



**SUA**  
An interview with Tomoko Takahashi, dean of SUA's Graduate School.

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**BOYS & GIRLS**

The March edition of 'Friends for Peace,' our pullout for children.

pages A-D

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## SGI-USA Registered on Trinidad and Tobago

Caribbean kosen-rufu has just taken a new step: The republic of Trinidad and Tobago recently approved the incorporation of an SGI-USA organization on its islands.

Trinidad and Tobago are at the southeast end of the Caribbean, just off the coast of Venezuela. Colonized by the British in the 19th century, the islands became a republic of their own in 1976. Members on the islands, who have been spreading Nichiren Daishonin's teachings there for many years, are very excited about their organization being registered with their government. The organization of Trinidad and Tobago is part of SGI-USA's Southern Zone, which is headed up by zone leaders Sheilah Edwards and Cliff Sawyer.

For more news about kosen-rufu developments in the Caribbean, please see our special Caribbean feature in an upcoming issue.

— JEFF FARR

### SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S LATEST SPEECH

## The Soka Gakkai Spirit: To Give One's All

Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

**T**hank you so much for traveling here in such cold weather! Nichiren Daishonin writes, "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). These are immortal words.

As human beings, it is inevitable that we experience regrets of one kind or another in the course of our lives. We are bound to have some regrets. That is part of being human. That is part of life.

Many people live in pursuit of position or wealth. Perhaps as a result, most of humankind does exactly what the Daishonin



'A life of no regrets: This is what Nichiren Daishonin teaches.' (Above) Attendees at the Women's Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Feb. 4-7.

warns against and "spends this life in vain, regretting it for all eternity."

In contrast, we, the courageous champions of kosen-rufu, live in such a way that we have no regrets — we advance unswervingly toward life's true goal, committed to the pursuit of real, lasting happiness. A life of no regrets: This is what the Daishonin teaches. How to live such an unsurpassed life: This is what we of the SGI are teaching the world. Let us advance with joy, confidence and courage in this knowledge.

No effort is wasted in Buddhism. Our work, our daily lives

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 4

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# Living a Contributive Life

**Dr. Tomoko Takahashi, dean of the Graduate School at SUA, Calabasas, explains why a master's degree in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) is like a 'passport to the world,' allowing graduates to help create a better world.**

*The World Tribune asked Dr. Tomoko Takahashi, dean of the Graduate School and professor of linguistics and education at Soka University of America, Calabasas (Calif.), to share her*

*experience as an educator and comment on SUA's master's program in second and foreign language education with a concentration in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL).*

**WT:** How did you get involved with language education, particularly with English as a second language (ESL) instruction?

**Tomoko Takahashi:** My first encounter with ESL was in the summer of 1975 when I first came to the United States from Japan and studied ESL in preparation for college. While studying ESL, I became interested in and rather critical of ESL instruction and began thinking, from a learner's perspective, of what the most effective and ideal ESL instruction should be like.

After that summer, I enrolled in a college in New Haven, Conn., and majored in English. After graduation I entered Columbia University to pursue my graduate studies in applied linguistics — I studied linguistics in relation to language education. After completing my doctoral program in 1984, I continued my post-doctoral research at Columbia and began teaching applied linguistics and training graduate-level students to become ESL teachers.

In 1992 I joined Soka University at Los Angeles (SULA), which is now Soka University of America (SUA), Calabasas, and became director of a new Japanese language program there. Then in 1994 the graduate school opened and I became its first dean



**Dr. Tomoko Takahashi, dean of the Graduate School at SUA, Calabasas.**

and have since been directing the master of arts program in second and foreign language education with a concentration in TESOL.

So, I was once an ESL student and am now involved with ESL instruction as a teacher trainer. Needless to say, my own experience as an ESL learner has helped me tremendously. Over the past 15 years I have gained extensive experience not only in teaching but in developing educational materials as well as research in language education.

I have published over 10 textbooks for English learners, four scholarly books and numerous papers and articles on linguistics and language education. I am also interested in the art of translation and have published the Japanese translations of three of Mrs. Rosa

Parks' books. It's certainly a sheer joy to be able to share my expertise in language education and linguistics with future teachers.

**WT:** What is the objective of your master's program?

**TT:** It's to educate graduate-level students in the methodologies and intellectual foundations of language education, and professionally train them to become ESL teachers or to become language educators such as textbook writers. In other words, the program provides future teachers with a theoretical foundation with the practical tools necessary to teach English to a non-native speaker. To achieve these goals we place emphases on linguistics, teaching and learning processes and cross-cultural awareness.

**WT:** What kind of teaching career can you pursue after receiving this type of training?

**TT:** A degree in TESOL is like a passport to the world. It opens up a path to international careers. It allows and enables you to teach English in other countries around the world as well as in the United States. Four classes of our graduates are now teaching in Japan, China and the United States — for instance, at Soka University and Soka Women's College in Tokyo, the Soka High Schools in Tokyo and Kansai, and Beijing

Foreign Studies University in China.

Language education has a significant impact on society on a global scale. You can help people communicate with one another and facilitate their cross-cultural understanding, as well as help them open their eyes to new dimensions and possibilities and to their new potentials. I think this is a great way to contribute to society and to the world. I hope to see more graduates travel throughout the world and make such valuable contributions as educators.

**WT:** What are some of the highlights of your program?

**TT:** At our university the student is the center of attention. And our program emphasizes small class sizes and rigorous academic discipline.

Each class consists of about eight students. In a small class, students receive personal attention from the members of the faculty. Small classes also facilitate more interaction among students and between students and the faculty. This is an ideal environment for learning and growth. Our staff and faculty also constantly strive to create an environment that is caring, encouraging and conducive to students' success.

SUA, Calabasas, also offers ESL classes to Japanese students



## 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. Or visit our website: www.soka.edu/calabasas/

**SUA, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

from Soka University and Soka Women's College in Tokyo and the Soka High Schools in Tokyo and Kansai. Our graduate students are placed in those ESL classes to do their practicum teaching as part of the graduate school curriculum. Outside the classroom, graduate students can also gain hands-on experience and knowledge in teaching ESL by interacting with ESL students on campus.

Other highlights include a well-balanced curriculum, a diverse student body, a quiet campus with beautiful natural surroundings, and campus programs such as the Human Rights Lecture Series, Botanical Center tours and lectures, bird watching and fitness walks.

**WT:** Where are your students from? Are they mostly recent college graduates? Or do they come with teaching or other work experience?

**TT:** We've so far had students from nine different countries — Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, Korea, France, Panama, the Philippines, and the United States. The international student body makes up on average about 40 percent of the entire student population. We encourage an international student body because we see linguistic and cultural diversity as an enrichment and a true asset for learning.

Our students also come from many different disciplines — that is, different undergraduate majors. Many of our students majored in English, linguistics, foreign language, education or other related fields, but we've also had

mathematics, history, political science, economics, psychology and business majors.

The diversity of the student population is further reflected in the student's ages, too; we've had recent college graduates as well as those who have worked for several years. The average age of the students we've had so far is 29. Some students (1 out of 4) come with teaching experience, but such experience is not required for admission. I would say what's required is passion for education and willingness to study in a highly rigorous program.

**WT:** Is it a rigorous program?

**TT:** Yes. First of all, we are striving to achieve academic excellence and make this program one of the best in the world. My personal dream is to make our academic program better than the TESOL program at my alma mater, Columbia University, which is considered to be one of the best programs in the world. When preparing to open the program, I researched a number of TESOL programs in the nation to come up with the best curriculum. Over the past five years, the program has constantly been improved in terms of its curriculum content.

