

## RECOGNITION FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

# New York Member Receives *Ellis Island Medal of Honor*

By **ROBERT TALIAFERRO**  
NEW YORK BUREAU CHIEF



Photos by PAUL KNOWLES

Marylou Berk of New York City.

MARYLOU BERK, CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT OF A LEADING MEDIA AND MARKETING COMPANY, IS AWARDED, ALONG WITH 99 OTHER HONOREES, THE ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL OF HONOR. THE HONOREES ARE ALL OUTSTANDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR ETHNIC HERITAGES, FORMER RECIPIENTS INCLUDING ROSA PARKS AND ELIE WIESEL.

SGI-USA member Marylou Berk was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor the evening of May 8 before an audience of more than 1,000 people. Recipients of the gold medallion exemplify achievement and citizenship. This prestigious ceremony was covered by all the major news organizations and broadcast live over the Internet.

Former recipients of the gold medallion who have been featured in the *World Tribune* include Elie Wiesel and Rosa Parks. This year's 100 honorees were chosen from more than 40,000 nominations open to the public. They included business leaders, public servants, educators, clergy, artists, soldiers, lawyers and entertainers. Most were introduced as an outstanding

representative of one or more ethnic heritages. Better-known recipients included former Astronaut and Senator John Glenn, Chief Justice William



This year's honorees were chosen from more than 40,000 nominations open to the public.

Renquist (Swedish), Toys 'R' Us CEO Robert C. Nakasone (Japanese), Lila Kim (Korean), Wayne Newton (Native American/Irish/German), Marlo

Thomas (Lebanese/Italian), Quincy Jones (African), and author, children's advocate and

SEE ELLIS ISLAND, 11



Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

SGI-USA artists in Philadelphia set up an art exhibit at their community center.

## Philadelphia Region HOSTS PEACE GALLERY ART EXHIBIT

SGI-USA member Alison Minard wanted to give other fine artists in the Philadelphia Region an opportunity to display their work. The exhibit on display at the Philadelphia Community Center from April 18 through May 26 did more than that.

At its official opening on April 28, the Philadelphia Community Center resembled a fashionable art gallery, its walls embellished with works in oil, acrylic, pencil, charcoal, poster

paint, etc., with carefully selected quotations from SGI President Ikeda's writings regarding art and culture, and their importance in developing bonds of understanding and trust among diverse people. The opening, which about 60 Philadelphia members and 45 guests attended, also offered members a chance to introduce friends, family and acquaintances to the philosophy of the SGI.

— CLAUDE LOMDEN

Members of Philadelphia Region

# HOST FIRST KOREAN—JAPANESE FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE MEETING

After reading SGI President Ikeda's description of the historical enmity between Japan and Korea in *The New Human Revolution*, Philadelphia pioneer member Stan Ohnishi decided to do something to change the situation. To break down the feelings of distrust between Korean and Japanese people, he organized an exchange meeting, the first of its kind, which took place April 18 at the Philadelphia Community Center.

The event, attended by about 100 members from the Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia regions, was a joyful occasion in which members shared experiences and performed. SGI-USA Senior Vice General Director David Kasahara personally apologized to the Korean members for the suffering in-

flicted on their country by Japan during World War II. He stressed that this meeting was a fresh start.

Mr. Kasahara also spoke about the fact that society today has the tendency to take life lightly. Even if we are happy now, the suffering of others in other parts of our planet — like the suffering of those in Kosovo — will eventually affect all of us. We cannot escape the suffering of others in our environment, he emphasized. Therefore, our individual happiness and world peace cannot exist without others achieving their happiness. "Your efforts for kosen-rufu now will make the next century a century of life," Mr. Kasahara concluded.

— WANDA PEACOCK and  
CLAUDE LOMDEN



Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

Korean members perform at the first Korean-Japanese exchange meeting in Philadelphia, April 18.



Photo by JOANNE SMITH

Sunnyvale Chapter members donate a plum tree to their city, May 16.

## SUNNYVALE CHAPTER Celebrates Its Community

On May 16, the members of Sunnyvale Chapter in San Francisco No. 2 Region held a Celebrate Sunnyvale meeting, at which they donated a tree to their community and fostered connections between SGI-USA members and the citizens of Sunnyvale.

The meeting was held in Las Palmas Park, where the members held a tree-planting ceremony with the plum tree they donated. At the base of the tree was a sign that read, "This tree is given to the citizens of Sunnyvale by the SGI-USA in honor of Daisaku Ikeda."

Involving members from all four divisions, the meeting included various performances, from the Boys and Girls Group backed up by the Men's Division Band to a skit on how the practice is a mirror for one's life. Presentations were also made to those who

had pioneered the organization in Sunnyvale and to those who had worked behind the scenes.

Ellis Smith, the Sunnyvale Chapter leader and a longtime resident of the city, recounted some of the city's history, in particular its emphasis on providing good public education for Sunnyvale's children. Paraphrasing SGI President Ikeda's 1999 Peace Proposal, he stated that isolation, not only among nations but among individuals, is at the core of many of today's problems — especially those concerning young people. Enthusiastic dialogue ensued after the meeting, with more than 100 attendants wearing stickers that said, "Ask me about my human revolution."

— ANNIE SMITH

## REDWOOD COAST AREA Shines Brightly

It was a windy spring morning on May 2, when SGI members from the Redwood Coast Area (an area along the California coast of approximately 600 miles, from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Oregon border) met in Petaluma, Calif., to commemorate May 3, Soka Gakkai Day. SGI-USA Vice General Director Richard Yoshimachi broke through the clouds and wind as he called on all the members to become shining suns in their families. Best of all, from the women's perspective, he mentioned that May 3 is SGI Mother's Day. After talking about the great contributions that women have made for kosen-rufu, he noted that President Ikeda thinks women shouldn't have to do anything on this day. Men should do everything, even buy the women nice presents!

— SYLVAN WARNER and LAURA HENDRICKSON

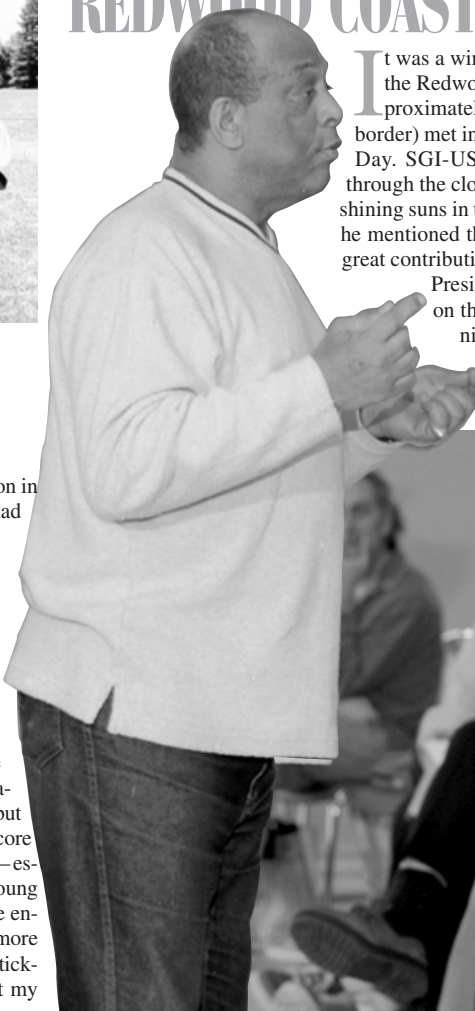


Photo by JAY C. SWETECH

Orlando Cepeda, who was recently inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, shares his experience with the Redwood Coast Area members, May 2.

