a dignified life in which all your wishes are fulfilled.

The American women's division is like a sun always shining the light of hope upon homes, communities and society. In hopes that each of you will be always healthy, wise and strong, I conclude my message.

February 1999
Daisaku Ikeda

EDITORIAL

Margie Hall reminds us that propagation doesn't stop when a friend joins the SGI.

page 2

WOMEN

Messages from women's division leaders for the general meetings this month.

page 3

SPANISH

Sample questions in Spanish for the April 25 Entrance Exam.

pages 6-7

Messages for the Women's Meetings

It's a New Era!

I offer my heartfelt congratulations on your meeting commemorating SGI-USA Women's Day (Feb. 27). I want to sincerely thank all of you who have contributed to making today's meeting a success.

Recently, SGI President Ikeda, the president of our worldwide lay organization, met for three hours with renowned American economist Lester Thurow. They discussed the direction in which society is presently going, and what society's goals should be toward the 21st century. President Ikeda stated that we must go beyond the era of politics and economics and enter the era of philosophy and spirit. This new era would focus on making the happiness of each individual its prime objective.

In light of his discussion with Professor Thurow, I find it highly significant that President Ikeda has named the 21st century "the century of women." This means he is relying upon the women to usher in this new era of humanity. In order to do so, each of us must steadily expand our capacity to care about others. This means challenging ourselves to care about another when it is the most difficult; for example, when that person is giving you a hard time. Our ability to stay engaged at this time and take total responsibility to create a bond of mutual trust and respect is how we will usher in a new era of hu-

manity. Our ability to show others that we care will melt the walls that exist between people and create in its place an ever-widening circle of harmonious relationships.

President Ikeda states in *The New Human Revolution*: "The course of history is determined by the people. When we each challenge our limitations and give full play to our unique potential, becoming the protagonist in the drama of our life and sphere of endeavor, the door to the new era for humanity definitely opens" (vol. 3, p. 35).

Beginning with today, let us unite in "breaking through the barriers of our own limitations," our women's motto for this year. President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, continually show us how much they think about us and genuinely care about our happiness. Together with them, let us take the lead in establishing a new era of humanity for the 21st century.

I am praying for your excellent health, longevity, prosperity and happiness.

Wendy Clark,
SGI-USA Women's Leader



Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

The Friendship Auditorium at the Florida Nature and Culture Center is the site of informal picture-taking with SGI-USA Women's Division Leader Wendy Clark (third from right) during the Women's Conference, Feb. 4-7.

Peace Starts Here

Our sincere congratulations on your women's division general meeting. We have heard that bright and cheerful gatherings filled with smiling faces are being held throughout the United States.

The late Dr. Linus Pauling once said: "The most praiseworthy people are those who act for peace, and it is Soka Gakkai members who are spearheading [the efforts for peace]. I hope they continue to advance fearlessly."

Let us advance alongside SGI President Ikeda toward our individual happiness, contributing to a better society and world peace while remaining true to

ourselves on the stage of our mission.

As Nichiren Daishonin states, "Do not spend this life in vain and regret it for ten thousand years to come" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 173). Let us treasure each and every day.

We are praying for the further success of all your endeavors.

Eiko Akiyama,
*SGI Women's
Division Leader*

Yumiko Hachiya,
*SGI Vice Women's
Division Leader*



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Year of Victory in the Chinese Community

Six hundred members and guests attended the 6th Annual Chinese New Year's Gongyo Meeting, Feb. 14, with SGI-USA General Director Zaitzu. The Los Angeles Friendship Center was home to this joyful cultural celebration of the start of the SGI's Year of Victory in the Community. A traditional Chinese dragon (left) was a highlight of the festivities. In his message to the members, SGI President Ikeda said that "caring for and encouraging those closest to you is the way to save society and humanity."

— FRANK NAKABAYASHI

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Publisher
Fred M. Zaitzu
Assistant Publisher
Greg Martin
Editor in Chief
Ted Morino

Managing Editor
Margie Hall
mhall@sgi-usa.org

Associate Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

Staff Writer
Stephanie Celano
scelano@sgi-usa.org

Contributing Writers
Lisa Jones
ljones88@aol.com
Terry Ellis

Graphic Artist
Don Sanders
dsanders@sgi-usa.org

Contributing Artist
Ellen Brown

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers
Gregory Nakasuji
Kirk Condyles
Jonathan Wilson
Dixon Hamby
Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
lisahollis@earthlink.net

Bureau Chiefs
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Foreign Language Pages
Chinese: Ingrid Yeh
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READERS COMMENTS

Send to:
Mailbox
606 Wilshire Blvd, PO Box 1427
Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427
or e-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS
1-800-835-4558
or e-mail: SGIsubs@aol.com

FRIENDS FOR PEACE
ffp@sgi-usa.org

SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

FINE PRINT
fineprint@sgi-usa.org

The *World Tribune* welcomes reader submissions. If you are interested in contributing an article or photograph, please contact us for guidelines. Together we can make a great newspaper.

DIALOGUE, FROM PAGE 1

world without sunshine.” Aristotle says, “A friend is like another self.”

Character and integrity are indispensable for making friends. True friendship cares nothing for social status or rank.

You can only make real friends when you open and share your heart with others. A selfish, egotistical person cannot make true friends.

As you grow older, it becomes harder to create friendships untainted by self-interest. That’s why it’s so important to make good friends while you’re young. Your friends from elementary school, junior high school and high school are like your fellow actors appearing on the stage of life with you in the same play. You will never forget them for the rest of your life.

The relationship between parent and child is a lifelong one, as the relationship between husband and wife is probably meant to be, too. I think that friendship should also be a lifelong bond.

That said, perhaps we can distinguish among friendships, dividing them into three groups according to their depth.

MIURA: What would those be?

IKEDA: Have you ever heard of the three levels of devotion to one’s parents from traditional Eastern philosophy?

YOSHIKO UEDA: Yes, I think I have.

IKEDA: The first level of devotion to your

parents is obedience, doing whatever they tell you to. Now, this might please your parents, but it is completely passive on your part.

The second level of devotion to your parents is to make a positive effort to serve them. This might include giving them a gift or doing something that delights them. The third level is to introduce them to what you know is right and beneficial for them — even if they oppose it.

