

• NEW PHOTO SERIES

'This Beautiful Earth' — SGI President Ikeda shares his life as a photographer — page 8

• LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES

Debut of a new quarterly pullout on how we can better help others — pullout section A-D

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Photo by DIXON HAMEY

Northwestern Zone Holds First Conference

Downtown Seattle

The very first zone conference ever to be held in the SGI-USA was conducted by the Northwestern Zone, which encompasses the Pacific Northwest Region, San Francisco #1 Region and San Francisco #2 Region. Attending the six-day event, from March 18–23, were SGI-USA General Director Fred Zaitso, Women's Division Leader Wendy Clark and young

women's and young men's leaders, Renu Jiandani and James Herrmann.

The first three days were centered in the Pacific Northwest Region and included a region kick-off meeting and a region/zone/national leaders dialogue. Because many youth March 16 celebration meetings were scheduled to coincide with the conference, the national and zone leaders were able to attend some of these encouraging introductory meet-

ings. While most of the meetings visited were in the Seattle/Tacoma area, the zone leaders were able to meet with members in Portland, Ore., and Spokane, Wash.

The national and zone leaders left for San Francisco late in the evening on March 20, and began the next day by splitting up and visiting all the outlying areas of the two San Francisco regions. Home visits, personal guidance and meetings with area leaders were on the schedule for

that day. The remaining two days consisted of a region/zone/national leaders dialogue and a lot more home visits.

This was the first of eight zone conferences that will occur over the next several months and was a great success. The national and zone leaders had the opportunity to meet many members in these regions and discuss goals and activities for the coming year.

— DAVID EISENBERG

Central Executive Committee Meets in Santa Monica

The inaugural session of approximately 50 zone leaders and national leaders who comprise SGI-USA's Central Executive Committee convened at the SGI-USA Visitors Center in Santa Monica

March 26–28. At the last CEC gathering in December 1998, a new zone system had been announced — zone leaders function to assist the national leadership in communicating to and support-

ing the regional organizations and their membership.

During the nationwide teleconference held Sunday morning, General Director

PLEASE SEE CEC, 3



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

STUDY

What's the first step toward defeating devilish functions?
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SPEECH

President Ikeda continues the experience of SGI-USA member Orlando Cepeda.
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MAILBOX

Your feedback on recent issues of the 'World Tribune.'
page 7

RECOGNIZING DEVILISH FUNCTIONS

The First Step Toward Defeating Them

By EUGENE HIRAHARA

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

When people try to advance or construct something positive, some force of resistance will work against and disturb their progress. In physics, one of Newton's three laws of motion states that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is a natural occurrence in our environment.



Knowing and recognizing the existence of this opposite force is crucial in our daily lives. The aerodynamic shape of a race car is the result of studies on how air resistance can be used to increase speed. We have to approach our lives and our Buddhist practice the same way — to prepare for resistance and use it to our advantage. Nichiren Daishonin explains that "he who abides by the Lotus Sutra will inevitably attain Buddhahood.

Therefore the Devil of the Sixth Heaven, the lord of this threefold world, will become intensely jealous of anyone who abides by the sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 201)

Because such "devilish" or negative functions are difficult to recognize, it can be difficult to fight and overcome them. Rather, it is easy to be deceived and swayed by them. Sometimes they appear as people who oppose our practice, other times it surfaces as feelings of doubts from within our own lives. Whether external or internal, the Daishonin explains that "this devil king...attaches himself like a plague demon to people in a way that cannot be detected by the eye. Thereafter, like persons who gradually become drunk on fine old wine, rulers, fathers and mothers, wives and children gradually become possessed by him..." (MW-1, 201).

The key, then, is to clearly recognize negative functions for what they are and muster up the courage to fight against them. Once we can recognize them, we've made an im-

portant first step toward overcoming them.

Especially when we practice hard and challenge ourselves to propagate this great philosophy for the sake of all humankind, we must expect that obstacles and devilish functions will arise, attempting to defeat us. Actually, the time when such obstacles occur is the time when we can change our karma and further advance in our lives.

As the Daishonin experienced one severe persecution after another, so too did his disciples. Many of them abandoned their faith because of what seemed to be severe difficulties. Taking a closer look, however, their defeat was linked to the fact that they did not expect such obstacles to occur. They could not recognize the negative functions for what they were and consequently were defeated. Others, like Shijo Kingo, triumphed because they recognized the opposing forces and maintained their faith.

So Buddhism teaches that when an individual practices and develops fortune in life, obstacles always appear.

And how much greater are the negative influences that appear in the world when the votaries of the Lotus Sutra number in the millions, all of them propagating the great pure teaching for the happiness of all.

That is why the Daishonin warns that as kosen-rufu progresses, the three powerful enemies will arise without fail, appearing as individuals and social forces who try to impede the flow of Buddhism. The appearance of powerful opponents serves as evidence that we are practicing correctly — it proves the legitimacy of the of our kosen-rufu movement.

Study is crucial to developing the correct perspective on our personal obstacles and the challenge of the temple issue. For this reason, the Study Department has recently revised the Intermediate Exam materials (see below) to include more study on this important aspect of Buddhism.

REVISED

Intermediate Exam Materials

Although the study material for the Intermediate Exam (Oct. 24) was announced in the December 1998 *Living Buddhism*, the Study Department is adding SGI President Ikeda's speech on Nikko Shonin's 26 Admonitions as a way to include more study of the temple issue. The speech was last published in the April 1998 *Living Buddhism*.

Study of the "Rissho Ankoku Ron," which is included in the *SGI-USA Intermediate-Level Textbook*, will be replaced by this study of the 26 Admonitions.

Following is the revised study material for the Intermediate Exam curriculum:

- "The Opening of the Eyes I & II," *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teaching of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 49-72
- The "Life Span" chapter, *Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, volume 2, chapters 16-20; volume 3, chapters 28-30, 36-40, 42 and 45
- *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*
- SGI President Ikeda's speech "An Explanation of Nikko Shonin's 26 Admonitions," April 1998 *Living Buddhism*

The sample exam will be published in the World Tribune in June.



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The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window titled "The WT Express:". The address bar is empty. The main content area features a large heading "Get The WT E-Mail Express" with a decorative border. Below the heading is the text "A New, Free Weekly Service to 'World Tribune' Subscribers." followed by a paragraph: "The World Tribune announces a free, weekly e-mailer: the WT E-Mail Express. It features:" and a bulleted list:

- previews of upcoming World Tribune articles.
- Excerpts from SGI President Ikeda's speeches, essays and dialogues: like his monthly Headquarters Leaders Meeting speeches and 'Thoughts on The New Human Revolution' essay series.

 Below the list, it says "We'll also let you know what's coming up in the Perspective and Editorial columns, news stories and more. Plus: occasional bulletins on significant events." At the bottom, it provides subscription instructions: "To subscribe to the 'WT E-mail Express,' just e-mail us: 1) Open a new message; 2) To: List Manager@sgi-usa.org; 3) Message text: SUBSCRIBE wtexpress."

CEC, FROM PAGE 1

Fred Zaitzu expressed his deep concern about the war in Yugoslavia. He said: "I sincerely pray for a quick resolution of the conflict and for peace. This also convinced me of the great value of our SGI peace movement."

Representatives from the eight zones reviewed the organization's quarterly plan for 1999, which was adopted at the last CEC gathering, and through intense brainstorming, reaffirmed the second quarter's goal — commemorative contributions — which will begin on April 28 and continue through June 6. Thorough dialogue in each region is

encouraged so that every person can have a shared understanding and sense of purpose regarding commemorative contributions.

The subject of propagation, which was the first quarter's goal, arose repeatedly throughout the conference. Suggestions from the membership on improving the organization were also discussed in depth. It was affirmed that strong prayer, educating ourselves and one another to deepen our understanding of Buddhism, and taking action are the basis of a long-range view in dealing with the temple issue.

The youth reported that the March 16 meetings were a

great success, and the young men and young women will be conducting their respective general meetings in July. The youth conferences scheduled at the Florida Nature and Culture Center this summer were cancelled to focus on the 1st SGI-USA Youth Grand Culture Festival to be held this fall in Los Angeles. It will be the first culture festival with nationwide participation since the January 1995 World Peace Youth Culture Festival in Hawaii.

Efforts are being made throughout the country to help new members and interested parties prepare for the Entrance Exam, which will take place April 25.

During the teleconference, SGI-USA Women's Leader Wendy Clark reported that more than 32,000 people, including 4,600 guests, took part in the uniquely creative and successful February women's commemorative meetings; this far exceeded last year's attendance of some 24,000.

The Publication Center reported that many compelling books will become available this year in the SGI-USA bookstores. Attention was also brought to the World Tribune Readers Survey published in the March 26 World Tribune in the hopes that many will offer their feedback.

The World Tribune
The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 9 SPEECH

With a Spectacular Winning Hit!

In part 2 of his March Headquarters Leaders Meeting speech, the SGI president continues with the story of SGI-USA member Orlando Cepeda's 'winning hit' in life. 'Life is a struggle to win,' President Ikeda says. 'And so is Buddhism. I hope that each of you, in your own circumstances, will overcome all hardships to savor lives of great triumph.'



Orlando Cepeda in March 1962, playing for the San Francisco Giants. Mr. Cepeda says that 'our biggest victory is to win over ourselves.'

In March 1993, during a San Francisco visit, I received an award from the city's War Memorial Performing Arts Center recognizing my efforts to spread the ideals of the United Nations and promote international cultural exchange. The presentation ceremony was held at the center, where the United Nations was born. Mr. Cepeda kindly attended the celebration. I was touched by his sincerity, and I will never forget it.

Also, during a 1994 visit to Japan, Mr. Cepeda took time out of his busy schedule to visit Soka University in Tokyo and encourage the university's baseball team. Since that time, the team has gone from strength to strength, achieving eight league

wins in succession. In addition, three of the students that Mr. Cepeda talked with have gone on to become professional baseball players in Japan.

How important it is to motivate and inspire young people!

In 1995, too, Mr. Cepeda extended a warm welcome to a delegation of students from Kansai Junior and Senior High Schools visiting San Francisco. He also travels from time to time to Soka University of America to talk with students there. He is a warm-hearted, kind person.

For my birthday this year, Mr. Cepeda sent me a copy of his new autobiography, *Baby Bull: From Hardball to Hard Time and Back*. On the flyleaf, he wrote: "1/2/99. To Sensei: Thanks for every-

thing. Happy Birthday. Your friend, Orlando Cepeda."

Mr. Cepeda has dedicated an entire chapter of the book to a frank discussion about the greatness of Buddhism and the wonderful support he has received from his fellow SGI members. He writes: "The story of my life cannot be written without paying deference to Buddhism. More than baseball, more than the home runs and runs batted in, more than the Rookie of the Year Award and the National League MVP, Buddhism helped make me what I am today. I say this because all the records and cheers and the celebrity do not, and did not, create inner peace. Buddhism saved me spiritually and gave me the tools to turn my pain into medicine. It has helped me make

myself a far better human being. And in doing so, it has made me a better husband, father, and friend" (p. 189).

