



EXPERIENCE:
Jean Frye
Sidwell sings
her way to
success.
pages 4-5

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Chicago Youth 'Reach for the Sky'

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Youth perform in the U.S.-Japan Youth Culture Festival held in Chicago, August 1995.

Since the beginning of the year, there has been a wide range of youth activities in Chicago, from large gatherings with much excitement to intimate and profound dialogues taking place late at night, in someone's apartment, in a coffee shop or on a bus. At times, members celebrated one another's progress and victories, at others they struggled with little support and lack of communication. Throughout it all, they have never ceased to challenge themselves to advance kosen-rufu in Chicago.

As they head into the second half of the Year of Victory

in the Community for the New Century, the Chicago youth division members are determined to grow even further and to win in their communities by showing actual proof in their daily lives. In preparation for Chicago's youth festival, "Reach for the Sky," scheduled to be held Aug. 14 at the North Shore Center for Performing Arts in Skokie, Ill., the study focus for the youth division is SGI President Ikeda's poem, "Youth, Scale the Mountain of Kosen-rufu of the 21st Century," which was recently revised and published in the April 16 *World Tribune*. In addition, they have set a goal of chanting 100 million daimoku from May 3

to Aug. 14, as part of SGI-USA's ongoing 10 billion daimoku campaign for 1999.

As the youth division members seek to recapture the spirit to propagate and challenge all kinds of obstacles in pursuing their dreams, they are determined to have every-one experience victory in their lives, so that their confidence and joy will radiate on stage — a true manifestation of hope in the community.

— JEFFERY MEGURO



A Successful May Contribution Activity

A Letter From the General Director

Dear SGI-USA Members,

I wish to thank you all for your sincere support and participation in our May Commemorative Contribution last month. I am very happy to report that we had a substantial increase in the number of members participating in this year's contribution activity. Furthermore, the resulting cumulative contribution was a significant increase over last year. Your wholehearted participation and dedication to kosen-rufu are deeply appreciated.

I believe the success of our May Contribution this year is an expression of your joy and confidence in faith and growing confidence in our American kosen-rufu movement. I look forward to working together with all of you to continue this trend as we carry out the important final preparation for the 21st century. Again, thank you very much, and please convey my best regards and thanks to all the members of SGI-USA.

Sincerely,

Fred M. Zaitso
Fred M. Zaitso

Raising Youth Is a Focus of Discussion at CEC Session

By MARGIE HALL
MANAGING EDITOR

The 44th session of the SGI-USA Central Executive Committee took place June 11-13 at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif., with national leaders and representatives of eight zones attending from around the country. The eight zones, which encompass 27 regions, are Central (Midwest; Chicago 1, 2 and 3 regions); Pacific (Hawaii 1 and 2); Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.); Northwestern (Seattle; San Francisco 1 and 2); Northeastern (Brooklyn/Queens/Long Island; New Jersey; New York West; New York East; and New England); Southern (Florida, Atlanta and Caribbean); So. California (L.A. 1; L.A. Coastal; Los Angeles; L.A. 4; Orange County; and San Diego); Western (Rocky Mountain; Texas/Oklahoma).

The overall success of the nationwide May Contribution activity was apparent in various reports given after SGI-USA General Director Fred Zaitzu's opening words (see his letter on page 1). Then it was unanimously agreed that throughout the country, a meeting for all leaders would be held on a regular basis (monthly or bimonthly). Encouragement in faith, communication of organizational direction and inspirational dialogue would be emphasized for these gatherings.

An update was given by several individuals on the temple issue, including the challenges each area is facing with the ongoing process of educating one another to deepen our understanding of and commitment to the issue. It requires the courage to pray and make efforts continuously to engage in compassionate dialogue to enable everyone to realize the truth and spirit of the Daishonin's teaching. A proposal was accepted that a nationwide temple issue committee would be formed and that the entire membership use prayer, study and outreach, with propagation as basic to our efforts.

Regarding the Entrance Examination held in April, SGI-USA Study Department Leader Eugene Hirahara reported that more than 1,500 candidates participated nationwide. In discussions with members on his travels, he observed that few people study on a daily basis; curriculum study is not being applied in most areas; it is difficult to develop qualified lecturers; orthodox study principles are not integral to regular activities such as the monthly World Peace Prayer meetings and discussion meetings; and a basic study program for children is needed.