MIURA: From our perspective, I guess, the third level would mean teaching parents who aren’t Soka Gakkai members about Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. Even if they oppose it, it’s the means by which they can achieve indestructible happiness, not only in this life but throughout eternity.

UEDA: What are the three levels of friendship, then?

IKEDA: I think we could call them the three levels of human relationships. In the first level of friendship, we see people forging bonds of mutual affection and empathy with one another in the course of ordinary day-to-day activities. They seek to enjoy their lives together. It’s a friendship based on mutual enjoyment, on having a good time together.

The second level of friendship is a little more advanced. The friends have their own goals; they each have a clear vision of the kind of person they want to become, the kind of future they want to build, the kind of contribution they wish to make to humanity. So they encourage and support one another as they work to realize their dreams and make something of themselves in the world. This is a friendship of mutual encouragement.

UEDA: I see, the friends don’t just hang out together and have fun, but they encourage and support one another in achieving concrete goals. Many of our high school division members write about that kind of friendship: “We worked together and built an incredible display for our school festival.” “Before every exam, we’ve been setting ourselves study goals and



Photo by LISA HOLLIS

‘True comrades can never betray one another...’

encouraging one another in our studies.” “As members of the school’s swimming team, we all challenged ourselves to swim six miles, and all of us did it! It was exhausting, but I know it’s something I’m going to remember with great pride.” “All of us became really close through working together on preparations for the high school division general meeting. I’m so glad the meeting was a success.”

MIURA: Another student writes: “They say studying for entrance exams is a lonely struggle. My feeling is that it’s a battle where you have to win against yourself. Studying for the exams, I’ve come to realize how important friends are in staving off feelings of isolation and loneliness.” Another writes, “My friend and I are striving toward our dreams for the future, and we’re both determined to give them our best shot.”

Many, many students have recognized that they are not alone — that knowledge has given them the strength to overcome tough challenges. That’s why I’m sure most of our readers can deeply appreciate this kind of friend-to-friend encouragement and support.

What is the third and highest level of friendship?

In the highest kind of friendship, people are even willing to give their lives for one another.

IKEDA: The third level of friendship is the bond of comrades who share the same ideals, a friendship in which each would willingly give his or her life for the other. This is the kind of friendship that exists in the realm of faith.

Many people who have achieved great things in history have had this kind of friendship. It’s the friendship of people of like mind, people who give their lives to realizing a common cause.

This kind of friendship demands absolute trust. True comrades can never betray one another, not even under the threat of death. They can never betray themselves, their friends or their ideals.

There are many examples of this kind of friendship, but one wonderful depiction of it is the friendship of Rossi and

Bruno in *The Eternal City* by Hall Caine. The story is set in Rome at the turn of this century. Italy is threatened by foreign powers, and its government is corrupt. The people are suffering greatly.

The hero of the novel is a young revolutionary, David Rossi. His dear friend is Bruno Rocco.

They feel the pains of the people as their own, and they rise up, speak out and fight against oppression. The government strikes back, and Rossi is forced to flee into exile. But Bruno is caught and imprisoned. He is tortured but refuses to succumb.

Then, the authorities try to deceive Bruno. They show him a letter allegedly written by Rossi, the contents of which suggest Rossi’s betrayal of Bruno. It is, of course, a forgery.

The prosecutor insinuates, “Your friend has left you here to suffer while, behind your back, he has secretly betrayed you.” But Bruno refuses to believe these demonic whisperings. Drowning out the lies of his captors, he shouts with all his might, “Long live David Rossi!” He dies calling out his friend’s name, continuing to believe in his friend’s integrity.

Rossi, his comrade’s spirit alive in his heart, eventually opens the way to the realization of their cherished ideal: an eternal city, where all people live together in happiness and peace.

Mr. Toda gave me a copy of *The Eternal City*, when I was young. It is a book I will always remember.

“Read this and then pass it on to a dozen or so of your good friends,” Mr. Toda said. “When you’ve all finished reading it, let’s get together and discuss it.” He taught us a noble kind of friendship that would withstand the fiercest storm. He taught us never to betray our comrades, no matter what attacks and hardships we faced. He taught us to move forward with iron unity until the victorious day kosen-rufu is achieved and the happiness of all humanity assured.

UEDA: That’s friendship on a grand scale. It’s humanity at its best, hearts burning with selfless commitment.

The human heart, at its best, is stronger than anything.

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IKEDA: Y... The hum... and igno... than any... noble.

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IKEDA: Yes, our heart is what matters most. The human heart can be very weak, fickle and ignoble. But it can also be stronger than anything, unflinching, supremely noble.

The great writer Victor Hugo was forced into exile during his struggle with the dictator Napoleon III. He was exiled for 19 years. But he was determined that, no matter what persecution he endured, he would stick to his ideals with a vibrant, resolute spirit.

Likening Napoleon III to Sulla, an ancient Roman tyrant, Hugo writes in the poem "Ultima Verba":

*Even if only one thousand are left, I will hold my ground!
If only one hundred survive, I will still cross swords with Sulla.
When only ten remain, let me be the tenth.
When only one is left, that one will be me!*

People not afraid to stand alone for their beliefs gain the support of true, steadfast friends.

If you persevere on the path you've chosen, your true friends will definitely appear.

MIURA: Today, many people lack ideals and beliefs. Because of this, sincere, hard-working people who are really making an effort get called show-offs, and those earnestly trying to achieve something of value are denounced as impostors.

IKEDA: "We are all born under sentence of death," it has been said. All of us will die someday. None of us can avoid that fate. The question, then, becomes how we spend the limited time we have. This is what counts.

Some people waste their lives worrying and fretting about trivial, inconsequential things. Some even take their own lives. Nothing is more foolish, or sadder, than that. Suicide is terribly wrong.

If we are going to give our lives to something, surely we should give it to a noble cause, the cause of eternal truth and justice.

If we keep up our efforts, even when the going is tough, we will earn respect. The important thing is to persevere on the path you have chosen, irrespective of how difficult circumstances may become or how others around you may change.

Those who can do this will emerge as champions and victors in life. They will win in the end. Such people also make true friends.

I have such friends. I have them all around the world. Your mothers and fathers are among them. My very reason for living is for the sake of all these unforgettable comrades.

The SGI is strong because of these bonds of genuine friendship. I want all of you to inherit the noble spirit of these comrades working for a common cause.