Secondly, this is a three-semester program, and there is so much to learn within a year and a half. Education is a big responsibility. We want to make sure that our graduates are equipped with knowledge in the subject area, effective teaching skills, commitment to education, compassion for students and the greatest character.

Another aspect of the program is that students become closer to



**Dr. Takahashi and the first graduating class of SUA, Calabasas, December 1995.**

each other because they have to study hard and struggle together. The faculty members also assign many group projects. In the program, because of its rigor, our students learn to help and encourage one another and to learn from one another.

Plus, the faculty members are always there to help the students. We don't just watch them struggle. We struggle with them. We also strive to set them good examples as teachers. One of our goals is to train our students to become humanistic teachers, and we believe struggling with the students is one way of achieving this goal.

Our graduates all say that they have learned so much at the SUA Graduate School — not only about teaching ESL but about themselves, friendship, humanism and compassion. It's such a great pro-

gram that I sometimes wish I were a student in the program!

**WT:** What do you think has been the greatest effect of Soka education on your students' lives?

**TT:** One of our graduates once said: "While at SUA, I learned the meaning of creating value in my life. I learned to do things wholeheartedly; to study 100 percent, struggle 100 percent, live 100 percent.... My direction for life is clearer now, and I know what I want to accomplish."

Another said: "I was able to awaken my desire to be part of Mr. Makiguchi's, Mr. Toda's and Mr. Ikeda's dreams. In other words, I could realize my mission in life: serving others and contributing to the blossoming of each individual through education."

I think these statements sum up the great effect of Soka education on the students' lives. That is, they discover their true selves, expand their lives and realize their purpose in life. They become awakened to their full potential and a stronger sense of mission for peace and the happiness of others.

When the SUA Graduate School opened in 1994, the university's founder, SGI President Ikeda said: "The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life. To study and learn, to take on difficult challenges, to continue to take action for the sake of the happiness of your fellow citizens — this is the key to a life that is ever youthful, value-filled, unhin-

dered and expansive."

In a nutshell, our students live this mission. It's absolutely inspiring to see them take their strong sense of mission along with their love for their alma mater and profound respect for its founder, and sincerely strive to become capable global citizens for the sake of humanity's happiness and peace — and to help others also become such global citizens. They really are gems of Soka education.

I've certainly learned a great deal in various ways from our students. In this sense I AM a student in the program, pursuing academic excellence with them, learning to be a better teacher for them and living the same mission as they do. I feel truly fortunate to have such great students as my teachers, colleagues and dear friends.

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## In his February Headquarters Leaders Meeting speech, SGI President Ikeda shares recollections of the training he received from his mentor, Josei Toda, and his early days as Soka Gakkai president after Toda's death. President Ikeda learned the Soka Gakkai spirit through his struggles as a young man, and now, he says, 'I wish to teach you this spirit — the spirit of giving one's all for the sake of kosen-rufu....'

SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

— all undertakings are Buddhism. If our efforts are based on faith, they will be transformed without exception into benefit.

I'm sure that many of you here today are extremely busy and have various challenges on your hands. Yet you have made the time and effort to attend this Buddhist meeting. The benefit you are accumulating as a result is immense. You are advancing on the path of the supreme Law.

All our efforts for kosen-rufu — even if they sometimes seem in vain, even if they are a struggle — have great meaning and value for our lives. They steer us in a positive direction. This is the power of faith.

### Nichiren Daishonin teaches us to stand firm against evil.

As a poet myself, please allow me to share the words of some renowned poets.

The English poet and playwright William Shakespeare notes: "Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile: / Filths savour but themselves" (*King Lear*, Act 4, Scene 2).

The Scottish poet James Thomson writes, "Ingratitude is treason to mankind."

The Persian poet Sa'di observes, "A grateful dog is better than an ungrateful man." It is said that if you keep and feed a dog for three days, the dog will never forget that debt. Consequently, this poet asserts, dogs far surpass people who forget their gratitude to others.

There is a well-known passage in the "The Sutra of True Requitul," which the Daishonin addresses to Sennichi-ama: "If I were in error, they [the Buddhas and heavenly deities] would surely make that plain. We would certainly expect that much from the deities of the sun and the moon, which are shining right before our eyes. Moreover, all these deities not only listened to the words of Shakyamuni Buddha, but vowed to punish those who persecute the votary of the Lotus Sutra, saying, 'their heads will split into seven pieces' (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 310).

"What then do they intend to do?" the Daishonin asks. "Because I, Nichiren,

strongly called them to task in this manner, Heaven has inflicted punishment upon this nation of ours, and these epidemics have appeared" (MW-6, 254–55).

This is a very important passage, the meaning of which we should ponder deeply. Buddhism is a battle. Everything is a battle. This is the essence of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Unless we fight to ensure the success of our kosen-rufu movement, no benefit will come. If we fail to take action, things may seem fine for a time, but in the end we will only suffer.

One has but to glance through the pages of history to see that corrupt societies — those in which lies and deceit prevail, and justice and truth are spurned — inevitably come to ruin. It is vital that we stand up to evil. If we leave it unchecked, we become part of that evil.

Remaining passive in the face of injustice is the same as silently endorsing it. Our silence and inaction let lies and deceit triumph.

The Daishonin teaches us to stand firm against evil.

### You have every right to live true to yourself.

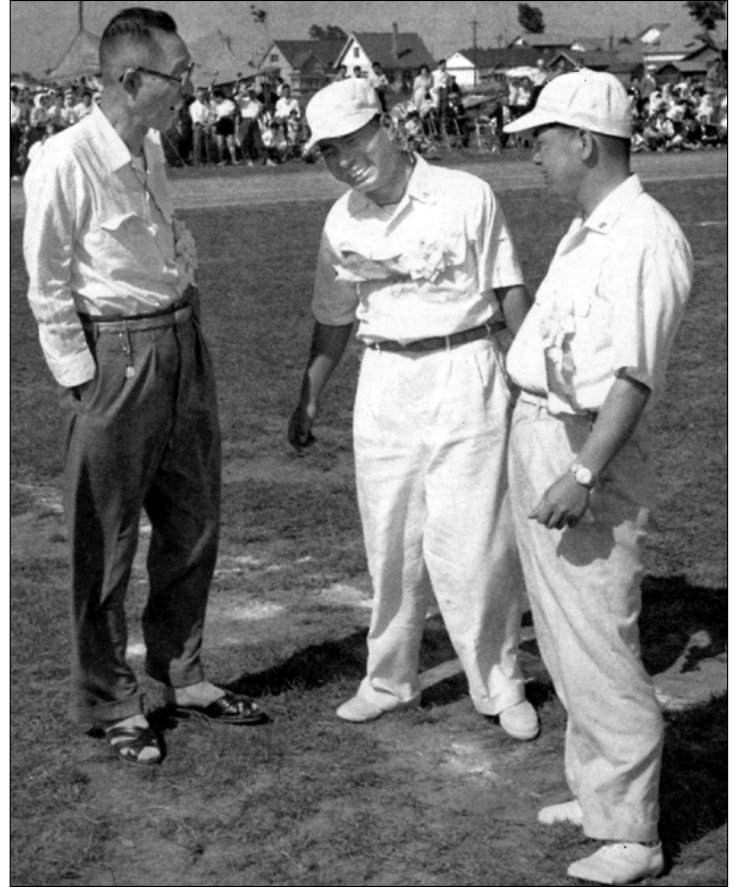
We of the SGI live in direct accord with the Daishonin's teachings. We live true to our convictions.

