



DENVER
Rocky Mountain youth meet for March 16.

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BOYS & GIRLS
The April issue of 'Friends for Peace.'

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 9 SPEECH

What a Drama of Inner Change!

President Ikeda shares another experience of an SGI-USA member who has accomplished remarkable human revolution: Orlando Cepeda, baseball hero. Mr. Cepeda, who recently was welcomed into the Baseball Hall of Fame, fell from stardom after a drug bust and subsequent prison time in the 1970s — but rebuilt his life with the power of faith.



AFP PHOTO/JOHN G. MABANGLO

Orlando Cepeda is congratulated by San Francisco Giants Manager Dusty Baker during a visit to the Giants spring training camp in Scottsdale, Ariz., March 3. The day before, Cepeda was finally picked for the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Thank you for coming all this way today, in such cold weather. I deeply appreciate all your efforts.

There are the famous words "A spirit so bold strikes the hearts of all" by the Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca, whom I have spoken about a number of times, in his *Troades*. Today, I want to offer a brief overview of his life that I hope you will find interesting.

Seneca was active not only as a philosopher but as a dramatist and statesman. His tragedies had a profound influence on the works of Shakespeare and other later playwrights.

Seneca is known for such

philosophical writings as *De constantia sapientis*, *De brevitate vitae* and *De clementia*, and for his 10 famous tragedies, including *Troades*. From a young age, he also gained reputé as an orator and entered politics. His talent-inspired jealousy among members of the Roman Senate and other leading political figures of the day. Greater be those who are envied than those who envy!

In Seneca's case, he was envied by the highest rulers of the land. Attempts were even made on his life. He was finally banished to the Mediterranean island of Corsica, where centuries

later Napoléon Bonaparte would be born. Seneca spent eight years there in exile. Being driven out and exiled is nothing unusual for those who stand up and fight in earnest for justice.

Seneca eventually was recalled from exile and returned to Rome. Under the patronage of an influential figure at court, he secured the position of tutor to the future emperor Nero. Seneca applied himself diligently to his duties, and after Nero became emperor, Seneca continued to serve as one of his aides.

During this early period of his reign, Nero is credited with hav-

ing judiciously ruled. But before long, his infamous tyranny began. He no longer cared about governing for the people, only about governing for his personal whims and ends.

The people became merely pawns to be manipulated. The empire was ruled by corruption and treachery.

And Seneca was appalled. Although it pained him to do so, he decided to retire from politics.

Rulers who have veered from the path of justice and truth cannot endure the presence of people of integrity. So it was not long before Nero wanted to be

rid of his erstwhile teacher. For alleged involvement in subversive activities, Nero ordered Seneca to commit suicide.

How Seneca must have lamented the depravity to which Rome had succumbed! But he went to his death with great dignity and composure, encouraging and consoling his sorrowing friends until the last moment. The solemn scene of his death has been depicted on canvas by many artists over the ages. His dauntless courage has moved untold hearts.

Let us also continue to fight on the side of truth. Let us live long and vanquish injustice.

Moving to another subject, the German author Goethe once observed that only with positive action can we surmount that which is unpleasant. He is absolutely right. If we cheerfully go about our daily activities, trifling annoyances will disappear.

For example, rather than reluctantly forcing yourself to do gongyo after someone has nagged you to, you should decide on your own: "Right! I'll do gongyo." You have everything to gain by starting off with a cheerful, positive attitude.

The same applies to other areas of your life as well. To take action, not because you've been asked to or told to, but because you have recognized on your own what needs to be done — this brings pleasure and joy to life.

The other day, some exciting news came my way like a home run flying into the spectator

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Where free speech and wisdom meet, by Greg Martin.

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Seeing Through My Excuses

By ULISSE GALLO

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Life is limited, and we must not begrudge it. What we should aspire to, after all, is the Buddha land. (“Aspiration for the Buddha Land,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 132)

I recently decided on the law school that I want to attend and, with the help of my instructor, began to prepare my application.



In My Life

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

She gave me some pointers about my résumé and told me that in order to meet my deadline, I had to put aside my need for immediate gratification and prioritize. I retorted that my free time was spent doing volunteer activities — for world peace, even — and that I would do my best.

Her statement, though, bothered me for days. Was I using my time wisely? Was my faith being reflected in my daily life? I realized that I had to be honest with myself. I needed to go to bed earlier and be rested rather than frantically scrambling in the morning.

Once I started doing gongyo in my car, I knew that my life was not going in the proper direction. So the other night, I just sat down after work and chanted an hour. I did the same the next night. On the third night, I picked up the Daishonin's writings and was reading the above passage, when suddenly it dawned on me. My professor had been right!

My actions had become focused only on my immediate gratification; things that were necessary to my life in the moment — finding an article, cleaning my apartment, or returning a phone call or an e-mail. I hadn't realized, though, that they were not truly important to fulfill my prayers to the Gohonzon. They were often excuses that kept me from chanting, both quality and quantity daimoku.

It is my constant battle to “aspire to the Buddha land” at every moment, but I have the choice, at any time, to re-prioritize my life by sitting straight up in front of my Gohonzon and chanting to win. For that moment, I have won. **W**

The Freedom To Speak Wisely

By GREG MARTIN

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT VICE LEADER



The fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra states, “The offense of uttering even a single derogatory word against the priests and laity who believe in and preach the Lotus Sutra is even graver than that of abusing Shakyamuni Buddha to his face for an entire kalpa.” The Lotus Sutra states, “[If anyone shall see a person who embraces this sutra and try to expose the faults or evils of that person, he will in the present age be afflicted with white leprosy,] whether what he speaks is the truth or not.” Take these teachings to heart, and always remember that believers in the Lotus Sutra should absolutely be the last to abuse each other. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 208)

This passage comes from the letter “The Fourteen Slanders,” in which Nichiren Daishonin explains the 14 slanders or evil causes — the attitudes that believers should avoid in their practice: 1) arrogance, 2) negligence, 3) arbitrary, egotistical judgment, 4) shallow, self-satisfied understanding, 5) attachment to earthly desires, 6) lack of seeking spirit, 7) not believing, 8) aversion, 9) deluded doubt, 10) vilification, 11) contempt, 12) hatred, 13) jealousy and 14) grudges.

The first 10 are problems in our personal practice, internal problems. They hurt us.

The last four — contempt, hatred, jealousy and grudges — are negative attitudes we hold toward other believers. They are particularly troublesome, because they disrupt the harmonious unity of believers, compounding the gravity of the slander. Thus, holding ill feelings (Jpn *onshitsu*) toward fellow believers will have a detrimental effect on our ability to

manifest benefit from our practice. Since all of us have such feelings at times in our practice, the ability to overcome and dispel them is a key component of our faith.

I've been familiar with the above passage for many years, but, frankly speaking, it wasn't until relatively recently that I noticed the part about “whether what he speaks is the truth or not.” According to the Daishonin, even if what we say is true, even if we're right, it's still slander to hold ill feelings. To a person like myself, raised to believe in “truth, justice and the American way,” this is a difficult thing to accept and understand.