MIURA: We talk lightly about friendship, but really it's a profound thing.

IKEDA: Friendship is one of the main foundations of what it is to be human. It gives sustenance and impetus to world peace and the betterment of society. By expanding our circle of friendship, we create the foundation for a peaceful society.

Even the most ambitious undertakings begin with one-on-one relationships.

UEDA: It would be wonderful if all people were friends.

IKEDA: All people are equal. Human beings therefore seek to forge friendships and build an ideal world — an eternal city, where all coexist in peace and harmony.

When expounding his teachings, Shakyamuni Buddha always addressed all living beings. I think the term *all living beings* incorporates this universal spirit of friendship — this spirit to treat every person and every living thing as equally precious and worthy of respect, this spirit to bring happiness to all.

While all people becoming friends is the ideal, we know that this is, unfortunately, not the case in the world today. That's why it's so important that we forge friendships with as many people as we can. We must face the challenges of reality and make what changes we can, small as they may be. The accumulation of such efforts will gradually lead to lasting world peace.

MIURA: You, President Ikeda, have built bridges of the heart all over the world through promoting cultural and educational exchange as well as grass-roots exchange among ordinary citizens. I feel as if our efforts are paltry in comparison.

IKEDA: Even the most ambitious undertakings actually come down to one-on-one relationships accumulating over the years. I have friends all over the world because I have always valued each encounter and sincerely treasured each person. It's always one-on-one, always. Don't be tricked into thinking that

Guam Celebrates SGI Day

Photo by ISAO ISHIZUKA



Members from the Pacific Islands celebrate SGI Day at the Guam Community Center, Jan. 23.

The 24th anniversary of SGI Day was celebrated the weekend of Jan. 23–24 by members from the Micronesian islands of Pohnpei, Saipan and Majuro joining the Guam members in cultural exchange festivities and a lecture on Nichiren Daishonin's writings. At a general meeting held Jan. 23, the audience was treated to presentations including a *Chamoru* (term for Guam's islanders) dance from the youth, a song from the Boys and Girls Group and a special accordion performance of several SGI songs and a local Pohnpeian tune from Noriko Lopez.

A tour of Guam over the weekend brought outer-island members to significant

sites, including the War in the Pacific Museum, several parks and the University of Guam, where last November, SGI President Ikeda donated over 100 books to the library and planted trees on campus. The festivities concluded with a Friendship Exchange meeting at Afleje (formerly Rizal) Park, site of the culture festival held in 1975 when the SGI was first formed. After an array of performances and picnic, the collective islands determined to continue their kosenruffu efforts in the Pacific toward the next SGI Day celebration — Jan. 26, 2000!

— HELENE ANDERSON

people who talk big and make flashy gestures are truly great.

A drop of rain from the sky, a drop of water from the river and a drop of water from the ocean are all just that: drops of water. The friends we make in our own small circle contribute to the spread of friendship around the world. Our individual circle of friendship is part of the global circle of friendship; these are one and the same.

Making one true friend is a step toward creating world peace.

The conclusion of a discussion on the importance of friendship among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Satoru Miura (young men's chief secretary) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women's leader). Part one appeared in last week's issue.



SUA Announcement

Now in its fifth year, Soka University of America's graduate school is accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education.

Individuals seeking admission to the M.A. program must hold a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree with a minimum grade-point average of 2.7 or B- on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600. Applications for the 1999–2000 academic year are due by March 31. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 West Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, CA 91302. Telephone (818) 878-3717, e-mail: grad_admissions@soka.edu.

Las preguntas del examen estarán basadas en las siguientes preguntas modelos, las cuales se les provee para el beneficio de los disertantes, coordinadores de estudio y para quienes van a tomar el examen. Los números de páginas en paréntesis al final de cada pregunta (con la excepción de cuatro preguntas) indican al lector donde puede encontrar la respuesta que le corresponde a cada pregunta en el libro de texto versión revisada *SGI-USA Material De Estudio Examen de Entrada (1998-2001)* que acaba de ser publicado y están en venta en las librerías de los centros comunitarios. Estos libros también pueden ser ordenados por correo al SGI-USA 'Mail Order Center' (tel. 800-626-1313, order #900).

Preguntas Modelo Para el Examen de Entrada

25 de abril, 1999

La Vida de Nichiren Daishonin

P1:
¿Cuál fue la práctica que Nichiren Daishonin proclamó el 28 de abril, 1253? (pág. 32)

P2:
Describe el significado de la Persecución de Tatsunokuchi en términos de la identidad de Nichiren Daishonin. (págs. 35-36)

P3:
Después de que el atentado de ejecutar a Nichiren Daishonin en Tatsunokuchi falló, él fue enviado a un lugar frío y desolado del cual no se esperaba que regresara. ¿Cuál fue este lugar? (págs. 36-37)

P4:
En respuesta al desaliento de sus discípulos sobre su exilio, ¿qué les enseñó el Daishonin a ellos? (págs. 36-37)

P5:
El Daishonin completó la base teórica de sus enseñanzas durante su exilio en Sado. ¿Qué dos trabajos escritos durante este período establecieron la base teórica para la inscripción del objeto de veneración? (pág. 40)

P6:
En sus escritos Nichiren Daishonin repetidamente declaraba que un Buda es ¿qué? (pág. 36)

P7:
Nichiren Daishonin empezó a inscribir el Gohonzon después ¿de qué evento? (pág. 43)

P8:
¿Qué principio es elucidado por la inscripción en el Gohonzon de Nam-myoho-renge-kyo y Nichiren.? (pág. 43)

P9:
Siguiendo el consejo del proverbio Chino que dice: "Si las advertencias de uno son

ignoradas tres veces por el soberano, uno debería salir del país, el Daishonin se retiró al Monte Minobu y preparó la gran tarea de eternalizar su Budismo. Su retiro no significó una vida de lujo para el Daishonin. Durante ese tiempo, ¿qué tres cosas él hizo? (pág. 46)

P10:
Para desarrollar la fe de los discípulos que entrenaba en el Monte Minobu, el Daishonin dio una importante serie de disertaciones. ¿De qué se trataban estas disertaciones? Y bajo ¿Qué título fueron éstas compiladas por escrito por Nikko Shonin? (pág. 48)

P11:
¿Cuál fue la diferencia entre el comportamiento de los seguidores del Daishonin después de la persecución de Tatsunokuchi y Sado y el comportamiento de ellos después de la Persecución de Atsuhara? (pág. 51)