It is trivial to worry about appearances and others' opinions or to complain that no one supports or understands you. Please live true to yourself, as you have every right to, and adorn your life with triumph, based on resolute prayer and action. Please become a person who powerfully activates the protective forces of the universe, the heavenly deities.

### The benefit of making offerings to the Law is immense.

Buddhism is a world where the subtle state of our heart or mind, our attitude at each moment, is all-important. The smallest things, therefore, can have momentous consequences.

The Daishonin writes: "He who offered a humble meal of millet to the *pratyek-*



'Mr. Toda was a warm mentor, a compassionate mentor.' Toda (left) with Daisaku Ikeda (center) in Hokkaido, August 1957.

*abuddha* became the Universal Brightness Thus Come One. He who offered a mudpie to the Buddha became the ruler of the continent of Jambudvīpa. Though one may perform meritorious deeds, if they are directed toward that which is not true, then they may bring great evil but they will never result in good. On the other hand, though one may be ignorant in mind and his offerings meager, if he presents them to a person who upholds the truth, his merit will be great. How much more so in the case of persons who in all sincerity make offerings to the True Law!" (MW-6, 281).

A child who offered something as humble as a mudpie to the Buddha was reborn as one of the world's foremost rulers, King Ashoka. But no matter how many offerings one may make to a villainous individual, ultimately they will result in great evil, never in good. The Buddhist Law is extremely strict.

The consequences are grave if one follows the wrong person or people. Even in second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's time there were corrupt, self-serving leaders. There were unscrupulous individuals. Those who followed such people were led astray and eventually discarded their faith.

On the other hand, the benefit of making offerings to the Law is immense. All of you are working energetically for kosen-rufu. You are making an offering of yourselves, of your lives.

In addition, you have courageously built the foremost global organization, the SGI, which is dedicated to realizing the Buddha's wish and decree. In light of the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin, the benefit that accrues to such actions is boundless and immeasurable.

### Phony disciples are many,

## SGI-USA Office of Public Affairs Opens

SGI-USA recently opened an Office of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. Headed up by SGI-USA Vice General Director Bill Aiken, the office will interface with various religious, cultural and peace organizations that are, like the SGI-USA, focused on peace and human rights. SGI-USA General Director Fred

Zaitzu explains that "the office is located in the heart of Washington, D.C., and I feel it is going to serve a very important function in expanding the understanding of the SGI-USA's movement there." It will also sponsor occasional lectures on contemporary issues.

— JEFF FARR

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**and true disciples are few.**

Feb. 11 is Mr. Toda's birthday. Were he alive, he would turn 99 this year.

Because of my weak constitution, Mr. Toda constantly told me to take care of my health. My lungs constantly gave me trouble, and I came down with pleurisy a number of times.

Mr. Toda despaired: "I want somehow to help you live a long life, Daisaku. But, frankly, I'm worried. I don't know whether you'll make it to 30. If you die, Daisaku, who will be my successor? What will become of the Gakkai?"

He wept as he said this. This was the spirit of Mr. Toda. How deeply he cared for the Gakkai. How deeply he cared for me, whom he recognized as his genuine disciple.

Phony disciples are many, and true disciples are few. I am confident that all of you are true disciples.

Mr. Toda was a warm mentor, a compassionate mentor. That's why I'll never forget him. If he had been arrogant and dictatorial, how could he have won the selfless loyalty and devotion of so many youth?

In those days, knowing the harsh reality of my physical condition, I was resolved to die giving my life to Mr. Toda and the Soka Gakkai. "Perhaps it's best that I die young in the course of our struggle," I thought. "That way I can leave an example of selfless dedication to kosen-rufu for fu-

ture generations and perhaps inspire many youth division members who come after me." That was my sincere sentiment, and Mr. Toda was aware of my readiness to lay down my life.

Such are the bonds of mentor and disciple. This is the true Soka Gakkai.

**To betray one's friends in faith is an immeasurably grave offense in Buddhism.**

I want to share some information about my life, just as it was, for the sake of posterity. As most of you know, I was inaugurated Soka Gakkai president on May 3, 1960. A special ceremony was held at the Nihon University Auditorium in Tokyo.

In those days, my family and I lived in a house the size of a matchbox. We had purchased it for a low price, borrowing half the amount from my wife's family and paying off the other half in monthly installments. The front entrance was tiny, and the toilet was located unceremoniously right next to it. It was a very simple, humble abode.

Even after becoming president, I commuted daily by train to the Gakkai Headquarters. I would ride my bicycle to nearby Kamata Station, go to the bicycle parking area, pay the fee, leave my bicycle there and then take the train to the Headquarters in Shinanomachi [about an hour's train

**SGI Dispatches Relief to Colombian Earthquake Victims**

Last month, the SGI organization engaged in a variety of relief efforts for victims of the recent Colombian earthquake. First, the Soka Gakkai in Japan donated \$30,000 in relief funds to the Colombian Embassy in Tokyo immediately following the disaster. Then, the SGI delivered relief supplies to victims in the city of Armenia, Colombia, to which an assessment team was dispatched. SGI-Argentina also held a cultural benefit for quake victims, Feb. 14. The performance featured 3,500 young men and women, and included participation from Flores University and the National Folk Ballet of Argentina. All participants were encouraged to bring a can of powdered milk to the show, allowing SGI-Argentina to collect more than 2.1 tons of milk, all of which was quickly shipped to hard-hit areas of Colombia. The Jan. 25 earthquake, which devastated western Colombia, claimed the lives of more than 1,100 people. Some 250,000 others were left without shelter. 卍

ride away].

There was an incident illustrative of that period: An eminent politician once stopped by our home to pay a courtesy call. It was during the day, so I wasn't there. I heard about it later. Anyway, our house was so small that he drove right past it. Naturally, if he were looking for a stately residence, he'd never find it! Apparently, he drove up and down the street a few times. He finally located our house after asking one of the neighbors, but even then he thought it must be a mistake.

On the day of my inauguration, when I returned home from the ceremony, there was no celebratory feast on the table awaiting me, none of the customary steamed rice with red beans.

With a strong resolve to stand alone, my wife said: "Today is a funeral for this family. As of this day, I consider my husband to have departed."

This is the Soka Gakkai spirit. This is the spirit of kosen-rufu. This is the spirit of mentor and disciple.

I wish to teach you this spirit — the spirit of giving one's all for the sake of kosen-rufu — through my example.

Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and his wife, Madame Deng Yingchao, dedicated themselves to the construction of their homeland with the same sense of commitment.

There are people who, though they are leaders, take no action and instead do nothing but criticize. There are those who just try to look good.

Many of those who betrayed the Soka Gakkai wanted simply to grab unearned fame and fortune, to obtain social recognition and personal profit so they could lead lives of luxury. They were worse than common thieves. They were the basest people.

President Toda was really harsh on traitors, describing them as "worse than curs." He would denounce them with blistering anger.

To betray the Soka Gakkai, which has inherited the Buddha's decree, to betray one's friends in faith, to betray one's own vow to realize kosen-rufu — these are immeasurably grave offenses in Buddhism.