Mr. Cepeda also talks about his mentor, President Ikeda, in his autobiography, introducing his activities to promote peace, culture and education, and mentioning proudly that the SGI leader has delivered lectures at respected universities around the world.

People who are obsessed with appearances have already lost out.

In response to Mr. Cepeda's election to the Hall of Fame, the San Francisco Giants announced that his old uniform number, 30, will be retired. On the day he was informed of his selection, he told gathered Buddhist philosophers: "Fifteen years ago, I embraced Buddhist philosophy... Our biggest victory is to win over ourselves. Today proves the validity of Buddhism and friendship." He is proud of his Buddhist faith.

In Japan, many people are too cowardly or too worried about appearances to openly pay tribute to the Soka Gakkai and their Buddhist practice as important factors in their success. How different is Mr. Cepeda's open acknowledgment! People who are obsessed with appearances have already lost — they cannot hope to adorn their lives with victory having such cowardice.

Life is a struggle to win. And so is Buddhism. I hope that each of you, in your own circumstances, will overcome all hardships to savor lives of great triumph.

Everyone has a vast palace within, their own Hall of Fame inside.

Entering the Hall of Fame is of course a wonderful achievement. But even more wonderful is entering the Hallowed Halls of Buddhism — the palace of life itself. Mr. Cepeda is a wise person and knows this.

In the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," Nichiren Daishonin says, "To chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is to enter the palace of one's own life" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 787). Everyone has a vast, unsurpassable palace within — a personal Hall of Fame, resplendent with the infinite treasures of the universe.

When we open the door to that palace, wherever we are — right there — we can find happiness. Consequently, there is nothing to fear and no reason to envy others for anything.

Buddhism expounds the principle of "attaining supreme enlightenment in one's present state, without having to change one's original status" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 50). In other words, people of the nine worlds [from Hell through Bodhisattva] can attain the state of Buddhahood without having to change their present form.

This is the Lotus Sutra.

Money are irrelevant. He or she of priestly attainment.

There is no crown to any king.

The Dharma find ourselves offering, w Eternally minating

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This is the quintessential teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

Money, position, education and fame are irrelevant. A person of genuine faith can reveal the state of Buddhahood just as he or she is. Similarly, the mere wearing of priestly robes does not guarantee the attainment of enlightenment!

There's no need to compare yourself to anyone else.

The Daishonin writes that even if we find ourselves in the hell of incessant suffering, we can transform it into a Land of Eternally Tranquil Light through the illuminating brilliance of the Mystic Law.

The Daishonin writes of the principle that "any place is, without changing its characteristics, in and of itself a Buddha land, the hell of incessant suffering immediately became the capital of Eternally Tranquil Light" (MW-4, 309).

In other words, even if we are in the depths of hell, the power of chanting enables us to change our circumstances into an enlightened realm. Each of you, without fail, can achieve a life of absolute victory and unsurpassed glory.

There is no need to put yourself down or feel envious of others. No one is leading a more noble life than you who dedicate yourselves to the work of kosen-rufu. Please challenge yourself with pride and confidence wherever you are.

Those who resolve "This is the path I will follow!" "Watch me change my life!" are strong. No one can hold a candle to them.

Happiness is found within. There's no need for you to compare yourselves to others.

For instance, though not everyone in the Arts Division may be basking in the spotlight right now, if there is even one who is, this amounts to the entire division enjoying popularity and success. The Lotus Sutra expounds the principle of consistency from beginning to end. A representative embodies the whole group he or she is representing.

If you support those who are in the spotlight, applauding them with all your heart and rejoicing at their success, you will, in accord with consistency from beginning to end, attain good fortune and an inner state of life equal to theirs.

The noble spirit is forged by taking on great sufferings for a noble cause.

Organizations and institutions of every shape and size are now making preparations to survive in the 21st century. I am now earnestly taking steps to extend the path of kosen-rufu even further. While consolidating the foundations

New Jersey Members Hold Relief Drive for Colombia



Maria Billa, from the consul-general's office in New York, accepts the donations.

The members of Liberty District in Englewood, N.J., were determined to do something to support the people of Colombia after the devastating earthquake there. Upon investigation, they learned that the most needed supplies were food, dry milk, flash lights and batteries, water and baby supplies. Their spirit and determination soon spread throughout the entire New Jersey Region, and a relief drive was in progress. In all, New Jersey members shipped 1,600 pounds of supplies to Colombia.

Maria Billa, representing the consul-general's office in New York, came to the New Jersey Community Center on March 7 to accept the donations on be-

half of the people of Colombia. More than 200 members greeted her with a cheery "Bienvenito" as she entered the room. Especially touched to see the children who had lined up to greet her, Ms. Billa said: "To see so many people gathered today makes me very happy. It is very nice to see the children, and to see that someone cares for children in other places. In Colombia, we are finding out that we are not alone through examples like this today and others throughout the world.... I can see that people here have a big heart and have service as their life."

The simple action of a young girl touched the hearts of everyone gathered at the community center. Ten-year-old Raven Hobson approached Ms. Billa fol-



Photos by KEVIN LYDEN

New Jersey members bring supplies for Colombia to the New Jersey Community Center, March 7.

lowing the ceremony, hugged her and whispered her sincere concern for the children of Colombia. "To see that children who have nothing to do with Colombia [are involved] is very touching," Ms. Billa responded.

— MARY MACK

we have built this century throughout the world, I am steadily making preparations to usher in the new century — the Century of the SGI.

I am confident that a wide, expansive path of kosen-rufu will be opened. We have as our powerful allies in this all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the 10 directions and the three existences of past, present and future. With a spectacular winning hit, let's achieve a brilliant victory for the new century.

I want to dedicate the words of Nepali philosopher and popular poet Bhawani Bhikshu in "A Welcome New" to you:

*This health and this stern bravery
Are all standing on the way of your
progress
Collecting and pouring...collecting
itself
spontaneously*

*People who are growing and making
progress are filled with vitality.
The Nepali poet Bala Krishna Sama
writes in "My Bathroom":*

*Remaining firm and resolute like the
Mount Everest with
truth, beauty and
eternity in my head,
I have ever to elevate the simple,
sweet and soothing message
of peace for the welfare of
humankind.*

Nepal — home to the world's highest summit, Mount Everest. I still vividly remember the boisterous welcome I received

from the students at Nepal's esteemed Tribhuvan University when I gave a lecture there in November 1995.

The French writer Victor Hugo declares in his novel, *Ninety-Three*, which is set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, "Great sufferings swell the soul to gigantic proportions." We undergo spiritual growth through problems and sufferings, through the weight of the responsibilities we bear.

A vast, noble spirit is forged by daring to take on great sufferings and hardships for the sake of a noble cause — such as creating a better world, working for the happiness of humanity, and sharing and spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism.

By contrast, people who always take shortcuts, have a good time and try to impress others will find that their spirit dwindles, withers and decays.

It is wretched to have to work with leaders who lack passion.

I have a favor I want to ask of our SGI leaders: Please advance with a big heart and passionate spirit, determined to warmly support your fellow members, to build the very best organization for kosen-rufu and to create a better world. It is too wretched for our members, if they have to work with leaders who have little passion or heart.

It is also especially important that men show utmost respect for women. Men have absolutely no place berating our incredibly sincere, hardworking women's

division and young women's division members.

Leaders, please do everything in your power to encourage everyone. Please love and cherish your fellow members and commend them for their efforts.

Leaders who let petty emotions get the better of them — and as a result go about blasting their fellow members and being spiteful and ill-tempered — are selfish and utterly contemptible. Save your disdain for corrupt government officials! Save your abuse for negative forces!

We must triumph in the struggle for kosen-rufu. We must succeed without fail. We are doing this for no one but ourselves — for our own growth and development, and to make this irreplaceable organization of the SGI, which is carrying out the Buddha's decree, truly rock-solid. We are doing this for no one but ourselves and our fellow members. Therefore, let's spiritedly, joyfully advance.

Self-pity, complaint and pessimism have no place in the Buddhism of the Daishonin. You're the one who will lose out if you let yourself succumb to them.

Let's overcome everything through challenging ourselves within! Let's achieve a happy, joyous victory! For the sake of kosen-rufu!

Please take care not to catch cold. Let's meet again in good health and high spirits! Thank you very much for today.

The conclusion 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 1 appeared in last week's issue.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 39-40

After the America East General Meeting in New York, a member asks Shin'ichi Yamamoto if overseas members should go into politics like members in Japan had. Shin'ichi explains why unique circumstances in Japan led to the establishment of the Clean Government movement there — unique circumstances that didn't exist elsewhere.

After the America East General Meeting, several newly appointed leaders and other members gathered around Shin'ichi Yamamoto. Some shared their determinations; some, not wanting to miss this opportunity, asked Shin'ichi further questions.

One pink-cheeked gentleman asked: "Sensei, will we also eventually see Gakkai members going into politics not only in Japan but in other parts of the world to actualize the spirit of *rishso ankoku* [realization of a peaceful, prosperous society based on Buddhist ideals] taught by Nichiren Daishonin?"

Shin'ichi unequivocally replied, "No, there's no need for that."

The questioner looked surprised.

Shin'ichi elaborated: "Being a good citizen, wanting to contribute to your country and working actively to assist and improve your community, thus gaining society's trust, will lead to the realization of *rishso ankoku*. Just because the Gakkai in Japan has sent members into the political arena and now founded the Komei [Clean Government] Political Federation, there is no need for our members in other countries to follow suit.

"Circumstances unique to Japan have compelled us to take this course," he explained. "For example, one political party in Japan protects only the interests of big business. Another gives sole

priority to the interests of large labor unions. Both the ruling party and the opposition parties collude with one another on political matters, and politics itself is full of graft and corruption. In addition, for far too long, the government has done nothing to ease the burden of the many people employed in small private factories or workshops — workers who have no organized representation. There has also been an absence of politicians who work earnestly for the happiness of ordinary citizens.

"That is why President Toda sent a number of his disciples into the political arena," he went on. "Deeply concerned about the disastrous path Japanese politics was taking — and insistent that the long-suffering Japanese people deserved better — he hoped that these members might keep a close eye on how the country was governed and restore government to the hands of the people, where it belonged. The subsequent establishment of the Komei Political Federation and the Komei parliamentary group last year was also prompted by the nature of the Japanese political system. Without an organized political alliance, it would be extremely difficult for individual Soka Gakkai-backed representatives to make their voices heard in the legislature.

"But just because our members have been actively engaged in politics in Japan," he concluded, "it does not mean that this should automatically be copied in other countries. The circumstances in each country are completely different. The true spirit of securing a peaceful society based on Buddhism lies in individuals making Buddhist principles such as compassion and respect for life their basis for living and then working to realize a society where all people can exist together happily, in peace. This spirit is not limited to the sphere of politics — it is about contributing to society as a Buddhist in all fields of human endeavor, in-

cluding culture and education. While the Gakkai as an organization will at times pursue projects in these areas, essentially efforts to achieve the ideal of *rishso ankoku* will center on the inner-motivated actions of each individual."