I believed that if I were speaking the truth, I could say anything to anyone — and not be committing slander. Now I find that the truth, too, can be slander. As the Daishonin says, misfortune comes from our own mouths.

So should we just keep our mouths shut? No. Elsewhere, the Daishonin teaches us that silence is the enemy of the Buddha. So we can't keep quiet. That wouldn't be correct. We must speak. We must take action. Still, the fact that we believe something to be true is not enough to justify saying anything we want. The crisis of free speech in America hinges on this point, I believe. The right of free speech must be tempered with responsibility and concern for its impact on others.

I am reminded of a scene from *Jurassic Park*: The mathematician/chaos scientist character played by Jeff Goldblum, after learning that the park scientists have

made living dinosaurs, makes a prescient statement like “The question you should be asking is not ‘Can we do it?’ The question you should be asking is ‘Should we do it?’” Similarly, *how* one should speak is the operative question in Buddhism, not simply whether we are right or not. Confirming that we're right is only a first step, not the final measure.

First Soka Gakkai President Makiguchi, with his value-creating philosophy, replaced the Western virtue of truth (as in truth, beauty and goodness) with gain or value-creation. Why? Because he recognized that truth is for the most part both relative and neutral.

Truth is relative because people observe the same events often in completely different ways. Eyewitness accounts, for example, are notoriously subjective and inaccurate. So, although we may know what we said, what we saw or what we heard and believe this to be the truth, rarely is it the absolute truth.

Truth is also neutral. It just is. In other words, just because something is true doesn't mean that it's valuable in and of itself. For instance, the truth may be that you have a newspaper in your hand right now — but it's what you do with that newspaper that makes all the difference. Hopefully reading this newspaper will bring you some insight and growth. But if you use it to hit someone, to use an extreme example, it becomes a weapon.

Using the truth wisely is what creates value. Wisdom is a virtue; truth is simply a fact. And compassion is the well-spring of wisdom. The Daishonin says that we cannot keep silent, but we must speak wisely if we want to create value. Ultimately, Buddhists see freedom of speech as the freedom to speak compassionately, wisely and responsibly in the creation of value.

Five in a series

ANNOUNCEMENT

Foreign Language Pages

Until now, the Spanish, Chinese and Korean language pages have been published monthly in the *World Tribune*. Beginning in June this year, the *World Tribune* will be mailing directly the language supplement of choice ONLY to the homes of those subscribers who request it.

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SEATTLE INCIDENT OVERVIEW — PART 2

Nikken's Dubious Diary

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

A questionable piece of evidence, Nikken's diary of his 1963 trip to America, has become a major focus of the Seattle Incident trial. Nikken's attorneys submitted the diary (previously undisclosed until then) in late 1997 to the Tokyo District Court. During his first appearance before the court, on Dec. 22, 1997, Nikken quoted from the diary, attempting to prove that, while he had left his hotel for drinks, he had never had a dispute with prostitutes in downtown Seattle the night of March 19-20, 1963.

First, Nikken had to explain where the diary came from. He claimed that in March 1995, while he was in the process of moving into a new Tokyo residence, his wife discovered the diary in a box. Supposedly, it was only when he read the diary (which he had no memory of keeping until then) that he remembered leaving his hotel that night. "This recollection came to me as a tremendous shock," he testified.

Soka Gakkai attorneys had often pointed out how Nikken, beginning in 1992, had been publicly declaring that he never left his hotel that night — but, in 1995, did an about-face and admitted that he had, after all, stepped out. Until his December 1997 testimony and the revelation of the diary, no explanation for this discrepancy was forthcoming from Nikken or his legal team.

The crucial March 19 diary entry, which Nikken introduced in

court, reads: "In the evening, for the first time since I arrived in the United States, I took a walk by myself here and there, ending up with the glasses of whiskey I longed for. Since I have not had any alcohol for such a long time, I got drunk.... Now I'm going to sleep. 1:00 p.m." (Nikken explained that he sometimes confuses p.m. and a.m.)

What time Nikken returned to his room is crucial to his testimony, for Mrs. Hiroe Clow testified that she was called by Seattle police to the scene around 2:00 a.m. She convinced the police to release Nikken to her then, which would not have been possible if he had been asleep by 1:00 a.m.

In court on Feb. 2, 1998, an attorney for the Soka Gakkai showed that two different colors of ink were used in writing the March 19 entry. Nikken was asked why the ink for "Now I'm going to sleep" was in blue, and "1:00 p.m." was in black. He answered, "After I wrote 'Now I'm going to sleep,' I went to sleep for awhile and got up again — maybe because of jet lag or something — and that's when I added '1:00 p.m.'"

The defense attorney asked how Nikken could remember such a minute detail, especially when he had previously testified that he was shocked at the diary's discovery, that he did not remember keeping it at all until his wife came upon it. "I'm not sure on this point" was Nikken's reply.

Recently, scientific tests were conducted on the diary by the defense; they suggest that "1:00 p.m." was added at a later date.



Page 53 of Nikken's diary:

[IN BLACK INK:] 19th: Left Los Angeles for Seattle at 8:30 with Vice General Chapter Leader Takahashi on a jet. (Camera → Mt. Lassen) After a stopover in San Francisco and Portland, arrived at 12:12. Four or five people, including Hiroe Clow, came to greet us. Headed for hotel right away and rested until 4:00. Was treated to sashimi and other Japanese food at a restaurant owned by Japanese.

Boeing Aircraft Company.

Seattle Chapter is about 180 households.

[CHANGES TO BLUE INK:] Chapter Leader Clow is a rough but good-hearted woman. Don't know how to describe Women's Division Leader Kawada. In the beginning, Seattle generally lacked a pure seeking spirit toward priests. Three or four women who showed up at the airport did not even greet me. They seemed to avoid me. Is it a sign of their humility or dislike? But as I spoke with them a little and gradually got used to them, I felt they seemed OK.

From 7:00, conducted a Gohonzon-conferral ceremony at Women's Division Leader Kawada's home (her 3rd-floor apartment). Ninety-eight people accepted the Buddhist precepts. Two Gohonzon.

Erich J. Speckin, a U.S. forensic expert, used a high-powered microscope to show that impressions made by the next day's diary entry, appearing on the reverse side of the page, affected the ink flow in "1:00 p.m." This would not have been possible if Nikken had written the March 19 entry before the March 20 entry, as he said he did.

Another test, conducted by David S. Moore, also a U.S.

forensic expert, employed specially filtered light shone on the page to reveal that the black ink used for "1:00 p.m." is most likely different from the ink used in the following paragraph (also in black, which Nikken testified that he wrote just before he wrote "1:00 p.m." and with the same fountain pen).