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at

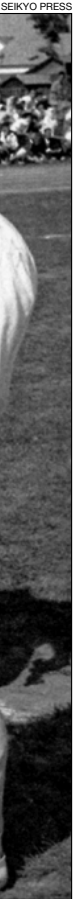
the 31st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Feb. 2. Part 2 will appear in next week's issue.

**WHO IS DAIKAKU IKEDA?**

Daisaku Ikeda was born in Tokyo in 1928. He studied under his mentor, Josei Toda, and, in 1960, succeeded him as president of the Soka Gakkai, a position he held until 1979. Since 1975, he has been president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). He is the founder of a university, junior and senior high schools, elementary schools, kindergartens and two art museums, and is honorary president of the Seikyo Press. His writings have been translated into more than a dozen languages.



On Feb. 13, SGI-USA member and poet Leon Jones (above), along with the America Rainbow Chorus, participated in the LA's BEST Community Jam Against Violence at UCLA's Royce Hall. LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) is an afterschool enrichment program for students in the Los Angeles Unified School District. More than 1,800 students attended the event.



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# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 31-32

**In New York, President Yamamoto considers incorporating the Soka Gakkai in America. He foresees having 'to acquire legal corporate status in each country where [the Gakkai] was active.... This was the only way it could become a movement rooted in the community and society of each country...'**

**O**n the way to Koichi Yabe's house, the road was wet, reflecting the glare of headlights. When Yabe informed Shin'ichi Yamamoto that it had been raining until a short time before his arrival, Shin'ichi sensed the rain's clearing was a function of the universe's protective forces. Had it kept raining, the members would have had to make their way in a downpour to the America East General Meeting, at which the New York Chapter would be inaugurated.

When Shin'ichi arrived at the house, about 10 members were waiting to greet him. He left the final planning for the evening's meeting to the leaders accompanying him, while he talked with the members and fielded their questions. All the questions were study related, since here, as in other cities on this guidance tour, a Study Department exam was to be held the following day.

The first time Shin'ichi came to New York and attended a discussion meeting, he found the members dejected, overwhelmed by the harshness of their daily lives. Many had cried out in disbelief when assured that they could become happy; it created quite a stir at the meeting.

Now, many of the same members were happily asking questions about points of study. They were filled with seeking spirit, earnestly desiring to study Buddhism. Shin'ichi could see that the New York members had achieved

tremendous personal growth since his last visit.

He answered their questions with great energy, commending each questioner, saying, "That's an important question," or "You've made a very good point," and then answering in a very accessible, easy-to-understand manner.

Much to the members' regret, the time passed all too quickly. Soon Shin'ichi was closing the session to get ready for the General Meeting.

While the New York members and leaders from Japan hastened to the meeting place, Shin'ichi remained with Yabe. He wanted to discuss with him the formation of a religious corporation for the Soka Gakkai in the United States.

In the future, the Soka Gakkai, a registered religious corporation in Japan, would have to acquire legal corporate status in each country where it was active, Shin'ichi felt. This was the only way it could become a movement rooted in the community and society of each country, he thought.

Buddhism is a teaching for all humanity. Similarly, the Soka Gakkai belongs to the entire world, not only Japan. Shin'ichi believed that each country should form its own Soka Gakkai organization: The foundation of faith would be the same but the organization unique to each country.

As they strove to be exemplary citizens, members would undertake activities of their own initiative, taking into account the conditions and circumstances of their countries, working for the happiness and welfare of their fellow citizens and all humanity.

Because of his job, Yabe was very knowledgeable about setting up affiliated corporations overseas and was acquainted with several U.S. legal experts.

**Y**abe listened to Shin'ichi's proposal about incorporating the Soka Gakkai in the United States and said: "I see. So you've decided to take that step. That definitely will be vital for the future. I'll look into the procedure, and I'll get back to you as soon as I have the information."

Yabe was happy that Shin'ichi had sought his advice. He had remained a Gakkai member largely because of his admiration for Shin'ichi's character.

In spring 1953, Yabe attended the wedding of his wife's younger brother, future Soka Gakkai Vice General Director Kiyoshi Jujo. Hanae, Yabe's wife, was also a Gakkai member, but Yabe was opposed to her faith.

At the wedding, he met Josei Toda for the first time and had his first real introduction to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. When Toda confronted him with the error of his religious views, Yabe grew angry and refused to listen to him.

Then, about a month later, Yabe suffered a deadlock at work that caused him so much anguish he came close to having a nervous breakdown. This is what finally led him to practice the Daishonin's Buddhism. After that, he came to like and respect Toda and often sought him out for guidance.

With Toda's death, however, Yabe completely lost enthusiasm for his Buddhist practice. "I don't want to stay with a Soka Gakkai that has no President Toda," he would say.

A short time after Shin'ichi's inauguration as president, Yabe was sent by his company to the United States. When his brother-in-law, Jujo, heard this, he urged Yabe to meet with President Yamamoto before leaving for America. Reluctantly, at Jujo's strong insistence, Yabe visited

the Gakkai Headquarters.

Shin'ichi welcomed him cordially and with utmost courtesy, congratulating him on his new position in the United States. Yabe, 18 years Shin'ichi's senior, was touched by the young president's sincere concern and good wishes for him.

He was also impressed by the energy and vision of this young man, who so fervently wished for peace and the happiness of all humankind, who sought to realize this by propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism around the world. Yabe was suddenly gripped by the desire to be part of the Gakkai again.

People derive inspiration from other people.

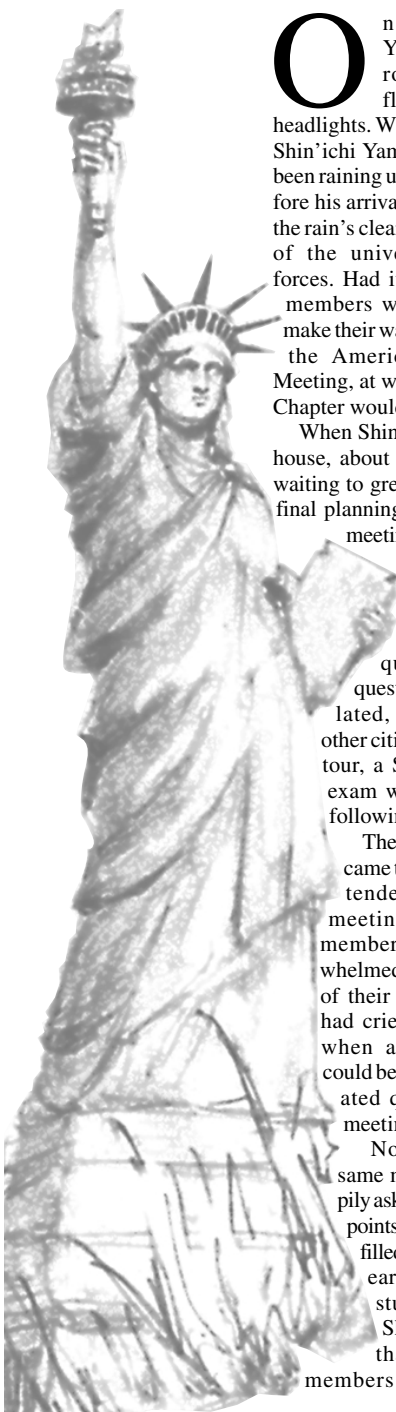
Now, here in New York, Yabe was happy to be reunited with Shin'ichi, and he firmly resolved to do everything in his power to assist the Soka Gakkai president.