P12:
¿Qué actividad por los seguidores del Daishonin hizo que las autoridades los persiguieran? (pág. 49)

P13:
¿A quién nombró Nichiren Daishonin como su legítimo sucesor? (pág. 56)

P14:
¿Por qué cinco de los seis sacerdotes principales abandonaron las enseñanzas del Daishonin después de su muerte? (pág. 58)

P15:
¿Qué actos de calumnia cometieron los cinco sacerdotes principales? (pág. 58)

P16:
¿Por qué Nikko Shonin deja al Monte Minobu y establece el templo the Taiseiki al pie del monte. (pág. 58)

P17:
¿Cuál fue el propósito de Nikko Shonin

al escribir "Las Veintiseis Advertencias"? (pág. 59)

'Sobre Como Lograr el Estado de Buda'

P18:
¿Por qué es que las enseñanzas del Daishonin sobre la Ley Mística difieren de las perspectivas de otras religiones? (pág. 6)

P19:
¿Qué significa "percibir la naturaleza de nuestra propia vida"? (págs. 7-8)

P20:
¿Qué está tratando de ilustrar el Daishonin al utilizar la analogía del hombre pobre que cuenta la riqueza de su vecino día y noche? (pág. 8)

P21:
¿Qué actitud nos conducirá a sentir que nuestra práctica es una "austeridad dolorosa"? (pág. 9)

P22:
De acuerdo a esta carta, ¿cuál actitud constituye la de los "no budistas"? (págs. 8-9)

P23:
¿Qué elemento clave de nuestra práctica budista enfatiza esta carta? (pág. 9)

P24:
¿Qué actitud no nos permite experimentar "alegría abrumadora" en nuestra práctica? (pág. 8)

Las preguntas 25-26 están basadas sobre el siguiente párrafo:

El Sutra Jomyo dice que la iluminación del Buda se encontrará en la vida humana, así pues enseñando que los mortales comunes pueden lograr el Estado de Buda y los sufrimientos de nacimiento y muerte

pueden transformarse en el nirvana. Además, sostiene que, si las corazon de las personas es impuro, la tierra en que viven también es impura, pero que, si el corazón de las personas es puro, su tierra también lo será. No existen dos tierras que sean una, pura y otra impura en sí mismas. La única diferencia yace en el bien o mal de nuestro corazón. (MW-1, 4)

P25:
¿Qué principio budista es ilustrado en este párrafo? (págs. 10-11)

P26:
¿Qué significa "el bien o el mal de nuestros corazones"? (pág. 10)

P27:
¿Dónde existe la tierra del Buda? (pág. 10)

P28:
En el principio de "la mutuamente inclusiva relación de la vida y todos los fenómenos", ¿qué representa la vida? (El material de estudio para esta pregunta será publicado en la próxima edición de la 'Spanish Page' [páginas en Español] del *World Tribune*. 13 de marzo, 1998.)

P29:
En el principio de "la mutuamente inclusiva relación de la vida y todos los fenómenos", ¿qué representa los fenómenos? ('Spanish page,' *World Tribune*. 13 de marzo, 1998.)

P30:
De acuerdo a Nichiren Daishonin, ¿cuáles son las enseñanzas inferiores? (pág. 7)

P31:
¿Cuándo se podría considerar invocar Nam-myoho-renge-kyo todavía como una práctica provisional? (pág. 7)

P32:
El Daishonin nos enseña que cuando entonemos daimoku al Gohonzon debemos "tener la profunda convicción de que

PREGUNTAS, DE PÁG. 6

.....” (pág. 9)

P33:

¿Cuál acción de la práctica budista es la que el Daishonin compara con pulir un espejo? (pág. 12)

P34:

De acuerdo a esta carta, ¿cuál es “el camino directo a La Iluminación”? (págs. 5–6)

‘El Verdadero Aspecto del Gohonzon’

Jamás busque este Gohonzon fuera de usted misma. El Gohonzon existe sólo en la carne mortal de nosotros, las personas comunes que abrazamos el Sutra del Loto e invocamos Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. El cuerpo es el palacio de la novena conciencia, la realidad inmutable que reina sobre todas las funciones de la vida... El Gohonzon se encuentra solamente en la fe. Como el sutra declara, “Sólo mediante la fe uno puede ingresar al Estado de Buda”. (MW-1, p. 213)

P35:

¿Qué es lo que Nichiren Daishonin nos insta a buscar dentro de nuestras propias vidas? (pág. 16)

P36:

¿Cuál es el significado del fragmento “El cuerpo es el palacio de la novena conciencia, la realidad inmutable que reina sobre todas las funciones de la vida”? (pág. 18)

P37:

En esta carta, Nichiren Daishonin se refiere al Gohonzon como “perfectamente dotado”. ¿Por qué es que otros objetos budistas de veneración están incompletos al compararlos con el Gohonzon? (‘Spanish Page’ *World Tribune*, 13 de marzo, 1998)

P38:

Ninguna persona tiene una fe inamovible al comienzo de su práctica. ¿Cómo es que podemos definir la fe al principio de nuestra práctica? (pág. 19)

P39:

Cuando invocamos daimoku al Gohonzon experimentamos la interacción de los cuatro poderes. Dos de estos poderes son 1) el poder del Buda y 2) el poder de la Ley. ¿Cómo podemos activar el poder del Buda y el poder de la Ley en nuestras propias vidas? (pág. 17)

P40:

Shariputra, un discípulo de Shakyamuni, era considerado como el “más sabio de sus discípulos”, sin embargo, ni siquiera él pudo lograr la iluminación a través de su propia sabiduría. ¿Cómo pudo él finalmente lograr la iluminación?. (‘Spanish Page’ *World Tribune*, 13 de marzo, 1998)

P41:

A pesar de que las dudas son algo natural

e inevitable, es importante esforzarse para tener una fe sin dudas. En vez de preocuparnos o atormentarnos, ¿qué debemos hacer cuando tenemos algún sentimiento de duda o insinceridad en nuestra práctica? (pág. 20)

P42:

¿Cuales son las dos acciones que expresan la fe en el Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin? (pág. 20)

P43:

¿En este escrito, qué nos trata de enseñar Nichiren Daishonin cuando cita los ejemplos del Emperador de Han y Li Kuang? (págs. 20–21)