These tests were submitted to the court by the defense in hopes

that he ended his March 19, 1963, diary entry in blue ink with 'Now I'm going to sleep,' then went to sleep, soon woke up again, then wrote in black ink the final paragraph about Mrs. Clow's husband's remains. Last of all, he said, he inserted '1:00 p.m.' at the previous paragraph's end with the same black pen. But forensic tests suggest that '1:00 p.m.' was added at some later date and is inconsistent with the black ink in the final paragraph, supposedly written with the same pen.

When I spoke, I sweated a lot.

Is the atmosphere of all the northern area like this?

Page 54:

The membership system of the Seattle Buddhist society.

In the evening, for the first time since I arrived in the United States, I took a walk by myself here and there, ending up with the glasses of whiskey I longed for. Since I have not had any alcohol for such a long time, I got drunk. When I spoke, they seemed to understand me, but I had no idea about what they said. Pitiful. Now I'm going to sleep. **[CHANGES TO BLACK INK:]** 1:00 p.m.

The case of Mrs. Hiroe Clow:

Her husband's will was to keep his ashes at Taiseki-ji. Regarding a certificate from Taiseki-ji, should I ask her to contact the Overseas Bureau and ask for a certificate directly from the head temple? She may contact Hoshio-ji in Yokosuka. But those who take faith in America do not have their own branch temple. In such cases, they should go through the Overseas Bureau. The experience of Hiroe Clow: She insisted on cremation [of her husband's body], according to his will, despite the Navy code for interment.

of convincing the panel of judges who will decide the case that the March 19 entry is of a suspect nature. Of course, this would cast great doubt on Nikken's entire testimony and would lend credence to Mrs. Clow's and former Seattle police officer Ronald Sprinkle's testimonies as to the truth of the Seattle Incident.

Two in a three-part series



SUA Announcement Application Deadline Extended

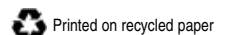
Now in its fifth year, Soka University of America's Graduate School is accepting applications until May 15 for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education.

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 May 15. 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/



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SPEECH, FROM PAGE 1

stands. It was the announcement that Orlando Cepeda, an SGI-USA member, has been elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame — the highest honor a baseball player can achieve in the United States. Mr. Cepeda is a former major league power hitter. I immediately sent my congratulations.

Mr. Cepeda is 61 and an SGI district chief in San Francisco. At the beginning of the year, he sent me a signed photograph of himself. His face radiated a wonderful warmth and maturity.

Mr. Cepeda signed the photograph: "To Sensei: Thanks for helping my life so much. Love, Orlando Cepeda, 30." The number 30 is his uniform number from his days with the San Francisco Giants.

Countless members who are foremost in their fields are emerging around the world. How remarkably the times have changed!

Americans' love for baseball is profound. Being elected to the Hall of Fame is an undying honor conferred on only the most outstanding baseball players — legends such as Babe Ruth.

I understand that not only performance on the field but also the ballplayer's overall qualities — his character and contributions to society — are taken into consideration by the Hall's Veterans Committee, comprised of former players and sportswriters.

The news of Mr. Cepeda's election to the Hall of Fame made headlines everywhere and was applauded with delight and happy surprise. This personal triumph of a fellow member is wonderful news for all of us in the SGI.

Come to think of it, around about the same time that I made my very first visit to San Francisco, in 1960, Mr. Cepeda was scoring big for the San Francisco Giants. The young first baseman and power hitter had many fans. In 1958, he was named National League rookie of the year. And in 1967, he won the National League Most Valuable Player Award. During his 17-year major league career, he hit a total of 379 home runs. He was known as one of the most feared major league sluggers of the 1960s. His record of runs batted in and home runs shines brightly even today.

However, a number of severe tests were in store for Mr. Cepeda. First, he was forced to retire due to a 1974 knee injury. Without the injury, he most certainly would have gone on to achieve an even greater batting record. His fans had looked forward to that. How bitterly disappointing it must have been for him to have his dreams dashed!

In 1975, he was arrested for smuggling marijuana and subsequently spent 10 months in a Florida prison. It was a swift, ignominious fall from fame and celebrity. Overnight he lost his prestige, his wealth, his friends — everything. After his release from prison, people gave him the cold



Together with youth: Orlando Cepeda signs autographs for young fans at the Giants spring training camp, March 3.

shoulder. He was scorned and discriminated against.

Everyone experiences hardships and trials. A life of all smooth sailing doesn't exist.

Mr. Cepeda was in the depths of hell. But it was in this dark period of despair that he encountered the Buddhism of the sun, the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, through a friend. That was in 1982.

He found the new world of the SGI to be infinitely warm, compassionate and profound. And how much hope the members' encouragement gave him! He gradually came to experience through his own life how incredible is the hope-giving philosophy of human revolution.

People who have suffered a lot can bring hope and courage to others.

A magnificent drama of inner transformation — a drama of revitalization and victory — had begun. With the determination to become a star player in the realm of kosen-rufu, Mr. Cepeda challenged himself in Buddhist practice for both his happiness and that of others, thus changing himself and his environment in the process.

He took his practice very seriously. He was no longer big-headed about being famous nor did he delude himself that he was great just because he was a star. In the depths of his anguish, he had grasped the essence of life. He was no longer lost and uncertain. Instead, he resolved to rise again and win the laurel crown in life as an outstanding human being. His was a drama of transforming earthly desires into enlightenment, of using sufferings as fuel for growth.

Eventually, Mr. Cepeda had the good fortune to secure a responsible position as a community relations representative with the San Francisco Giants, his old team. It marked his return to the world of baseball. Having given everything to that sport, how ecstatic he must have been!

Buddhism changed Mr. Cepeda's attitude toward life 180 degrees. His life changed from one of personal ambition to one dedicated to working for humanity, society and the future. This is the correct path in life.

Selfishness is a particularly disgraceful trait in leaders.

With enthusiasm and joy, Mr. Cepeda started working for kosen-rufu on the front lines of our organization. To decide to do something and then pursue it wholeheart-

edly — such unwavering commitment is often found among our members abroad. Despite his knee injury, despite sometimes having to use a cane to get about, Mr. Cepeda traveled far and wide. Leaning on his cane, he would laboriously climb the stairs of apartment buildings one at a time. Limping, he would visit one member's house after another. What sincerity! What passion! None could help being moved and inspired by his example.

He also devoted his energies to fostering and educating troubled youth. He would frankly relate his own experiences — telling them about his drug arrest and subsequent imprisonment. No doubt he wanted to drive home the message "Your life is precious. You have to treasure yourself. I made a mistake and paid the price, so I know how valuable is the time of youth. I don't want you to go through the same hardships I did."

He visited hospitals and prisons across the United States, encouraging many, many people. Having overcome indescribable suffering himself, his life glowed with genuine humanity. People who have experienced suffering can bring hope and courage to others. And such is the spirit of a genuine practitioner of Buddhism. It is the true spirit of the SGI.

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Mr. Cepeda's warm character and sincere efforts have won him immense trust and respect from his local community and society at large.