EXPERIENCE — SEIJI TAKAKU, PASADENA, CALIF.

# THREE BROTHERS TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES

**Seiji Takaku shares how he and his two brothers are creating lives of fulfillment based on their practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Their transformation ultimately encouraged their father, who had opposed their practice in the beginning, to join them. 'After seeing all the dramatic changes that had taken place in his our lives,' Seiji explains, 'my father could no longer ignore the validity of this practice.'**

member who lived near my parents told him "if you pray to the Gohonzon your son will be cured. Having a good doctor is not the only way to cure his disease." Although this person sincerely desired to help my family, my father thought this person was suggesting not to see a doctor. As a result, he became furious and seriously mistrusted the Soka Gakkai.

So you can imagine how angry my father became when he discovered that Masaharu, at 19, joined the SGI. If you can believe it, he tried to introduce my father to the practice just after asking for money to help cover his \$60,000 debt! Despite my father's opposition, Masaharu taught the rest of my family about Buddhism. A year later, my mom joined hoping that her sons could lead a normal life. Another year later Masayoshi, joined in the hopes of becoming a Karate fighter. I, on the other hand, did not mainly because my older

One letter from my younger brother and a phone call



Masaharu, his daughter, Mami, 3, Seiji, Masayoshi and his daughter, Hidemi, 2, at their parents' home in Kuroiso, Japan.

If you ask me what is the greatest benefit that I have received since I started practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I must say that it is the fact that everyone in my family is an SGI member. Because of this practice, we have created such a strong family. However, 15 years ago things were not going so smoothly.

My older brother, Masaharu, was a heroin addict in Japan and almost killed himself from a drug overdose. At the time he was \$60,000 in debt from his drug habit. My younger brother, Masayoshi, was studying to become a chef at my father's request. My father is a chef and he wanted Masayoshi to follow in his footsteps. However, my brother secretly quit his job, behind my father's back, to pursue his dream of becoming a full-contact Karate fighter. As for me, I was the only son who had the opportunity to attend college in Japan. My father was very proud of me. However, I dropped out after one year. All this turmoil happened at one time during 1988.

At that time, my father was against any form of religion — especially the Soka Gakkai. Understandably so, according to my father. He had an experience that influenced his opinion. When my older brother was only 4 months old, he was diagnosed as having a rare incurable disease for which doctors could find no cure. My father was feeling so angry and hopeless. An SGI



Seiji's father, Sakaru, with granddaughter, Hidemi, 2.

brother continued to abuse heroin, and my family suffered a lot as a consequence.

In 1989, in search of my own dream for the future, I decided to come to the United States to learn English. By doing so, I'd enroll in a good college and hopefully return to Japan and find a good job there. After a year I tried to attend a community college with the idea of transferring to a university, but I was rejected from every one I applied to because of my poor English ability. Things did not go as I had planned. I really wanted to return to Japan.

from my older brother, however, convinced me that I could achieve anything if I put my mind to it. Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they explained, would allow me to do that. After refusing to practice for so many years, I finally decided to give it a try. My brothers taught me gongyo over the phone, and I chanted very sincerely with one goal in mind — to get into a good college.

So many things have changed within the past nine years of my life, changes that could only have occurred because of my family's Buddhist practice. My older brother, Masaharu, now married with two beautiful children, overcame his drug addiction, and is the proud owner of a successful hair salon in Japan. My younger brother, Masayoshi, after 10 years of dedication, became the Light Heavy Weight World Champion of Karate last year. His accomplishments were recognized several times by the *Seikyo Shimbun* and various magazines such as *World Karate*. He has also appeared on numerous TV programs. He is married and has a beautiful daughter.

As for me, I graduated from UCLA with the second highest honor, *magna cum laude*, with a grade point average of 3.8. I received my master's degree in experimental psychology at California State University, Long Beach. I am currently finishing my doctoral dissertation at

Claremont Graduate University where I have recently passed my oral exams. I received a Haynes dissertation grant, which will pay for my remaining year in graduate school.

As for my personal life, well, I finally met "Miss Right" two years ago. She was even willing to marry me without my having a steady job! My wife, Takako, has unselfishly supported me throughout my entire doctoral program for the past two years. No words can express my gratitude for her untiring trust and support.

But the greatest benefit happened last year. As I mentioned earlier, my father completely opposed the SGI for the longest time. However, after seeing all the dramatic changes that had taken place in our lives, my father could no longer ignore the validity of this practice. At age 60, my father finally joined the SGI! He is now chanting every day and doing a complete gongyo after a year of practice. When my wife and I visited Japan this past winter, he led morning and evening prayers on several occasions. My mom told me she is the happiest woman in the world.

Before concluding I would like to say that none of this would have been possible if my older brother hadn't joined the SGI and had a sincere desire to become happy. I'm so grateful that, amidst his struggle of drug abuse, Masaharu never

gave up on this practice and his dream of sharing this Buddhism with his entire family. Once I asked him how he managed to maintain such a strong conviction, he said, "Because I trust SGI President Ikeda and this practice."

Just as I believe every person has the right to become happy within his or her lifetime, I also believe everyone has the right to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. With this conviction in mind, my wife and I decided to host introductory youth meetings every month. It is our hope to support people in their practice of Buddhism and pursuit of all their dreams.

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**Part 1: The Life of Nichiren Daishonin**

- Q1. During the Sado Exile, the Daishonin completed the theoretical foundation of his teachings. What two works written during this period established the theoretical framework for his inscription of the Gohonzon? (Pick two, 2 pts. each)**
- (A) *Maka Shikan* (Great Concentration and Insight).  
 (B) The Lotus Sutra.  
 (C) "On Attaining Buddhahood."  
 (D) "The True Object of Worship."  
 (E) "The Opening of the Eyes."

- Q2. Which practice did Nichiren Daishonin proclaim on April 28, 1253?**
- (A) Meditation.  
 (B) Alms-giving.  
 (C) Abiding by the precepts.  
 (D) Mastering occult powers.  
 (E) Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

- Q3. After the attempt to execute Nichiren Daishonin at Tatsunokuchi proved unsuccessful, he was exiled to a cold and forbidding place from which he was not expected to return. What was this place?**
- (A) Kamakura.  
 (B) Tokyo.  
 (C) Sado Island.  
 (D) Mount Minobu.  
 (E) Eagle Peak.

- Q4. Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly states in his writings that a Buddha is:**
- (A) A person who will appear after kosen-rufu is achieved.  
 (B) An awakened common mortal.  
 (C) A superior being.  
 (D) A person without problems.  
 (E) One who attains happiness in the afterlife.

- Q5. After the Tatsunokuchi Persecution and Sado Exile, many of Nichiren Daishonin's followers wavered in their faith. In what way was the behavior of the Daishonin's followers different during the Atsuhara Persecution?**
- (A) They were willing to die for their beliefs.  
 (B) They accepted Nembutsu teachings.  
 (C) They abandoned their faith.  
 (D) They denied any association with him.  
 (E) They all returned the Gohonzon.

- Q6. Why did five of the six senior priests abandon the Daishonin's teachings after he died?**
- (A) Their desire to marry, have children and accumulate money was very strong, and they did not care for the strict guidelines the Daishonin set down.

