

- SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA DEDICATES A NEW POEM TO YOUNG WOMEN
- THE MAY ISSUE OF 'FRIENDS FOR PEACE' FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Discussions On Youth

TRUE COURAGE *is* PEACE

SGI President Ikeda: The people in the spotlight, the people who always seem to be doing big, flashy things, are not always courageous. And it goes without saying that war and oppression are not acts of courage but of cowardice.

True courage means carrying out peaceful, just and beneficial activities. True courage is to live honestly and tenaciously. This is the most priceless courage. It is steadfast courage, sound and healthy courage.

The people who have no courage are the ones who steal, who oppress, who kill and maim, who threaten lives with weapons, who wage war. People do such evil things because they are cowards. They have no courage. Cowardice is dangerous.

PLEASE SEE COURAGE, 6

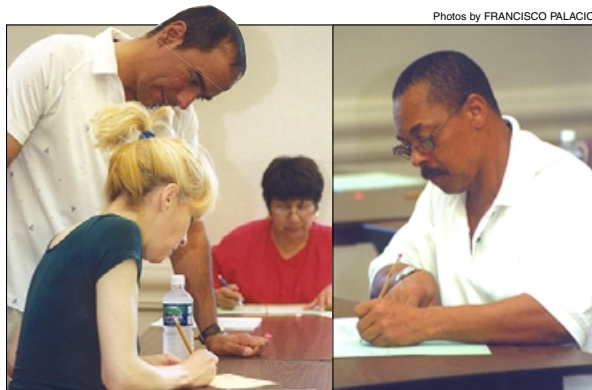


San Francisco youth



Long Island youth

IN THIS CONCLUSION TO HIS DISCUSSION ON COURAGE, PRESIDENT IKEDA SAYS THAT 'TRUE COURAGE MEANS CARRYING OUT PEACEFUL, JUST AND BENEFICIAL ACTIVITIES. TRUE COURAGE IS TO LIVE HONESTLY AND TENACIOUSLY. THIS IS THE MOST PRICELESS COURAGE.'



At the Miami Community Center on April 25, members take the SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam.

Entrance Exam *a great experience*

The Study Department Entrance Exam was held at 111 locations on April 25. A total of 1,583 members, including SGI-USA members residing in the Tokyo area and Okinawa, took the test.

The test materials included Nichiren Daishonin's letters "On Attaining Buddhahood," "The Real Aspect of the Go-

honzon" and "Happiness in the World." Participants also studied the Daishonin's life history and the pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*.

More than 1,300 people took the test in English, the rest taking it in Japanese, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Cambodian and Portuguese. Study Department Leader Eugene Hirahara

commented that "since a majority of the participants were new members, I feel that we had a very meaningful exam." The exam answers will be printed soon in the *World Tribune*.

Next up for the Study Department is the Intermediate Exam, to be held Oct. 24. (See the April 9 *World Tribune* for the revised Intermediate Exam materials.)

OPEN LETTER

Pam and Spring Nelson of Littleton, Colo., write about the recent tragedy at Columbine High School.

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FINE PRINT

The May edition of your messages to the 'World Tribune' readership.

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PERSPECTIVE

Carolyn Tynan wonders how we should define 'casualties.'

page 7

AN OPEN LETTER

from Pam Nelson of Littleton, Colo. — On behalf of Columbine District

Dear Fellow Members,

Thank you for your heartfelt daimoku and concern, which have meant so much to this community.

The following is a brief report of the recent tragedy at Columbine High School in terms of how it has impacted our family and our community.

Having just left my job of nearly three years — with great anxiety — to put all my resolve into doing the things in life that are important to me, I happened to be home on the morning of April 20. I was on the phone with my eldest daughter, Spring, when she interrupted our conversation to say that she had just heard on the television that there had been a shooting at Columbine (High School). I was on my way out the door to get my middle daughter, Dawn, to work, so I was unable to stay and find out what was going on. I drove her to work, then headed home, unable to get any news on the radio, apart from the strong implication that something was terribly wrong.

Unable to turn down Pierce (the street on which Columbine High School stands), I was re-routed and then re-routed again, finally parking on another subdivision quite some distance away and having to enter my own sub-division by foot. We live in the Leawood sub-division, only blocks from the high school. By this time, however, it was apparent that something very major and very ominous was going on, as Flight for Life helicopters, ambulances, police vehicles, etc., were everywhere, and noise and anxiety levels were running very high.

I should stop here to explain that we (my husband, Lauren, and I) have had at least one child in Columbine High School since the day we moved here 10 years ago, and that this is, in fact, the first year that we have not had a child in that school! Our youngest daughter graduated from Columbine last year, and Timmy, our son, is due to start there in the fall as a freshman. No words can say how grateful we are that our children were

not there; however, there is no denying the impact of watching the suffering of our friends and neighbors in the community — of which there are many — and of being such an intimate part of the horrifying scenario.

But back to that morning. I passed Leawood Elementary on my trek home and saw parents getting out of their vehicles, or arriving on foot, running into the school, distraught and confused. I got home a few minutes later and turned on the television, and began to understand a little of what was transpiring, though news was sketchy and was still being pieced together even by those on the scene.

Still, I was supposed to pick up Spring and her young son, Louis, and then later go to a movie with Spring and for coffee with her and her friend, Jess, and I figured I'd better take a shower and get ready. I think this was the side of me running on automatic as I think people are prone to do when something horrible happens that they would just as soon not reckon with. I look back now and realize that I should have known then and there that this was going to be a life-changing event, but at the time, I refused to acknowledge it.

I took my shower, oddly enough, with one leg in the bathtub and the other one on the floor, in some state of disjointed readiness. Then I came downstairs and listened to the news, alternately chanting daimoku in front of the Gohonzon. And then I realized there was no way I was going anywhere. I called Spring and we called it off in favor of following events and chanting.

It was a very difficult day for everyone. My son's school was locked in and I didn't see him for several hours beyond the time I normally expect him home. Parents in our neighborhood waited for up to four excruciating hours to find out whether their high-school-aged children were safe or injured or worse. As it turned out, the sister of Spring's friend, with whom we were going to have coffee, was still in the school. (She would later get out

safely.) The dearly loved teacher killed in the incident had been one of Spring's teachers during high school; my friend Sue's daughter was in the cafeteria when the shooting began; my next-door-neighbor's child was in the last group to make its way safely out of the school; my children's many friends had siblings