By contrast, those who remain drunk on fame and position ultimately lose people's trust and are despised.

Many members regard Mr. Cepeda with great affection, looking up to him like a father or brother. He is a hardworking, dependable district chief, who leads by his own example. Whenever there is an SGI meeting of any kind, he is always there with a guest or two. I hear that he brought three guests to last month's discussion meeting.

Despite an extremely busy work schedule, which takes him around the United States, he never fails to stay in touch with his members. He also makes time to visit members at home, sparing no effort to encourage and support them. A person such as Mr. Cepeda is a true member of the SGI, a disciple directly connected to the Daishonin.

It is a wonderful opportunity to be a leader in the SGI organization.

Today, the greatest pride of this illustrious baseball hero, Mr. Cepeda, is to stand on the front lines of kosen-rufu as an SGI district chief.

From the perspective of the Mystic Law, such things as worldly fame and status are totally insignificant and frivolous.

Mr. Cepeda says that he absolutely does not wish to be treated as a celebrity in the SGI. He undoubtedly believes that a spirit of equality should prevail — that this is the real SGI spirit, that this is precisely why he is exerting himself with his whole life.

What a wonderful and sublime thing it is to live as an SGI leader! Any leaders who cannot appreciate that are to be pitied. At heart, they are vain and worried about appearances.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda sternly rebuked vain people. A young man's division leader once asked him, "What should we strive to achieve, so that our family and friends can be proud of us?" Mr. Toda replied strictly, "How can there be any prouder achievement than being a Soka Gakkai leader?" Mr. Toda keenly perceived the questioner's vanity.

Mr. Toda's sentiment, which I loudly echo, was: "Does fame make someone great? Does status? No! Surely there is no life more noble and valuable than dedicating yourself to kosen-rufu as an SGI leader, even if you have no particular social standing or recognition. Do not forget this Soka Gakkai spirit!"

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 32nd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, March 9. Part 2 will appear in next week's issue.

SGI Members Join UNA National Conference

Photo by JOANNE TACHIBANA

New York is home base for the United Nations and was host for the National Conference of the United Nations Association, March 6-9. Gathered at the historic Roosevelt Hotel were 300 delegates representing the 175 UNA chapters nationwide. Among them were SGI members who are taking the lead in their local UNA communities: Mary Ann Coleman, president, Long Beach Chapter; Royce Ann Mathers, president, Greater Kansas City Chapter; Joanne Tachibana, president, Hawaii



The SGI New York Chorus performs at the UNA National Conference, March 6.

Division; and Ann Porowski, vice president, Capitol Chapter (Washington, D.C.). In their UNA responsibilities, these women support SGI President Ikeda's commitment to strengthen the United Nations, the only international forum where 185 countries conduct dialogue and resolve disputes.

The convention program was rigorous, with workshops, panels, plenary sessions and business meetings running from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. each day. International experts covered a variety of topics: U.S.-U.N. relations, workers rights in the global economy, population/development, disarmament and the adopt-a-minefield program. An important highlight was U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan addressing the group.

The SGI New York Chorus provided the musical opening for the first night's session. Brenda Miller directed the chorus' performance of "United Nations on the March" and a stirring rendition of "The Power of One," which received a standing ovation. The SGI-USA New York members also set up an information booth at the convention site, providing information about the organization to all interested persons.

— JOANNE TACHIBANA

Rocky Mountain Youth Gather in Denver for Kosen-rufu Day

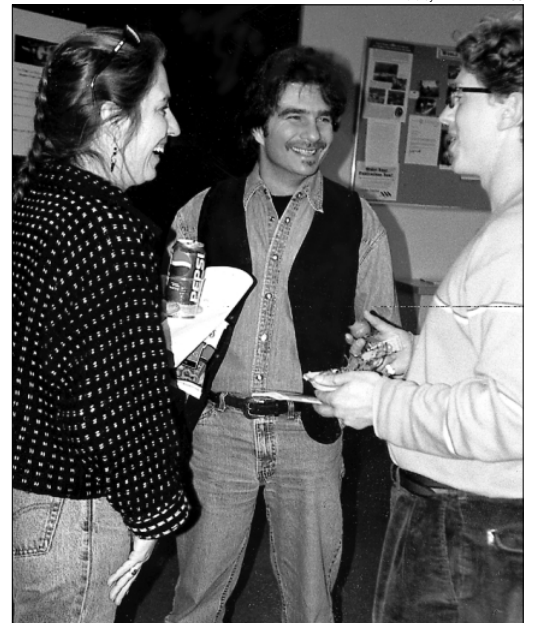
Photo by PETER NELLHAUS

Two days after a gloomy snowstorm in Colorado, "The Sun of *Jiyu* Over a New Land" was the theme the youth division members chose to commemorate March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, at the Denver Culture Center. Around 170 youth from all across Colorado and southern Wyoming gathered on the bright, sunny morning of March 14 for a momentous meeting.

The meeting carried the message of SGI President Ikeda's 1993 poem "The Sun of *Jiyu*" in a way that was easy for everyone to relate to: Throughout the meeting, excerpts from the poem were read, and the Denver youth performed a humorous super heroes skit — with *Jiyu* Man as the protagonist. There was also a performance by the Youth Division Band and an experience.

The New Mexico youth division also on March 14 held their commemorative meeting, in which the youth division did musical performances. The meeting was dedicated to Arizona Area Women's Division Leader Akiko Ogburn, who died March 13.

— LISA MATSUO



Youth from throughout Colorado and southern Wyoming gather in Denver to study "The Sun of 'Jiyu' Over a New Land," March 14.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 37-38

Shin'ichi Yamamoto reminds the New York members that 'America is the land of liberty and democracy.' He emphasizes that 'with freedom also comes the need for self-control...especially if the ideal of genuine democracy is to be actualized.'

Q-and-A sessions have been a tradition in the Soka Gakkai since the time of first president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. In his day, Makiguchi invariably led discussion meetings and answered questions from guests and members.

Josei Toda, his successor, also endeavored to devote as much time as possible to fielding questions from the audience at meetings or while giving lectures. He often remarked that the Buddhist sutras — except for the Lotus Sutra's "Expedient Means" chapter, which is termed an "unsolicited and spontaneous teaching" — are all essentially records of Q-and-A sessions.

Mr. Toda drew a parallel between the four kinds of people present in the assemblies where the Buddha preached and the participants of Soka Gakkai Q-and-A sessions, using the example of a question about illness to make his point:

The first kind of people present are those who ask the Buddha to expound the teaching. They are the people at Soka Gakkai Q-and-A sessions who ask the question on behalf of everyone. The second kind are those who praise the Buddha's teaching. They correspond to people who, after hearing guidance given in response to the question, rise to share a relevant experience, thereby reinforcing the guidance. The

third kind of people are those who, having attained sufficient maturity, listen to the Buddha's teaching and immediately benefit from it. This refers to people who, upon hearing guidance in response to the question about illness, accept it and are certain in the knowledge that they too can recover from illness through faith. The fourth kind are those who attain no immediate benefit but nevertheless form a bond with the Buddha's teaching and benefit from it at a later time. These are like people who, after hearing guidance at a Q-and-A session, decide to take faith and to deepen their understanding of Buddhism.