P44:

Inscritos en caracteres chinos en a lo largo del centro del Gohonzon, están las palabras “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren”. ¿Qué principio budista indica esto? (incluya las partes que componen este principio) (pág. 15)

‘La Felicidad en esta Vida’

P45:

¿Cómo podemos elevar nuestra condición de vida? (págs. 22–23)

P46:

¿Por qué es importante elevar nuestra condición de vida? (págs. 22–23)

P47:

¿Por qué es que Nichiren Daishonin declara que “No hay mayor felicidad para los seres humanos que invocar Nam-myoho-renge-kyo”? (págs. 22–23)

P48:

¿Qué es lo que nos permite experimentar la “felicidad que proviene de la Ley”? (págs. 24–25)

P49:

¿Cuál es la diferencia entre “la felicidad que proviene de la Ley” y “la felicidad que proviene de los deseos”? (págs. 24–25)

P50:

¿Por qué es contradictorio a las enseñanzas del Sutra del Loto atribuirle a otra persona la causa de nuestra felicidad o infelicidad? (pág. 24–25)

P51:

¿Qué clase de determinación en nuestra práctica es la que contribuye a desarrollar nuestra condición de vida? (págs. 24–25)

P52:

¿Cómo es que la frase “disfrutar plenamente de la vida” se relaciona con nuestras vidas? (pág. 25)

P53:

¿Qué es lo que significa ser un Buda original o de libertad absoluta? (pág. 25)

P54:

¿Qué significa lograr “paz y seguridad”? (pág. 27)

P55:

¿Qué se entiende por “las dificultades de la vida” en el Budismo? (págs. 28–29)

P56:

¿Por qué Nichiren Daishonin instó a Shijo Kingo: “fortalezca su fe más que nunca”? (pág. 30)

P57:

¿Cuál es el significado del consejo de Nichiren Daishonin a Shijo Kingo: “solamente invoque Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, y cuando beba sake, quédese en su casa junto a su mujer”? (pág. 29)

P58:

¿Cuál es el propósito de nuestra práctica de fe? (pág. 22)

‘Preguntas y Respuestas Sobre el Asunto Relacionado con el Templo’

Las preguntas desde la 59 a la 63 están basadas en la

“Introducción”:

P59:

¿Cuál es el punto fundamental del budismo que desafía a las personas que están interesadas en la pasividad y la obediencia total de sus creyentes? (pág. 60)

P60:

¿Qué párrafo del Sutra del Loto respecto a las persecuciones se aplica directamente a la SGI? (pág. 60)

P61:

¿Cómo es que el budismo caracteriza la oposición de la autoridad? (pág. 61)

P62:

¿Cuál es el significado de los obstáculos en nuestro movimiento budista? (pág. 61)

P63:

¿Qué es lo que significa para la SGI la oposición del clero? (pág. 61)

Las preguntas 64–66 están basadas en la pregunta número 2: “¿Por qué es importante saber acerca del asunto relacionado con el templo?”

P64:

¿Cómo podemos beneficiarnos cuando comprendemos el asunto relacionado con el templo? (pág. 63)

P65:

¿Qué quiere decir “tener una fe correcta”? (pág. 63)

P66:

Con una perspectiva hacia el futuro, ¿por qué es importante comprender el asunto relacionado con el templo? (pág. 63)

Las preguntas 67–70 están basadas en la pregunta número 4: “¿Cuál es la verdadera diferencia entre el templo y la SGI?”

P67:

¿Cuál es la postura de la Nichiren Shoshu en relación a la igualdad entre los miembros laicos y el clero? (pág. 65)

P68:

¿Por qué es que la perspectiva de la Nichiren Shoshu sobre el Gohonzon contradice la perspectiva de Nichiren Daishonin? (pág. 66)

P69:

Nichiren Daishonin claramente describe lo que significa recibir la herencia o la fuerza vital de la fe. ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la perspectiva de la Nichiren Shoshu y la perspectiva del Daishonin? (págs. 66–67)

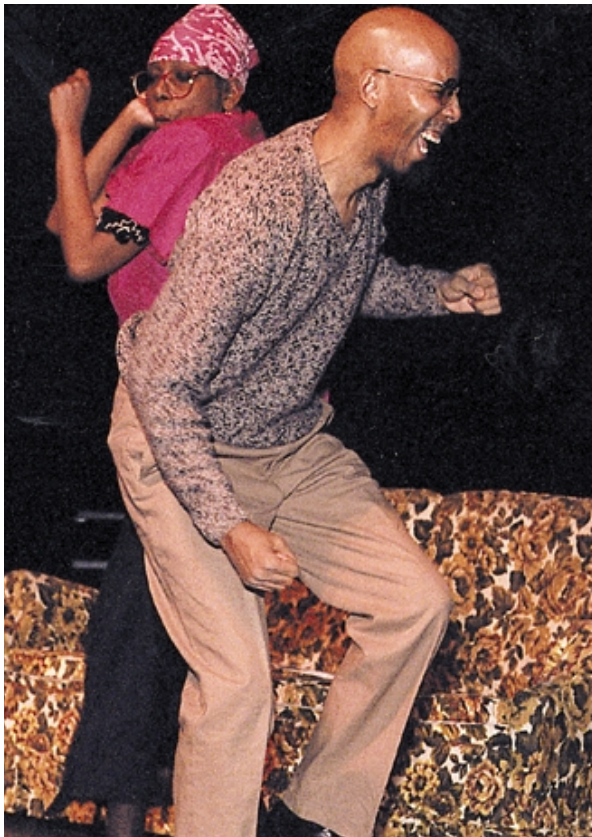
P70:

¿Cuál es la diferencia esencial entre la Nichiren Shoshu y la SGI en cuanto a la acción y el compromiso para el logro del kosen-rufu? (pág. 68)



A Community Victory in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., Region members put on a recital, 'Peace Begins With Me,' inviting their friends from the community to join in.



They prepared for months, rehearsing nights and weekends, struggling as they refined harmonies and pored over pronunciation (particularly for a Stevie Wonder tune to be sung in Spanish and Zulu). Dec. 20, 1998, was supposed to be the day that the Washington, D.C., Region Chorus would dazzle their guests at their annual recital, this year titled "Peace Begins With Me," to be held at the Publick Playhouse in Cheverly, Md.