# Study Department Entrance Examination

The SGI-USA Study Department held the Entrance Examination on April 25. With the exception of question No. 1, each question has one correct answer and is worth three points. Question No. 1 has two correct answers, worth two points each (four points total). There were 100 points possible on the exam. A passing score was 70 or above. (See box at the bottom of p. 5 for answers.)

- (B) They gave up their faith when accused of being spies for the Mongolian invasion.  
 (C) The steward of the Minobu area, Hakiri Sanenaga, refused to allow them to visit the temple there and threatened to behead them.  
 (D) They did not understand the essence of the Daishonin's teachings, believing he had only taught a form of Tendai Buddhism.  
 (E) Upon examining various documents, writings and treatise, they determined that the Daishonin's philosophy contradicted Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings.

**Q7. Why did Nikko Shonin leave Mount Minobu and establish Taisei-ji?**

- (A) Because food was more plentiful in the Mount Fuji area.  
 (B) Because believers wanted a temple at the foot of Mount Fuji.  
 (C) Because the military government used the Mount Minobu temple for Shinto ceremonies.  
 (D) To protect the true teachings of Buddhism from the slanderous behavior of the lord of the area, Hakiri Sanenaga.  
 (E) To propagate the Daishonin's teachings especially among the people of the Taisei-ji area.

**Part 2: "On Attaining Buddhahood"**

**Q8. What does it mean to "perceive the nature of your own life"?**

- (A) To realize our shallow understanding of life.  
 (B) To realize that Buddhahood exists at the most fundamental level of life.  
 (C) To realize that we share a common destiny with all people.  
 (D) To understand the source of the world's problems.  
 (E) To understand that we can always be forgiven for our bad karma.

**Q9. What is the Daishonin trying to illustrate by using the analogy of a "poor man counting his neighbor's wealth night and day"?**

- (A) Money is not the answer to a

- happy life.  
 (B) By focusing on other people's wealth, we can learn how to create our own.  
 (C) To study Buddhism or practice good deeds while believing that the truth is outside ourselves will not help us awaken to the true nature of our lives.  
 (D) Good fortune includes material wealth.  
 (E) By associating with those who have good fortune, we will eventually gain our own.

**Q10. According to this letter, what is the attitude of a non-Buddhist?**

- (A) Seeking the Law outside oneself.  
 (B) Perceiving the true nature of one's own life and the lives of others.  
 (C) Striving to have confidence in one's Buddha nature.  
 (D) Never being swayed by external circumstances or obstacles.  
 (E) Strengthening one's conviction to change his or her destiny.

**Q11. What attitude prevents us from experiencing "great joy" in our practice?**

- (A) Believing in our Buddha nature.  
 (B) Believing in the Mystic Law.  
 (C) Praying with sincerity and determination.  
 (D) Exerting ourselves as a Bodhisattva of the Earth.  
 (E) Thinking that the Law does not exist within us.

**Q12. What Buddhist principle is illustrated by this passage: "It further states that if the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure, in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds."?**

- (A) The three obstacles and four devils.  
 (B) The oneness of life and its environment.  
 (C) The Three Great Secret Laws.  
 (D) The oneness of body and mind.  
 (E) The three powerful enemies.

**Q13. When would chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo still be con-**

**sidered practicing provisional teachings?**

- (A) If we chant to solve our problems through faith.  
 (B) If we chant believing that we inherently possess Buddhahood.  
 (C) If we chant to build our happiness upon our innate Buddha nature.  
 (D) If we chant believing the Law is inside ourselves.  
 (E) If we chant thinking of the Law as a power outside ourselves.

**Q14. Nichiren Daishonin teaches us that when chanting to the Gohonzon, you should 'summon up deep conviction' that:**

- (A) The Buddha is a deluded common mortal.  
 (B) Life is impermanent; hence, there is nothing you can depend upon.  
 (C) Myoho-enge-kyo is your life itself.  
 (D) Your life is a mirror.  
 (E) The life of Shakyamuni Buddha is separate from your own.

**Part 3: "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon"**

**Q15. What is the meaning of the passage "The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions."?**

- (A) By chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, we can tap our innate, supreme life-condition and attain Buddhahood.  
 (B) We have hidden supernatural powers that can only be revealed through self-mastery.  
 (C) Our karma is the basis of life's functions.  
 (D) The fundamental darkness within us indicates the ultimate consciousness, our Buddha nature.  
 (E) The potential for Buddhahood exists only within Nichiren Daishonin.

**Q16. When we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon we experience the interaction of the four powers. Two of the four powers are 1) the power of the**

**Buddha and 2) the power of the Law. How can we activate the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law in our own lives?**

- (A) By asking others to chant for us.  
 (B) Through the power of skepticism.  
 (C) By resolving to chant when we have more time.  
 (D) By believing in the power of the Gohonzon to the point where we do not need to chant, replacing practice with faith.  
 (E) Through our own powers of faith and practice.

**Q17. Even though doubts are natural and unavoidable, it is important to strive to have doubt-free faith. Instead of worrying or tormenting ourselves, what should we do when we have feelings of doubt or insincerity in our practice?**

- (A) Resolve doubts through earnest practice and study.  
 (B) Realize that doubts indicate the practice is not for you and stop.  
 (C) Practice less strongly until the storm clears.  
 (D) Rely on common-sense strategies.  
 (E) Just follow the advice of friends and family.

**Q18. According to Nichiren Daishonin, what two actions arise from faith?**

- (A) Chanting only for our personal wants and needs each morning and evening.  
 (B) Practice and study.  
 (C) Going to meetings at least once a week and reading books about Buddhism.  
 (D) Chanting during the day and begging for alms in the evening.  
 (E) Studying Buddhist theory and lecturing to others.

**Q19. What point is the Daishonin trying to teach us in this writing by using the examples of the Emperor of Han and Li Kuang?**

- (A) Their clarification of the Buddhist teaching was incorrect.  
 (B) The mentor and disciple relationship is important in Buddhism.  
 (C) The power of faith can make the impossible a reality.  
 (D) The Chinese had a good grasp of Buddhist doctrines.  
 (E) Emperors are no better than common folk.

**Q20. Down the center of the Gohonzon are the words 'Nam-myoho-enge-kyo — Nichiren.' What Buddhist principle does this indicate?**

- (A) The oneness of the inner and



## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 1 SPEECH — PART 2

# What Can We Learn

**SGI President Ikeda has talked about Napoleon on many occasions. This time he asks what we can learn from Napoleon's life. He comes up with the answer that 'when Napoleon achieved one victory, he immediately looked to the next.... This is the secret to winning a battle. It is important to make one victory the cause for the next.'**

The exhibition "Napoleon Bonaparte: The Man" is currently being held, to great acclaim, at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum in Hachioji. It features nearly 500 extremely valuable items, including French national treasures on display for the Japanese public for the first time.

*The Tokyo exhibition will run through Aug. 1 and then travel to various cities throughout Japan until the year 2001.*

Standing as we do at the brink of a new century, I believe that this exhibition gives us a glimpse of what a single individual can achieve when he or she stands up with unyielding commitment to an ideal and how he or she can write history and change the times by doing so.

Dr. Jules Brassner, director of the Napoleonic Society of America, is the honorary chair of the exhibition executive committee. I offer my humble thanks for his efforts in making this exhibition possible.

What precisely can we learn from Napoleon's life? The great American thinker Ralph Waldo Emerson — whom Mr. Toda encouraged me to read — had this to say of Napoleon: "The lesson he [Napoleon] teaches is that which vigor always teaches — that there is always room for it."