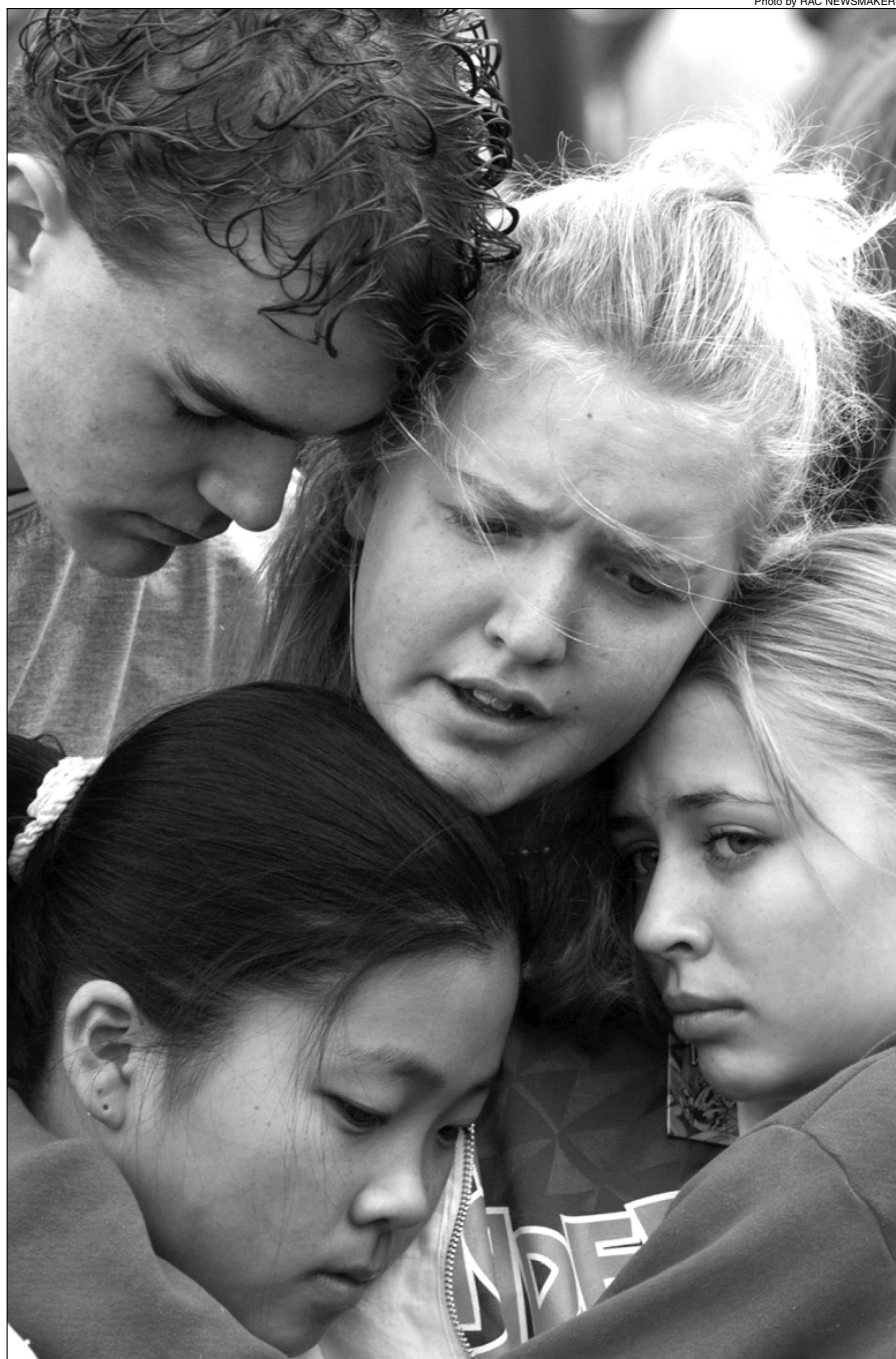
wounded or best friends shot. Virtually no one living in this area was unaffected.

As most people reading this article already have a good sense of how events unfolded in this horrifying story, I will not go into that in any detail. However, I would like to share a bit of what we experienced and what

we learned and how we were changed by it.

First, I would like to say that writing this article is not easy for me in that it brings to mind things that my mind would just as soon not relive. Today has been an especially difficult day — for many, I suspect, in that the memorial service is over, the fu-

Photo by RAC NEWSMAKERS



A group of students comfort one another during the statewide memorial service April 25, in Littleton, Colo.



Pam Nelson

nerals are taking place, and the media and spotlight are shifting to other events, leaving behind a stark and lonely reality. Still, there are things to share that should be shared, and that is my purpose in writing this article for my fellow SGI members.

We were very moved by the memorial service, attended by the Vice President of the United States, Al Gore, along with 70,000 others, and which we had the sober privilege of attending. We were particularly moved by the students, who, in large part, still stand undaunted. Of all the things that have touched me personally, the thing that has inspired me the most is the courage displayed by these students, and also by the faculty and all those working at that school in any capacity. Those who have lived through crisis will know that things do not always go this way. Especially where survival is at stake (as SGI President Ikeda has written about in his accounts of the Titanic, for example), there are many who take the safe and easy way, often at the expense of others.

I myself have experienced personal tragedy on another, less life-

threatening level, which shook my faith in humanity for some time afterward. Only with daimoku was I able to come to a different place in my thinking. However, with this incident, ironically enough, my faith in humanity has definitively been restored.

As the stories started coming out, it became evident that these people reacted to crisis in a courageous and noble manner that has been an inspiration to all those around them — kids who held doors open for others to escape; the janitor who saw kids to safety rather than take the easy exit; the boy who draped himself over his sister and her friend, so that he would be the one shot; the kids who refused to leave their dying teacher, the teacher who saved so many by staying behind to help evacuate them, sacrificing his life in the process.

Then there was the girl who was asked by the gunman if she believed in God; she answered, "There is a God, and you need to follow along God's path;" and was subsequently shot point blank. No matter what spiritual path that girl had faith in, there is something pure and noble in her willingness to stand up for it, no matter the cost, much as Soka Gakkai presidents Makiguchi and Toda did for the sake of Buddhism, and as President Ikeda teaches us to do on behalf of truth and justice as we see it.

Living in this area — Columbine, which is an unincorporated part of Jefferson County — I have had the privilege of ex-

periencing the true meaning of community spirit.

The support for one another during this crisis has been incredible — truly a thing to behold, as testified to by the many flowers and signs evident throughout the community and by the beautiful makeshift memorial, started as a handful of flowers and which has grown in parallel proportion to the hearts of the people. This is a beautiful area, predominantly Christian, but which embraces a healthy live-and-let-live morality in which we have been accepted as Buddhists with little fanfare, always well treated by our neighbors.

My children have asked me whether, after living through this tragedy, I want to move away, and my answer, unconditionally, is no. Well, I mean, someday I also want my little cabin up in the mountains...but Buddhism teaches that there are no coincidences. We chose to live here for a reason and we have lived through this experience, along with our neighbors, for a reason. Furthermore, I am so proud of this community and of the way people have handled themselves and how much they have pulled together to see each other through. I have always liked to think of myself as a citizen of the world, but no matter where life takes me in the future, I will always be proud to have been a resident of beautiful Littleton, Colo.