Of these four kinds of people, Mr. Toda stressed that the first — those who ask questions — play the most important role. To ask a question in front of a large number of people requires courage and a strong seeking spirit. A Q-and-A session cannot proceed, nor can guidance be given in response to people's questions, unless someone speaks up and asks.

That is why Mr. Toda was unstinting in his praise and appreciation of those who asked questions. Whenever someone asked a pertinent question that was of interest to everyone or a question that provided an opportunity to explain a profound Buddhist principle, he would say: "That's a very good question! Thank you!"

Josei Toda was a virtuoso of the Q-and-A session; he was a master of the discussion meeting. He would explain difficult Buddhist concepts by using simple, everyday examples. He would inject humor and wit into his guidance, evoking laughter from his audience and opening their hearts, so that the precious wisdom of his words would penetrate their lives.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto also highly valued such Q-and-A sessions, regarding them as a wonderful Soka Gakkai tradition. Q-and-A sessions consist of dialogue. And dialogue produces understanding, which fuels dynamic faith and inspires fresh progress.

After answering several questions at the America East General Meeting, Shin'ichi addressed the whole audience: "It has been two years and three months since my last visit to New York, and I'm truly delighted to meet with all of you like this and to see you in such high spirits.

"America is the land of liberty and democracy," he said. "As a symbol of those values, New York has captured the imaginations of people the world over. But with freedom also comes the need for self-control, for self-mastery — especially if the ideal of genuine democracy is to be actualized. Otherwise, people simply become slaves to desire, pursuing image and short-term gain, and moving ever further away from true happiness.

"Human revolution is about surmounting our weaknesses, strengthening our lives, and cultivating our character," he went on. "Only through challenging ourselves in this way can we advance surely on a path to genuine fulfillment. And Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is the great teaching that makes this human revolution, this inner transformation, possible.

"Therefore, spreading Buddhism in America — and particularly here in New York — is extremely important toward creating a model for freedom directly related to human happiness," he emphasized. "The United States is also the leader of the Western world. The somber

reality is that, as last year's Cuban Missile Crisis showed us, decisions made by the United States will determine in the future whether the world will fall victim to or be spared from global nuclear war. By propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism in this country, we will spread a philosophy that provides a basis for eliminating nuclear weapons, thereby creating a great momentum toward world peace. That's why I so eagerly look forward to your wonderful efforts to share this Buddhism.

"President Kennedy has spoken of a New Frontier — the Gakkai spirit is also one of pioneering uncharted frontiers," he concluded. "Faith means opening new frontiers in our lives, in our potential and in kosen-rufu. The driving force for such efforts is our chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, our strong prayer, as well as our brave, tenacious efforts to challenge ourselves. Please blaze with a passionate New Frontier spirit for kosen-rufu and work to open the way to happiness and peace. And I hope that all of you will advance in harmony, close camaraderie and solid unity. That concludes my remarks."

Shin'ichi found himself awash in cheers and applause. The New York members had resolutely taken a stand in their faith. The seeds of kosen-rufu had begun to sprout.

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

Greetings

Seems like the other day Ian and I were exchanging vows and here it is 10 years later! Wanted to inform the New York members and friends that in mid-July we will be traveling up to celebrate and would like to re-unite with all who's available. Call us at (787) 261-5913. Hasta luego! — Evelyn Willoughby (Puerto Rico)

I'm NOT *taiten* or sleeping. I'm doing human revolution teaching English in Japan (PE teacher in USA). My contract was for a year, now three. I miss the Boys and Girls Group, Culture Department, stage crew, friends and family. Living in Japan, I now appreciate the strong, dynamic gongyo and daimoku sessions of the SGI-USA members and Goshu I can understand. March 4 was my 27th Gohonzon birthday. Thanks, Chuck Evans (my sponsor) in the Rocky Mts. Thanks to my women's district leader, Setsuko Graham of Hemet, Calif.

I'm connected to SGI-USA and Hemet District because she mails me my *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* every month and updates me on the members. Yeh!! Let's do *shakubuku*!! Let's create victory in our districts and community!! YOUTH, wherever you are, STAND UP and FIGHT for KOSEN-RUFU!! Let's support our mentor, President Ikeda. Lost contact? Jane Perry: Corpo Asahi-gaoka #102, 110-2 48-3 Aza Takabatake Marumori-machi, Igu-gun Miyagi-ken, Japan 981-2166. Phone 0224-72-6443 e-mail: coach@jet.ne.jp — Jane Perry

Dear Washington Chapter Members: Although words are inadequate to describe my deep appreciation for the efforts you made toward our successful SGI Women's Day Commemorative Celebration on Feb. 27, I will have to resort to them, because you cannot see the feelings I hold inside. You are just wonderful! All of us, YWD, YMD, MD and WD worked together in unity with daimoku

and concerted action to bring about an event that was so powerful, so joyful, so meaningful, we had to, literally, start cleaning up so that people would start to go home. Thanks to you, we made our goal of 50 members and guests!...

With your undaunted spirit to do anything for kosen-rufu, we will build such a happy and victorious Washington, DC that we'll eventually be included on the "Victorious America" daimoku map. With my deepest respect — Angela Baden, Washington Chapter WD Leader

Lost and Found

My wife and I were introduced to the Daishonin's Buddhism three years ago in Los Angeles by a wonderful lady by the name of Elaine Coleman, whom I believe was a leader then. We were in close contact with her till last year when we had to come back home to Singapore for good. Since then, we were not able to contact her, as we look upon her as our mentor, who gave us the gift of life. We

hope to reach her through the *World Tribune*. Our address here in Singapore is: 21 A, Lengkong Dua, Singapore 417701 and our telephone number is 65-4495662. Our e-mail address is kominato@cyberway.com.sg — Robert Zuehlke

Milestones

A Buddhist memorial ceremony for William A. Phelps

(3/31/55-02/21/99) was held Sunday, March 7, 1999, at the SGI-USA Chicago Culture Center. William was the father to Laural Celine Evans and William Zack Evans. The ceremony was such a magnificent and joyous celebration. My children and I appreciate the encouragement, support and daimoku of all SGI members, his friends and coworkers. For us, it was supreme actual proof that absolutely nothing surpasses the protection of those within the circle of faith of this great organization. — Veronica Evans, previously Evans-Phelps

Recently my mother passed away. I felt a great loss within myself and I wanted to express how I felt. This poem is dedicated to my mother and to all others whose mothers have passed away. — Rod Burke, Santa Monica, Calif.

My Mother

My Mother, a diamond, a jewel, a treasure, that's what she was. Upon hearing of her death my heart screamed out and cried in grief.