In their efforts toward this May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, the vigor and courage of the members throughout Japan have

opened the way to the 21st century. Congratulations! Your victory is admired by all; it is a victory that could only have been achieved by the organization directly linked to Nichiren Daishonin. It is a miraculous victory. I am confident that the Daishonin is praising you all.

Emerson also made this observation about Napoleon: "His victories were only so many doors, and he never for a moment lost sight of his way onward, in the dazzle and uproar of the present circumstance."

When Napoleon achieved one victory, he immediately looked to the next. He wasn't satisfied with the present triumph; he didn't allow himself to relax, he didn't give up the larger struggle. This is the secret to winning a battle. It is important to make one victory the cause for the next. This is the smart way to fight, the way that leads to successive victories.

Those who bask in their triumphs will grow arrogant — that will eventually lead to defeat. The moment of triumph is the very moment to start working toward a new, larger goal. In this way, the next victory is assured.

This spirit of ceaseless advance is the "brave and vigorous exertion" referred to in the "Expedient Means" chapter (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 23). If we look at each of the Chinese characters that make up this term in Japanese, *yumyo shojin*, *yu* means courage, *myo* (vigorous) means applying one's wisdom and resourcefulness to the limit, *sho* (pure) means unadulterated, concentrated and perfect, and *jin* (effort) means ceaseless advance. Brave and vigorous exertion produces a person who always triumphs. It forges and strengthens us, so that our lives are ever victorious.

The Napoleon exhibition includes many rare personal items from the last six years of Napoleon's life, which were spent in exile on the island Saint Helena. Among these are five French national treasures, including Napoleon's last throne. Many of the pieces have never been shown outside France until now, and a memoir in Napoleon's own hand is being

exhibited for the first time anywhere. Four sabers of Marshal Murat [one of Napoleon's most celebrated marshals] — again, French national treasures — are also in the exhibition.

I have always believed that there would be a new interest in Napoleon and his life, and I have been working on realizing this exhibition for several years. When one acts in earnest, one finds wisdom and strength. On the other hand, if those who have high positions and a degree of power do not work in earnest, they betray the people who made them what they are.

Failing to be dedicated and sincere is nothing but arrogance. In the famous words of Cervantes from *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, "Ingratitude is the daughter of pride."

### In the SGI, our revolution is our faith.

"From this place and this time forth commences a new era in world history." These are the words of the great German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, as he observed with admiration the victory of the people during the French Revolution. The specific incident Goethe is referring to is the Battle of Valmy, which took place in 1792.

Valmy was the name of the hill on which the battle was fought, just a few years before Napoleon made his appearance on the main stage of history. The nations of Europe were attempting to overturn the rising tide of the French Revolution. They had crossed into French territory and were heading toward the capital of Paris. The Battle of Valmy took place in the midst of this.

Historians offer many different interpretations of this battle. The attacking forces were led by Prussia, at that time the strongest military power in Europe. The Prussian army was made up of aristocrats and it very well armed. It was completely confident of its victory.

The French army, by contrast, included a large number of volunteers. The Prussians looked down on their opponents as an army of "rabble," sure that these volunteers would flee at the first

threat. They made light of the French and were arrogant, just as the graduates of top universities might look down with scorn upon those with no college education.

The Prussians fired mercilessly on the French, but the French forces did not budge. They knew that if they were defeated, their revolution would be crushed, the aristocrats would rule once more, the people would be exploited again and their ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity would be dashed to dust. That would be unbearable — no doubt, such thoughts stirred them to fight bravely. These heroes of the people were armed with revolutionary spirit.

For us in the SGI, our revolutionary spirit is faith. Everything is determined by our faith, by our hearts. I call to you: Never forget to arm yourself with this revolutionary spirit! The SGI is also a volunteer army of the people, armed with faith. Justice and truth fuel our fighting spirit. We possess genuine, faithful comrades. Therefore, we're strong. This is what makes us invincible.

### The type of leader who just gives orders while seeking personal glory is the lowest of the low.

At first, some of the untrained French troops, frightened by the unaccustomed gunfire, quailed and were about to flee. But their experienced commander, 57-year-old François-Christophe Kellermann, called to them not to retreat a single step. "I am here beside you!" he shouted. Rallying the troops, he regrouped them and led them in a new advance.

Looking down on others does not make you a leader. You must encourage others and fight at their side. Leaders must call to them: "Let us fight together!" "Let us die together!" Only with this kind of leadership can people be inspired to fight for a cause.

But there is another type of leader — those who give orders from above and exploit the people, meanwhile cleverly acquiring personal rank and glory. When the crucial moment comes, these leaders foist all the hard work on others and make certain that no harm comes to them-

selves. Such cowards are the lowest of the low.

The Battle of Valmy was called a battle between the nobility and the ordinary people. The volunteer soldiers, now roused and fired up, shouted in the very midst of the battle with voices that made the earth shake: "Long live the nation!" "Long live the people!" Over the sound of the explosions and the roar of the gunfire, they repeated this intrepid cry, like crashing waves, like thunder.

The enemy was startled. They were shaken. They stopped in their tracks.

The fearless spirit and cheer of the people were the sources of their victory. The Prussian troops, afflicted with bad weather, sickness and short provisions, were finally forced to retreat.

"One's voice does the Buddha's work" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). Our voice can be a weapon, a powerful force.

Another of the reasons that the Prussians were defeated, it is said, is that their leaders lacked the will to fight and win. There were probably many reasons for this, but it is generally true that people who cling to rank and power are, in fact, cowards. They are so concerned with protecting themselves that they cannot give themselves wholly to their cause. That is their weakness.

The Battle of Valmy was not that large, but it has been remembered and valued as an important victory for the people. I think the same can be said of the great struggles that all of you as SGI members are making in your local regions, and I am sure that the Buddhas and heavenly deities — the protective functions of the universe — are applauding you.

The French have *esprit* or spirit. They have spiritual strength. That, in a sense, makes them stronger than people of any other nation.

The late French art historian René Huyghe often spoke in our discussions of *esprit*. After his death, his wife wrote to me that Dr. Huyghe always had the fondest memories of me. She also said that she wanted to present me with some of his personal effects as keepsakes.

Dr. Linus Pauling, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist and peace

ARCHIVE PHOTOS

# arn

# From Napoleon's Life?

activist, also left me many of his personal effects. Because these are a precious legacy for all humankind, they are now on display in the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition currently traveling the United States.

Behind my resignation as Soka Gakkai president 20 years ago was a dark conspiracy initiated by forces jealous over the burgeoning power and influence of the people our movement represented. Among those involved were unscrupulous individuals willing to sell out their mentor. There were pitiful people always ready with fine-sounding words but, when it came to the crunch, who did nothing.

At that time, some friends said to me: "President Ikeda, please come to France. We have a castle to put at your disposal, from where you can lead the kosen-rufu movement." These friends were Philippe Moine, present director of the Victor Hugo House of Literature [in Bièvres, on the outskirts of Paris] and his wife, Masako.