Mr. Hirahara also announced that the current study coordinators position would change to Study Department Leader at the region and area levels, with a term of one year, which would end in June 2000. He emphasized that Buddhist study deepens faith; it gives impetus to advancing kosen-rufu; and study is the key to establishing a new humanistic philosophy. He determined that study coordinators would work together with the line leadership to improve the study program in each area.

Harry Sakurai, executive director of the Florida Nature and Culture Center, reviewed the schedule for upcoming conferences, and said that a new brochure will be prepared and distributed among the membership. (See opposite page for the FNCC schedule.)

On Raising Youth

A presentation on raising youth was made by General Director Zaitzu, who visited Columbine High School with the local region leaders when he was in Denver one week after the tragic shootings and offered flowers and daimoku for the peaceful repose of the 15 victims. "It's a beautiful campus and community," he said. "Within this beautiful environment, my heart ached..." He pointed out that in the SGI-USA, the youth "are the great treasure and hope for the future of America. Exactly as President Ikeda has been demonstrating with



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

The Central Executive Committee meets at the SGI Plaza, June 11-13.

his dedicated action for over 50 years, to cherish and nurture our youth must be our crucial priority."

Mr. Zaitzu related his experience as a cherished new youth in his district in the Soka Gakkai, holding leadership responsibilities several months after beginning his practice and a year later being entrusted with giving Goshō lectures at age 20. "The organization boldly entrusted me with responsibility even though they may have had many worries or reservations in doing so," he said. "I recall always having good communication with my men's and women's division leaders. Clearly, they were entrusting the youth, but they were not leaving us alone by ourselves. I felt their support.

"The most important point in raising youth is to first chant and pray for the growth of youth," he continued. "The atmosphere of camaraderie, trust and family is the result of joyfully fighting side by side for the growth and development of one's district and chapter ... that feeling of togetherness created warm hearts, trust and support among everyone."

The general director related Nanjo Tokimitsu as a great ex-

ample of the spirit of youth. "He was 16 years old when he went to visit the Daishonin following the deaths of his father and brother. Nikko Shonin was a strong influence on the development of Tokimitsu's faith. The Atsuhara Persecution presented a grave danger, but Nanjo Tokimitsu played a significant role in protecting the believers in that area. He continued to provide support to the Daishonin throughout this period and to lead the propagation campaign. Nichiren Daishonin's confident encouragement was the key to young Tokimitsu's growth and development.

"I hope that the youth of today will stand up to protect the members with the same spirit," he added. "President Ikeda says that young people should advance without concern about making mistakes or failing. Youth must not be weak or wait for others to train them; they should develop themselves. He often mentions that a lion travels alone, without seeking protection from others. Youth can take the lead in propagation, publications promotion and the temple issue."

Following Mr. Zaitzu's talk, much discussion ensued among the CEC representatives on the topic of raising youth. Questions arose such as how to attract youth who are not involved in activities? How to create activities that will be attractive to them? How to speed up the process of passing the baton for the future?

SGI-USA Youth Division Leader Ed Feasel then spoke about the youth's anticipation and excitement about their culture festival and other activities in the fall, saying, "President Ikeda's recent guidance to us was to make minimum effort with maximum result, based on propagation efforts and discussion meeting attendance." It was suggested that 50 percent of youth participants be junior high and high school students or Student Division members.

Also, the Youth Peace Committee is launching an exciting program called "Victory Over Violence," to be implemented in every district across the country. There will be a video, information packet and a pledge form that every member, as well as family and friends, can sign. These materials will be available in July,

with the expectation that they will be used by the youth division members in organizing the district discussion meetings during August. The Victory Over Violence Pledge forms will be distributed for signatures at the August discussion meetings.

Membership Guidelines

On the topic of membership guidelines, approximately 500 surveys were completed by district leaders. Proposed guidelines based on their feedback were made. Revised official guidelines will be forthcoming soon.

Public Relations

Bill Aiken, national director of media relations, announced that the newly created SGI-USA Office of Public Affairs was officially opened April 3 in downtown Washington, D.C. It will serve as a communication point with elected officials and peace and human rights organizations involved in issues related to reli-

gious liberty and children's rights, for the purpose of advancing solutions to issues facing the United States and global society. The office would also be a source for information regarding the philosophy and activities of the SGI-USA and President Ikeda.