I need also to say thank you to the many people who called our home, members and non-members alike, from all over the coun-

try, to make sure that we were all right. There are no words to express how much this means in a time of crisis, to which I'm sure the parents of injured and slain children would attest. The world's care has been a source of hope and inspiration to everyone here, so please don't ever be afraid to express your concern at a time of crisis for fear of imposing; I have learned that your concern as a fellow human being is what makes the healing possible, and that nothing is as important in life as having good friends.

None of us will ever be the same after this incident, but nor should we be. To remain the same would be the greatest tragedy of all, and it behooves all of us to view the terrible events at Columbine High School as a call to action.

Which brings me finally to the name *Columbine*, which happens to be the name of our SGI-USA district, and which has, in my mind, deep significance in both its connection to the tragedy and in the roots of its meaning. The columbine is Colorado's state flower, which grows primarily at higher altitudes, and "Where the Columbines Grow" is Colorado's state song. The columbine was chosen as the state flower because it was perceived that the colors were representative of the state itself — blue for the skies, white for the snow, and yellow for the gold discovered here.

After seeing how this tragedy has revealed the greatness of the people living here, I would like

to add that the blue stands also for nobility, the white for purity, and the yellow for the gold in people's hearts. The fact that it grows at higher altitudes represents the blossoming of our higher life-condition, and the fact that it is a wildflower speaks for its innate resilience. But because this incident touched the lives of people the world over, I believe that the columbine also represents these noble virtues, this elevated life-condition, and this innate resilience at the core of all people.

So the question then becomes, will our society blossom through this incident or be crushed by it? Will we allow the flower of youth to be trampled upon? Or will we stand up to protect our children, just as in 1925, the government of Colorado made it the duty of all citizens to protect the columbine from needless destruction or waste? I like to think that the tragedy of Columbine High School will be a starting point for all the world to come together, following in the example of this great community. My personal resolve is that this be so, starting with me, starting with my Buddhist practice, starting with this very moment. I have already outlined my personal plan of action on this account, and now I must do as we all must do if change is what we truly want and insist upon — follow through — let our actions speak even louder than our words of grief and hope.

*Thanks again,
Pam Nelson*

'I AM FOREVER CHANGED'

by Spring Nelson, Littleton, Colo.

I am a graduate of Columbine High School. I graduated in 1992, my sister Dawn in 1994, and my sister Courtney in 1998. My brother, Timmy, is to attend next fall.

Littleton is a comfortable and growing community and it is a place where I felt totally safe. Upon hearing of the shooting, I sat in total disbelief, which quickly turned to tears. I had to take my son, Louis, to school that afternoon fearful for his safety. When I returned I watched a boy, his body limp and bloodied — we later found out he'd been shot twice — throw himself head first from the second-story library window. It was apparent to me that he was able to do this by his sheer will to live. I am forever changed.

I have spent this last week crying from the very depth of my being. I work in an intensive care unit where four of the most critically wounded were brought.

I continued chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon and invited my 6-year-old to do the



Photo by LINDA SMITH

Spring Nelson and son, Louis.

same with me. I wanted him to feel safe. Answering his questions has been painfully difficult — "Where do I hide if this happens at my school? Can I hide in my backpack?" I'm left reassuring him he is safe and that he will be protected.

When I returned to work this week, I found a place I felt useful, helpful. I had chanted many daimoku to be compassionate, to be a shoulder for these lives to cry on, to encourage them and make them feel safe. One mother of the victims began talking with me and I shared with her my sincere prayer for everyone and that although I did not know them, I loved them. I made a promise to make changes. I will make those changes necessary to ensure that these tragedies will never happen again. She wept and I wept and we hugged.

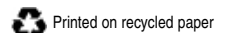
I am a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend and a Buddhist. I will make those changes. I will be at the forefront of change with dialogue, compassion and love. I will ensure that our children are safe. They are all of our children. We are each other's neighbors. My tears are your tears and my courage will be yours as well.



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SGI President Ikeda's Poem

May the Fragrant Laurels of Happiness ADORN YOUR LIFE

SGI President Ikeda presented the following poem for the young women's division members on March 24.

O how beautiful is the sun —
Its infinite brilliance
Illuminating the dignity of humanity!
O power that exists
In order to fulfill its own pledge,
In order to eternally brighten all things!

In the presence of the sun,
There is no darkness.
In the presence of the sun,
There is no discrimination.
In the presence of the sun,
All share equal rights.
In the presence of the sun,
All is a shining realm of peace.

Today once more
I will walk my chosen path,
I will pursue my chosen work,
To write a magnificent personal history.
Undeterred by the rain of insidious lies,
I will walk the path of happy smiles,
True to myself,
Undefeated by anything,
Striving in my own way!
For this path
I regard as my greatest treasure.

Youth —
It never comes again.
Youth as precious as a rare jewel.
For that reason,
Radiant with joy and vitality,
I will live with all my might.
For in such effort
Lies the foundation of life;
For in such effort,
My own happiness,
A new inner happiness,
Is born and begins.

I will never stop moving forward!
Even in difficult times,
I will not look behind me.
Life must be lived
With strength, integrity and optimism.

There will undoubtedly be bad times
Along with the good.
But, still, I will never curse life.

Youth is life continually growing!
In each joyous step along the way
Are countless books of knowledge,
And the wisdom for which you seek.

— Dedicated to my most precious and beloved young women's division members —

Photo by LISA HOLLIS



Young women at the Los Angeles Friendship Center.

All the hardships of this existence
Must be triumphed over
Within the depths of your own life.

A youth, and a life, lived wisely
In the beautiful world of the heart,
Cherishing happiness and constructive
hope,
Brings great joy and delight.

In such a way of life,
Everything you experience
Forms the garland of flowers,
Sweetly fragrant,
That you wear as your crown.

O daughter of wondrous mission!
You can transform a bleak winter
landscape
Into the setting of a vivacious dance
of spring,
Bathing all in bright sunlight.

I will not lose my footing

In the morass of society.
I have no need to feel envious
Of empty, illusory glamour or fame.
Nor am I intimidated
By cruel criticism or abuse.

For I embrace the eternal Law
In which I have absolute faith,
And I have my sisters in the YWD,
As well as my SGI family,
Whom I can talk to about anything
And whom I deeply trust with all my
heart.

The sunny, vibrant life-force of youth
Possesses the world's gold;
Youth itself dwells in a jeweled palace.

Ah!
The palace of your life sparkles
With the brilliant light of glittering gems,
More numerous than stars in the heavens.

There is nothing more priceless than this.

Everyone equally possesses this precious
treasure.
In this world, there are no special people:
We are all human beings.

A dear friend,
The world-acclaimed violin virtuoso
Yehudi Menuhin,
Once said in his later years,
"God resides within our hearts."
Naturally, the Buddha is also found
Within our lives,
Not in temples or monasteries.

No one can take that treasure away,
For that treasure is you, yourself.
To awaken to this truth
Is happiness.