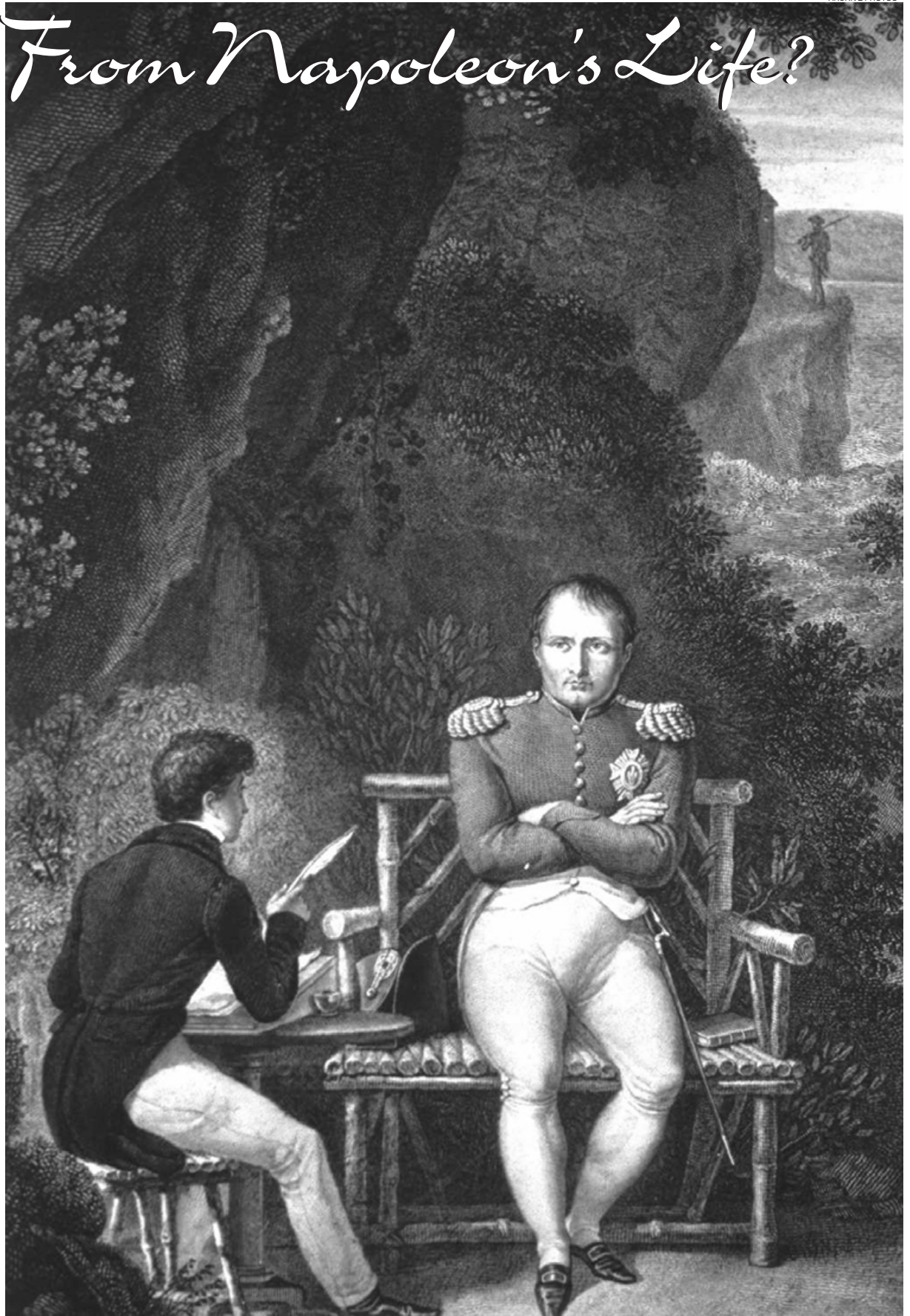
I was touched by their sincerity. Outside Japan, there are people who are strong and daring. Of course, I couldn't accept the castle. I politely turned down their kind offer, thanking them deeply for the spirit behind their gesture.

There were others who suggested that I bid farewell to Japan, a land driven by envy and spite, and move overseas. But my wife pointed out to me: "There are still students in the Soka schools. They need the founder of their schools here." I tell you this because I want to leave a record of what actually transpired then.

**To not advance is the same as to retreat.**

"La Marseillaise," the French national anthem, was composed by a passionate youth and sung bravely by the people during the French Revolution. A general of that era said he had been victorious in battle because "La Marseillaise" had helped him in leading his troops.

The heroes of the French Resistance, which battled against the



SEE NAPOLEON, 10

Napoleon in exile on the island of Saint Helena, after the defeat of his army in the infamous battle of Waterloo. In his last years, which he spent on Saint Helena, Napoleon had time to reflect on his turbulent life. 'Falsehood fades and disappears, but the truth endures,' he declared.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 17 SPEECH

# NO BORDERS Necessary

In his speech at a dinner held by South Korea's prestigious Cheju National University, SGI President Ikeda encourages us to strive for a borderless world.

courageously working to contribute to society and improve our future.

**President Makiguchi's martyrdom is the eternal foundation of Soka University.**

In the struggle for peace, my wife's mother fought bravely alongside first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, undaunted by the oppression of the Japanese military authorities. My wife was a fourth-grade elementary school student when her mother first took her to meet Mr. Makiguchi.

From early on, Mr. Makiguchi emphasized the great cultural debt Japan owes to Korea. He was enraged by the arrogant abuses of Japanese militarism that ignored this obligation, and he refused to remain silent about

it. Mr. Makiguchi's martyrdom for the cause of peace remains the eternal foundation of Soka University.

One of the students of the first class of Soka University, 28 years ago, was a bright, praiseworthy young woman who is a Korean resident in Japan. I recall eating a bowl of noodles with her on the campus that first spring while cherry blossoms and forsythia bloomed.

I wanted to encourage this fine young woman, who bravely challenged the despicable prejudices of Japanese society, so I wrote an inscription on the back of a photograph of the university, which I happened to have with me: "Originally there were no borders dividing us into nations. Only later did humankind create these artificial boundaries. Therefore, we must always re-

member to strive for and create a world in which we can live in beautiful human solidarity, transcending national borders."

This young woman went on to become the first Soka University graduate to qualify as a licensed tax accountant, offering an inspiring example and blazing the way for the students of subsequent graduating classes. Today, she is a mother of two and a women's leader in her local area. She is also very proud of her Korean heritage and works hard to promote friendly Korea-Japan relations.

**Poets should fight for youth, for the people, for all humanity.**

I hope I am not presumptuous when I say that I am a man of action. I believe that poet is just an

other name for a fighter who stands at the forefront of the struggle for the interests of youth, of the people, of all humanity.

Today, your faculty expressed their trust in me by bestowing an honorary doctorate upon me, the first time this honor has been presented to a non-Korean. I am determined to reciprocate this trust by keeping up my fight for peace, education and culture as long as I live.

I pray with all my heart for the health of the entire faculty and the eternal prosperity and development of your wonderful university and Cheju Island.

*President Ikeda's speech at a dinner hosted by Cheju National University in Cheju City, South Korea, May 17. See last week's issue for more on his visit to Cheju.*

Cheju has, from the distant past, been a place where brave women have shone. During a famine two centuries ago, a noble woman of Cheju, Kim Man Deog, used her wealth to purchase grain and distribute it without delay among the starving populace, thus saving large numbers from death. The story of her kind deed is famous.

My wife and I dedicate the very significant honors we have received today to the mothers of Korea and the world, who are

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 25 ENCOURAGEMENT

## Where Is OUR INNER FOCUS?

SGI President Ikeda gave the following encouragement at a Kansai representative leaders conference at the Soka Gakkai's Kyoto International Culture Center in Kyoto, Japan, May 25.