My Mother, my friend, my companion, whose love was unconditional. She was always there for me, always watching over me. Now I cannot see, speak, or touch her anymore. At first this was almost unbearable and I could not comprehend. But, beneath all the grief my Mother's love lives on, shining like a bright diamond that she was.

My Mother, whose love was like a blanket that always covered me, cannot speak anymore. Her lips are silent but mine are not, and I will pray for her evermore.



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

EXPERIENCE — CLAIRE WROBLEWSKI, DOE RUN, MO.

Still Chanting After All These Years

I was living in western Massachusetts when I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in 1973 by my elder sister, Marie, who had come in from Washington, D.C., for Thanksgiving. I was 16 at the time. From the beginning of my practice, I was encouraged by my seniors in the organization to have a long-range vision of life; so I made it

called Doe Run, in Missouri. Aptly named with its small population, the doe and the deer pretty much still rule! Soon I discovered a great joy — doing a refreshed gongyo. I knew there were no other SGI members living here and I felt that due to my practice, all the life around me from the smallest blade of grass to the biggest oak tree was enjoying for the first time the

activities director was moving to Florida and the administrator said that he had suggested that I replace him!

So from third shift house-keeping, I jumped to daytime activities director. All would seem ideal, but without the confidence I received from my Buddhist practice, I could not have made such a bold advancement under the scornful glances of some of my co-workers.

That was approximately four years ago. Today I still enjoy working in the activities field. Now more than ever I am able to use many things that I learned in our SGI organization, such as always put the members' happiness first — in my case, the residents' happiness — keep your life-condition high so that you can be like sunshine for others, and think big!

I initiated many new programs. For instance, the nursing home had a man-made pond that I convinced the owner to have stocked with catfish so the residents could enjoy fishing. Now we hold an annual Senior Catfish Derby where we invite all the local nursing homes to participate. Stories poured in how many residents who appeared to have given up on life now had their children and grandchildren hunting down and dusting off their fishing tackle and pole. To their amazement Grandpa was goin' fishin'! More stories surfaced; for example, a woman from the nursing home decided the catfish were her pets, so she fed them bread early in the morning so they wouldn't succumb to the bait! Whether pro- or anti-fishing, one thing was certain, these seniors all had caught something — a sparkle in their eyes that wasn't there before!

When things got quiet, I chanted for new ideas that would make life more engaging for the residents. One day I felt deadlocked, too tired to initiate new ideas, when I opened the *World Tribune*. To my great delight, there was a series on the topic of aging. It was exactly what was looking for. I printed many excerpts from the articles and posted them daily for all the staff to read. Many staff later told me that their day didn't start until they read the inspirational words



Members of the Junior Volunteer Reading Program. Claire established the program at the nursing home where she is activities director to encourage young readers to volunteer and read to the residents.

I would display. Even the administrator and the owner of our nursing home commented on how impressive the daily postings were and what an influence they had on the staff.

The particular words from SGI President Ikeda that stuck in my mind from the articles were: "It is not how long we live but the quality of our lives that count." I decided this would be my motto for the residents from now on. My vision and mission were clear. I determined that I would do my utmost to establish the best quality of life for each resident I was responsible for. I believe due to this correct thinking and my chanting, I was able to pioneer many new, exciting programs that enriched not only the lives of the residents but the lives of the people in my community.

The Junior Volunteer Reading Program was established to encourage young readers to volunteer at the nursing home and read to the residents. The residents, if able, would help them if they stumbled on their words. It was the beginning of a great rapport with the children and the local schools. A reporter from the local newspaper began showing up at our doorstep almost monthly to ask about any new programs that they could report on. To our surprise, the Junior Volunteer Reading Program even received a letter of congratulations from none other than Hillary Clinton!

My administrator told me that the staff's morale was at an all-time high, greatly due to the Activities Department's influence. Soon after, we were notified by the South East Missouri Area Agency on Aging that our nursing home had won an award for the outstanding contributions to the lives of its residents. To my amazement the award is called the

"Quality of Life Award!"

Recently I was promoted to activities coordinator responsible for supervising several of the nursing homes under the same ownership. My focus is on staff morale, community relations, implementing creative new programs and most important, making the lives of the residents meaningful and rewarding.

I am confident that all the success I enjoy at my job is due to sticking to my practice at all costs. That encouragement about aiming for 20 years was right on target for me. And this is only the beginning. I feel I have so much more work to do. In my personal life, many things have also changed for me. My estranged second husband traveled 1,100 miles to surprise me at my doorstep and asked for a reconciliation, which I accepted. He has proven over the last few years to be sincere and we are doing much better.

My children are healthy and happy. My eldest daughter received the Gohonzon and is presently attending the University of Massachusetts on a full scholarship.

I greatly appreciate the sincere SGI members of Far Reaches District with whom I have the great pleasure practicing. With their unpretentious, caring ways, they have served as a great oasis and influence for me. ❧



Claire with husband, Bruce, daughter, Samantha, and son, Mathew.

my goal to shoot for my 20th year of practice. They told me that no matter what kind of turmoil my life goes through, hold on to my practice. It was a good thing I did, for I went in and out of schools, in and out of too many jobs to count, and in and out of two marriages.

As the sun rises and sets, and the days turn to months and years...I finally greeted my 20th year of practicing Buddhism. I found myself in what appeared to be my most difficult and unfortunate situation to date! I was separating from my second husband and had moved, with my three children ages 18 months, 3 and 15, to the Midwest where I barely knew a soul. I had sold my home in Massachusetts and paid someone to build a home for my children; unfortunately, to date, I have never seen my money nor had my home completed!

Luckily for me, the greatest thing I received from my 20 years of practice allowed me to face this situation bravely — I had confidence! I knew nothing was impossible, with my practice to the Gohonzon. I knew I would get through this and win. The town where I live is

warm and joyful vibrations of my gongyo and chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. It felt like something really big was happening to me and my environment, and if I was destined to move here for the sole purpose of refreshing my gongyo, then it was all worth it.

Practically speaking, I had to find a job. On the East Coast, I had done all sorts of jobs from being a waitress to a nurse's aid to insurance adjuster and more. I wasn't specialized but I was flexible. I quickly landed a job at a nursing home as a housekeeper on the graveyard shift. It was challenging, but I did my best. Although there was no one there to see me but a few frightened mice, I always tried to present myself neatly and sometimes would work through the day shift if they needed me.

Soon I developed a friendly relationship with the activities director of the nursing home and was able to get different volunteers for his activities. Michiko, my SGI district leader, volunteered to perform a dance for the residents in traditional Japanese costume. The performance was a great success and the following day I received big news. The



Claire sings along with Ethel Sikes to celebrate Ethel's 95th birthday.

**SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION**

FRIENDS for Peace

APRIL 2, 1999

HAWAII BOYS AND GIRLS KICK OFF INTO 1999

By Shirley Calalay, Honolulu



In Jan. 17, a beautiful Sunday morning, we had our Hawaii Boys and Girls Group Kick-Off Meeting and Talent Show at the Hawaii Community Center.