Just as a lantern you light for others
Illuminates your own way,
Your prayers for the happiness of your
friends
Bring the star of happiness
To shine brightly in your own heart.

The abode of happiness in which I
dwell
Is far from small!
It can accommodate everyone,
This friend and that.

People of selfish ego
Callously drive others out,
Wanting to gain sole possession
Of the jeweled abode.
But ultimately they bar themselves
From the palace
And wander lost
In the hell of loneliness.

Like an endless vista
Of beautiful festoons of flowers,
The warm camaraderie
Of friends joined hand in hand
Multiplies my joy boundlessly.

"Kindness is the flower of strength,"
Said José Martí,
Hero of Cuban independence.

I am a flower that blooms with dignity,
Undeterred by the pounding rain!
I will share my smile
With my friends!

Photo by TERUMI SAITO



A dance group performs at the New Orleans Youth Festival, March 20.

If you are cowardly and weak,
You cannot protect others.
In the end, you'll only see a pitiful self,
A person with no compassion.

Only by triumphing
Over your own sorrows,
Can you understand
The dark despair and pain of others.
Because you refuse to be defeated
By your own weaknesses,
You can help others
To overcome their sufferings.

Be strong! Ever strong!
These are the crucial watchwords
In your efforts to open the door
To the palace of happiness.
Say good-bye to sad songs,
Win over your weak tendencies,
And never succumb to deception.
You must know a self
That never betrays justice or truth.

Faith is not wallowing in self-pity;
It is being absolutely victorious in life!

Daughter with sparkling eyes!
Your youth in itself
Makes you a princess of happiness!
Soar high above the morbid clouds of
suffering!
With your own lively, animated spirit,
Spread wide the wings of freedom!
Gaze down serenely upon
The murky swamps of jealousy and
envy!

You must not be a pathetic slave
To constantly vacillating emotions.
Have pride and dignity!
And be the ruler of your own heart!

Always remember
You are a queen of humanity!
Regal on your treasure throne,
Blessed with a world rich in color,
Strive to concentrate on your mission!

The Gosho urges,
"Become the master of your mind
Rather than let your mind master you."
These words are an eternal beacon
Lighting life's path.

In my heart
Burns an immortal flame of philosophy,
Shines the light of my lifelong mission,
Resides a great purpose!

Those who pray deeply
With a firm and unshakable
Conviction in faith
Are liberated from the fear and anxiety
Of being cast adrift in the darkness.
In the depths of their hearts

A bright, untrammelled path
Of peace and contentment
Unfolds without end.

I am not obsessed
With the illusion of fame,
Which like a passing image
Shimmers but fleetingly
On the water's surface!

Make companions
Of the sun and the moon,
Who shine with undying light!
Take great joy
In working hard
In the sphere of your daily endeavors!
Live a life of true substance
Leading to happiness!

Noble YWD!
Do not be attached to trivial things!
Because the foolish are far removed
From the world of heavenly emissaries,
And they are swept away
By angry, roaring waves.

You must never be deceived!
You must never be taken in!
Nor is there the slightest need
For you to envy anyone!

Only you know the reality
Of your own life;
The undeserving scorn of others,
Has no meaning!
You must be true to yourself —
Those who are,

Know happiness.

If you are wise and discerning,
Then you will win for yourself
A life of great victory.

I possess the mirror of a pristine life
That reflects with unsparing clarity
The evil of this world —
A life that, like the pure white lotus,
Remains unsoiled
By the squalor of this defiled age!
I possess the sharp jeweled sword of
idealism
That makes the corrupt and unscrupu-
lous
Tremble for shame!

O flower of a new revolution!
The Joan of Arc of the New Century!
With your silvery voice,
You constantly invigorate sleepy veter-
ans
Of past campaigns;
You inspire courage in the hearts
Of the fatigued older generations
To rise up and fight again.

History recounts
That Joan of Arc
Was just an ordinary young woman.
But the people of the village
Where she lived
Say she was a young woman
Of great initiative.

She willingly worked,

She readily spun thread,
She gladly pulled a plow....
And finally she took the lead,
Standing up to fight
To save France from peril!

And now —
The curtain has begun to rise at last
On the brilliant stage of the 21st
century!
The time has come
For the daughters of the sun,
Crowned with verdant laurels,
To stand up and begin
Their inspired dance!

A fresh breeze blows,
And the blue, blue sky,
Stretches on for eternity.
So let us spread our wings!
Let us dance with courage
And fly with burning hope,
Into the future that lies waiting
for us
In the grand new century ahead.

Daughters of the sun!
Always remember the noble mothers
And the stern fathers,
Who worked selflessly,
Braving wind and rain,
To build our Castle of Soka!

March 24, 1999

Daisaku Ikeda
Poet Laureate

COURAGE, FROM PAGE 1

Yasuyuki Itakura: When militarism raged in Japan, the Soka Gakkai's founding presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda refused to follow the crowd. They stood up to the authorities for what they believed was right, bravely calling for a return to the road of peace and freedom. That must have taken tremendous courage.

Ikeda: But at the time they were denounced as traitors, thrown in prison and labeled cowards for opposing the war. It was an insane time. And I'm worried that we're seeing a trend toward the same insanity in Japan today.

Itakura: Today's mass media spread the most ridiculous lies, but they remain unpunished. They violate people's human rights over and over, without shame or compunction. They brazenly sell their lies on street corners, and advertise them everywhere.

Our society has become abnormal. But living in the midst of this abnormality, people no longer notice just how abnormal it is.

Michiko Kanazawa: In that sense, it's just like it was in fascist Japan.

The other side of courage is compassion.

Ikeda: People who possess true courage aren't cowardly and base. They are honest and simple. That's why they are so frequently painted as villains or misunderstood.

On the other hand, there are individuals who are great manipulators and become famous and popular through self-promotion and clever plotting. People see their fame and popularity, and envy them. Many, unfortunately, are completely taken in.

But we shouldn't be swayed by others' praise or criticism. Those who do what they believe is right — even if they are misunderstood, scorned, persecuted — have a clear conscience and are true winners in life.

Kanazawa: Courage is a very down-to-earth thing, isn't it?

Ikeda: It's a matter of perseverance.

A mother's desire to raise her children into fine adults, no matter how hard she has to work to do it, is a noble form of courage. The other side of courage is compassion. They're two sides of the same coin — courage is the front side of the coin, and compassion is the back.

True courage is always backed by compassion. There is nothing evil or malicious behind it. If there is any malice or ill-intention, you can be sure it is not real courage.

A mother's feelings for her children are the perfect example of courage and compassion.

By definition, courage must be backed up by justice and compassion. Mr. Toda used to say: "True compassion is very difficult for ordinary mortals. Emotions get in the way, or we just can't be bothered. Compassion is necessary, but it's hard for us to sustain it. We can, however, sustain courage. So though we know compassion is important, what we can actually do is be courageous."

In fact, if we act with courage, we find that our compassion for others grows deeper. Courage is the ultimate virtue that we can strive for.