Most praiseworthy of all are those who strive for kosen-rufu. Most noble are those taking action in accord with the ideals of

the SGI, an organization advancing kosen-rufu. This is clear when viewed through the eyes of Buddhism.

If we lose the commitment to work for kosen-rufu, then no matter what honors or position we may gain in society, from the Buddhist perspective, it will all amount to nothing. Especially if we have gained position through the support of the SGI organi-

zation and forget to have appreciation for that fact, then we are merely using faith for self-serving ends and, ultimately, will fall into a life-condition of profound suffering.

Though we may appear to have the same commitment to faith, the question is whether our inner focus is on kosen-rufu or on ourselves. That small difference will produce dramatically

different results.

Those who earnestly devote themselves to SGI activities are Bodhisattvas of the Earth who are advancing toward kosen-rufu with a direct connection to Nichiren Daishonin. I assert this unequivocally, based on the Goshu.

The sun rises in the lives of those who ground themselves firmly in the organization dedi-

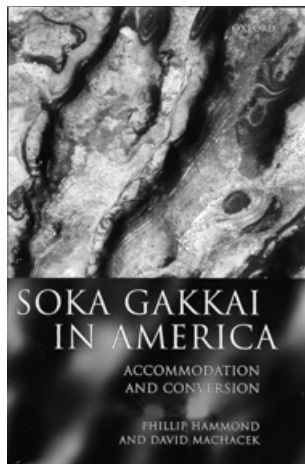
cated to kosen-rufu and make steady, ongoing efforts. They lead the most noble, most happy, most vibrant and most fulfilled lives.

The leaders should be sincere in all things and live in such a way that they will be loved, appreciated and praised by everyone, causing people to exclaim, "How fortunate we are to have such a wonderful leader!"

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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 18 SPEECH

## THE GREATEST PRIDE

In another speech to Cheju National University officials, President Ikeda says that 'the greatest pride of my youth is that, when my beloved mentor, Josei Toda, second Soka Gakkai president, was experiencing the most trying adversity, I abandoned my plans to go to university. And I alone among all his disciples gave my entire being to supporting and assisting him.'

In spite of his persecution, he came to Cheju with imper- turbable calm and self-possession. He had great affection for the honest island people and devoted his energies to the education of youth.

Kim had a devoted disciple, Lee Sang Jeok, who was stationed in China then. Throughout Kim's exile, Lee continued with unwavering sincerity and thoughtfulness to send his mentor precious books that he obtained. Though others might have betrayed his mentor, he remained faithful.

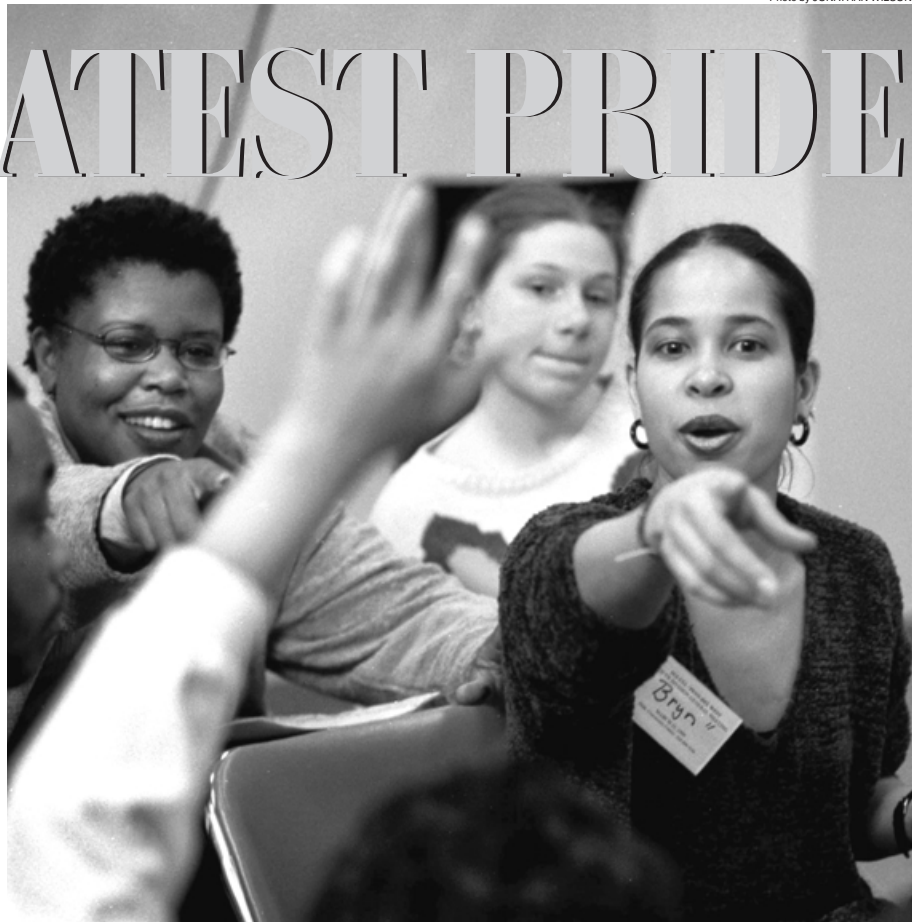
Lee was unafraid of the authorities' persecution or the vicissitudes of public opinion. He stayed true to the way of mentor and disciple. How this must have pleased and gratified his mentor!

Kim painted his picture of evergreens — a pine and a cypress, trees that retain their vibrant verdure despite the harsh winter cold. Inscribing the painting in masterful calligraphy with a verse praising his disciple's unchanging devotion, he sent it to Lee. This was *A Cottage Under Evergreen Trees*.

Lee wept with joy when he beheld the painting. He took it with him to a gathering of leading Chinese scholars and, with great pride, presented his mentor's work for all to see. These luminaries of China were moved by the painting and praised it highly.

Transcending differences of nationality and circumstance, they thought of Kim far away and the hardships he was facing. They each composed a short poem in tribute to this mentor and disciple united in the cause of justice. Lee had the 16 paeans to true friendship mounted together with the painting and sent it back to his mentor on Cheju.

Speaking of mentors and disciples, two years ago, when Dr. Cho Moon Boo became president of Cheju National University, South Korea's minister of education, Lee Myung Hyun, a former student of Dr. Cho, attended the inauguration ceremony. This is another beautiful, moving masterpiece of mentor and disciple.



'There is a real-life source of eternal youth: devoting one's life to the sacred task of humanistic education, based on a deep love for young people.'

The new century will be ushered in by people with a fresh, new vision and by places that have a fresh, new energy.

In *The Social Contract*, the 18th-century French thinker Rousseau writes of an island that attracted his attention. He praises the valor of the people of the Mediterranean island of Corsica in defending their freedom and democracy. "I have a presentiment," he writes, "that this little island will one day astonish Europe."

This island of Cheju has a vital power source that is producing talented young people: our Cheju National University. I am certain that this courageous, invincible island will thus astonish Asia in the new century and will be looked on with admiration by the whole world.

### Staying true to the way of mentor and disciple means never surrendering to fear.

I am reminded of a masterpiece that was painted here on Cheju Island: the ink painting *A Cottage Under Evergreen Trees*, a national treasure by the great painter Kim Chong Hui, completed 155 years ago. Kim's enormous talent earned him the envy of others, and he was falsely charged with a crime and exiled to Cheju.