Though kosen-rufu was always the goal, how to promote it would differ from country to country, in accord with each country's uniqueness. Irreparable damage could result in the future if members overseas decided simply to implement what had been done in Japan, without thinking whether it would be appropriate to their country. Shin'ichi had been worried about this for quite some time.

The following day, Jan. 14, a Study Department exam was held at the hotel where Shin'ichi and his party were staying. This time Shin'ichi joined the other leaders from Japan as an examiner for the Oral Exam, quizzing several members on study points.

In the afternoon, Shin'ichi and his companions went to have a look around New York City and even went to the top of the Empire State Building. Shin'ichi had wanted to give those who were visiting the United States for the first time a chance to do some sightseeing.

That evening, Shin'ichi met with Tomio and Emiko Haruyama. He particularly wanted to talk with Tomio, the newly appointed New York Chapter leader, wanting to help him secure a firm foundation for deep, lasting faith.

After inquiring at length about Tomio's work and other matters, Shin'ichi seriously told him: "I'm sure you are highly regarded and have an extremely promising career at the trading company that you are working at now. But there is one important thing I'd like to point out: It is a mistake to evaluate the Gakkai based on the criteria you might use to appraise the size and assets of a business. A

business enterprise's greatest objective is making a profit. The Gakkai's goal, on the other hand, is to help people around the world become happy and to lay the groundwork for lasting world peace.

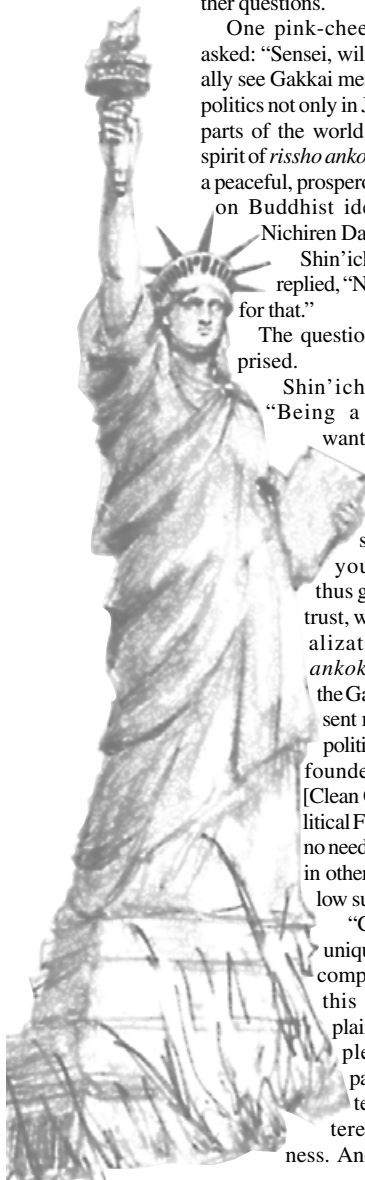
"In attempting to achieve that goal, our founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, suffered persecution at the hands of Japan's wartime military government," he shared. "He was thrown into prison, where he died. Our second president, Josei Toda, was imprisoned along with him. But he survived the ordeal and upon his release rose to the task of realizing the vision of kosen-rufu he inherited from his mentor. Today, the Gakkai has reached out and brought happiness and hope to a membership in excess of 3 million households.

"We of the Soka Gakkai have been going out among the suffering and sharing their pain and problems as if they were our own," Shin'ichi emphasized. "We have offered support and encouragement, showing people how to transform their destiny, helping one person after another become a winner in life. And all of our efforts are completely voluntary.

"Yet our organization has had to put up with being derided as 'a gathering of the poor and sick,'" he said, "or being called 'fascists' or 'a violent religious group.' But our members have not let this deter them and have continued to work for people's happiness. There is absolutely no other organization like ours! You should give deep thought to what really makes a person great and what is the most valuable way to live."

(To be continued)

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



WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

'Friends for Peace' Encourages

Thank you so much for Andy Odano's experience in the Feb. 5 *World Tribune* "Friends for Peace" pullout section. His experience about losing his wallet and then chanting determined daimoku and finding it really encouraged my family and myself. Our daughter, Diana, age 13, had just lost her school backpack with all her notebooks and textbooks. She was quite upset about it. We had just recently received this issue of the *World Tribune* and I happened to come upon Andy's experience. It really gave us encouragement to chant more daimoku.

Two weeks later the backpack was found and returned to us intact. This was such great actual proof to all of us! We are presently living in Beijing, China (where there is no formal organization at this time) and even though we receive our SGI publications late (because we have to have our mail forwarded), we've never appreciated them more! Thanks again!
— MONICA, JIM, GEORGE and DIANA WELLS, Beijing, P.R. China

On the Temple Issue

I related to the experience that Carrie Triffet gave on her husband joining the temple. My wife and I had district leaders quit the SGI and badmouth SGI leaders, and as a result my wife gave up chanting altogether.

My situation at this time is not as difficult as Carrie's experience in the March 5 *World Tribune*. I freely chant and attend SGI activities though my wife isn't active. Carrie's experience gave me hope.

— PHILIP RAY,
Ventura, Calif.

I would like to clarify a statement I made in my experience in the issue dated March 5. I said that my husband is on the temple payroll, but that is not an accurate statement. He produces the temple publications as a faith activity, but at my insistence he receives a token payment from the temple each month just to cover expenses. I regret the error.

— CARRIE TRIFFET,
Van Nuys, Calif.

Editor's Note: Reader responses to Carrie Triffet's experience indicate confusion on some points. To clarify, Carrie Triffet wrote and voluntarily submitted her experience to the World Tribune. We believe her intention in sharing this experience was to take a courageous stand on the temple issue as well as to encourage SGI members to take personal responsibility for this issue.

Bravo for the 'WT E-Mail Express'

When I came across the announcement of the *WT E-Mail*

Express in the *World Tribune*, I thought, "What a great idea." As a professional musician and educator, I travel extensively. I tour regularly and I teach at a music conservatory in another state. I was falling behind in my reading of the *World Tribune*. I just received my first copy of the *WT E-Mail Express* a few minutes ago, and although it doesn't substitute for reading the *World Tribune*, it makes me feel connected to the current rhythm. I'm now able to read excerpts from President Ikeda's latest guidance and related materials, no matter where I am in the world. It's also nice to have it delivered to me on my computer since I'm on my desktop or laptop daily. In addition, I can archive subsequent *WT Express* mailings with clutter-free storage. Perhaps one day the *World Tribune* will be delivered in this manner. I'm so happy to see how the SGI-USA is adapting and using today's technologies to help further support and promote kosen-rufu.

— ROBIN EUBANKS,
New York City

'Rising Furor'

In the Jan. 15 *World Tribune* Perspective "Set Yourself Free!", Deborah Goodwin talks about the misuse and abuse of our freedoms in America, and indicates "the rising furor that

decries our military agenda in Iraq" is an example of this. The only "rising furor" I am aware of concerning Iraq centers on the behavior of Saddam Hussein, and his documented history of the plunder, pillage and murder of his own people, and his fanatical determination to produce chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction to be used against people in other countries. As followers of Nichiren Daishonin, it is our vital mission to pray for, and take action to establish world peace, but, as we have learned in our dealings with the Nikken sect, this sometimes means confronting, and refuting evil when we become aware of it. Indeed,

President Ikeda reminds us "we need to resolutely attack abuses of power that cause people suffering. This is fighting on the side of justice. It is wrong to remain silent when confronted with injustice. Doing so is tantamount to supporting and condoning evil." Through repeated experience, we know Saddam makes a mockery of dialogue, and only responds to threats of military force.

If we become silent and passive in the face of his injustice and tyranny, we will be condoning evil. If we truly wish to set ourselves free, we must tap our Buddha wisdom to understand our environment, and take responsibility for safe-guarding the people as we work to improve our world.

— DAVID MATTHAU,
Edgewater, N.J.

World TRIBUNE

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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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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.



THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAYS BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

‘Himalayan Light’

I had only a few seconds to get the shot.

The day was Nov. 3, 1995. I was heading for a hill on the outskirts of Katmandu, Nepal. We had been traveling by car for what seemed like more than an hour over a bumpy road. The sky, which had been blue when we left, was now taking on the reddish hues of twilight. Should the sun set completely, the chance for a photo would be lost. I wanted to get the shot if at all possible; I wanted to share this scene with the youth.

Katmandu is a city close to the heavens, yet from within the city proper one cannot glimpse the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. And depending on the weather, the mountains are not always visible even from the hill we were bound for. In fact, as we drove, the Himalayan peaks lay hidden behind a veil of white clouds.

But the view had changed completely by the time we arrived atop the grassy hill and got out of the car. The curtain of clouds obscuring the peaks had suddenly parted. Now, jutting into the sky beyond the clouds, were peaks glistening silver-white in the sun's waning light. Towering summits of the 23,000- to 29,000-foot class, such as Mount Manaslu, stood against the sky like a procession of kings and emperors.

The Himalayas strike a gallant image as a band of heroic figures towering in triumph above the world. Firmly, resolutely, they soar skyward. In terms of their height and majesty, no mountains in Japan can approach

them. Just as ordinary mountains are a massing together of earth and rocks, the Himalayas appear as a massing together of countless other mountains — they are mountain giants.

These sublime, noble peaks were just as I had imagined them. As my heart filled with awe and appreciation, I raised my camera and snapped the shutter six, maybe seven, times.

These mountains seem alive — breathing. Behind these mountains exists a great life-force. Through these tremendous prayer towers, the life-force of the planet surges skyward and calls out to the heavens. The Himalayas stand as a monument to the Earth's unaging and undying activity.

After a moment, the inky darkness of night began to enfold the mountain summits, and a large moon cast its silver glow. Smoke from homes where evening meals were being prepared rose from the village below.

Just then, a merry group of children approached. There were about 20 of them, and they had come to the hill from the village nearby to play. At first, they had stood around watching me from a distance. But perhaps unable to restrain their curiosity, they had all drawn a little closer with each movement I made.

They were dressed shabbily, but their eyes sparkled like jewels. I couldn't help addressing them: "We are followers of Buddhism. This is the land where the Bud-

dha was born. The Buddha grew up looking at these magnificent Himalayas, and he worked hard to become a human being who resembled these mountains. He made himself a winner in life — someone who stands tall, with dignity, like these majestic peaks. You are the same as him. You live in the same wonderful place. You can definitely become great!"

Ah, Earth's highest summit! It is said that even today the Himalayas continue to grow, to thrust upward, higher and higher. They are young mountains, still in their formative years.

As human beings, we too yearn for greater heights. We want to scale the highest peak before us. Ever higher! Ever onward!

To all living things, the Himalayas seem to be calling out: "Break through your present circumstances! Stand tall, soar skyward!"

Challenge the impossible! Aim at the peak no one has climbed before! Scale the precipice!

Look down on those of base ambition, those mired in the mud of selfish desire! Drive away worthless smooth talkers devoid of action!

At the highest summit there are storms, lightning and fierce winds. But on that treasure throne there is also eternal honor, nobility and peace.