Instead, the recital became the first public activity for the region in 1999, the Year of Victory in the Community. A gas leak at the Playhouse on Dec. 19 forced the performance to be rescheduled for Jan. 30. Then, as the weather grew colder, bringing snow and ice storms, some chorus members became sick with throat and bronchial ailments. Maintaining the enthusiasm that had fueled their progress in December became an issue.

While she felt "sad" after the December cancellation, 10-year-old Channi Murray said she prayed sincerely for the performers to "get through the show without any accidents." Channi said she learned that "if you chant a lot, you can begin to accomplish your dreams."

Nathalie Wells overcame physical challenges to perform. At age 77, she feared the arthritis in her knees and lower back would force her to stay home. "The encouragement of the other chorus members enabled me to keep coming out," she said, "and after the performance, I felt fine."

The day of the show, each participating member was given a copy of the SGI president's calligraphy for "Victory in the Community." Encouraged and energized, the group went on to give their very best to the 300 assembled SGI members, family members and guests. Victory was theirs!

— CAROL CHASTANG
Photos by KATHRYN AIKEN



We receive the baton. We receive the mission of kosen-rufu, entrusted to us, the youth of the world. On March 16 we will commemorate our acceptance of this precious assignment — the task to create world peace. Here in the U.S., in every region, in nearly every area, the youth will host introductory meetings in observance of March 16.

Last year's Kosen-Rufu Day celebrations saw giant-sized meetings with incredible numbers of youth — fresh faces and veteran supporters — showing up for both preparation and events.

In light of the words SGI General Director Mr. Wada gave us during his recent visit — “take care of your members” — the idea of smaller meetings, oriented toward new members and guests, seems like a strong plan.

This year, let's ensure that individuals are given the best opportunity



© Illustration by Brian McKenzie

possible to learn about SGI. Each guest would then get as much support as s/he needs both during and long after the introductory meeting.

As we know, the mission of kosen-rufu is to develop for others and ourselves the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. With propagation existing as a key activity, we spread this Buddhism, sharing our lives, our practice, our struggles and our triumphs with friends. This is

what we have called the

process of kosen-rufu. Hence, we devote our March 16 commemorative meetings to introducing others to Buddhism. Let's hold Kosen-Rufu Day activities as both an honoring of history and a launching point for supporting others!

The Story of March 16

By Dorney Burgdoff, San Francisco

March 16 marks the culmination of our struggle for human rights through peace, culture, and education. In 1958 President Josei Toda designated this day as the “dress rehearsal for the future realization of kosen-rufu.” In celebrating this day, we commemorate the significance of fighting evil within our society and within ourselves.

On March 16, 1958, 6,000 Japanese youth responded to the call to attend a meeting with their mentor, Josei Toda. Many of these youth spent a good part of the previous night traveling for hours to the head temple. The message they had each

been given was to bring a bowl and chop sticks. When they arrived, each one of them was treated to a helping of nice, warm pork soup.

President Toda entrusted his dreams and goals for the Soka Gakkai to his disciple, Daisaku Ikeda, who now has entrusted this vision to us, the youth. March 16 marks our chance to shine as we run with the torch of our predecessors and our organization. The meaning of this day is illuminated by our commitment to stand up for justice and by the action that we take in this regard. With creative energy we forge new territory for the SGI and humanity and thus show the greatness of our mentor.

“March 16 — which came to be called Kosen-Rufu Day — would thereafter serve as a day for the disciples to renew their pledge to build the eternal, indestructible foundation for kosen-rufu.” (All quotes taken from *The Human Revolution*, vol. 12).



Daisaku Ikeda and Josei Toda on March 16, 1958.

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

Curious what fellow members go through as they share Buddhism? Check out the following dialogue among 17-year-old Barbara Frazier of Killeen, 35-year-old Janet Fleschner of Dallas and 23-year-old James Kubiak of Austin...

QUESTION: *What's a great way to introduce a new person to the practice?*

Barbara: Get to know the person and as you get to know them they will share their problems with you. It's important to create friendship and build trust.

QUESTION: *What do you tell your friends when they ask about Buddhism?*

Janet: I really listen to people and see what they are seeking. I tell them that they can break the chains that are holding them down by chanting.

Barbara: I tell them it's not the stereotypical scene you might see in a movie. We are fighting for world peace and in order to accomplish this goal we have to start with and change our own lives.

QUESTION: *What are the challenges in creating an introductory meeting?*

James: Making people feel comfortable, having the enthusiasm to share.

QUESTION: *How can we overcome these challenges?*

James: Lots of daimoku!



Jessica Mingo

In August 1997 I was floored...literally. I had swelling in my feet, which prevented me from walking. So, for two days I had to crawl around the floor of my house, which was very humbling. And that was just the beginning.

The doctor said I had some kind of severe joint inflammation, which not only might last all my life, it might worsen over the years. I would need steroids to walk and I would never be able to do the activities that a normal person could do. This was especially tough since I was only 22, and I had been physically active all my life, skiing and running. I even played college soccer.

At that time I was set to move forty miles north to Los Angeles. There I would develop my career as an actress.

I made the move, but meanwhile my mysterious illness was continuing. I got a new doctor in L.A., one who was very warm and caring and wanted to find out exactly what was going on with me. Through tests, he concluded that I had total body arthritis (swelling, soreness, and fatigue).

I spent the next weeks depressed and constantly crying. Since I had just moved to a new city and since my obstacles were strong I did not connect to any members. My daily Buddhist practice was weak.

And things were getting grim. I thought I was crazy since I was crying all the time. This made me ashamed, too ashamed to tell anyone about my condition. I went on anti-depressant medication. A few weeks later I had a room-spinning panic attack. I was at the movies with my boyfriend watching *Scream 2* of all things. Everything started to swirl. I couldn't see. All I could do was put my head in my hands.

The big news came in early December of 1997 (a couple weeks later). The doctor found antibodies for Lupus inside me. Lupus is one of the worst diseases imaginable. Life with Lupus is extremely limited. Lupus victims wear-out easily and they spend much of the day enduring harsh pain for which there is no cure. I was scheduled to take a second test in January. If this test found any Lupus antibodies, I would be confirmed to have Lupus.