Courage can be called the noble spirit to serve others.

Kanazawa: I want to introduce the experience of one of our high school division members from Shizuoka. At school, she was part of a closely knit group of seven. As they spent more and more time together, they became increasingly aware of each other's shortcomings and strong points.

Gradually, all of them, except for her, began to gossip about any member who wasn't present at the time. She tried to persuade them to stop this, and the other six used that as an excuse to turn on her and pick on her.

Itakura: We see that so often. It's really a dangerous tendency.

Kanazawa: In class, they would give her cold looks. They handed her letters filled with

nasty remarks about her. Whenever they happened to touch her accidentally, they would scream, as if in horror, and run away.

Each day was agony: With each indignity inflicted on her, she felt as if her heart were being torn out. Whenever she had free time, she'd hide in the girl's bathroom to avoid the humiliation that her six ex-friends were heaping on her.

Thinking how wonderful it would be to find someone she could trust and unburden herself to, she finally summoned the courage to tell her mother about her school problems. After her mother heard the whole story, she gave her daughter a copy of "Discussions on Youth." The daughter read it very carefully, and as she did, she felt courage welling up inside her. Once she realized that by chanting daimoku she could transform all her suffering into fuel for becoming happy, she decided to take positive action to change her situation.

She continued to pray: "I won't be defeated! I will become strong!" Gradually she gained more and more courage. Going to school wasn't a problem anymore. Before that, she had only gone because her mother drove her to and from school.

Eventually, she made new friends. In the end, she even changed her relationship with the members of the original group that ostracized her for the better — she gets on quite amicably with them today. She ac-

tually feels grateful to them, for they motivated her to become stronger and more independent.

The secret, she says, to getting others to change is to become a stronger person yourself. "I absolutely rec-

The sun shines wherever people of faith take action.

Itakura: I've always thought that faith is the greatest courage.

Ikeda: That's exactly right. There are courageous people in many different fields, but perhaps the realm of religion has the most. The Christian missionaries, especially, have always spread their religion no matter how harshly they were persecuted. Though their religious beliefs are different from ours, their lives, their actions, are truly courageous.

Buddhism is also courage. Nichiren Daimoku declares, "Nichiren's disciples cannot accomplish anything if they are cowardly" (*The*

Major Writings of Nichiren Daimoku, vol. 4, p. 128). He continually stresses the importance of courage.

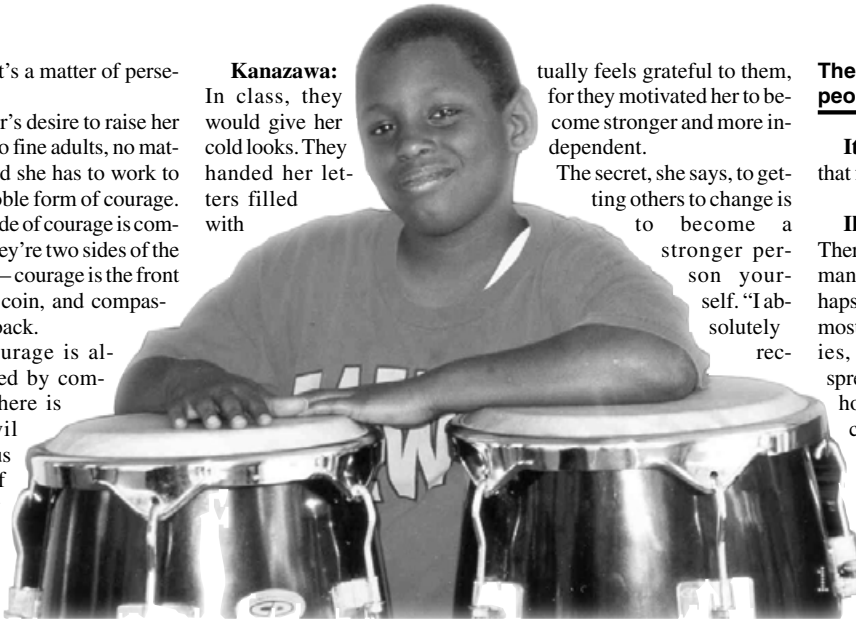
For the sake of our faith, we must not let any persecution defeat us. That is courage. That is the most noble way of life there is.

Those who follow it will be acknowledged by the heavens as true heroes. Not only will their names be remembered forever, but they will leave their distinctive mark on the humanity's history. They will inspire others to have courage and to become heroes, too.

Such individuals are great — they are bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Courageous are those who uphold correct faith and take action for the sake of their beliefs. They are heroes among heroes. Their hearts beat in accord with the fundamental rhythm of the universe. The sun shines wherever those people are — illuminating their lives, their families, their classmates, their society, their country and their world.

Whatever you may have to challenge, I say to you, "Have the courage to take a step forward!"

The conclusion of a discussion on courage among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Yasuyuki Itakura (Kansai young men's leader) and Michiko Kanazawa (young women's secretariat). Part one appeared in the April 16 issue. Part two appeared in the April 30 issue.



Youth resting after performance at the New Orleans Youth Festival, March 20.

Photo by TERUMI SAITO



fineprint@sgi-usa.org

Greetings

Happy Birthday to Carol Daly in Queens, N.Y. For 25 years she's been encouraging members with her voice — both singing and speaking. Viva la neighborhood! Love from your neighbors, David, Brigid and Richard Witkowski

Thank you to all the people who send out our schedules every month. You are certainly appreciated by us all. — Judy Eaton, Cottage Grove, Ore.

Announcement

The Southern California memorial prayer service for SGI-USA members, families and friends will be conducted on Sunday, May 30, from 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m. at Sky Rose Chapel, Rose Hills Memorial Park, located at 3888 South Workman Mill Road, Whittier, Calif. Refreshments will be served after the service. Those who wish to participate, please contact Tony Sugano by May 10 at (310) 393-0016. Fax (310) 393-4737. E-mail:

tsugano@sgi-usa.org

Lost and Found

...my friend Susan Blake. She moved to Davis to start medical school about the same time I became a single mom almost 10 years ago. So many fond memories of doing Byakuren together and of our friendship I would like to share with her as well as the wonderful fortune of my new family. Please help me find Susan. — Veronica, e-mail: Laboure.slaughterm@earthlink.net

I am looking for a member who relocated to Los Angeles and was at the Ronald McDonald House with his family. His name is Brian Shaw. If you should find him, can you please give him my e-mail address. And that I will be receiving the Gohonzon on Saturday, April 3, 1999, at the community center. E-mail: islandbigboy@webtv.net

I'm looking for my old friend and soul mate Catherine Yamasaki, formerly from

Fremont, Calif., and Monrovia, Calif. The last time I talked to her she was in Hawaii. I miss talking to you, Catherine, and want to know how you are. Please call me. — Pauline Lawver, (626) 414-8169