One in a series

GUIDELINES

BE A UNITY CREATOR

By Greg Martin, Vice General Director

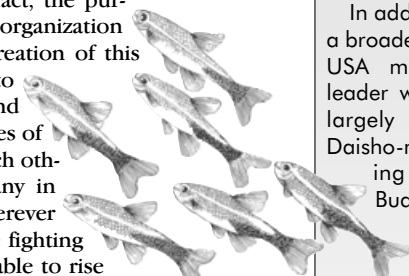
All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with one mind (*itai doshin*), transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren's propagation. When you are so united even the great hope of kosen-rufu can be fulfilled without fail. But if any of Nichiren's disciples should disrupt the unity of *itai doshin*, he will destroy his own castle from within (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 23).

The principle of many in body, one in mind (*itai doshin*) is central to the Daishonin's teachings. It is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate law of life and death. Only when we have established the spiritual bond of many in body, one in mind with our fellow members can we experience true benefit gushing forth from the depths of the ultimate truth of life. We participate in the great flow of the lifeblood of the Law to the extent that we are able to transcend all differences and unite together with the same mind as Nichiren Daishonin. What is the mind of Nichiren Daishonin? In "The True Entity of Life," he writes: "No matter what, maintain your faith as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, and forever exert yourself as Nichiren's disciple. If you are the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth" (MW-1, 93). The mind of Nichiren Daishonin is to maintain one's faith in the Gohonzon and exert oneself to accomplish kosen-rufu. All those who do so to the best of their ability no matter what may happen are certainly Bodhisattvas of the Earth and thus able to participate in the flow of the heritage of the ultimate Law.

Nichiren Daishonin tells us that, in fact, the purpose of propagation, the purpose of the organization and the purpose of leadership is the creation of this great flow of *itai doshin* by ever striving to carry out our activities with the same mind as his. One of the most important qualities of leadership is the ability to create and teach others to create this spiritual bond of many in body, one in mind. Suffering occurs wherever members are not united, where they are fighting amongst themselves, where they are unable to rise above their differences, where they fail to create the unity of believers. As the Daishonin explains further in this passage: "But if any of Nichiren's disciples should disrupt the unity of many in body, one in mind (*itai doshin*), he will destroy his own castle from within" (MW-1, 23).

What is it that prevents us from working together in one mind, from creating this spiritual bond, from transcending our differences? SGI President Ikeda says: "The cause, I believe, is selfishness, personal feelings and conceit" (*Selected Lectures on the Gosho*, p. 159). In a word, it is arrogance. Therefore, one of the most important qualities of leadership is the ability to show by example how to transcend differences and unite together with the same mind for kosen-rufu as Nichiren Daishonin. In practical terms it is President Ikeda who is teaching us and showing us this example of excellent leadership. The spiritual bond of many in body, one in mind is the actual manifestation, therefore, of the spiritual bond of mentor and disciple sharing the same mind, the same heart and the same intent. Leadership in SGI-USA is, in many ways, all about the creation of *itai doshin* in our own area.

(For more on this subject, see: *Selected Lectures on the Gosho*, by Daisaku Ikeda, pp. 150-65)



Spirit of Leadership

from General Director Zaitzu



Fred Zaitzu

Dear World Tribune reader,

When discussing leadership, the most significant question to answer is what are leaders' goals and objectives. Where are they leading people? Among the many possible objectives, SGI-USA leaders strive to guide people to happiness, to the Gohonzon, to overcoming their problems, to accomplishing their human revolution; ultimately to kosen-rufu.

This pull-out section is the first in a series being planned to discuss the concept of leadership from the Buddhist perspective. For many years, SGI President Ikeda has been giving guidance about leadership. I believe this is because it is so integral to our goal of achieving kosen-rufu. Certainly, within SGI-USA, there are many appointed leaders who volunteer to help plan and execute our organization's program to inspire the faith, practice and study of our membership.

In addition, however, and from a broader perspective, every SGI-USA member is a Buddhist leader who, in a society that is largely uninformed about the Daishonin's Buddhism, is showing everyone how a Buddhist lives. For anyone who knows us as practicing Buddhists, our every word and action has the potential to show them the humanity and depth of the Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI. In this sense, President Ikeda's guidance on leadership is incredibly valuable for our Buddhist practice regardless of what organizational responsibilities we fulfill.

A central theme in President Ikeda's perspectives has been contrasting leadership built on authority and power with leadership aimed at inspiring people and leading by example. The former method uses force to make people follow, even against their will, while the latter motivates people to naturally move forward

on their own free will and desire. Since kosen-rufu is an objective that all people naturally yearn for from the depths of their lives, President Ikeda repeatedly points to leadership that releases natural self-motivation within each individual as the model we cherish within the SGI.

Just recently, he confirmed this again by stating that leaders for kosen-rufu should not be self-centered. If you are too obsessed with yourself, you will lose sight of the members. The members should always be the focus of our attention. If people assume leadership for their own sake, then they become the center of that movement. With this perspective, leaders can only consider the movement from their own perspective. In planning an activity, such individuals would think, "I hope everyone comes to this meeting so it will be clear that I am a good leader." This viewpoint includes no compassion or consideration for creating a valuable experience for those attending the meeting.

On the other hand, leaders who are focused on the members' happiness work to plan meetings that will benefit those who come. Such efforts are an expression of their concern for those attending the meeting. Ideally, feedback and input from members add to a more fulfilling activity. This fundamental care about the members' happiness and desire for their inspiration in faith is the most important element in leadership. I want to thank the Publications staff and others for initiating this series of discussions on leadership. It is a very significant topic. At the same time, I deeply appreciate your ongoing support of the *World Tribune*. I sincerely hope you find this new series an inspiring and instruc-

LEARNING FROM *THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION*

Lessons about Leadership:

“A NEW WORLD”

In the following excerpt from volume 1, page 113, Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages two women's leaders from San Francisco on the value of unity.

The group decided to stop for a short break at a small park near the bridge. Stepping out of their cars, they saw on display a section of the suspension cable used in the bridge. A sign explained that the cable was 37 inches in diameter and comprised 27,572 separate strands of wire. Shin'ichi and the others stood in a circle around the display.

“The cable is thick, but each wire is quite thin. How amazing that it can hold up the bridge!” exclaimed Katsu Kiyohara.

Nodding in agreement, Shin'ichi then spoke to Yukiko Gilmore and Chiyoko Taylor, who had been appointed respectively as the San Francisco District chief and women's division chief the day before.

“It's true that the individual wires are not very thick, but when bunched together in great numbers, they display incredible strength. This resembles the unity of *itai doshin* (many in body, one in mind). In the Soka Gakkai, too, though each person's strength may be small, when that strength is combined and the members are firmly united, they can display unimaginable power. Unity is strength.

“From now on, you must play a central role in unifying the members' efforts to support the kosen-rufu movement and the happiness of the people of San Francisco.”

“Yes!” the two women replied in unison.

The immensity of this lofty mission with which they were entrusted filled them with a sobering sense of responsibility.

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



“WESTWARD TRANSMISSION”

In this episode from volume 3, pages 19–20, Shin'ichi Yamamoto discusses what could be termed “sincere unintentional disunity.”

One of the most important tasks in the Year of Dynamic Advancement was to strengthen the many new chapters around the country. Now, as the new year began, Shin'ichi Yamamoto wanted to discuss how to achieve this.

“The chapter chief might say, ‘Let's try hard in our Gakkai activities and reap the benefits of faith.’ If, on the other hand, the vice chapter chief sitting next to him then says, ‘Faith is not separate from daily life. Let's strive diligently in our jobs,’ the messages will conflict.

“Or, the chapter chief might say, ‘I'd really like to see our chapter concentrate on study.’ But if the women's division chief then says, ‘Study without practice is abstract. It's pointless if we don't try to introduce others to this Buddhism,’ the members will be

left feeling bewildered.

“This is a prime example of disunity. Although each statement fits Soka Gakkai guidelines, the apparently conflicting guidance will only confuse the members. This is because the leaders haven't tried to

constructively.

“If, for example, when the chapter chief says, ‘Let's promote study,’ the other leaders were to say, ‘Yes, and because we study to support our practice, let's also chant daimoku and share Buddhism with others,’ no one would be confused. The statements don't conflict; they complement each other.

“In baseball, the team with good teamwork is strong. When the first base-

game if the teammate stands by and does nothing, saying, ‘It's his job to cover first base.’ And when a player comes to bat with a man on base, he might bunt or hit a fly ball to advance the runner, even if it means the batter himself will be called out.

“The important thing is to think not only about yourself but to work in harmony with those around you in order to win. This will contribute to your own growth as well.

“In any event, let's again create a record of unprecedented triumph this year through solid unity.”

After the leaders meeting, Shin'ichi posed for a photograph with the others as a record of their pledge to achieve victory. The engines of new advancement now began to rev with a thunderous roar. The leaders returned to their respective areas with a passionate fighting spirit apparent in their expressions, the pulse of fresh progress beating strongly in their hearts.

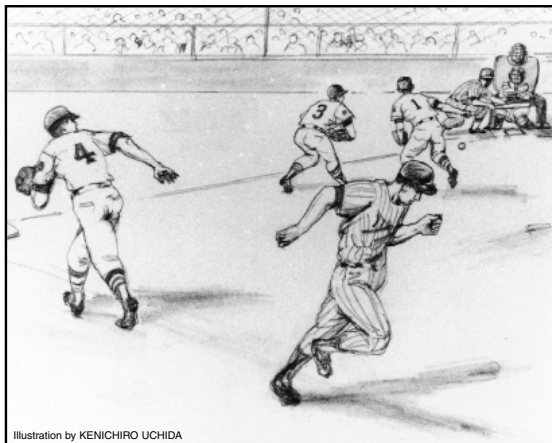


Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

harmonize. If they were in sync with one another, they could naturally express the above points more

man fields a ball, a teammate will cover first base. This is acting in harmony. The team won't win the

Photo by CHERYL UTLEY



Consensus or unity building is an essential aspect of effective leadership in any arena of life. This is especially true for Buddhist leaders. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "This spiritual bond (many in body, one in mind) is the

basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren's propagation (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 23). "Similarly, you should also reconfirm the fundamental path of faith, practice and study," notes SGI President Ikeda during his historic visit to the United States in 1990, "and make a fresh departure based on the unity

of many in body, one in mind — the starting point of our movement. This is the key to the reconstruction of [SGI-USA] as a model organization" (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 51).

As essential as it is, building a clear and solid consensus is not an easy thing. The following are some practical tips for making the process work in your organization.

1 Begin with a clear purpose. The prime point or purpose of our activities should always be the *Major Writings* and the practical guidance of President Ikeda. Confirming the purpose and objectives of each activity or event at the beginning of the planning process sets the foundation for effective planning and action.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Determine the purpose and expected outcome.
- Determine what needs to be done to achieve these goals.

DON'T

- Confuse actions or means with the goal or purpose.
- Lose sight of the objective.

2 Create open dialogue. "Discussing things openly as siblings or members of a family, please proceed hand in hand, step by step, toward construction and growth" (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p.49).