Jessica's EXPERIENCE

Triumph on the Road to March 16

I spent Christmas in Montreal, which for me usually meant skiing. But on this trip, I spent most of the time inside while my boyfriend and his family were out on the slopes. Deep down I felt defeated by my condition. I didn't expect to win.

When I returned to L.A. it was January. The preparations for March 16 were getting under way. Mystically, I was invited to attend the kick off meeting on Jan. 11. (Los Angeles was having its Global Family Festival, a giant stage production to commemorate March 16).

The kickoff meeting totally blew me away. Members from the five L.A. regions got on stage and fired up the room. The energy, the power, the commitment to kosen-rufu — everything was amazing. I was totally blown away. I kept thinking that this is going to change my life, that I have to get my life up to this level. Ed Feasel gave words that touched me profoundly. He talked about a little car that fails to make it uphill because its engine is too small. He likened the car to our lives: "How do we make ourselves have a stronger engine? There's only one way: chant."

It was at this time that I finally sat down in front of my Gohonzon and did some serious chanting. Tears flowed. I made an incredible conviction about my health. My second antibody test was coming up and I decided: "There is NO WAY I'm going to test positive. I have to win. I WILL



Jessica together with co-actor Pim.

win. This is my crucial moment."

Days later I received my second lab results. Negative! I did not have Lupus!!

I got active in the March 16 preparation and eventually was asked to take one of the main acting roles. The show would go four times for a total of 5000 audience members. What an opportunity! But, then maybe not. Being a main character meant having a more frequent and difficult practice schedule. Because of my health, I was hesitant to take part. I did not have Lupus, but my body was still recovering from its weakness. I imagined that a big role in the Global Family Festival might be too intense.

But, I realized that I had to do this for kosen-rufu. I had to be able to carry out the task.

Ultimately, I participated as one of the main actors. The festival was unbelievable. Working, uniting with everyone, it was beyond words. And the effect on my life was amazing. In my daily life I acquired a job in an entertainment production office, which was totally cool (it just popped into my lap). And later in the year I wound up acting in a television commercial for America Online, my first national appearance! My friend Shan insisted I write my experience.

The real deal is that I have such gratitude for the SGI. I owe this organization so much. And I want to continue supporting our movement for the rest of my life. ♪



Jessica (third from left) dancing away at the Global Family Festival.

YOUTH *Study* MARCH

How do you make "If Only" a reality?

By Mark Kaplan, San Francisco

Do you sometimes think, "If only I could change my family, school, work or that person would just go away... then everything would be OK"? When a person or situation is getting on our nerves and making everything dark, it is especially hard to believe that WE have the power to change it... right now... in this instant. This is what is meant in "On Attaining Buddhahood" where it says: "There are not two lands, pure and impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good and evil of our minds."

How do you make this theory a reality? In volume six of *The New Human Revolution* (pp. 26-31), a Japanese woman who moved to Iran with her husband wrestles with this very question. She did not *choose* to move; her husband's work required it. She hated her new country and had no friends. What could she do? Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages her:

"Ultimately, your attitude and outlook determine whether you see your situation as a painful ordeal or try to find meaning and value in it.... Nobody's perfect. Nor is there a perfect living environment where everything will be just the way you want it.... But reality invariably never quite matches the ideal vision or image of the way you want it to be. So you end up finding fault with everything, only adding to your despair and amplifying your discontent and dissatisfaction.

"It's kind of like looking at a plum tree expecting it to be a cherry tree.... Rather than being attached to and constrained by the idealistic standards you've created, you should look hard at reality just as it is, then try to discover some positive or enjoyable aspects and turn them to good account.... When you chant, you can see yourself and your environment exactly as they are. You can also bring forth strong life force, gaining the strength you need not to be defeated by your weaknesses. And more importantly, you'll awaken to [your] mission.... People are unhappy because they don't know how to be happy where they are."

By constantly looking about for better circumstances, we can't possibly appreciate the positive aspects of where we are. But when stop being distracted, dig in, and chant, the wisdom and strength to create the Buddha land where we stand emerges.

In 1993 President Ikeda gave practical advice on how to dig in: "Dig below your feet, and there you



© Illustration by Brian McKenzie

"ON ATTAINING BUDDHAHOOD"


The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, pp. 3-7.

supposedly so profound and sacred, was the source of so much confusion and conflict. He asked why religion didn't have the power to help people. These questions led this 12-year-old to determine "to become the wisest person in Japan." He decided to study Buddhism and at age 16, he left his family to become a priest.

Nichiren's entire youth was spent pursuing this dream. In "On Attaining Buddhahood," he explains that enlightenment, the goal of Buddhist practice, can be attained only if you "awaken to the mystic truth, which has always been within your life." It is a mistake, he says, to seek happiness outside one's self.

Nichiren struggled in his teens and twenties to accomplish his goal. He didn't struggle because he was pressured to or because it was expected of him. He struggled because it was his determination. And the effort to achieve it enabled him to lead a life that changed the world.

We all have dreams and hopes. Nichiren's prayer "to become the wisest person in Japan" is not unlike the aspirations of many young people today — to find a cure for cancer, to become President, to inspire people through art or music. We all have dreams that would potentially change society, even alter the direction of human history. But without the effort to make them a reality, they are only dreams. It's easy to just hope that some other person will "discover" us or give us what we want. And when compared to the hard work of *actualizing* our dreams, doubting that they'll ever come true is very easy.

But Nichiren taught this Buddhism as a way of enabling us to develop our highest potential. His life illustrates the truth of his teachings. Of course, his life is exceptional, but the central teaching in "On Attaining Buddhahood," indeed, the core teaching of Buddhism, is that all of us possess unlimited potential. Everyone can lead a profound and meaningful life. And as we learn from Nichiren Daishonin, the determination we make in our youth can enable us to lead lives of unimaginable accomplishment. 

will find a wellspring. Taking care of the tasks at hand is important. The main thing is to make your goals clear and then set about achieving them one by one with steady and thorough efforts. Only through such continuous efforts can we open up the path before us" (May 1993, *Seikyo Times*, p. 46).

The Determination We Make in Our Youth

By Ken Saragosa, Philadelphia

Nichiren Daishonin began teaching Nam-myoho-rence-kyo in 1253, when he was 32. He wrote "On Attaining Buddhahood" just two years later. When he first began teaching, people thought he was restating the Lotus Sutra, but gradually it became clear he was revealing a new, more profound teaching. The Lotus Sutra contains the truth of the Buddha's enlightenment, but it is within Nichiren's teachings — chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo to the Gohonzon — that we are shown the practical and immediate way to attain enlightenment *as we are*.