I am looking for Sean Wallace, a student division/YMD member who had returned to Los Angeles last spring from Ann Arbor, Michigan: Sean, how are you doing? I hope that everything is going well. I haven't heard from you at all after you had left.... Are you attending Harvard now? I hope to hear from you soon. — Masakazu Sueda, Michigan, e-mail: msueda@engin.umich.edu

I would like to contact Diane Alexander who practiced with me in Oakland, Calif., before she moved to Atlanta. I heard she moved to the Caribbean. I am planning a trip there this summer and would like to contact her. If anyone knows how to contact her please let me know. — Judi Henderson, e-mail: judih1@pacbell.net

Milestone

Fallen Comrade – April 12

I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the recent passing of a Chicago member named Clarence Clay (CC). After several years of struggling with AIDS, the Buddhist gods have now extended their hands to guide him across the "Sea of Suffering." Though often ill, he did Gajokai and other activities in support of our kosen-rufu movement. He was a true friend and a warm human being. His brightness and vigor for life will always remain deeply embedded in my mind, as I will continue to chant for his earliest repose. CC, I'll see you in the next life. — Maude O'Donnell, Houston

Correction:

Last week's dialogue between SGI President Ikeda and Herbe Hancock mentioned Mr. Hancock's 1997 Grammy for the album *Manhattan*. It was actually for the song "Manhattan." We apologize for the mistake.

PERSPECTIVE

By CAROLYN TYNAN
THOUSAND OAKS, CALIF.

Many childhood memories float in my mind. There are some embarrassing ones that I wish I could forget, but most are happy. Then there are the few that continue to have a strong affect on my life as an adult. These are the memories of Realization — the moments when I understood something important about the *real* or *grown-up* world around me.

In 1969, I was 10 years old; this was the Vietnam era. Between episodes of *Speed Racer* and *Kimba, The White Lion*, I would occasionally catch some TV news. For the first time I heard the word *casualties* and I wondered what it meant. To my child's mind it sounded almost pleasant, a casual-sounding word. But I sensed it meant somebody got hurt. So when the newsman said, "Today there were 132



Define 'CASUALTIES'

casualties, I thought, again in my child's mind, that people had fallen down, scraped their knees, cut their fingers or broke an arm. This was totally logical to me because I had seen images of army men running through jungles carrying rifles and with big packs on their backs. It sure looked like they could fall down very easily.

Years later my big eighth grade project was to write a report on World War II. I remember reading all kinds of books and looking through our family's *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I came across an issue of *Life*. It was a retrospective about Vietnam. Inside were many images that I had seen years ago. There was that little girl, naked and crying as she walked down the street. I realized she had no hands, yet I had to look at her several times in order for my mind to acknowledge this very important fact that I couldn't see before. As I continued, I came across that word, *casualties* and for the first time I understood that it meant *killed*. Thousands of dead American young men.

Today it's 1999 and I've never stopped hearing that word, *casualties*. There are other words, *eth-*

nic cleansing, national interest and my new favorite, *collateral damage*. The difference is I no longer process these words through a child's mind. All these benign PR words used to cloud the horror of mass suffering and even death in foreign lands, only as far away as my TV screen.

The things I could not "see" as a child I can not ignore as an adult. The feeling I was somehow being fooled by the words people choose to describe events has stuck with me. I began to look beyond the obvious and the simple. I am grateful for that moment of realization. It hasn't made me cynical or negative.

Quite the opposite I think.

My mentor, [SGI President] Daisaku Ikeda recently said, "The first step toward peace is recognizing the other party's humanity." Fundamentally, that is what this memory was all about. Realizing that human beings were suffering and consequently, beginning to develop a desire to see justice and peace. This is a positive thing and it has lead me to learn about ordinary individuals who did and are doing *extraordinary* things to make a positive difference in our world. They are a constant source of encouragement as I try to learn from our collective history. **WT**

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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.

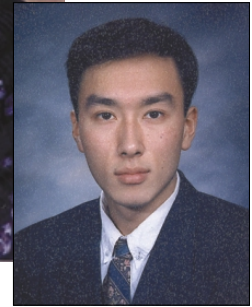
A LETTER from a father to a deceased son

MY SON GEORGE DIED ON JUNE 8, 1994, AFTER SUSTAINING INJURIES IN A ROLLERBLADING ACCIDENT. GEORGE WAS 22 YEARS OLD AND HAD GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE ONLY THREE DAYS BEFORE HIS ACCIDENT. HE WAS A YOUNG MEN'S DISTRICT LEADER AND AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE BRASS BAND, SOKA GROUP AND THE GAJOKAI. HIS FAVORITE SONG WAS "SMILE," BASED ON A POEM BY CHARLIE CHAPLIN.



Photo by MICHAEL ANTON

Patricia and David Kasahara, New York City. Their son George (right).



By David Kasahara,
SGI-USA Senior
Vice General Director

Dear George,

It has been almost five years since I lost you. It reminds me of the proverb that states, "Time flies like an arrow."

It is true that time heals some of the wounds of life. On the other hand, it is also true that there are some pains that cannot be fully cured. These pains only deepen and become more distinct as time passes, turning into sorrows with which we must struggle throughout our lives. My experience of your death is such a pain.

Whenever I recall your accident five years ago, I experience the deepest sense of regret. Yet, at the same time, I am also filled with wholehearted feelings of appreciation for the beautiful life we shared as father and son for 22 years. I have many unforgettable memories of you, and I have engraved these recollections in my heart as my precious gifts from you.

Even though you departed this life at a young age, your image is engraved in my heart, and that image will live as long as I do. I really want your beautiful smiling face to dwell deeply in my heart forever. For this reason, I have determined to lead a joyful life myself. Otherwise, how could I ask you to keep smiling?

I have shared my resolution to lead a happy life with your mother, Patricia, sister, Margaret, and brother, John. And they all agreed to accept the challenge of building a wonderful family to prove the great power of the Gohonzon, and for the sake of your happiness, wherever you are.

George, I really want you to know that the four of us are all doing extremely well. Every day our lives are full of a great sense of gratitude to the Gohonzon, SGI President Ikeda, and our friends in the SGI. In truth, I am not sure I would have been able to survive your tragic loss without these three great supports.

We are strongly convinced that the best way to express our debt of gratitude to the Gohonzon, President Ikeda and the SGI-USA is to dedicate our lives to the happiness of other people and the development of the SGI-USA in any way we can.

George, do you remember that you gave your mother and me a bottle of Irish Cream liqueur in a beautiful box as a wedding anniversary gift a few years before your passing? I was so happy — not simply because of the present itself — but rather because of the warm consideration you showed to buy a gift for your mother and me out of the small salary you were earning as a delivery man.

Some months later we finished the bottle, but, for some reason, we kept its beautiful container and have been using it as a vessel for small change. From time to time, I would use this change. But after your death, your mother and I decided to fill the container with our small change, then, when the box was filled, we contributed all the money in your name to the SGI-USA. About three years ago, the container was full and we were able to fulfill our plan.