Our masters of ceremony, Carolyn Goto and Taryn Goto, did a fantastic job introducing the 18 performances. The opening number was a large group line dance to "Electric Boogie." Solo performances were done by Toshi Takahashi on violin, playing "Happy Day"; a piano solo by Andrew Manabe playing variations of "Heart and Soul"; a voice acappella by Liann Cagle singing a Chinese song entitled "Mei Li Hwa"; and Miki Ishikawa singing "My Heart Will Go On." Solo dancers included Stacy Koyama performing "Winter Wonderland" as a hula, and a modern Hawaiian dance to "Fish and Poi" was done by Jane Calalay.

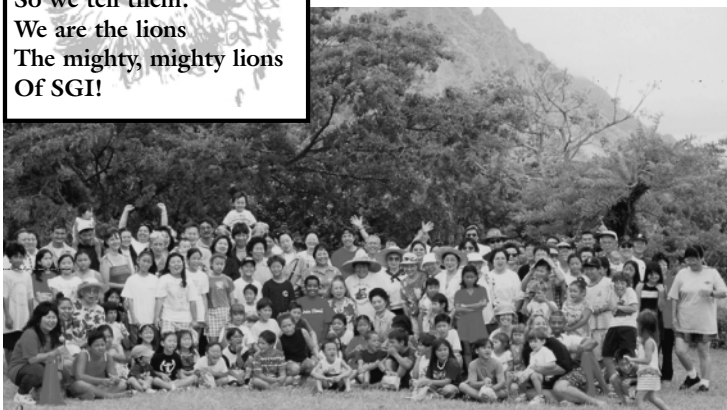
Other talents included a flute duet by Lisa Kawada and her friend Claire Yoshinaga, and a hula duo by Reiche and Jennifer Kuehu. Cultural performances included a Caribbean dance, Chinese songs and a modern dance interpretation of the music of the Back Street Boys and N Sync. An amusing break included audience participation in a little song and exercise. The finale brought everyone together either wearing a Simba mask or waving a Simba fan and doing the Lion's Cheer, followed by singing "Shinseki No Uta" (Lion's Roar Song).



LION'S CHEER

We are the lions
The mighty, mighty lions
Everywhere we go
People want to know
Who we are
So we tell them:
We are the lions
The mighty, mighty lions
Of SGI!

With 100 performers and 140 boys and girls in total attending this activity, many guests, family members and leaders were touched by Hawaii stars and also encouraged to see the potential of our future youth division. Everyone was excited and a little tired after the meeting, and left happy, having made another mark in the Hawaii Boys and Girls Group history.



Announcing: A NEW BOYS AND GIRLS GROUP IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

By Carmela Beckman-Spector, Petaluma, Calif.



The boys and girls of Adobe Chapter: (left to right) Stephanie, Sam, Nicholas, Ty (in back), Joey, Dillon and Kirby.

A new Boys and Girls Group meeting has begun! The kids of the Adobe Chapter (in Northern California) had their first monthly meeting on Feb. 14.

After doing "echo" gongyo, chanting daimoku and playing a game, we learned about SGI President Ikeda's life as a boy. We also talked about the Boys and Girls Group goals for 1999. Then we made collages showing the first goal: Study hard at school.

We closed our meeting by chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo three times and exchanged Valentine gifts. It was

a lot of fun!
In our March meeting, we plan to continue our study of President Ikeda's life, focusing on him as a new member and his life with President Toda. We will also review the goals for 1999 and talk about the second goal: Try your best at gongyo and daimoku every day.
We are very excited about this year! The Adobe Chapter Boys and Girls Group is determined to have fun, learn about Buddhism, and become great friends. Together, we are working for kosen-rufu here in Northern California!

Hey, Kids!

Enter the Name-Our-Press Contest!

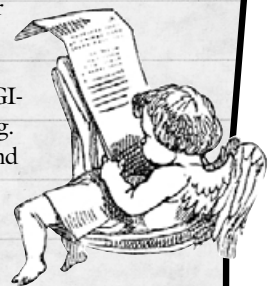
You will soon be publishing books just for you: story books and books with games and puzzles; books to help you do gongyo and books that tell the stories of important people in the history of Buddhism, plus lots of other kinds of books.

And we need your ideas! Should we call our children's books "Lion Cub Press"? How about "Mighty Oak Books"? Or maybe "Eat-All-Your-Vegetables Publications"? (Well, maybe not....)

What are your ideas? If your idea contributes to the final

name chosen, even if it's not exactly the name you suggest, we'll give you a gift certificate to choose your own children's book from the SGI-USA catalog.

Please send your ideas (you can suggest as many as you like) by May 31 to: Name-Our-Press Contest c/o "Friends for Peace" 606 Wilshire Blvd. P.O. 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427



EXPERIENCE

PETER JUSTIN KARUPPIAH, 10

Los Angeles



Hi. I am in the fifth grade. I have always been a member of the SGI. I have also been learning Japanese since kindergarten. The reason why I have been learning Japanese is because my mom wants me to be able to translate the Goshō and read President Ikeda's speeches.

In 1998, I gave a determination at New Year's Day Gongyo. I had three goals: 1) to chant more, 2) to do better in math and Japanese, and 3) I wanted to get better in soccer.

During last year, I achieved all my goals. I've been doing at least one full gongyo with daimoku almost every day since October. I have been getting better grades in math and speaking more Japanese. And I made the '98-'99 AYSO All-Star Team in soccer for Region 19. I chant every day for my team and so far we won two big tournaments and came in second in two others.

Thank you. 🌸

ZAKEE CORRELL

Philadelphia



THE BENEFITS I ACHIEVED IN 1998 ARE:

1. Chanting more daimoku.
 2. Getting a new bicycle.
 3. My mom saying I can decide when I will get my hair cut.
 4. Getting in the second grade.
 5. Going to the movies with my sister.
 6. My eye operation turned out to be good.
 7. Winning the Halloween contest.
 8. Getting a new Power Ranger set.
 9. And being on the honor roll at school.
- I determined to chant more daimoku this year. 🌸

POETRY

WHAT IS THE SGI?



By Denise Rutherford, 8
Philadelphia

The SGI stands for Soka Gakkai International. There are SGI members in half of the countries in the world. Because of the SGI we can learn how to practice correctly to improve our lives and to become happy and help other people to become happy too. The SGI is a Buddhist organization that practices Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for the happiness of all humanity. The more we practice Buddhism the more energy comes into us. Like for instance when my pop-pop died. Almost all of the Buddhists called me and my mom and said I'm so sorry what had happened. I'm so fortunate to be able to chant. So remember that the SGI is always there when you need it.

"THE FEELING"

Rain pedaling on the window pane.
While beautiful blossoms fall out of the sky.
A child comes out of the bed,
then comes an angel out of the sky
to grant the child's wish.
Everyone was happy and peace was through the country.