When Nichiren began teaching Buddhism, he was the same age as many of our SGI youth leaders. At such a young age, how was he able to establish and propagate something so significant as to change the entire world and influence Buddhist thought for centuries? Nichiren first made the determination to study Buddhism when he was 12 — today's typical age for entering junior high school. He wondered why religion,

QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DIALOGUE:

1. What are your dreams and hopes for the future?
2. What is your experience of "transforming your land" or changing your circumstances?
3. How does the example of Nichiren Daishonin apply to our lives?

MATERIAL REQUEST

SEND IN YOUR STUFF

Our youth publication is only as strong as what you bring us.

- Poems
- Articles
- Picture stories
- Commentaries
- Pulitzer Prize insight

...whatever you got, get it to us.

HOW?

Postal Mail
SGI-USA
Attn: Kim Stapchuk, Seize the Day
606 Wilshire Blvd.
PO Box 1427
Santa Monica, CA 90406
Email:
seize@sgi-usa.org

GET REAL



THE SUCCESSFUL SUCCESSOR

By Jeannie Olander
SGI-USA Jr. High School Division Leader

Recently, I re-read a portion from the "Successors" chapter of the great epic *The Human Revolution*, volume 12. This section details the dramatic final days of President Toda's life and also talks about the episode of March 16, the day that Toda passed on to the youth division members the responsibility of spreading true Buddhism. There were 6,000 youth present that day when Toda said: "Today, I want to bequeath this mission to you young people. I entrust the future to all of you. I'm counting on you to accomplish kosen-rufu!"

What has been achieved since that day is proof of the mentor and disciple relationship. President Ikeda and those 6,000 youth are the examples of what it means to fulfill the role of a disciple.

In the novel we are invited into some of the last conversations Toda has with Shin'ichi Yamamoto (SGI President Ikeda's character in the novel). There are two specific instructions Toda gives him. The first: "Shin'ichi, the world is your challenge; it is your true stage.... There are many peoples, many races. Some nations are democratic and some socialist. We'll have to start thinking about how to disseminate the Mystic Law in such places. After all, realizing peace and happiness for humanity is the fundamental aim of Buddhism.... Shin'ichi, you must live! You must live as long as you can and travel the globe!"

The second: "You must fight adamantly against any evil that takes root within the priesthood. Do you hear me, Shin'ichi? You must never retreat a single step."

This made me think about a conversation I had earlier this year with a group of junior high/high school members who had just visited the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles — a museum/information center about the history of the Holocaust. They were excited to tell me that the museum director spoke about SGI and the significant contributions President Ikeda has made toward human rights. When I heard about this I thought how well it expressed President Ikeda's resolve. It's actual proof of a true disciple who fulfilled the pledge he made to his mentor on March 16, 1958.

Recently, President Ikeda proclaimed that he would build a new Soka Gakkai with the Youth Division. This March 16 the SGI-USA Youth Division has a goal to gather 10,000 Youth Division members and 5,000 guests for our introductory meetings. I ask myself, "Can I be someone whom President Ikeda will depend on to ensure kosen-rufu in the 21st century?"

PURPOSE of SEIZE THE DAY

Imagine if all of us, the youth division of the entire United States, could meet in the same room once a month and miraculously respond to what each person has to say. This meeting would be the supreme medium for us to exchange ideas, communicate, and rally ourselves toward world peace. But, of course, we cannot all meet in the same place. And a fantastic forum where thousands of people engage in a single vast dialogue is an impossible ideal.

But certain alternatives are not merely an ideal. Our newspaper serves as the forum for this nationwide exchange. And though the written process is of course slower, it exists as the most immediate medium for the countrywide membership to maintain unity and share Buddhism.

Upon our request, SGI President Ikeda gave our insert its name — *Seize the Day*. These three words seem the perfect battle cry for us, the American youth, as we fight for peace, culture, and education.

The phrase *Seize the Day* carries a tone of advancement and hope. But what exactly does this phrase mean? Perhaps a good task for each of us is to contemplate our own individual interpretation of the word *seize* (some kind of practical action and dedication we conduct) and seek to employ it in our daily lives.

The staff of *Seize the Day* hope that you can utilize this insert whenever and wherever possible. Cite the study page at meetings, read the monthly experience, share material with members and non-members alike, especially teenagers.

We are determined that *Seize the Day* will become a paper worthy of such high focus, and we will work steadily to improve



Shan Serafin



Kim Stapchuk

the quality of everything on each page. We encourage both your criticism and your contribution. Let's make this much more than a pipeline of one-way information. Of great importance is that this paper reflect the thoughts and actions of all

the youth in America. It's a monumental task, but we can do it with your involvement.

Shan and Kim head-up the *Seize the Day* insert. If you have any suggestions, materials, etc., please see bottom of page C on where to send them.

**VICTORIOUS AMERICA:
10 Billion Daimoku For Justice & Victory!**

The chart has 52 hours total.
Each box is one hour of daimoku.

By Renu Jiandani — SGI-USA YWD Leader & James Herrmann — SGI-USA YMD Leader

The youth will sponsor a nationwide four-divisional 10 billion daimoku target to be completed by Nov. 18.

The theme of this daimoku target was discussed and agreed upon by the SGI-USA youth region leaders and announced at the Central Executive Conference last December. We unanimously agreed: the only way to ensure victory in our quarterly focuses for 1999 (Propagation, Contribution, Publications and District Meeting Participation) is to begin with prayer. We also agreed that this daimoku campaign can be a natural, exciting part of our temple issue activity. Members are frequently asking what they can do regarding the temple issue. Praying for the justice of the SGI

and praying for all to see and understand the grave errors of Nichiren Shoshu is action we can all take.

In order to win in each of our quarterly campaigns, we also need courage. President Ikeda recently mentioned, "Without courage, there can be no happiness." And courage comes from prayer. We invite every SGI-USA member to participate in the accomplishment of this daimoku target. By doing so we can all create a great victory in each one of our lives that will ensure a "Victorious America." A copy of the daimoku chart is provided above. For details on how to hand in your chart(s), please contact your local region or area youth leader.