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Keep the facts separate from the assumptions.
- Discuss the situation from various perspectives.
- Take the time to discuss alternative proposals.

DON'T

- Assume your proposal is best.
- Confuse opinions or assumptions with facts.
- Dismiss alternatives too easily, focusing only on one idea.

3 Be an active listener. "It is important for leaders to be fair and impartial and to hear out opinions that differ from their own. By giving sincere consideration to diverse opinions, you can develop a broad, flexible outlook and make stable progress" (*Ibid.*, p. 49).

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Pay attention to each speaker.
- Summarize what you believe the person has said.
- Ask for further clarification if what's being said is not clear.

DON'T

- Interrupt each other.
- Engage in more than one conversation at a time.
- Jump from one subject to another.

4 Create an atmosphere supportive of dialogue. "I would like to emphasize the importance of fostering an atmosphere where members feel free to speak their minds to leaders and say what they feel has to be said" (*Ibid.*, p. 50).

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Give positive, warm and friendly acknowledgment to others' ideas.
- Actively invite others to express different views.

DON'T

- Get defensive, angry or frustrated, debate or attempt to control others.
- Focus only on what's wrong with an idea.

5 Handle differences of opinion or confrontations. "Although to criticize and censure someone out of petty emotionalism is of course incorrect, it is necessary that constructive and valuable opinions be aired. If a leader is broad-minded enough to listen with a sense of appreciation, both he and the person sharing his opinion can expand their state of life" (*Ibid.*, p. 51).

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Focus on the problem, not on the person.
- Question your own assumptions.

DON'T

- Retreat rather than try to understand differences.
- Don't agree simply to reduce conflict.

6 Participate in the dialogue. "From the standpoint of faith, to keep silent when one sees something amiss is tantamount to lacking mercy" (*Ibid.*, p. 51).

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Try to involve the quieter members, giving all an equal chance.
- Protect others from being interrupted or attacked.

DON'T

- Be dominated by one or two people or allow two people to argue while others watch.
- Withdraw from the discussion or defer to more aggressive people.

7 Commit to the process. "It is my belief that the essence of goodness is the aspiration toward unity, while evil directs itself toward division and sundering" (April 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 51). For the consensus building process to be effective after open dialogue, each participant must have the intention to reach consensus, be able to put aside their own ideas and commit themselves to making the agreed upon plan work.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO

- Clearly restate what has been agreed upon.
- Commit ourselves to the plan.

DON'T

- Vote or use majority rule — this can only create compliance, not consensus.
- Force or manipulate others.
- Refuse to unite with others or pretend to agree then act on your own.

8 Chant daimoku and take courageous action. Finally, no matter how wonderfully successful the consensus building process may be, unless each participant is determined to pray and take action for its success, nothing will be accomplished. "It is also important that we establish clear and concrete goals for what we hope to achieve each day and then pray and challenge ourselves to achieve each of them. This earnest determination gives rise to wisdom and resourcefulness, thereby leading to success. In short, to win in life we need determination and prayer, effort and ingenuity (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 251)."

THE SPIRIT OF LEADERS

Words to the Wise



To teach another something is like oiling the wheels of a heavy cart so that they will turn, or like floating a boat upon the water so that it may move ahead without difficulty. ("The Wealthy Man Sudatta," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 307)

FROM SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA:

Leaders have to cast aside all selfishness and vanity, becoming strongly determined to devote themselves fully to the members. This is the true, correct way to practice Buddhism. In any event, you have to decide to work for your fellow members and do everything in your power to enable them all to fully reveal their potential. This is what it means to be a genuine leader. (Aug. 22, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 7)

A leader has to consider what to impart to others. Even just a few words may be enough: "You seem tired. Have you been very busy?" "How is your husband doing?" "Please dress warmly to avoid catching cold." "Thank you for allowing us to use this wonderful room for our meeting." You might bring a snack like a rice cracker or piece of fruit for members to enjoy on their way home. What you choose to do is up to you, but a leader should always ponder the question "What can I do to raise everyone's spirits? How can I give people hope and peace of mind?" (September 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

It is also important that leaders love the members as they would their own children. This is the spirit of a genuine leader. (Sept. 5, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 9)

In the struggle for kosen-rufu, when the leaders advance, everyone advances. When the leaders grow, everyone grows. But if the leaders are all words and no action, there will be no victory. When a leader resolves: "I will challenge my human revolution!

I will develop myself!" and then takes action, the driving force for continual victory is born. This is the only formula for continuous triumph. (Sept. 26, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 11)

We mustn't allow ourselves to be ruled by a self-centered mind. Rather, we have to discipline the mind and gain mastery over it. This is the Daishonin's strict admonition. We are not the center around which things revolve. Central are the Buddhist teachings and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Central is the goal of kosen-rufu, the happiness and peace of all humanity. Central are our precious, fellow SGI members. It is our place as SGI leaders to exert ourselves thoroughly for this nucleus of faith. Ultimately, selfless devotion means possessing such a deep sincerity of purpose. (Oct. 24, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10)

Leaders should be second to none when it comes to prayer.... Leaders who do not pray for their fellow members are leaders in name only. Leaders should also be second to none when it comes to working hard and agonizing for the advance of kosen-rufu.... Leaders should be second to none in taking action. We have to take the initiative ourselves, encouraging those who are suffering and visiting those who are unwell and need to be cheered up. We have to spring to action quickly — with a light step, warmth in our voice and a friendly, down-to-earth attitude. (Oct. 24, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 11)

I hope that the SGI will always remain the most friendly and harmonious of organizations. I ask you, as leaders, to be careful never to lose your tempers and scold members emotionally. The role of a leader is to be patient, to listen to what everyone has to say and to be encouraging and supportive. (Aug. 8, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 14)

A question we must constantly ponder as SGI leaders is how we can generate fresh energy and momentum for kosen-rufu. That is our responsibility as leaders, and wisdom is essential for this task. Ingenuity and resourcefulness are important hallmarks of a leader. To simply go about activities — whether it be meetings or some other challenges — in the same old way, out of force of habit or laziness, is a disservice to everyone. There is no sense of freshness, and all progress grinds to a halt. (Nov. 7, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 8)

To become a leader in the Soka Gakkai and to work for kosen-rufu is the highest, most enduring honor in life. Getting a doctorate or becoming a physician, studying abroad, getting elected to public office — such things alone do not constitute human greatness. Far more noble and praiseworthy are the lives of those who strive earnestly in the organization for the sake of the people's happiness and a peaceful world. (Aug. 1, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 9)

Conversaciones sobre la Juventud

TRES NIVELES DE AMISTAD

En la siguiente conversaci n el presidente del la SGI Daisaku Ikeda se ala tres niveles de amistad: 1) Personas que establecen lazos de afecto rec proco y aspiran a disfrutar juntos de la vida. 2) Personas que se alientan mutuamente, a medida que se esfuerzan para realizar sus propios sue os. 3) El lazo de amistad entre camaradas que tienen un v nculo de absoluta confianza.

Una existencia sin amigos es como un Mundo sin Sol

Miura: Otra carta dice as : "Realmente disfruto estando solo. No me atrae mucho hacer todas las cosas en grupo. Quisiera saber si esto est bien".

Presidente Ikeda: Por supuesto que s. Cada uno es libre de disfrutar de su propia compa a, si lo desea. Estar en medio de mucha gente y tener verdaderos amigos son dos cosas muy distintas. Ustedes tienen derecho a hacer amigos a su manera, de elegir aquellas personas con quienes pueden compartir sus ideas y sentimientos.

Por favor, recuerden que la amistad es uno de los cimientos m s importantes de la vida. El mundo est inundado de proverbios y sentencias acerca de este v nculo fundamental : "Los amigos est n m s cerca del coraz n que la familia" y "Si la amistad desapareciera de la vida, ser a lo mismo que si se apagara el sol" (Cicer n); "Un amigo fiel es un alma de dos cuerpos" (Arist teles.)

La personalidad y la integridad son indispensables para cultivar la amistad. En una verdadera amistad, no cuenta la posici n social. Solo se puede hacer buenos amigos cuando se abre el coraz n y se le comparte con los dem s. Una persona ego sta, centrada en s misma, no puede tener amigos de verdad.

A medida que uno se va haciendo mayor, resulta cada vez m s dif cil establecer lazos que no est n te idos por los intereses personales; de modo que es muy importante consolidar relaciones amistosas genuinas mientras uno es joven. Los amigos que van forjando en cada uno de los niveles escolares, durante su poca de estudiantes, son como sus compa eros de elenco, que salen a escena junto a ustedes en el gran teatro de la vida, para interpretar la misma obra. Jam s olvidar n a esos amigos por el resto de su existencia.

V ase Amistad, p g.B

VENCRIENDO MIS DUDAS INTERNAS

EXPERIENCIA

Pascual Olivera, Director del Departamento de Artes de la SGI-USA, comparti su experiencia en la conferencia que se realiz en noviembre de 1998, en el Centro de la Naturaleza y la Cultura de la Florida. (FNCC)

Cuando yo he tenido la oportunidad de hablar con algunos artistas de la SGI, he notado que un punto que sale mucho a relucir es la preocupaci n por las dudas internas. Muchos de los que estamos en el campo art stico tenemos confianza y optimismo, pero todos tenemos que luchar con el asunto de la auto-estima en uno u otro momento. Yo, como muchos otros artistas, he tenido que luchar con las dudas internas en mi propia vida.

Desde antes de entrar al primer grado, yo ya sab a que quer a ser artista. Estaba interesado en el arte en todas sus formas: arte visual, teatro, y, por supuesto, en la danza espa ola, que es mi carrera ahora. Tuve suerte que mi maestro de primer grado vio que yo ten a una naturaleza art stica y apoy mi inters en las artes desde esa temprana edad.

Mis padres no tomaron en serio mi inter s hasta mucho m s tarde cuando yo decid vivir de esto. De hecho, trataron por todos los medios de desalentar mi creatividad, mi respuesta fue aislarme y perd el quinto grado. Despu s de eso, ellos comprendieron que yo estaba decidido a seguir mi inter s art stico, entonces aceptaron dejarme ir a la escuela de danza y actuaci n, pero segu n pensando que la idea era absurda. Lo que yo o a era: "Nunca vas a alcanzar nada"; "Hacerse artista es una tontera". "Eres un tonto"; "S pr ctico, deja eso"; "Vas a sufrir y te vas a morir de hambre como artista"; "No eres suficientemente bueno".

Cuando mis compa eros de clase se dieron cuenta que yo estaba yendo a la escuela de danza y a clases de teatro en vez de jugar futbol, basketbol o baseball, tambi n se mofaban de mi: "S lo las ni as van a clases de danza", "Eres un afeminado" "No te me acerques".

Ideas como esa se fueron grabando en mi vida a una edad muy temprana y tuvieron mucho que ver con la forma en que yo

pensaba de m mismo. Estas fuerzas desalentadoras a os de pensar de mi s lo en forma negativa y de haber entrado en un ambiente de negatividad- fueron la base para que yo me convirtiera en un experto autodifamador.