"FACING YOUR FEARS"

Dread and bull is not facing your fear.
What you have to do is face your fear.
Facing your fear goes together.
But don't think of your fear as a word.
Do you know who made up guns?
Someone who didn't face their fears.
But you're not that kind of person...
if you listened to this poem. 🌸

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

WINNERS!

of the 2nd Annual Essay Contest

AGE GROUP: 5-6



What I like about my family,

by Sarah Randolph, 6, Los Angeles

I like my family because they are nice, and they teach me things that I don't know. I like my dad because he is silly, and I like my mom because she is sweet. I like my Aunt Martha too, and my grandma and grandpa. My dad teases me that's why he is

silly. And my mom kisses me, that's why she is sweet. And I like my aunt because she is funny, and she is funny because she tickles me. I like my grandma and grandpa because they are nice, and they are nice because they hug me.



AGE GROUP: 5-6



Dear 'Friends for Peace,'

by Jahlani Daniel, 6, and Jahmila Daniel, 5, Chicago

Hi! We are a brother and sister. We want all of our friends for peace to know that we love our mother, Teisha Esters, and our grandparents, Bruce and Selma Hudson. We all chant together to be happy. We like how they help make us happy while we are chanting Nam-

myoho-rence-kyo. We are happy when they let us chant together in front of the Gohonzon with our other friends for peace who are the toys in the picture with us! We hope our happy letter makes our friends for peace all over the world happy, too!



AGE GROUP: 5-6



How I contribute to my family's happiness through chanting,

by Thomas Goss, 5, Bonita, Calif.

Each time you go through chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, it gives you happiness. Everybody has a good time chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, but sometimes everybody forgets about Nam-myoho-rence-kyo and starts war. But, then after a few days they start chanting again.

mom and dad? What about your brothers and sisters? Do they ever forget about Nam-myoho rene-kyo?

I never forget what my parents say about Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. What about your

You can use the energy you get from chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo to help your family. Everything will go right. You always have a good time with your family. If you ever forget Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, don't forget it again.



AGE GROUP: 7-9

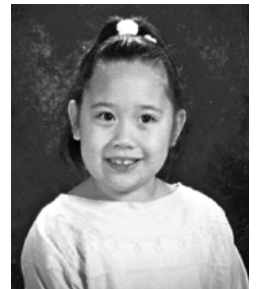


What I like about my family,

by Ashley Gooch, 7, Ft. Hood, Texas

I like to spend time with family doing SGI activities, going to meetings and chanting. I like chanting together with my older sister. I really enjoy spending time outside with my dad. I love when my mom or sister helps me learn to read. I like

watching the cartoon channel with my dad. I am proud of my dad for being in the Army and helping our district meetings. I like to play games with my family. Most of all I like just being together with my family at home.



AGE GROUP: 10-12



My family,

by Erika Noel, 10, Honolulu

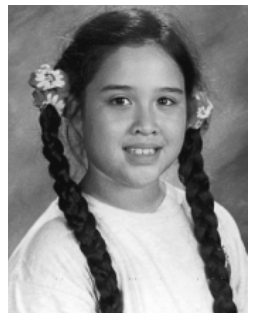
What I like about my family is my family helps me with my homework and is always there for me

but he does the best for the family like work in Okinawa for two months and comes back to Hawaii. I am sad but I understand because he does the best for the family. My mom tells me if I chant, anything is possible.

From my family, I learned never to treat anyone badly even if they don't believe in Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. I also learned to be friends with everybody, and the most important thing I learned is even if you couldn't do something good, at least you tried. My dad is not very good in chanting

So now, I truly believe Nam-myoho-rence-kyo works as long as you try.

But what I like about my family best is they tell or do what is best for me.



UNDERSTANDING KARMA

An Adventure With Salt and Soap



MATERIALS NEEDED: Medium-size mixing bowl filled with water, salt shaker filled with salt, another shaker filled with black pepper, a dry bar of soap and paper towels.

In Buddhism, we believe everything that happens to us is a result of our thoughts, our words and the things we do. It is called karma.

Focusing on our words, once they are spoken, they cannot be taken back. However, by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can

lessen or even reverse their effects.

To demonstrate, think of the salt shaker as you, and the salt inside is your words. The bowl with water represents another person (maybe your mom or your best friend!). Do you remember the last time you got mad at that person? Think about the words you used as you shake salt into the water. Did you call your friend a name or say something mean to your mom? After you got mad, maybe you wanted to take back your words because you didn't really mean them.

Could you take back your words? Can you take the grains of salt out of the water? Try (and keep the paper towels handy!) and you'll see that the salt has dis-

solved in the water.

The same is true of thoughts as well as words. Our words and thoughts go out into the ocean of thought around us and, just like the salt, they can never be retrieved. That's why it is very important to think carefully about what we are about to say. Before speaking, we can ask ourselves if what we are about to say would create joy or pain for the other person.

Using the same bowl of water, pick up the pepper shaker and shake (into the water) once for each negative thought you may have had over the last week. Then take the dry bar of soap and think of it like the Nam-myoho-renge-kyo that you chant. Rub the soap

all over your index finger and then slowly place it (without stirring) in the center of the bowl of water.

The pepper (negative thoughts) will all be pushed to the side of the bowl by the soap film (Nam-myoho-renge-kyo), which demonstrates that even though the negative thoughts may still come to us, by chanting and doing gongyo, we can push our negativity aside and make room for positive thoughts and words, and thus help our-



selves

GOSHOGOODIES

On Cause & Effect

Likewise, the Shinjikan Sutra states: "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present." ("The Opening of the Eyes," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], pp. 197-98)

Suppose you study hard for a test at school and you pass the test with a high score. Studying hard is the cause and passing the test is the effect. You as an individual are responsible for your own happiness. At the same time, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism encourages us that because we are the ones who make the causes for how our lives turn out, we have the power to change it for the better with every action (cause) we make. Practicing within the SGI — chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, doing gongyo, studying and helping others — are the best causes we make for our happiness. (SGI President Daisaku Ikeda in his message to the Boys and Girls Group, September 1996)

CAUSE & EFFECT

IN OUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND ACTIONS

Do you know the saying, "What you say and what you do always comes back to you?"

If we make positive or friendly actions toward others, we will attract positiveness and friendliness from others. In the same way, if we make negative or unfriendly actions toward others, we will attract negativity and criticism from others.

- 1 Stretch a rubber band (not too far!) and let it snap back to you. The law of cause and effect teaches us that what we send out always comes back to us — just like the rubber band.
- 2 Think something positive while stretching the rubber band. Let go and the rubber band snaps back to you just like the positive thought you are thinking.
- 3 Think something negative. Stretch the rubber band and let it go. The negative thought comes back just the same as the positive thought.
- 4 Now try using a yo-yo. Toss it out and think something positive like friendship. As the yo-yo comes back to you, say "friendship" to represent friendship coming back to you.

Whether positive or negative, our thoughts, words and actions all return to us just as we sent them out.