Addressing both Yabe and his wife, who were sitting side by side, Shin'ichi said: "By the way, I want to appoint you, Mr. Yabe, general chapter advisor, and you, Mrs. Yabe, Queens District women's division leader, as well as New York Chapter women's division advisor. Would you both agree to taking on these positions?"

Smiling, the couple nodded and replied yes.

*To be continued*

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





[fineprint@sgi-usa.org](mailto:fineprint@sgi-usa.org)

**Greetings**

To the St. Lucia members —  
I was a medical student in St. Lucia for a few semesters, and although I did not get a chance to attend meetings an hour and a half away very often, I want them all to know how beautiful I found their spirit and how refreshing their daimoku. I want to thank Martha and Littleton especially, as well as all those whose faces are clear to me, if not their names.

I was encouraged and inspired and must say that I could feel President Ikeda's presence in the meetings I attended. The purity and struggle I witnessed will remain with me as a beautiful stroke in the watercolor painting of my Buddhist experience. I know many there are fighting hard, both inner demons and outer. But I know they are sure to win in each of their daily lives because they possess sincerity. The young men's division is so strong there!

Thank you, St. Lucian members, for all your efforts and dedication, something which many will never know, but which the universe can never fail to reward. — Dianne DeKeyser, El Paso, Texas

I recently attended the "Happiness in this World" conference at FNCC. I went on the Everglades tour and had a fabulous time. Our Airboat captain was Gorilla. All he kept telling us was how much he "LOVED SGI." Toward the end of the ride he told us why. His daughter had been born with three holes in her heart and some other life-threatening complications. The doctors went so far as to tell him not to get attached to her. He had the doctors try an operation. The doctors said that even if she survived the operation, recovery would take at least six to nine months and then there were no guarantees.

Gorilla has been the Airboat captain for most of the SGI Everglades tours, so people are always telling him about the practice. He said that he told some members about his daughter and they said that they would chant for her and taught him how to do the same. His daughter recovered in about six weeks

and is doing wonderfully. Gorilla has a message for those members who chanted for him and his family: "Thanks from the bottom of my heart. I love you all." — Gorilla

I was so encouraged and touch by his story. He proved to me that this Gohonzon works for ALL HUMANKIND. I determine to tell everyone I can about chanting. Whether they practice or just say Nam-myoho-enge-kyo one time, it is truly the cause they make that matters. Thank you. — Bryant Williams  
P.S. See you at FNCC soon.

We are snowbirds who winter in south Florida. One thing we always look forward to is New Year's World Peace Gongyo at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. It gets better year by year.

Arriving at the Culture Center, we were welcomed by sunny skies and a mid-70 degree temperature unlike any other place in the USA on that, the first day of the new year.

The hour and a half program was virtually flawless. We want to commend all the performers: the four piece string ensemble; the singing group, Global Voices; the Miami Dance Group; the Miami Music Group (orchestra); the youth performing "Wild People;" and the joyful singing and participation of the boys and girls. It must have been quite an undertaking to manufacture the paper dragon the boys and girls held over their heads as they marched throughout the auditorium.

Everything moved according to schedule due to the splendid work of the emcee, who also asked "Buddhist" type questions to people in the audience chosen at random. All questions were answered correctly by design. One question comes to mind: "Who was the founder of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?"

All the people involved, performers and the behind the scenes people who put the whole thing together, are to be congratulated for the valuable time and effort they devoted to this wonderful program. Months of hard work and planning had to have been done by many people who have busy schedules of their own. These two snowbirds so far away from home are certainly grateful for the opportunity to start 1999 in such an uplifting way. Thank you. — Dale and Kathy Anderson, 1711 South Shore Dr., Portage, MI 49002 / Winter residence: Hobe Sound, Fla.

**Congratulations**

To our friends in the SGI in New Jersey and New York: We have moved to Seattle and practice in the Thornton Creek District. Our son, Griffin Thomas King, was born at Swedish/Ballard Hospital in Seattle, Wash., at 2:46 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 14, 1998. He weighed in at 6 pounds 11 ounces. We are blessed with this new addition to our family and thank you for the kind thoughts, prayers and generosity you have shown us on Griffin's behalf. We look forward to all the joys and challenges that our new life will bring. — Michael, Glyde and Griffin King, Seattle

**Milestones**

Tom, we shared the same birthday, many of them together, and oh, what fun we had. We were alike in many ways, but not in every way. You taught me things I didn't know, I showed you things you couldn't see. We were never family in name, but we were always family in heart. And I will miss you from my life, but never forget you because you will always be a part of my life. You touched so many, Tom DeSimone, and made a difference in so many lives, especially mine. Your best friend, Cynthia Fiducia, New York City

Steve Kistler, who practiced in Olympia, Wash., and Evanston, Ill., passed away on Feb. 9, 1999. Steve was a gifted and prolific musician and a man capable of great sensitivity and kindness. It was Steve who midwived me into my practice by introducing me to the organization though he was not yet a member himself. He gave many of us a lot to chant about, but was also a tender and gentle friend. "Every drop of sweat shed for the sake of art adds to the river of human peace and culture. I pay respect to artists several times, tens of times more than I do politicians of those in the economic sector" (President Ikeda). — Marybeth Goodrich McCarthy  
<[suneyewoman@hotmail.com](mailto:suneyewoman@hotmail.com)>

**Lost and Found**

I am looking for Beverly Corpus who used to practice in Beverly Hills. Are you

out there? Haven't been in touch with you for several years and would love to hear from you. Hope all is well with you. Please call, e-mail or write me if you get this. Kirsten Ator (718) 788-1048. 222A Prospect Park West Brooklyn, NY 11215. [kirator@aol.com](mailto:kirator@aol.com)

Desperately seeking LaWanda Cavallo who practiced in Kent, Ohio, until 1997. Your Kent Group really misses you, especially Jazsma, my mom and I. — Ann Perry (330) 297-4472 517 Clinton St. Ravenna, OH 44266

I am looking for any members in Richmond, Va., to help my wonderful cousin to practice. She just started chanting and needs a sponsor to encourage her, find her discussion meetings, and to teach her gongyo! If you can help, please contact me at [LauraRecht@aol.com](mailto:LauraRecht@aol.com). Thanks!

I am searching for Teresa Fosque. She and I practiced in YWD and Byakuren together in Baltimore, Md., about four or five years ago. However when I moved, we lost touch with each other. Teresa then moved to Atlanta and I to Virginia. Teresa was my headquarters leader and a good friend. Teresa girl, if you get this message, please e-mail me at [rhurvey@yahoo.com](mailto:rhurvey@yahoo.com) because I sure do miss chatting with you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Wanted: *Lectures on Buddhism*, vol. 1, by Daisaku Ikeda, 1961. Please respond to August March, 37 Central Ave. Ravenna, N.Y. 12143. Thank you.

**'Buddhism in Daily Life' Exhibit Held at the University of Tennessee**

Photo by BILL HNATH



On Jan. 21, the SGI club of the University of Tennessee sponsored a "Buddhism in Daily Life" exhibition at the University Center. Along with the help of many chapter members, students Kazuma Hatano, Jennifer Cawn and Melissa Mann, the new club president, set up the daylong exhibit. It featured information on the basics of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, videos, a collection of photos of SGI President Ikeda's visits with dignitaries and examples of his peace proposals. Excited by the turnout for the event — more than 40 students and faculty saw the exhibit — the club members resolved to continue to get involved in the community to share this Buddhism.