Yo vi a Jos Greco, el famoso bailar n espa ol, muchas veces cuando hac a presentaciones cerca de la casa de mi familia en Cleveland, Ohio. De alguna manera, l se interes en mi y recomend a mis padres que me enviaran a Espa a a entrenarme; que si pasaba el entrenamiento, l me permitir a hacer una prueba para su compa a. Mi sue o de trabajar para l, me mantuvo para pasar cuatro a os de estudios de danza en Espa a.

Cuando regres , fui a mi prueba con el Ballet Espa ol de Jos Greco, s lo para que se me dijera, sin siquiera haberme visto bailar, que estaba demasiado alto [de estatura] para su compa a.

Yo me qued devastado, pero estaba acostumbrado a aceptar el rechazo. Despu s de todo, yo nunca iba a alcanzar nada. "Yo era un est pido. Ellos estaban en lo cierto; sto no era pr ctico. De todos modos, yo no hab a sufrido lo tanto-yo no me hab a muerto de hambre todav a. Por supuesto, me hab an rechazado!" Estaba perfeccionando el arte de auto-ofenderme con una carrera llena de rechazos. (M s tarde logr entrar a la compa a de Jos Greco y llegu a ser el primer bailar n. Fue mientras estuve en su compa a que fui introducido al Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin).

A los 18 a os me fui a New York a probar fortuna en las artes; necesitaba un agente. Yo hab a o do hablar de la famosa agencia William Morris y me fui a buscarla. A la recepcionista le debo haber ca do bien, le agrad mi entusiasmo, porque consegu una entrevista con un agente. En realidad, [al agente le ca bien y me ofreci un contrato exclusivo por siete a os. Sucede que

la Agencia William Morris era la oficina de selecci n del reparto para el musical El sonido de la M sica, estelarizada por Mary Martin.

El agente quer a ponerme en el musical para que yo consiguiera el dinero suficiente para vivir en New York y continuar mis estudios de canto, danza y actuaci n. El me iba a dirigir mi carrera. Yo sal de la oficina de la William Morris feliz de la vida. Mis pies casi no tocaban el suelo.

Entonces me puse a pensar "Pero yo no estoy listo para sto, es demasiado r pido. D nde est el sufrimiento, las pasadas de hambre por mi arte? Qu va a pasar si se dan cuenta que no estoy suficientemente preparado? Soy un est pido, yo nunca voy a llegar a nada". Abatido por mis propias dudas, nunca regres a la agencia William Morris y tampoco les regres las llamadas.

Tuve muchas oportunidades como esa en mi carrera y siempre, me las arregl para sabotearlas y termin viajando con una revista musical que se presentaban en clubes nocturnos. Los due os eran alcohlicos y muy abusivos, [pero] yo me sent a como en casa y me qued con ellos por casi dos a os.

En 1968 empec a practicar el Budismo. aprend que uno nunca debe difamar [calumniar] al Gohonzon, ni a los miembros, ni a los l deres, ni la pr ctica, porque uno va a ver los efectos negativos y le har n la vida miserable. Por alguna raz n, yo capt sto muy r pidamente y como estaba desesperado por tener xito en mi vida, puse mi mejor esfuerzo para cumplir con esas ideas b sicas. En ese tiempo, sin embargo, no se hablaba mucho sobre las auto-difamaciones. Yo practicaba muy fuerte e hice mis sue os realidad a pesar de lo que pensaba de m mismo: "Yo no soy un buen miembro"; "Espera que ellos se den cuenta no soy una buena persona"; "Yo soy un desastre de dirigente. S lo es asunto de tiempo

para que ellos descubran que soy un est pido".

A pesar de mis pensamientos negativos, yo hac a que mi pr ctica budista trabajara para m en muchas formas (as es de poderoso Nammyoho-renge-kyo), pero, fundamentalmente, no era feliz, no era libre.

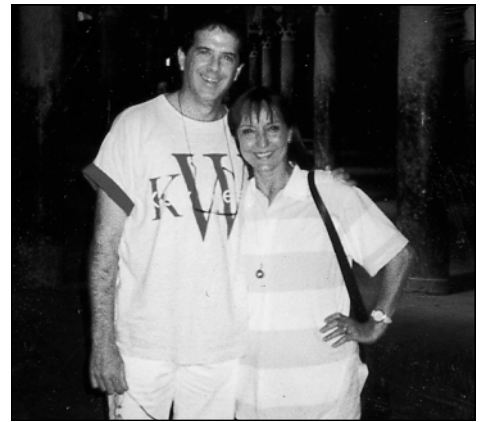
En 25 a os de ser budista, yo he vencido muchos obstculos y he tenido muchos momentos cruciales. Todos mis sue os se han hecho realidad. -Tengo la carrera de mis sue os; el matrimonio de mis sue os, contra todas las probabilidades; el hogar de mis sue os. He vencido una enfermedad incurable, e incluso, he llegado a ser un l der exitoso-todo, a pesar de m mismo, pero todav a estaba prisionero de mis pensamientos negativos.

Entonces se present otro momento crucial en la forma de un obstculo, tan gigante que, esta vez, hasta llegu a pensar que ni mi pr ctica al Gohonzon me iba a salvar. Pens en el suicidio, pens no seguir practicando (Yo no entend a c mo la gente pod a dejar de practicar, pero ahora, ante este impasse en mi vida, yo ten a los mismos pensamientos)

Afortunadamente, yo era, y todav a soy-muy disciplinado con mi gongyo, por eso, durante este horrible tiempo, nunca dej de hacer gongyo. A veces me sent a como que estaba entonando en [estado de] coma, estaba petrificado, pero no paraba.

Entonces, le algo del Presidente Ikeda: "Cada uno de nosotros tiene 'su demonio particular'-una falla b sica que se planta en el camino de nuestro crecimiento personal. Si podemos vencer esa falla fundamental, todo se abrir dramticamente". (*World Tribune*, Septiembre 12, 1997, p g. 13) Decid tratar de nuevo y, esta vez, me iba a retar hasta encontrar mi demonio fundamental.

V ase Pascual p g. C



Pascual y Angela Olivera en Espa a

Amistad de la p g. A

El vínculo entre padres e hijos es algo que jamás se rompe. Lo mismo sucede, en principio, con la relación entre los esposos. Pues bien, creo que la amistad tendrá a que ser, de manera similar, un lazo eterno, para toda la vida.

Considero que quizás podrá establecer ciertas diferencias entre los distintos tipos de amistad y dividirlos en tres niveles, de acuerdo con su profundidad.

Miura: Cuáles serían esos tres niveles?

Tres Niveles de Amistad

Presidente Ikeda: Conocen ustedes los tres niveles de devoción hacia los padres, según las tradiciones de Oriente?

Ueda: Sí, me parece que sí.

Presidente Ikeda: El primer nivel de devoción hacia los padres es la obediencia, es decir, hacer todo lo que ellos les indican que hagan. Bien, eso puede resultar muy adecuado para ellos, pero en el caso de ustedes, los hijos, no es más que una actitud completamente pasiva. El segundo nivel de devoción es poner el mayor empeño en atenderlos. Significa, por ejemplo, que los hijos les hagan algo en obsequio o que lleven a cabo alguna acción que los complazca. Finalmente, el tercer nivel se relaciona con enseñarles a sus padres aquello que ustedes saben es correcto y beneficioso para ellos, aunque, tal vez, ellos se resistan.

Miura: Pienso que, en nuestro caso, eso significaría enseñar a aquellos de nuestros padres que no son miembros de la Soka Gakkai acerca del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin. Porque, aunque se opusieran, es el nicho medio para lograr la felicidad absoluta e indestructible, no solo en esta existencia, sino para toda la eternidad.

Ueda: Y cuáles serían, entonces, los tres niveles de amistad?

Presidente Ikeda: Creo que también podríamos llamarlos "los tres niveles de relaciones humanas". Dentro del primero, vemos que las personas establecen lazos de afecto recíproco y de empatía en el ámbito de la vida cotidiana, y aspiran a disfrutar juntos de la vida. Se trata, entonces, de una amistad sustentada en que uno y otro gocen de la mutua compañía y pasen buenos momentos juntos. La segunda instancia es un

poco más profunda. Cada uno, dentro de un grupo de amigos, tiene sus propios objetivos; sabe con claridad qué clase de persona quiere llegar a ser, como desea construir su futuro y contribuir con la humanidad. Entonces, esos amigos se alientan mutuamente, a medida que se esfuerzan para realizar sus propios sueños y llegar a ser útiles a la sociedad. Esa es la amistad basada en el aliento mutuo.

Ueda: Ya comprendo. Los amigos no están simplemente para salir juntos a todos lados y pasarla bien. Deben alentarse unos a otros para lograr objetivos concretos. Muchos miembros de nuestra división de estudiantes nos han escrito sobre este tipo de amistad; quisiera leerles algunos párrafos: "Hemos trabajado juntos y armamos una impresionante exhibición para el festival de nuestra escuela"; "antes de cada examen, nos ponemos objetivos de estudio y nos damos ánimos entre todos para concretarlos"; "como miembros del equipo de natación de la escuela, nos hemos desafiado para nadar diez kilómetros y lo logramos! Fue agotador, pero es algo que vamos a recordar con gran orgullo"; "todos nos sentimos muy unidos cuando preparamos la reunión general de la división. Estoy realmente feliz, porque el encuentro fue todo un éxito".

Miura: Y tenemos aquí la carta de otro estudiante que escribió lo siguiente: "Dicen que cuando uno se prepara para los exámenes de admisión, tiene que luchar solo. Siento que esa es una batalla en la que uno tiene que triunfar sobre sí mismo. Cuando comencé a prepararme, me di cuenta de lo valiosos que eran los amigos. Hay otro alumno que expresa sentimientos parecidos: "Mi amigo y yo estamos esforzándonos para concretar nuestros sueños en el futuro, y estamos decididos a ser brillantes".

Muchos estudiantes se dieron cuenta de que no están solos, y esa certeza les da la fuerza para superar cualquier desafío. Por eso, creo que nuestros lectores sabrán apreciar realmente esa clase de amistad que brinda aliento y coraje.

Cuáles serían, entonces, el tercer nivel de amistad?

El Lazo indestructible entre Camaradas

Presidente Ikeda: El tercer nivel de amistad es el lazo que existe entre personas que comparten los mismos ideales; se trata de una relación en la que cada uno da a

gusto la vida por el otro. Esa es la clase de amistad que existe en el ámbito de la fe.

Muchas grandes personas, que han concretado logros impresionantes, han cultivado esa clase de amistad. Una amistad entre gente del mismo espíritu, que consagra su vida a una causa común. Ese vínculo supremo exige la más absoluta confianza. Los antiguos amigos jamás se traicionan, ni aunque eso les costara la vida, jamás, tampoco, se traicionan a sí mismos ni a sus amigos, y nunca renuncian a sus ideales.

Existen muchos ejemplos que ilustran la calidad de esos lazos impercederos; entre otros, está la maravillosa descripción de la amistad que unió a Rossi y a Bruno en la obra *La ciudad eterna*, de Hall Caine. La historia se desarrolla en Roma, a comienzos de siglo. Italia, en manos de un gobierno corrupto, está bajo la amenaza de poderes extranjeros. Eso hace que el pueblo sufra lo indecible, el heroísmo de la novela es un joven revolucionario, David Rossi quien tiene un gran amigo llamado Bruno Rocco.