Teleconference

During the nationwide teleconference on the last day of the CEC gathering, General Director Zaitusu said that this year, more than 10,000 guests nationwide were introduced at various SGI functions. What is needed now is our confident encouragement to those guests for them to begin their practice, he said. He also announced that the national headquarters has appointed SGI-USA Young Women's Division Leader Renu Jiandani to spearhead the promotion of publications and SGI-USA Young Men's Division Leader James Herrmann to spearhead propagation efforts.

In her speech, Renu Jiandani said that each district will receive

a promotions package and an updated list of subscribers showing those whose subscriptions have recently expired. Traditionally it has been the women's division who have encouraged us to read the publications, she explained, but now the youth can gain this experience, encouraging each member in their districts to subscribe to the periodicals. She shared that a friend who had many personal problems subscribed to the *World Tribune*, and although she was unable to attend activities, the newspaper provided the nourishment that allowed her to develop her own practice and receive the Go-honzon a year later.

James Herrmann stressed that the propagation movement will be based on true concern for others, and not for a numerical result. We need to discover what suffering and unrealized goals people have in order to show them the value of practicing Buddhism, he said. Nothing is a greater source of joy than seeing others become happy. Let's share our own experiences in doing propagation, he said, even

when giving personal guidance.

Women's Secretariat Leader Linda Johnson spoke about the temple issue, saying that the action plan is prayer, study and outreach: pray to correctly understand the issue and help others to do the same; study by subscribing to and reading our publications; outreach means to visit all our members and also to share Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with others, including the temple members, to clarify the correct practice of his teachings. Our courageous dialogue does not detract from the spirit of tolerance or religious freedom, because shakubuku is based on compassion, she said.

"In America, we have enjoyed tremendous success in sharing the Daishonin's Buddhism. We are unique and remarkable when compared to other Buddhist religions in the depth and diversity of our roots in American soil. 'We indeed have a success story,' writes Phil Hammond, professor of religion at the University of California, Santa Barbara. We can be rightfully proud of that history." ■



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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.

Upcoming Conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture Center

July 8-11 Happiness in This World Conference

What is happiness and where does it lie? It is a question people have been asking themselves throughout the centuries. At this conference participants can examine current motivations toward achieving happiness, balanced by a Buddhist perspective. Seminars include discussion of key elements that enable one to continually live a creative, joyful life through our Buddhist practice. Attending leaders include Al Albergate and Patricia Kasahara.

July 25-18 Women's Division Conference

Any woman is invited to attend this conference, especially recent graduates of the young women's division. Attending leaders include Wendy Clark, Linda Johnson and Theresa Hauber. The theme of this gathering is "Creating the Century of Women Through Humanism." There will also be ample opportunities for dialogue, question and answer and group discussion.

July 22-25 Culture Department Conference

The conference theme is "Equality and Humanity: The Buddha in a Professional World." Attending leaders include Eric Hauber, Gerry Hall and Greg Martin. This conference is intended for the current regional leaders of each division within the Culture Department so that they can create a unified, national understanding of the new Culture Department Mission Statement; accomplish a clear awareness of the refreshed direction of the Culture Department; and develop and share new strategies for nurturing Culture Department members. There will be encouragement and guidance in faith, dialogue with others in similar fields, and extended opportunities to meet with the national leaders of each of the divisions of the Culture Department.

Aug. 5-8 Chinese Language Conference

The language conferences are intended to provide members with the opportunity to study Nichiren Daishonin's *Major Writings* and President Ikeda's guidance, discuss organizational direction and Buddhist practice in the United States, and share experiences and develop friendships in their native language. (This conference was originally scheduled Aug. 26-29.) Attending leaders include Frank Nakabayashi, David Lee and Judy Chow.

Aug. 12-15 Korean Language Conference

Attending leaders include Richard Sasaki, Yong Won Cho and James Lee. (This conference was originally scheduled Sept. 16-19.)

Aug. 19-22 Men's Division Conference #1
Aug. 26-29 Men's Division Conference #2

Toward a new "Century of Humanism," men's division members will be holding dialogues through studying Nichiren Daishonin's teachings, SGI President Ikeda's writings, guidance and sharing of personal experiences. These conferences will feature an all-day boat tour, during which discussions will be held. Attending leaders include Richard Sasaki and Shinji Ishibashi.