— BILL HNATH

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EXPERIENCE — CARRIE TRIFFET, VAN NUYS, CALIF.

# To Reach the Hearts of Temple Members

When the temple issue erupted, Carrie Triffet's husband joined the temple and is now a member of their advisory board. Her love and concern for him have crystallized into a determination to protect all temple members from the temple's influence. 'While on the surface they all seem to be doing fine,' Carrie says, 'I know their lives are being subtly poisoned by pernicious false doctrine. It's an emergency situation of epic proportions, but the damage is taking place in such slow motion that it's virtually undetectable to the naked eye. Radical changes have to be made, because lives are at stake.'

Photo by USA HOLLIS

**I**n 1990, after four years of practicing Buddhism, I met and married a wonderful man. We married in the Nichiren Shoshu temple and went to the head temple in Japan for our honeymoon, to chant to the Dai-Gohonzon. But then within weeks of our return from Japan, the temple issue exploded.

Over the next two years, my husband slowly moved toward the temple, ultimately embracing it fully and taking his entire district, many of whom are our mutual friends, with him. With his sincerity and hard work, he soon rose to the top of that organization, becoming a member of their advisory board. He also produces all their publications, which means he's on the temple payroll.

I love my husband very much. I made the determination long ago to fight this ignorance on his behalf and to protect him from his slanderous causes with my life itself if necessary. But for the past six years, I saw it as a very private campaign. Honestly speaking, like many other SGI members, I was at first disappointed by the SGI's "official" handling of the priesthood issue. Even though it was a very real part of my daily life, I would turn away every time I heard or read information on the subject. I found the SGI approach to be superficial, disingenuous, and even at times counterproductive and harmful. So I distanced myself as much as possible from the larger organization, while continuing to practice hard at the grassroots level.

But this past summer, while involved in some very messy and painful human revolution on another subject altogether, I realized that if wanted to change my life, I was going to have to challenge the temple issue. While chanting, I suddenly knew that I couldn't sit on the fence anymore, arms crossed, being critical of the SGI from the sidelines. This is my organization. I needed to commit to it 100 percent. I realized it's the only credible hope in the world at



Carrie Triffet at home in Van Nuys, Calif.

this moment for the attainment of kosen-rufu. So it is infinitely precious, warts and all, and I need to do everything in my power to protect and nourish it. That means, if there's something I see that's wrong, I need to take responsibility to fix it myself. And with that realization, I turned around to squarely face my real mission for the first time. ALL suffering temple members are my problem. Not just my husband or my friends. While on the surface they all seem to be doing fine, I know their lives are being subtly poisoned by pernicious false doctrine. It's an emergency situation of epic proportions, but the damage is taking place in such slow motion that it's virtually undetectable to the naked eye. Radical changes have to be made, because lives are at stake.

Once my mission was defined, I looked around wildly for someone smarter, stronger and

way more enlightened to whom I could hand this mission over, and then I could just support them from behind the scenes. But I couldn't find anybody like that. So I had no choice but to vow to the Gohonzon that it's me. I will be the one to take full responsibility, alone if necessary, for creating the conditions that will bring temple members back to correct practice.

**S**hortly after vowing to accomplish my mission alone, I found I didn't have to. I was able to meet and join a small, determined temple issue committee in the San Fernando Valley that's been resolutely chanting together seven days a week for the last two years. Their original goal was to chant together to stop the temple's negative influence. There is nothing more powerful than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. But pre-

cisely because chanting is infinitely powerful, I feel we need to set our sights as high as possible. I feel it's very important that when we chant about this issue, we dig down to illuminate the nature of the evil itself.


My prayer is that each of us will take full responsibility for this priesthood issue. It's in our lives — we're practicing during this time, so we must have some karmic connection to it. If each of us made the determination to do our own human revolution, as courageously as necessary, for the sake of others, we could fight to eradicate evil from our own lives. Injustice, authoritarianism, arrogance — they all exist in our own lives, and therefore also in the SGI because the SGI is us. If we volunteer to break our own karmic bonds to all these forms of evil, I feel we can simultaneously uproot the hold that Nikken has over the lives of his followers.

This is the daimoku talking, but I really believe with my whole heart that this is where the real answer lies. Lots of courageous individual SGI members doing our own human revolution for the sake of suffering temple members would create such a shimmering explosion of joy and light and creativity within the SGI, as well as within our personal lives. It would shatter deadlocks, moving us all forward toward becoming the people we want to be for the 21st century. But most important, I believe the shock wave from that explosion would reach the deadened hearts of those countless temple members, and they'd be drawn irresistibly back toward the light. And when all those temple members drift away from the temple of their own volition, maybe that's what causes a local temple to stop negatively influencing people for good.

I've been reaching out to members and leaders these last few months, having dialogues on this subject. I've been talking a lot with young men's leaders in particular and I'm very hopeful that I'm making real concrete headway. It is my sincere desire to help

create a beautiful new SGI-USA that SGI President Ikeda can really be proud of. Virtually all of my prayers, every day, go into this mission, so I know that continued effort will create real change for the better. And as a result of all this, I've begun to experience within my own life the kind of changes that I just spoke of.

**T**he act of standing up alone has brought forth an avalanche of obstacles both from inside and outside my own life; I won't pretend that it hasn't been hard. But because with each new obstacle I refuse to be defeated, I seem to have found that elusive key to unlocking my life. Lately I can feel all kinds of deeply imbedded karmic hindrances starting to break up and disappear. My whole life seems to have reoriented itself toward success, and it's now jetting at light speed in that direction. And I only started noticing recently that at the moment it's raining benefits. To give just one example, after suffering from various seemingly unrelated health problems the last few years (including one that caused me to undergo two painful surgeries earlier this year), I recently met an excellent nutritionist who has found the underlying related causes for all my health problems and is working to quickly bring me back to total health.

This principle is exactly what President Ikeda and the SGI have been telling us from the very beginning. President Ikeda says: "When your determination changes, everything else begins to move in the direction you desire. The moment you resolve to be victorious, every nerve and fiber in your being immediately orient themselves toward your success. On the other hand, if you think, 'This is never going to work out,' at that instant, every cell in your being will be defeated, giving up the fight. Everything then will move in the direction of failure." We've been hearing for years that Buddhism is win or lose. Now, I've finally made my choice. I'm going to win. 

SPECIAL  
PULLOUT  
SECTION

# FRIENDS for Peace

MAR. 5, 1999



## San Francisco ROCKS!

By RONALD BAIRD  
San Francisco

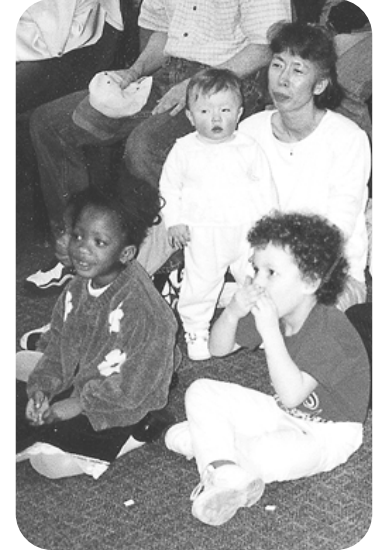
**T**he San Francisco 1 & 2 regions Boys and Girls Group 1999 Kick-off Meeting on Jan. 24 brought together members, young and not-so-young. They shared a skit, music, a presentation, a report on a local area and kicked off the new year together. The meeting was attended by at least 145 children from as far away as Fresno, Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Sacramento, Fairfield, Monterey, Stockton and San Francisco.