Ambos, que sienten el pesar de sus compatriotas como si fuera el suyo, deciden ponerse de pie, proclamar la injusticia y luchar contra la opresión. Los gobernantes corruptos contraatacan de inmediato, y Rossi se ve forzado a exiliarse. Pero Bruno cae prisionero y recibe toda clase de torturas. Aun así, se niega a claudicar.

Entonces, las autoridades deciden tenderle una trampa. Le hacen leer una carta supuestamente escrita por Rossi, cuyo contenido insinúa que este traiciona a Bruno. Por supuesto, se trata de una mentira abyecta. El fiscal encara a Bruno y le dice: "Tu amigo te ha abandonado a tu suerte aquí, mientras que, a tus espaldas, te ha traicionado". El prisionero resaca dar crédito a esas insinuaciones demoníacas. Superando con fiera voz las insidiosas calumnias de sus captores. Bruno grita con toda la fuerza de sus pulmones: "¡Viva Rossi!", y muere con el nombre de su amigo en los labios, absolutamente convencido de la integridad de su camarada.

Rossi, con el espíritu de su amigo ardiendo en el corazón, finalmente logra concretar aquel ideal tan ansiado por los dos: el de una ciudad eterna donde el pueblo puede vivir en paz y armonía.

El señor Toda me regaló un ejemplar de *La ciudad eterna* cuando yo era muy joven. Es una obra que siempre recordaré. "Llévala y luego préstale el libro a tus amigos más cercanos", me dijo el señor Toda; "después de, cuando todos lo hayan leído, formemos

un grupo y conversemos juntos sobre la obra". Mi mentor nos instruyó acerca de esa noble clase de amistad que puede resistir el huracán más feroz. Nos enseñó que jamás debemos traicionar a nuestros compañeros de lucha, aunque estuviéramos soportando las penurias y ataques más duros. Nos inculcaba el espíritu de avanzar en fraternidad, hasta que llegara el día victorioso en que el Kosenruffi se hubiera logrado, y la felicidad de la humanidad entera se hubiera concretado.

Ueda: Esa clase de amistad es lo más grandioso. Deja traslucir el noble corazón del ser humano, fiel a su compromiso altruista.

Lo más Importante es lo que está en el Corazón de uno

Presidente Ikeda: Es verdad. Lo que más importa es lo que está en nuestro corazón. El corazón humano puede ser muy débil, inconstante e indigno; pero también es capaz de evidenciar una increíble fuerza, una enorme nobleza y rectitud.

El gran Victor Hugo fue condenado al exilio por oponerse al dictador Napoleón III y, por ese motivo, estuvo alejado de su patria durante diecinueve años. Sin embargo, adoptó la resolución de mantenerse fiel a sus ideales por más persecuciones que se abatieran sobre él. "Quiero espíritu más vibrante y resuelto! He aquí lo que expreso en un poema:

*Cuando solo mil queden en pie, firme he de permanecer!
As sobrevivan cien, con Sullá2 mi espada he de medir.
Ser el último de los últimos diez, dejadme con orgullo pedir
Y cuando solo uno haya quedado, yo mismo ese uno habré de ser!3*

Las personas que no temen ponerse de pie, aunque estén solas, para defender sus ideales, siempre cuentan con el apoyo de amigos fieles y sinceros.

Mantengamos el Sendero que Escogimos

Miura: Actualmente, mucha gente carece de ideales y de convicciones. Por eso, las personas sinceras, que se esfuerzan de todo corazón son tildadas de "presuntuosas"; también muchos atacan a los que están tratando denodadamente de lograr algo valioso en su vida y los llaman "impostores".

Presidente Ikeda: "Todos nace-

mos sentenciados a muerte", reza un dicho. Todos vamos a morir un día. Nadie puede eludir ese destino. Entonces, la cuestión más importante es cómo aprovechamos el tiempo limitado que tenemos en este mundo. Solo eso cuenta. Hay gente que desperdicia su existencia afligiéndose y lamentándose por las cosas más triviales e insignificantes. Algunos llegan al extremo de quitarse la vida. "¿Qué extravío insensato y trágico! El suicidio es un error terrible, lamentable.

Si vamos a dar la vida por algo, deberíamos hacerlo por una causa noble, la causa de la justicia y la verdad eternas.

Si jamás cejamos en nuestro empeño, aun en las circunstancias más severas, conquistaremos el respeto de todos. Solo importa que perseveremos en el camino que hemos escogido, sin que nos dejemos conmovir por ninguna vicisitud, por más dura que sea; sin que nos aflija demasiado la inconstancia de los demás. Mantengamos el sendero que escogimos

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Vase Amistad p g. D

Pascual de la p g a

"Cuando su resolución cambia, dice el presidente Ikeda- todo lo demás se empieza a moverse en la dirección de sus deseos. En el momento en que usted resuelve salir victorioso, cada nervio y cada fibra de su ser se orientan, directamente, hacia su éxito. Por otro lado, si usted piensa: -Esto no va a trabajar,- en ese mismo instante, cada célula de su ser está derrotada y dejar de luchar. Entonces, todo lo demás se mueve en dirección al fracaso". (World Tribune, Julio 11, 1997, p g. 14)

Después de entonar mucho daimoku, me di cuenta que mi demonio fundamental y las raíces destructivas de mi vida eran mis auto-difamaciones, y mis dudas propias. Decidí dominar los pensamientos negativos contra mí mismo. Durante tres semanas no permití que ni un solo pensamiento negativo entrara en mi mente. Entonces, pasé algo negativo y yo me ataque a mí mismo con venganza.

Después de dos días de estar me apaleando a mí mismo, me senté en el momento, habiendo recuperado mi verdadera identidad. Había encontrado el camino para regresar a mi zona de comodidad y ya no tenía que luchar, al menos eso fue lo que pensé.

Fue en ese momento que me di cuenta que mis propias dudas estaban en el centro de mi vida y yo me senté a comodidad con ellas allí, por eso estaba en profundos problemas. Ese obstáculo y ese descubrimiento fueron el momento crucial para mí y di un gran paso en la búsqueda de mi revolución humana para toda mi vida.

Empecé el proceso con la tarea más difícil: aprender a quererme. Nunca había podido decirme a mí mismo: "Me gustas, te quiero".

Me parecí a embarazoso, por eso me veía a mí mismo como un niño escondido en una esquina-llorando, magullado y lleno de miedo. Tenía que verme a mí mismo abrazando a ese niño (yo mismo) y diciéndole cosas que le gustaran como: "Nunca te voy a volver a maltratar (ofendí a nadie); "Nunca voy a volver a abusar de ti ni voy a permitir que nadie vuelva a abusarte. Te voy a hacer la persona más feliz del mundo. Nunca te voy a hacer llorar, ni voy a dejar que te pongas triste". Cada vez que tenía pensamientos negativos sobre mí mismo, la imagen del niño o aparecía y no, no rompí mi promesa a este niño o ahora feliz.

Cuando la gente trató de abusar de mí, no se los permití. Incluso, mantuve un diario durante este tiempo y escribí todos los más profundos y secretos sen-

timientos hacia mí mismo y hacia los demás. Por un año escribí tres páginas diarias, sin importar lo que pasara, yo escribí hasta que ya no hubiera más negatividad que escribir. Yo había trabajado sobre ella, [la negatividad], la había dejado ir y ahora, mi niño interior estaba feliz y en paz. Me había limpiado a mí mismo purgando mi negatividad por escrito y entonando [daimoku].

A veces me ubicaba a mí mismo en diferentes situaciones negativas solo para ver cómo hubiese reaccionado, pero nada podía traer mis auto-difamaciones de regreso nunca más porque ya se había ido. Me había curado.

No quiero dar la impresión de que soy perfecto. La revolución interna es una cosa en avance, yo todavía puedo ser negativo y quejarme con lo mejor de ellas. La diferencia es que ahora, yo voy directo al Gohonzon y domino mis problemas. No permito que las cosas malas persistan más.

No hace mucho, yo estaba muy molesto con algunos cambios que se dieron en la organización. Me sentí como me habían pateado en el estómago; gemí y gruñí por cierto tiempo, [pero] después me empujé hacia el Gohonzon y entonces con todo mi dolor, descubriendo que tenía una lección que aprender, no era una coincidencia. Era mi oportunidad de crecer y desarrollar mi fe. Oré de todo corazón y pocas semanas después, las circunstancias cambiaron y se hicieron mejores que nunca. Durante 15 años había sufrido por este asunto y resulta que era para que cambiara mi propia actitud.

Hoy, yo puedo decir sinceramente que tengo una vida de verdadera libertad y felicidad. No tengo resentimientos de ninguna clase; solo quiero ayudar a los muchos artistas que todavía están atrapados en sus propias dudas y quienes han hecho de esas [dudas] su zona de comodidad sin percatarse de ello.

Cada quien tiene diferentes experiencias sobre cómo se hicieron desconfiados de sí mismos, en una vida creativa, es difícil hacerlo.

Como artistas, nosotros vivimos en un mundo de rechazos: "Eres muy alto"; "No eres suficientemente alto"; "Eres demasiado guapo"; "Eres feo"; "Eres muy joven"; "Eres muy viejo";



"Tu rutina es demasiado moderna-abstracta, eso no se vende aquí"; "Tu rutina es demasiado realista no es lo suficientemente moderna abstracta.

Eso no se vende aquí, tu rutina es demasiado realista-no es lo suficientemente moderna-abstracta. Vete a cualquier otra parte". "¿Quién te dijo que podías escribir?"; "No dejes tu trabajo diario"; "Ponlo en el montón bajo la letra Z y no me llames"; "Con cuántas sinfonías has tocado?"; "Lo siento, te estoy sobre calificando"; "Lo siento, no estás bien calificado"; "Lo siento, no eres lo suficientemente bueno"; "Lo siento, eres demasiado bueno paranosotros".

"¡¡¡TIENES EL TRABAJO!!!"; "¿Por qué a mí? Yo no soy lo suficientemente bueno; no estoy preparado; no he sufrido lo suficiente; tengo que hacer tablas un poco más de tiempo; Ellos [otros artistas?] se merecen más el trabajo; ellos tienen el talento que yo nunca voy a conseguir".

Una vez a mí me hicieron esta pregunta en una reunión de la División de artistas: "En mi grupo de artistas, en casa, tengo dos actrices. Las dos de la misma edad, el mismo tipo y hacen los mismos papeles. Una es mucho más talentosa que la otra, pero la menos talentosa siempre consigue los trabajos. La otra, no ha conseguido un trabajo de actuación en el último año y ha estado haciendo tablas por una vida. ¿Cómo puede ser eso?".