Now, for a second time, the box is again filled with change, and the annual SGI-USA May commemorative contribution activity is quickly approaching. Your mother and I are again overjoyed to present yet another donation in your name.

To be honest, I was surprised how all these small amounts of pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters added up to a rather large sum, but I have come to see that an accumulation of items of small value can add up to something of surprising value. Nichiren Daishonin states in one of his writings, "[The number] one is the mother of [the number] ten thousand" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Dai-*

shonin, vol. 5, p. 112). Beside the significance of this short passage that Daishonin expounded upon, I interpreted that each and every number, starting from one all the way to infinity, consists of nothing but a multiple of one. Likewise, an organization, a society and the world consists of nothing but assemblies of individuals. I firmly believe that we can accomplish any goal in our lives through an accumulation of tenacious and steadfast efforts. At the same time, I have learned not to underestimate the value of what even one small effort by one person can mean to others.

George, these donations are a collective effort involving you, your mother and me because our connection to you gave us the wisdom to make these offerings. These donations are also a vehicle for you to participate in kosen-rufu activities for the sake of the 21st century as an eternal young men's division member. After we present this contribution to the organization, your mother and I will begin refilling the vessel with change in order to make yet another donation in your name on May 3, 2001.

And there is another offering you made — you donated your organs at the time of your death. I want to report to you that these donations meant a new left kidney for a 33-year-old woman from New York; a new right kidney for a 40-year-old male dialysis patient; a new liver for a 9-year-old girl; a new pancreas for a 33-year-old woman; and most remarkable of all, a new heart for a 60-year-old man. Moreover, the donation of your bones allowed several people to avoid amputation and regain the use of their limbs after serious injuries or bone cancer. In addition, the New York Firefighters Skin Bank in-

formed us of at least two severe burn victims who received skin grafts because of you.

These medical reports have left me amazed by how much good one person's generosity can do for other people. I am sincerely praying for the excellent health and longevity of each person who received your organs. George, I am so proud of you.

And yet another present you gave continues to have wonderful impact. George, your mother is still talking about the beautiful floral bouquet you gave her on her birthday just four months before your death. Whenever she mentions it, it is with great joy and appreciation, and she also is confident that you will present her with an even larger bouquet in the future.

Until we next meet you, we will, together with President Ikeda, dedicate our lives for kosen-rufu in the best way we can. Through these actions, we will become better parents by the time we meet you again.

Lastly, I would like to read my favorite passage from President Ikeda, a passage that I treasure with my whole life for your sake: "No matter how disheartening the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we must not allow our resolute faith and conviction to waver. We must not allow our courage to falter. We absolutely must not be swayed.

"I have faith! 'I have pride!' 'I have a mission!' 'I have hope!' 'These are my treasures!' Those who live with this wholehearted cry and conviction under any circumstance are people of genuine faith" (April 7, 1995, *World Tribune*, p. 5).

Please have a good rest until we see each other next lifetime.

Good night, George.



SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION

FRIENDS for Peace

MAY 7, 1999



Maui Holds Children's Rights Exhibit

Feb. 22, Kahului, Maui — SGI-USA's exhibition "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" opened today at one of Maui's premier shopping centers. Entertainment was provided by many children's groups from throughout Maui: (clockwise from upper right) the Puerto Rican dance group Los Chiquitos performed; Maui Boys and Girls Group members helped General Director Zaitzu and Maui Mayor Kimo Apana cut the ribbon; The Okinawan



Paranku dance troupe performed; the Kihei Youth Center and Paia Youth Center performed traditional Hawaiian chants and hula; and the Taiko Drum group delivered an electrifying cadence. (Fay Hovey and Joanne Tachibana contributed to this article; photographers included Tomiko Kato, Anita Sabado and Ikuko Yamada)



Hey, Kids!

Enter the Name-Our-Press Contest!

We will soon be publishing books just for you: story books and books with games and puzzles; books to help you do gongyo and books that tell the stories of important people in

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

What are your ideas? If your idea contributes to the final name chosen, even if it's not exactly the name you suggest, we'll give you a gift certificate to choose your own children's book from the SGI-USA catalog. Please send your ideas (you can

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



EXPERIENCE

SHELLE ANN SHIMIZU, 9

Honolulu



Aloha! I attend the Boys and Girls Group meeting every month and try to chant as often as I can.

In the beginning of last May, I gave my mom some money for her birthday and Mother's Day. I wanted her to choose something for herself from the shopping center to celebrate. She said what would really make her happy would be to donate to the special contribution campaign.

She explained briefly to me about it, and what I understand is that my contribution will help SGI President Ikeda and world peace. She also said

that whatever we do for kosen-rufu would always come back to us. So we decided to give half the money to the special contribution campaign, and half we would have a small celebration with special ice cream.

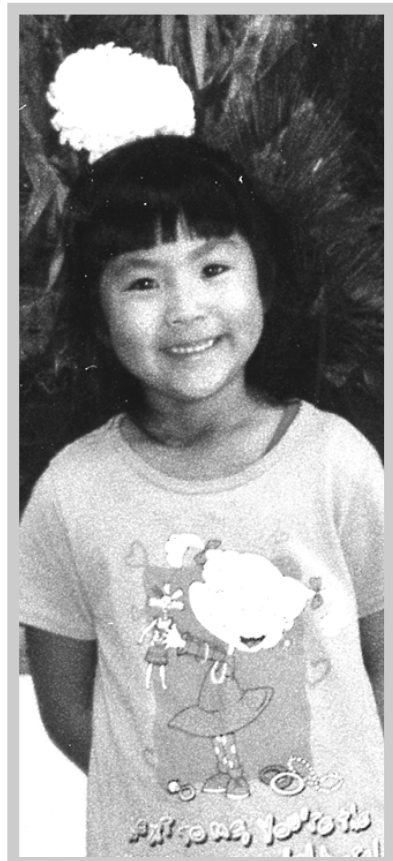
The next weekend we went to visit my mom's friends for Mother's Day, and one of them gave me a gift. It was a new wallet, and it had money in it. After we left, my mom said, "Remember, I told you whatever you give for kosen-rufu would always come back to you?"

All I could say was, "Wow!" I couldn't believe it. I was so surprised. I'm really happy to have given to the special contribution, and I plan to give again this year!

Thank you. 🌸

JANE CALALAY, 7

Honolulu



When I first went to kindergarten, I was afraid to go to school because I did not have any friends. My mom told me to chant to the Gohonzon so I can have a good day at school and make new friends. I chanted every day before and after school to make new friends and to enjoy school, and I did make friends. When I started to come to Boys and Girls Group meetings, I also was able to make more friends at the community center.

This year I am in the second grade. When I first started, my class was filled with new children. Some of the boys I knew from my first grade class, but the girls were all new. This year, every day I would chant to the Gohonzon so I can make new friends and learn a lot from my teacher. I try to do my best in class and ask the teacher if I have questions about the work. I read a book every day and do my homework.