The greatest pride of my youth is that, when my beloved mentor, Josei Toda, second Soka Gakkai president, was experiencing the most trying adversity, I abandoned my plans to go to university. And I alone among all his disciples gave my entire being to supporting and assisting him.

But so profound was my mentor's concern for me and my being unable to attend university that he spent nearly every morning of the next decade giving me a thorough education through private lessons. I know in my heart that my receipt of an honorary doctorate from your great institution of learning is also due to my studies at "Toda University."

### Humanistic education entails communicating with and learning from young people.

Your country, including this island of Cheju, is the home of great human beings. Your people are profound; they are large in spirit; they are strong. They boldly open their own paths with their own

character and integrity. Your university, with its mottoes of truth, justice, self-realization and enterprise, is the true symbol of this fighting intellectual spirit.

There are Ancient Chinese legends of sailing to your island home in search of the magical herb of immortality, of eternal youth. But there is a real-life source of eternal youth: devoting one's life to the sacred task of humanistic education, based on a deep love for young people. This means communicating with and learning from them. By doing so, eternally youthful life-force wells forth from one's life like an inexhaustible spring.

The great 16th-century Korean educator and poet Lee T'ogyean writes:

*Why are the green mountains ever green?*

*Why do the rivers flow ceaselessly day and night?*

*We, too, must never stop!*

*Let us remain forever brimming with vitality!*

I, too, am determined to join hands with the faculty of Cheju

National University and make further lively and youthful progress in fostering global citizens for the coming century and promoting cooperation among them. This is an undertaking in which your fine university will play a key role.

I am very happy that a goodwill exchange delegation comprising Soka Gakkai members from Kansai and Kyushu — both places that have close historical ties to Cheju Island — is visiting today.

Allow me to close by offering my congratulations, with immeasurable respect and appreciation, on the 47th anniversary of your university's establishment, which you will celebrate May 27. Three cheers for the illustrious institution that is Cheju National University!

*Kamsahamnida!* (Thank you very much!)

*President Ikeda's speech at a dinner he hosted reciprocating the honors and hospitality he and Mrs. Ikeda received from Cheju National University, Cheju City, South Korea, May 18.*

# The FINE Print



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

## Milestones

Dana Zweig and Charles Syntsakos were married in a Buddhist ceremony on Nov. 1, 1998, in Newport, R.I. They thank all their friends and comrades in faith who through the years supported them, enabling them to finally reach this momentous occasion!

Congratulations to Tom and Diane Friese on their 25th wedding anniversary. Strength, hope and determination have been the foundation of your marriage and the amazing actual proof is an incredible inspiration to many people especially your children: Ari, Vivian, Andy and E.J. We love you!

## Lost and Found

Hello Sherry (Zimmerman),

I know you're out there!! I know you've tried to get in touch but we just keep missing real contact. I'm still in Omaha for the moment. I'm anxious to hear about your life and practice since your last letter. You can reach me at this e-mail address: [grj9000@aol.com](mailto:grj9000@aol.com) or (402) 561-9915 or 680-8238 or 5806 Western Ave., Omaha, NE 68132.

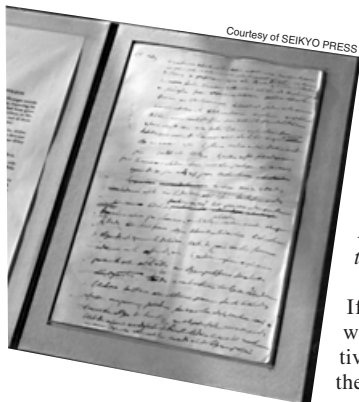
Love ya, Geoff Jordan (P.S. Karen N. is getting married, how 'bout you?)

Please help me find a young lady that was a member in Visalia, Calif., for a short time. Originally she lived on the island of Hilo in Hawaii. Her name at that time was Ranille Matos, she had a young baby girl and we lived in the same apartment complex in the late 1980s. Ranille was always

the picture of Sunshine with her great smile and even greater attitude; her practice was strong and the short time that I knew her she received many wonderful benefits. Though she left Visalia to return to Hilo after only a few short months, I will always remember her strong determination. Ranille, I think of you often and send daimoku for your happiness. Please contact me at (559) 292-5456 or [JSerefine@aol.com](mailto:JSerefine@aol.com) — Justine Serefine

Where oh where is Arlene Mills? She practiced with us in North Hollywood, Calif., for several years. Then she went back to her home in South Africa. For a while she was in Jo-berg, but we lost track of each other. Please drop me a line, Arlene. — Dorie Houser, 921 Intrigue Way, Las Vegas, NV 89128

Corrections: The dance being performed in a photograph in the May 21 issue, page 4, from New England Region's cultural diversity festival was identified incorrectly. It is a Panamanian dance. Also in the May 21 issue, in the page 5 story on the book donation to the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, the university chancellor pictured is Dr. Linda Bunnell Shade. We apologize for the mistakes.



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

A handwritten memoir from Napoleon's exile to Saint Helena is one of the 500 items on display in the 'Napoleon Bonaparte: The Man' exhibition at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum.

## NAPOLEON, FROM PAGE 7

Nazis during World War II, also sang "La Marseillaise." I remember fondly once, at my suggestion, the SGI-France youth division members and I marched along singing this song.

Our Soka Gakkai songs, too, rouse us to victory. I recently proposed that we compose new songs of advance, new marches and triumphant tunes to carry us into the 21st century. I look forward to the appearance of fresh songs that all members can easily relate to and enjoy.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of Goethe's birth [Aug. 28, 1749]. In one of his works, Goethe writes the following lines hailing the creation of a new age:

*Brothers, rise to liberate our world*

*Heralded by comets, a time of greatness has come  
Let us cut in two and discard  
All the ploys of tyranny  
Forward, advancing, to the heights  
Let us make a success of this great work.*

If we interpret Goethe's words in terms of our own activities and ideals, to "liberate the world" means to realize world peace. "Heralded by comets" means that the heavens are watching us. "Cutting the ploys of tyranny in two" means cutting the arrogance of the authorities in two. "This great work" means, for us, making a success of the momentous undertaking of kosen-rufu.

In another verse, Goethe writes:

*As we advance thus boldly  
\*\*\**

*Nothing can halt our progress.  
Forward, advancing, to the heights  
Let us complete this great work.*

We mustn't stop. To not advance is to retreat. Forward, ever forward — this is the secret to victory.

The SGI tricolor flag of victory waves bravely around the world. Whenever I see our flag while driving somewhere, I send my daimoku to the members there. I want to travel all around Japan, all around the world, as we enter the period for consolidating the foun-

dations for kosen-rufu, as we head into the 21st century.

## Crucial to our future are well-rounded people.

In his last years, when he was exiled to Saint Helena, Napoleon reflected on his turbulent life, during which he had endured a constant stream of criticism and abuse.

Napoleon writes: "A victory, a monument — here is the best and truest reply. Falsehood fades and disappears, but the truth endures. Wise people, especially in future ages, pass their judgments based on fact." Such was his faith in the future. Wild, false accusations disappear with time. Only the reality of victory remains in the end.

Here is another well-known remark he made: "March at the head of the philosophies of your time, and you will find these philosophies following and supporting you."

A fierce struggle is now under way to determine what philosophy, what force, will lead the 21st century. What will determine the outcome of this struggle? Talented people, talented individuals.

Crucial now are well-rounded people, who have both character and strength — whole people. Fostering just such people is the SGI's goal.