Sept. 9-12 Third Stage of Life #3 Conference

This conference is for Japanese-language participants age 55 years and above. Attending leaders include Kazue Elliot and David Kasahara.

Please contact your regional office or send your inquiries about the conferences to the SGI-USA Headquarters, Attn: FNCC Information, 606 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

EXPERIENCE — JEAN FRYE SIDWELL, WEST HILLS, CALIF.

Singing Her Way to Success

Fighting depression, low self-esteem and chronic voice problems, Jean Frye Sidwell developed her childhood passion for singing into a successful music career.

When I was growing up, life was very difficult. My father was in the military and we moved constantly. Each time we moved my five brothers and I would have to change schools, sometimes in the middle of the school year.

Having no other girls in my family made moving especially hard on me. I often felt lonely and sad; being the new kid all the time was never fun. It got to the point where I didn't seek out new friends and kept to myself a lot. As I got older, one way I would keep from feeling lonely was to sing. I loved singing. I would go to my room, close the door, put on my favorite record and sing for hours. I loved it so much that I continued singing through junior high, and high school. I was always told that I sounded really good and was eventually asked to perform for school functions. I loved performing, too, and at that point I was hooked!

In 1976, I joined a band and started singing professionally. I was 17. I left the band in 1978 and moved from the Midwest back to where I was born near San Diego. I dreamed of pursuing a career as a recording artist in California — the land of opportunity. I had no idea how difficult this would be. I would learn that, as with many endeavors in the performing arts, it is very difficult to survive financially and there are so many negative messages out there about having a successful career.

For the next few years, I struggled deeply with my own demons. Being on my own for the first time, I again felt lonely and sad. I began to eat to fill the void and developed a weight problem. Struggling with depression and low self-esteem, I began to have suicidal thoughts. Singing had always helped me in



Jazz singer Jean Frye Sidwell, performing at The Palace in Hollywood in 1995.

the past, so I decided to enroll in music school full time with voice as my major.

My best friend in school had been practicing Nichiren Daisshonin's Buddhism and told me about chanting. He invited me to various activities but I never went. I respected his practice but I wasn't ready to practice myself.

I eventually managed to find a way to make a living as a singer. I joined another band in 1980, and began traveling with them. I was so happy when I was singing on stage, but my internal struggles were always just underneath the surface. Soon I began having serious problems with my voice. After a while it seemed I was hoarse most of the time. I went from one vocal instructor to another and still could not overcome it.

Finally, I lost my voice completely and had to stop singing for a minimum of six months. I was devastated. The one thing in my life I had always held on to no matter how bad things got, the thing I gained a sense of identity from, was no longer available to me.

In 1981, I decided to take a big

step and move to Los Angeles — if I couldn't sing I would at least be at the center of where the music industry was. I enrolled in dance classes and the first person I met, Olivia, also an aspiring singer, became a very good friend. We often talked about finding a sense of community and spirituality. The next year she left town for a while and we lost touch.

In 1983, I hit rock bottom. I still wanted very much to sing but I was petrified of losing my voice again. I lost myself in a relationship with an alcoholic boyfriend. It ended when he came home drunk one night and hit me. Again, I was devastated. I felt everything was caving in. I was sad and lonely and I wanted to die. I was beginning to wonder if I shouldn't just forget about a music career, pack it up and move back home. Around that time my friend Olivia came back into town. I would find out later this was no coincidence.

I needed a roommate and she was in need of a place to stay so I invited her to stay with me. Olivia was also really struggling. Two weeks later she went to an intro-

ductory meeting on Nichiren Daisshonin's Buddhism and received the Gohonzon shortly thereafter. For the next month she chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo every day and I noticed something start to change in her — although I didn't want to acknowledge it. I remembered that my best friend in junior college had told me about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo years earlier. It had seemed to help him so I supported Olivia in her practice. As for me, I had grown so familiar with suffering that it represented a strange security to me — I didn't want to let it go. Olivia would encourage me to chant, but I wouldn't. I got more depressed and she got happier.

Finally one day she got me to chant for 20 minutes. Afterward I felt like a heaviness had been lifted off my life, like the black cloud I had been living under was gone and the sun had come out. I'll never forget that day. I received my Gohonzon shortly thereafter.