For the months of September, October, November, December and January, I got the "Na Kane of the Month" awards for my class. It is like a super-kid award. I got a certificate, a special pencil, and got to sit on stage to eat lunch with the principal one day. I felt so proud of myself, and my mom and family were proud of me, too. I felt good knowing I was doing my best in school.

I appreciate the Gohonzon for helping me to be a good student and make friends. I appreciate my mom and family for helping me when I read my book and for correcting my homework.

Thank you. 🌸

NATALIA DARE, 10

New Jersey



I had a big fight with my friend. I chanted to talk about it with her and solve the problem. It wasn't a big, big, major, long problem. It happened Feb. 13 and ended March 1, so it was only 16 days. It sounds long but it didn't seem long.

There is this program during recess, it's called Peer Mediation. It's a program where you talk to the Peer Mediators. They are people that help you and your enemy talk out the problem and find ways to solve it. That is how I solved the problem. Now we are good friends.

Signing up for Peer Mediation was my idea. While I was chanting to solve the problem, I was also chanting for a house with an inground pool. Last Saturday, we found the perfect house. It has an inground pool! And even better, it has a diving board.

I learned a lot from chanting. I learned that it helps me be happy. I also learned that it helps me a lot with my life. 🌸

"FRIENDS for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 606 Wilshire Blvd., P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90401-1427.

Memphis Entertains With 'The Birds of Snow Mountain'

By RICHARD SADLER
Memphis, Tenn.

The Boys and Girls Group of Memphis performed a one-act play at World Peace Gongyo on March 7 based on the parable in the Lotus Sutra about the Kankucho birds. The skit was called "The Birds of Snow Mountain" and featured a narrator, several lazy birds, and children playing the parts of snow, the sun, the mountain and the Moral of the Story.

The story is about two lazy birds called Kankucho, who waste their days playing and lying in the sun on the mountains in which they live, never using the daytime to build a nest so they can keep warm during the cold nights. Thus, they live their days never preparing for harsh times and their nights shivering in the cold, vowing to build a nest in the morning when it gets warm. Of course, when morning comes, they forget their vow and instead spend their time enjoying themselves.



As the play starts, the narrator cues the Sun to arise, and the birds begin their dance to the tune of "Green Onions" by Booker T. and the M.G.'s. For the nights spent shivering, "Grizabella" from the soundtrack to the Broadway musical *Cats* was played. The skit was met by laughter and much applause. There was even an encore performance. Children from the ages of 4 to 14 participated. Evergreen District is planning a series of skits based on Lotus Sutra parables using the book *Treasures of the Heart* by Daisaku Ikeda as reference material. The next skit will be based on another well-known parable, "The Gem in the Robe." ❄️



WHY SHOULD WE CHANT?

By Jerry Watkins, Palo Alto, Calif.

Two young children sitting side by side.
You young children along for the ride.
Going to a meeting with Mom and with Dad
To chant for a while
But this made them mad!

"Where are we going?" asked the one who was short.
"To chant for a friend who needs our support."
"Why should we chant?" asked the one who was tall,
"We're just two kids with no reason at all.
Do we have to go to this meeting, so far?
Why can't we stay home,
Or just sit in the car?"

"We want you to chant; he needs your support, too.
That's why we're all going; it's what we must do."
"We don't want to go to a meeting today.
It just isn't fair.
We just want to play."

"I'll give you a reason why it's important for you:
Suppose it's your friend down sick with the flu,
Or maybe a buddy, feeling ever so blue.
The buddy needs someone — and that someone is you.
You see, chanting for others
Is the best thing you can do."

"I'll give you another good reason to chant:
To chant for yourself when you think that you can't.
You need a good grade, to be doing your best;
You gotta do well in tomorrow's big test.
Chanting has power without limitation,
So go to Gohonzon
And change each situation."

Now, good children, coming along on this ride,
I have given a clue to chanting's good side.
Now, I wonder, if you think that you could,
Give me your reasons
Tell me why you should!

HEY KIDS

Do you want to be a correspondent for

If you want to report on activities and people in your areas, please fill out the form below and mail to us:

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Phone: _____

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LET'S HAVE A TREASURE HUNT!

1 What does *seek* mean? What does it mean to have a seeking mind or seeking spirit?

Make up your own puzzle!

2 Cut the puzzle into shapes. Hide each piece of the puzzle along with small treats or trinkets.

3 Have your family or a group of friends find the puzzle pieces. When all the pieces and treats are found, have everyone put the puzzle together, and then enjoy the treats as you explain that, because of everyone's seeking spirit and their efforts to work together to complete the puzzle, they can enjoy the rewards (the treats) of their work!

WORD SEARCH

S	E	E	K	I	N	G	S	P	I	R	I	T
R	L	H	D	N	N	M	C	B	S	G	G	
C	L	I	M	B	H	M	A	E	M	N	O	
E	H	A	R	N	C	V	R	F	I	N	D	
A	E	E	P	R	R	E	B	K	O	P	M	
T	P	C	R	W	A	M	E	O	V	R	M	
W	H	P	Q	I	E	E	X	V	R	B	I	
T	I	R	I	P	S	D	L	E	A	R	N	
O	S	P	U	C	V	H	H	O	T	R	D	
U	N	C	O	V	E	R	D	R	O	K	B	
P	D	R	O	S	F	V	R	H	I	K	Z	

Can you find these words:

Find, Uncover, Cherish, Search, Learn, Climb, Seeking, Team, Mind, Look, Brave, Spirit

GOSHOO GOODIES

SEEKING SPIRIT

Even common mortals can attain Buddhahood if they cherish one thing: earnest faith. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 268*)

When we focus our hearts, our seeking spirit, on kosen-rufu — that is, achieving world peace through our actions for the happiness of ourselves and others — our lives will sparkle with jewels of good fortune and happiness. SGI President Ikeda states: "Just as the sun rises each day, just as your mother prepares meals for you each day, you must have the spirit to keep striving, to study hard and to go to school each day. From this, we can learn something important. If you abandon what you have to do, you're the one who loses out. Therefore, you must never give up.... Victory belongs to those who persevere tenaciously in such efforts" (*Discussions on Youth, vol. 1, p. 37*).

About: SEEKING SPIRIT AND PERSEVERANCE

FROM SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA:

The important thing is to be determined to learn from everything. You should strive to climb the slope from yesterday to today, and from today to tomorrow, refreshingly determined to reach a deeper understanding. This kind of vitality and seeking mind will guarantee your victory in life. You should never forget this (*May 1995 Seikyo Times, p. 55*).

When you pursue something with a strong determination, you will have no regrets even should you fail. And if you succeed, you can achieve truly great things. Whether you fail or succeed, your steady efforts will lead you to your next path.... You will discover your path as you keep searching, chanting earnestly to find your direction and seeking advice and guidance from those around you (*Discussions on Youth, vol. 1, p. 140*).