One can be very bright but lack integrity. One can be famous but lack a personal philosophy. One can have passion but lack intelligence or endurance. One can be tremendously popular but lack sincerity. Such people cannot be

called well-rounded. Their qualities are separate, fragmented, not seamlessly integrated to form a sublime whole.

The wholeness I speak of is the special quality of those who practice the Daishonin's Buddhism. That's because Myoho-enge-kyo contains everything: virtue, life force, intelligence, good fortune, philosophy.

Napoleon's philosophy was to give opportunities to talented individuals. Mr. Toda called on us to educate and train our juniors to surpass us. Capable people will determine victory. They will create our future.

That is why the SGI concentrates on nurturing capable individuals. The SGI will triumph because of this focus.

In an editorial Mr. Toda wrote 45 years ago for the May 1 issue of the *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai study journal, he says that those who carry out kosen-rufu are emissaries of the Buddha; they are carrying out the Buddha's work. These emissaries are infinitely superior to heroes like Napoleon and Alexander the Great, he says.

Those who propagate the Mystic Law and participate in SGI activities are the true heroes, the noblest people of all.

*Part 2 of President Ikeda's speech at the 33rd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, May 1. Part 1 appeared in the May 21 World Tribune, and the conclusion will appear in next week's issue.*

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# Read SGI President Ikeda's guidance every week in the World Tribune

These excerpts are from a new book of daily encouragement, *For Today & Tomorrow*, compiled from SGI President Ikeda's guidance from the World Tribune. Available soon at SGI-USA bookstores or from the SGI-USA Mail Order Center. By phone at (800) 626-1313. By e-mail at [sgiusamoc@aol.com](mailto:sgiusamoc@aol.com)

Prayer is the foundation. But at the same time if we fail to make concrete efforts, no matter how much daimoku we chant, our prayers will not be answered. Buddhism is reason. If we just chant without doing any work we cannot succeed in our jobs.

The real benefit of the Mystic Law is inconspicuous. Just as trees grow taller and stronger year after year, adding growth rings that are imperceptible to the human eye, we too will grow toward a victorious existence. For

this reason it is important that we lead tenacious and balanced lives based on faith.

I hope that you will always speak the truth boldly, saying what needs to be said no matter whom you're addressing. When it comes to championing a just cause, you must never be cowardly, never fawn, never try to curry favor.

Eiji Yoshikawa, the renowned Japanese author of many epic historic novels, asserted, "Great character is forged through hardships." Surviving a life of hardships and difficulties, of stormy ups and downs, is what produces a person of great depth and character. True happiness is also found in such an unshakable state of life.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was a tireless crusader for human rights, said: "Life's most

persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?" Do not say you will do it "someday"; now is the time. Do not say "someone" will do it; you are the one. Now is the time for youth to take full responsibility and courageously pave the way for the people's triumph.

Suffering and undergoing hardships for the sake of friends and for spreading the Law show the sense of responsibility of a genuine leader and are the behaviors of a bodhisattva. There is no suffering or hardship that a Bodhisattva of the Earth cannot surmount. So no matter what happens, I would like you to steadily advance one step at a time, always chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo with a vibrant voice.

Please never turn your back on your faith. Courage is crucial. There is no room for faintheart-

edness in faith. The timid doom themselves to ridicule—from their partners, from their children, from their friends, from the world at large. The Daishonin declares that there is no place for cowards among his disciples. President Toda said the same.

Life is full of unexpected suffering. Even so, as Eleanor Roosevelt said: "If you can live through that [a difficult situation] you can live through anything. You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'" That's exactly right. Struggling against great difficulty enables us to develop ourselves tremendously. We can call forth and manifest those abilities lying dormant within us. Difficulty can be a

source of dynamic growth and positive progress.

Religious strife must be avoided at all cost; under no circumstance should it be allowed. People may hold different religious beliefs, but the bottom line is that we are all human beings. We all seek happiness and desire peace. Religion should bring people together. It should unite the potential for good in people's hearts toward benefiting society and humanity and creating a better future.

This lifetime will never come again; it is precious and irreplaceable. To live without regret, it is crucial for us to have a concrete purpose and continually set goals and challenges for ourselves. It is equally important that we keep moving toward specific targets steadily and tenaciously, one step at a time.



Marylou Berk (center) and her husband, Allen (standing behind Marylou), with family members at the Ellis Island ceremony.

**ELLIS ISLAND, FROM PAGE 1**

humanitarian, First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Marylou Berk (Italian), corporate vice president of Ziff-Davis, Inc., was one of the few recipients who were invited to offer their appreciation during the awards ceremony. In her remarks, Marylou spoke about her grandmother's passage through Ellis Island and of her mother's struggle to raise three

children alone after her father's early death. "She taught me the value of having a mission, made me feel great about myself and taught me how to use obstacles as a source of growth. She encouraged us to be individuals while demonstrating the importance of unity. I continue that life philosophy today."

Of her career at Ziff-Davis, she said that it shows that "when you make positive causes, you get beneficial ef-

fects. Ziff-Davis encourages and rewards its employees to think 'Out of the box.' It's so refreshing. How fortunate I am." Ziff-Davis is a leading media and marketing company focused on the Internet and related technologies. One of Marylou's more recent accomplishments at Ziff-Davis was the relocation of their corporate headquarters in Manhattan. The project took two years and involved coordination with more than 500 people.

She concluded by saying: "I have learned the reason for life is to be happy. It is the basis upon which our country has been founded. It is the same reason that this country leads the world and continues to embrace immigrants. I encourage all of you to work as hard as you can at being happy in life. That is the only way that world peace can be achieved."

Marylou has been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for 15 years and is a vice women's division leader in Lincoln Center District. Her husband, Allen Berk, is the Ansonia Chapter men's division leader.

This 13th annual event was sponsored by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations,

which serves as an umbrella organization for more than 300 ethnic organizations. NECO's mandate is to preserve ethnic diversity, promote ethnic and religious equality, tolerance and harmony, and to combat injustice, hatred and bigotry. In his remarks, NECO Chairman William Fugazy spoke out eloquently and forcefully about overcoming the hatred and bigotry that have recently surfaced in this country as evidence by criminal acts.

The purpose of the awards gala is to celebrate various heritages by recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of people who make up the ethnic and cultural "mosaic" of this country. All ethnic groups are honored, whether or not their ancestors arrived through Ellis Island. By recognizing the common dreams and aspirations of all peoples who are part of this country, NECO's purpose is to forge unity and hope through a celebration of common values.

From 1892 to 1954, Ellis Island was the doorway to a new life for more than 12 million immigrants. Forty percent of all living Americans today can trace their heritage to Ellis Is-

land, including this author. It was not only the place, but also the spirit of Ellis Island that was the theme of First Lady Hillary Clinton's remarks.

As the keynote speaker, she emphasized that Ellis Island was both a place that needed to be preserved and a "state of mind" that we must maintain for the "present and the future." The First Lady had just returned from Fort Dix where she had greeted Kosovo Albanian refugees coming to America. General Day, in charge of their reception, had said that an old woman arriving with a scarf around her head had reminded him of a photo of his grandmother on Ellis Island dressed in the same way. "For them, this was their Ellis Island," said the First Lady. By opening our hearts and our country to these refugees: "We are saying who we are. We are emphasizing the importance of individual rights and mutual respect." She suggested that mutual respect for all ethnic groups, our Ellis Island legacy, be our guiding principle in attempting to resolve the conflict in Kosovo.

The event concluded with fireworks display and a dinner for the honorees and their guests.

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