Mi suposición sería que la que siempre está trabajando en su profesión tiene este tipo de pensamientos: "Yo me levanté tarde, me bajó la regla; me siento terriblemente mal, pero voy a dejar esto a un lado y voy a ir y voy a ganar. Yo soy la mejor persona para este papel; este papel fue hecho para mí. Yo voy a conseguir

este papel y lo voy a demostrar en la prueba. Estoy muy agradecida de hacer este papel. Voy a firmar un contrato y esta película será un éxito gracias a mi talento y a mi contribución. Este es mi año de suerte y mi día de suerte. No estoy en gran forma, pero ellos me van a adorar de todos modos". En tanto que la otra, piensa: "Me levanté tarde, ¿para qué molestarme en ir a esta hora? me bajó la regla y me siento terriblemente mal, mejor me quedo en la cama. Probablemente, no me iban a dar el papel, de todos modos. Deben haber un montón de actrices talentosas haciendo la prueba y yo no tengo tanto talento para enfrentarlas. No puedo aceptar que me rechacen. No he conseguido un papel en más de un año. ¿Qué tal si me dieran ese papel? No he trabajado en casi un año, no estoy en forma. Ojalá no tuviera que esperar otro año. Este no es mi año. Este no es mi día de suerte". Quién, cree usted, que va a ganar el papel?

Como artistas, nosotros tenemos que vencer el miedo al fracaso y el miedo al éxito. Debemos desarrollar el valor de recordar que en el Budismo no existe eso de fracaso, lo que existe son momentos cruciales. Con la espada de Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, podemos luchar contra el mayor de nuestros miedos: nuestros pensamientos negativos, y podemos rellenar nuestras vidas con esperanza y optimismo.

El Presidente Ikeda dice: "En otras palabras, no pongan excusas. Asuman la responsabilidad de sus vidas-decidan salir victoriosos. Si se permiten el fracaso, ni con todas las excusas del mundo van a llegar a ninguna parte. Fracaso es fracaso, no importa cuán elocuentemente usted trate de justificarse a sí mismo. Lo importante es ganar, allí donde usted está ahora, lograr la victoria, sin falta. No importa cuántos obstáculos enfrentemos, es crucial que transformemos la situación y salgamos victoriosos, allí donde estamos. Eso [es lo que enseña] el Sutra del Loto". (WT, 18 de abril, 1997, p g. 9-11)

La parte más provechosa al hablar sobre este tópico es que cuando uno se da cuenta que tiene tendencia hacia las dudas internas, es cuando puede empezar el proceso de curación [y] mientras uno no está completamente curado, seguir sangrando. Es un verdadero proceso de curación [y] los beneficios

son maravillosos. Yo he recibido cartas y tarjetas postales de artistas diciéndome que esforzándose y entonando [daimoku] para liberarse de pensamientos negativos, han tenido un éxito mayor que todos sus más locos sueños. Nosotros tenemos que limpiar el camino para que nuestra creatividad pueda fluir de tal manera que inflencie, inspire y toque el corazón humano derivado de un estado de vida feliz y positivo.

Con este espíritu nuestro Presidente de la SGI dice en Aprendiendo del Goshō: Las enseñanzas eternas de Nichiren Daishonin (p g. 128-29): "Espiritu significa el estado de vida interior, el corazón de uno. Es lo que decide a qué vamos a dedicar nuestras vidas. Es la oración fundamental en la cual basamos nuestra existencia. El espíritu de una persona es invisible pero se manifiesta en los momentos cruciales. No solo eso, también controla cada aspecto [de la vida] de la persona, en cada momento de cada día-es el determinante fundamental de la vida de uno.

El Sutra Kegon dice: 'El corazón es como un pintor experimentado', como un gran pintor; el corazón crea libremente las representaciones de todas las cosas. El corazón de uno es el diseñador, el pintor, el escultor y el arquitecto de la vida propia y vida

Es nuestro espíritu, nuestro momento de vida lo que cuenta. Nuestro espíritu es nuestras esperanzas, nuestras oraciones, e incluso puede ser identificado con el subconsciente.

¿Qué clase de futuro divisamos? debemos preguntarnos. ¿Qué clase de auto-yo estoy tratando de desarrollar? ¿quién es lo que quiero lograr en mi vida? debemos trazar el dibujo de esta visión de nuestras vidas en nuestros corazones tan específicamente como nos sea posible. Esta 'pintura' será el diseño de nuestro futuro. El poder del corazón, en realidad, nos permite ejecutar una obra maestra de acuerdo con el diseño. Esta es la doctrina de la posesión de los tres mil reinos en un solo momento de vida.

Mientras más específico y detallado sea el plano que tenemos en nuestro corazón, seremos mejores. El punto es continuar, y vividamente trazando el blanco que tenemos y avanzar hacia esa meta sin pensar en nada más. Entonces, a cada instante, la realidad de nuestras vidas, gradualmente, se ir acercando al plan al que aspiramos.

Vase Pascual, p g. D

Notificación

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Amistad de la página B

Tengo la dicha de tener esa clase de amigos. Los tengo por todo el mundo, y los padres de todos ustedes se cuentan entre ellos. La misma razón de mi existencia son todos esos inolvidables compañeros con quienes comparto mis ideales. La fuente de la fortaleza de la SGI son los lazos de amistad genuina que nos unen. Deseo de modo ferviente que hereden el noble espíritu de los amigos que luchan juntos por una buena causa!

Miura: Pensar que a veces hablamos con ligereza de la amistad pero es algo muy profundo!

Presidente Ikeda: Así es. La amistad es uno de los factores fundamentales que hacen a nues-

tra condición humana. Le confiere un enorme sustento e impetu a la paz del mundo y al bienestar de la comunidad. Al expandir el círculo de la amistad, podemos construir el cimiento de una sociedad pacífica.

Lograr la Paz a través de la Amistad

Ueda: Qué hermoso ser a que todos los seres humanos fuesen amigos!

Presidente Ikeda: Todas las personas son iguales. Por lo tanto, los seres humanos buscan construir lazos de amistad y erigir un mundo ideal: una ciudad eterna donde todos convivan en paz y armonía.

Cuando exponía sus enseñanzas, el buda Shakyamuni

siempre se dirigía a todos los seres vivientes. Considero que la expresión "todos los seres vivientes" corporifica en sí misma el espíritu universal de la amistad, ese espíritu de tratar a cada persona y a cada ser dotado de vida como seres dignos del mayor respeto, y de afanarse por la felicidad de todos ellos.

Aunque lo ideal sería que las personas del mundo entero cultivaran una mutua amistad, sabemos que lamentablemente, la realidad es muy distinta. En vista de ello, es crucial que nos esforcemos con firmeza, para establecer lazos de camaradería con la mayor cantidad de gente posible. Enfrentemos los desafíos que la realidad nos imponga y hagamos todos los cambios que están a nuestro alcance para realizar, aunque sean imperceptibles.

La acumulación de tales esfuerzos conducirá a la humanidad, gradualmente, hacia una paz impercedera.

Miura: Presidente Ikeda, usted ha construido puentes que unen los corazones de personas de todo el mundo, a través de intercambios educativos y culturales, y promoviendo encuentros entre ciudadanos comunes de los rincones más remotos. Siento que nuestros esfuerzos en ese sentido palidecen ante sus logros.

Presidente Ikeda: Aun el empeño más grandioso se reduce, en esencia, a las relaciones individuales que se van acumulando a lo largo de los años. Tengo amigos en el mundo entero, porque siempre he valorado cada encuentro y

he atesorado con profunda sinceridad a cada persona. Siempre se trata de un contacto entre dos seres humanos, siempre. No caigan en la trampa de creer que los que hacen discursos altisonantes, llenos de gestos ampulosos son grandes personas.

Una gota de lluvia que cae del cielo, una gota de agua del río, una gota de agua del océano es, cada una, solo eso: una gota de agua. Los amigos que hacemos dentro de nuestro pequeño círculo contribuyen a propagar la amistad alrededor del orbe. Nuestro núcleo personal de amistades forma parte del gran círculo global de amistad; es exactamente lo mismo. Forjar una genuina amistad con una sola persona significa dar un paso hacia la creación de un mundo de paz.

Pascual de la página C

Todo depende de lo que hay en nuestro corazón. Las oraciones sinceras, definitivamente, serán contestadas. Si nosotros decidimos que algo es imposible, entonces, como eso es lo que estamos pensando, hasta las cosas posibles se hacen imposibles, pero si tenemos la confianza de que, definitivamente, podemos hacer algo, ya estamos un paso más cerca de lograrlo".

La libertad completa en nuestras vidas, es posible. En el pasado, aparentemente, yo atraía a la gente negativa, ahora, ellos tímidamente se alejan. Ahora yo conozco mejor a las personas que tratan de ofenderme, abusarme, aprovecharse, usarme, irre-

spetarme o denigrarme, y no se los permito. Yo sé que yo era un esclavo de mi propia negatividad; ahora, en realidad, puedo mostrar más compasión y aprecio hacia otras personas porque siento aprecio y compasión por mí mismo. La infelicidad, desgracia y depresión eran mi zona cómoda. La felicidad indestructible era ajena a mí, yo no pensaba que pudiera ser alcanzable. Ahora, con mi nuevo estado de felicidad, no puedo volver a lo anterior. Siento como que ya no practico el Budismo con la cabeza sino con el corazón. He aprendido que los cambios en el destino [de uno] no suceden [así porque], uno tiene que trabajar en ellos.

Por favor, sean amables con sus compañeros artistas. Nosotros

recibimos muy poco de la sociedad en general. Como artistas, a veces, vivimos en un mundo aislado, un mundo donde nos podemos sentir completamente solos. Pero es que, actos de extraordinaria bondad, traen extraordinarios beneficios a nuestras vidas y son grandes fuentes de propagación de este Budismo.

Por favor, recuerden siempre que somos niños, niños en nuestra clase, todos somos [niños]. No hay dos actuaciones iguales, ni obras de arte iguales, ni poemas, ni libros iguales. Cada despertar del ser humano está influenciado por un artista. Desde la taza de café que nos tomamos, la ropa que vestimos, nuestros carros,

nuestras casas, las televisiones, las películas, la radio, el teatro, la música, hasta los zapatos y los calcetines, todos salieron de la creativa imaginación de un artista como nosotros.

Me encanta lo que dice la estrella de Broadway, Tommy Tune sobre la vida, en su libro *Pie de páginas*: "Todo es tan completamente simple; tan frustrantemente complejo. Esto no es el traje de la presentación, ES EL ESPECTACULO!"

Espero que, como artistas, podamos crear una gran fortuna para nosotros y ser exitosa y saludablemente felices, de modo que podamos hacer a nosotros por kosen-rufu. El mundo no sobrevivirá a sin nosotros.

Nosotros tenemos el poder de llegar hasta la vida humana y traerla hasta el Gohonzon por medio de nuestro arte; nuestro talento es nuestro regalo: úselo en una forma positiva.

Sea en el mundo escrito, en el mundo hablado, desde una galería o la pared de un museo; del escenario, de la televisión, la radio o el cine, el arte, como ninguna otra cosa en el mundo, tiene el poder de tocar y mover el corazón humano. Así de importantes son nuestras vidas.

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Por Ester Zapata.
San Antonio, Texas

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