Boys and girls from the combined San Jose and Silicon Valley areas ended the presentations with 20 children playing "Ode to Joy" on their recorders. Second-grader Royce Hall, a 7-year-old Silicon Valley Area member, said: "At first I was nervous performing in front of all the other kids. But after we finished 'Ode to Joy,' I felt happy — I felt proud and happy!"

Royce's older brother Kendall Hall, a 10-year-old fifth grader, led gongyo for the boys and girls meeting at the San Francisco Culture Center that morning. Kendall said: "I felt good that we were that good, and we'd only been practicing for a month. Later I told our new music teacher at school that I had learned how to play the recorder."

Boys and girls from the combined San Jose and Silicon Valley areas also had an experience with stage fright earlier in the month when they performed Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" in front of an audience of 720 at their New Year's Day celebration in San Jose, Calif. ❄️

## A Nashville SURPRISE



By MEREDITH GREEN AND SUSAN GARMONY, Nashville, Tenn.

**T**he Boys and Girls Group of Nashville surprised area members with a fabulous puppet show at February's kosen-rufu gongyo meeting. It was based on the story of the Kankucho bird (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255), who whiled away the hours in the morning sun rather than build a warm nest in preparation for the cold nights.

The young members used Beanie Babies and hand-drawn props on a brightly painted red, yellow and blue stage bedecked with the name "SGI Playhouse." Megan Haynes, Nagisa

Konuma and Kara Bellenfant gave voices to the characters and illustrated temperature-changing effects with snow and varied the day and night scenes. Women's division members Elizabeth Davidson and Yoshiko Konuma assisted behind the scenes, while Nikki Dean acted as master of ceremonies and narrator.

The highlight of the show featured Nashville West Chapter Men's Division Leader Tadashi Konuma, who emerged as "Mrs. Squiggles," better known as "The Worm Lady." At that point, Gummi Worms were distributed to all the children in the audience. ❄️



## Buffalo Kids, Won't Ya Come Out Tonight!

By SUSAN DiVINCENZO, Buffalo, N.Y.

The theme mural for the New Year, 1999, was created by the Boys and Girls Group of Buffalo and presented to the Buffalo Community Center at the New Year's Day meeting. This project was a great start for the year of the community and took place between Christmas

and New Year's with the artistic support of Buffalo artists Mark DiVincenzo and Ron Brent.

The mural represents the flowers of the Law (of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo) blooming in nature and depicts the beauty and potential we have within our community toward vic-

tory in the new millennium. The mural will be an inspiration during all events that take place at the community center in this final year before 2000. Once again, the Boys and Girls Group in Buffalo have brought great inspiration to the members! ❄️

## EXPERIENCE

### JULIE ODANO, 12

Culver City, Calif.



Hi! I am a Boys and Girls Group graduate, and I'm in the seventh grade. I play on an AYSO All Star Soccer team. Three weeks ago, we were playing in a tournament just for all-star teams. These games were for the area championship. Each team played seven games and earned points. The top four teams in points would go to the finals. Our team was in second place. In the final game, our team played the number one team — Santa Monica.

The morning of the game, I did gongyo and chanted lots of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. I was determined to win. I play center forward on my team, and everyone was counting on me to score goals. Our team played great, but we tied the game 1-1! Somehow, I just couldn't score a goal! We had to play overtime: We would play two 7-minute halves. My mom and I chanted daimoku on the sidelines. When the overtime started, I chanted to myself. I kept chanting as I played. Finally, I got the ball on a break-away and ran as fast as I could toward the goal. The goalie came out to get the ball from me, but I beat her and from the top of the circle I kicked the ball straight to the goal! The ball slowly rolled toward the net. My coach was running down the side lines following the ball as it rolled into the net! When the ball crossed over the line, my coach knelt down on the ground with relief. My whole team was jumping with joy!!! Even one of my teammates said, "I love you."

After my goal, our team was really excited and motivated to win. We won the game!!! We became the area champions. Chanting and doing gongyo gave me confidence to do what I needed to do that day!!!

I am doing gongyo and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo every day, and I have been able to keep a 4.0, straight-A grade average at school, too. I am very happy that I practice in the SGI, and I always remember that SGI President Ikeda says, "Never give up on anything!"



## OUR PRACTICE — THE ENGINE OF OUR LIVES

(from Discussions on Youth by Daisaku Ikeda)

(pp. 180-81) "To borrow the example of a meal, daimoku might be likened to the main course, while gongyo represents the side dishes, such as salad. Though one main dish might make for an adequate meal, we need to eat from other food groups as well if we want to have a nutritionally balanced diet. When we're busy, a purely carbohydrate meal, for example, can be fine and give us the energy we need, but a balanced meal is ideal."

(p. 184) "As I said, there's no need to become anxious and put unnecessary pressure on yourselves. Buddhism exists to free people, not to restrain them. Doing even a little bit every day is important. The food we eat each day turns to energy for our bodies. Our studies, too, become a valuable asset when we make steady efforts on a daily basis. Our lives are created from what we do, how we live, every day. For that reason, we should strive to live each day so as to continually improve ourselves. The driving force for this is gongyo."

(p. 185) "Exerting ourselves in the practice of gongyo each day amounts to what we might call a spiritual workout. It purifies and cleanses our lives, gets our motors running and puts us on the right course for the day. It gets our bodies and our minds working smoothly and puts us in rhythm, in sync, with the universe."

(p. 186) "When we chant daimoku, our problems and sufferings all turn into energy for our happiness, into fuel for our advancement."

(p. 53) "No matter how much we study, it can never be enough. I hope all of you will develop into great individuals in the 21st century. Now it's time for you to cultivate your minds through reading. That will decide everything."

## 5 WAYS TO LEARN AND IMPROVE GONGYO

### 1 TRY IT

Start with one page a day, and each week add another page. Try doing Sections A and C first (these sections are the easiest). Chant with someone.

### 2 MAKE A LIST

of five or ten things you want, like goals or benefits. These are your targets. Doing gongyo is like shooting an arrow at your target. You'll know when you hit the bull's eye!

### 4

### KEEP A DAIMOKU CHART

Like the one on page D. You can fill in one box for every minute or five minutes that you chant.

### 5

### LEAD GONGYO

Sometimes with other people, like your family, if you can.

### 3 CHANT EVERY DAY,

morning and evening, even if you chant just a few minutes.

## What Do You Think?

What are your questions about Buddhism?

What do your friends ask you about chanting?

Send us your questions! We wanna know what you wanna know. We want to make study topics more interesting and useful for you, so we need to hear from you — yes, YOU!

Send your questions to: "Friends for Peace"

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Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427

# WORD SEARCH:

## Faith, Practice and Study

Circle the words that describe some of our benefits from chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and doing gongyo. (Look for words that go across, down, backwards.)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | S | H | I | N | E |
| S | M | I | L | E | S |
| H | A | P | P | Y | I |
| F | R | I | E | N | D |
| U | T | R | E | L | A |
| N | A | W | A | K | E |

(Answers: Shine, Smiles, Happy, Friend, Awake, Hip, Alert, Smart, Fun, Practice, Study, Faith)



### THE BASIC PILLARS: FAITH, PRACTICE, STUDY

By Audrey Correll, Philadelphia

**FAITH** is to make goals, such as good grades, having a great day or whatever you want or feel you need. Faith is to chant and do gongyo as best as you can, and do whatever you can to contribute to meetings, your family and your community. When you take action for one of your goals, such as studying if you want good grades, you will see the effect or the result, which will be getting GOOD GRADES! When you will naturally become more and more confident about the power you have to make your dreams happen, accomplishing all your goals.

**PRACTICE** is for self and for others. We practice to become happy ourselves, and to help other people become happy, too. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in our lives is very powerful. When we chant, we can help ourselves and help others, too. We can chant for our classmates to be happy. We can chant for our teachers to be great. We can chant for our entire family to be happy and healthy. We can even chant for our communities to be happy and safe. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is great, and when we chant it is like a song to the whole universe. Sometimes we may forget that we have a Buddha nature and that we have great potential in our lives. We may even forget that every single person also has a Buddha nature inside their lives, and they have great potential, too. That's why we chant — to remind ourselves — and we study.

**STUDY** helps us to learn more about this Buddhism and remind ourselves how great it is to have Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in our lives. When we study, we also learn and become more confident about the power of our practice to overcome any obstacle we may encounter.

### What Is GONGYO?

The word gongyo is made from two words: GON means careful and without stopping, and GYO means practice. Gongyo is something we practice every day.

### Why do we do GONGYO?

We do gongyo to wake up our lives! If you have a sleepy life, it will be hard to make friends, feel good, or even do well in school. But by trying to do gongyo each day, you will find that everything goes better. Gongyo is like a key that opens the door to hope, joy and good fortune.

# THE GEM IN THE ROBE

(from the April 1996 Seikyo Times)

**A** poor man came to visit a wealthy friend. Late into the night, the two friends ate, drank and talked. When the poor man went to bed, he fell into a deep sleep.

In the middle of the night, a messenger came to inform the rich man that he must go immediately to a land far away. Before he left, he wanted to do something for his poor friend to show how much he cared for him, but he did not want to wake his friend from such a restful sleep.

So the wealthy friend sewed a beautiful gem inside the hem of

his poor friend's robe. This jewel had the power to satisfy all of one's desires.

The next morning, the poor man awoke to find himself alone in his wealthy friend's house. Totally unaware of anything that had taken place while he was sleeping, he wandered off.

The poor man traveled from place to place, looking for work. All the while, he was completely unaware that he possessed a priceless gem in the hem of his robe.

A long time passed until, one day, by chance, his wealthy friend came upon him as he wandered

destitute in the street. Seeing the man's impoverished condition, the wealthy friend asked him:

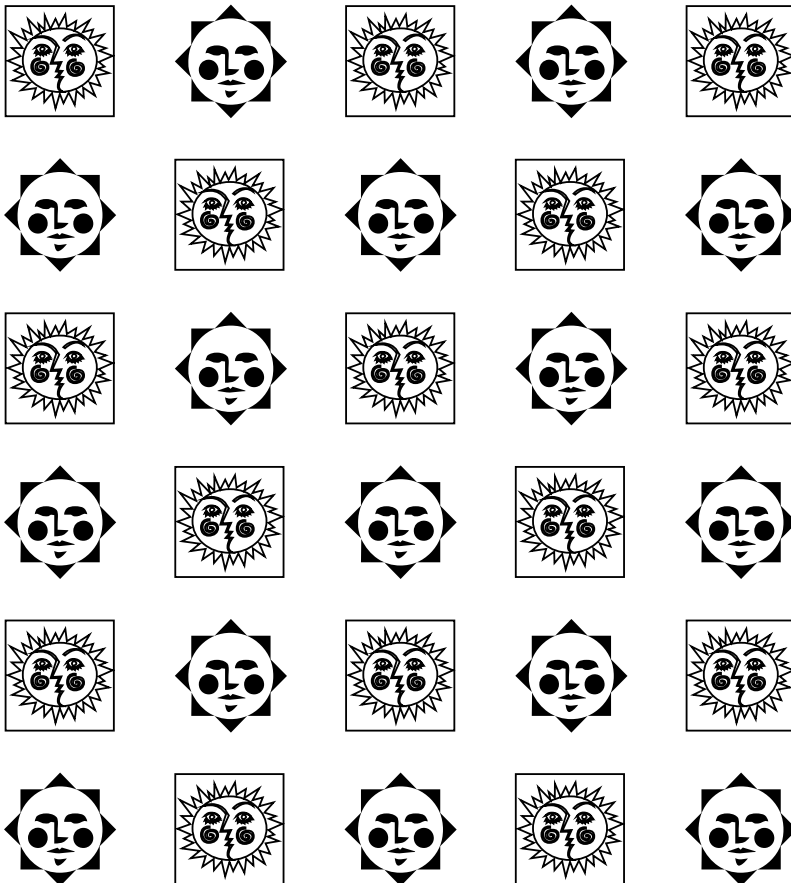
"Why have you allowed yourself to become so poor? You could have used the jewel that I gave you to live your life in comfort. You must still have it, yet you are living so miserably. Why don't you use the gem to get what you need? You can have anything you want!"

Bewildered, the poor man fumbled through the inside of his robe and, with the help of his friend, found the gem. Ashamed of his ignorance, yet overcome with joy, he realized for the first time the

depth of his friend's compassion. From then on, the poor friend came to own many precious things and satisfied all of his desires.

*This story appears in chapter 8 of the Lotus Sutra. When the poor man awoke from a deep sleep, he was unaware he had the priceless jewel. This represents people's disbelief that they possess a Buddha nature. The wealthy man represents Nichiren Daishonin who bestowed the priceless jewel of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo on all humankind. When we realize we possess this "jewel," we can attain absolute happiness. ☸*

## A Daimoku Chart for You!



Color in one figure for every 1 minute (or every 5 minutes) you chant.

## ASK AMANDA

Dear Amanda,

I have a problem in school. One girl has always been bossing me around. I try to be nice but she always calls me names. Sometimes when I play with her friends, she gets mad and says, "Go away," and she says, "No, you can't play with us." That really hurts me. What should I do?

— Your Friend in Columbia, Md.



Dear Friend in Columbia,

It's unfortunate that this girl hasn't been treating you with the same respect and sincerity with which you treat her. She must not be very happy if she likes putting you down and making you feel left out. Don't let her make you feel bad about yourself. You are being sincere and friendly. That's a good cause. She's the one making the negative cause by rejecting you and hurting your feelings.

Seek out people who love and respect you. When you develop a high life-condition, you'll naturally want to be around people who also have a high life-condition and who care about you. You can chant for this girl's happiness but don't be swayed by the negativity that comes out of her mouth. The more strength and confidence you develop in yourself, the easier it will be to walk on by without letting her words penetrate your heart.

— Amanda

Thanks to Sara Algase, Amanda's friend in New York, for sending us her answer. Hey, kids, what's on your mind? Ask Amanda. Send your questions to:

"Ask Amanda" c/o "Friends for Peace"  
606 Wilshire Blvd., P.O. Box 1427  
Santa Monica, Calif. 90406-1427

"FRIENDS for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experiences (around 150 words), comments, questions or news articles to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 606 Wilshire Blvd., P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427.