We both jumped in and practiced very hard. We chanted a lot, joined the young women's dance team, sang songs at weekly discussion meetings and helped others to practice Buddhism. I still had a deep fear of losing my voice, so singing engagements were few and far between. I was always encouraged by seniors in faith to challenge this and told I could accomplish anything with my practice to the Gohonzon.

During this time I got my first full-time job as a secretary! I had no experience and basically got paid well to learn office skills. In 1985, I made a determination to challenge the situation with my voice and joined the SGI-USA young women's chorus. The next few years were so difficult for me. I lost my voice on many occasions, but amazingly I was allowed to perform anyway. That doesn't happen anywhere else!

Many times during a performance I would just mouth the words of the song and smile as tears would run down my face. I remember thinking: "What am I doing here?? I have no voice! Why don't I just give it up!?" In spite of how I felt at times, I took on more responsibility in the chorus and I was always encouraged to keep fighting — that this situation

would definitely change.

A fellow chorus member and friend whom I had recently met and introduced to Buddhism had similar voice problems. She had just begun studying voice with a classically trained teacher and recommended that I see her for a consultation. I was leery because the teachers I'd had before had done nothing for my problems — some actually even made it worse! She assured me that this teacher was different. I began studying with her and immediately saw a difference in my voice. I studied with her for four years and since that time have never lost my voice or even had minor problems.

Since then, I began to sing a lot more professionally. I also realized that I wasn't going crazy any more over my weight and it hasn't been a problem since. I had so much support in my life that feeling lonely was no longer an option!

The depression was another matter, though, and it continued to show up regularly. In fact, it actually became worse over time. Some days I had to chant just to get through the day. In time I realized it kept showing up and getting worse so I could change my life.

I went to a therapist to get help with my depression. At my first visit I was asked many questions. One of the last questions was about whether I had ever been abused

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sexually. I started crying. Sadly, my answer was yes. From the age of 6 until I was 11, two of my brothers repeatedly molested me. I had never shared this with anyone. It was as if a secret door had been opened on my life. I left there feeling an incredible sense of sadness, relief and dismay that I could have kept these secrets for so long. My life made so much more sense — my struggles with overeating, low self-esteem, abusive relationships — at that point I began the difficult journey to understand who I really was inside. I chanted a lot that year.

In 1991, I started working a part-time job and sang professionally as much as I could. I met a musician named Chris while working on a friend's original music project. We fell in love and a year later we got married — something else I had chanted for — but that's a whole other experience.

He was so different from the men I had known in my life. We put together a band and began playing music on the weekends for private parties. We made good money but it was not enough to do things like buy a house. We got 40-hour-per-week jobs and commuted to work two hours every day, which was extremely difficult for us. We really wanted to be doing music for a living but both of our jobs paid well and included great benefits. We had no idea at the time, but we were establishing a founda-

tion for what was to follow.

My daily practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism has taught me to never give up on my dream and each day and every year to make a new determination. On New Year's Day in 1996, I determined to do only music and to make a very good living doing it. I wrote this down on a piece of paper and put it away. That year both Chris and I began feeling very restless and frustrated at our jobs. We had both done well, receiving promotions and pay raises — we had even bought a house two years earlier. But how could we possibly ever have this much financial security doing music?

Sometimes it felt as if we might never leave our jobs!

I remembered the determination I had made at the beginning of the year and redetermined in my chanting to accomplish my goal.

Shortly thereafter Chris' company was under new management and the situation became unbearable for him. He began submitting resumes to other companies and I kept chanting. One day I was having a casual conversation with a musician friend and I happened to mention that Chris was trying to make a change in jobs. To my surprise he was happy to hear it because he had been looking for someone to join him in his new



Jean Frye Sidwell in the studio recording her first CD 'Tenderly,' in 1997.



Jean with her husband, Chris.

business, which was producing, recording and selling his own original music! It turned out to be the perfect situation for us. With lots of hard work, by the end of 1996 we had both left our jobs and were gainfully employed in our own business doing only music! We were making three times the money and actually working less!

In 1997, I made another New Year's determination — to record my first CD! By July it was done and we were selling it through our company through our company. The response was so overwhelming that I recorded a second CD in 1998! It also has sold very well so far — 1998 was the most successful year either of us has ever had. We never would have imagined our dream could be fulfilled in the unique way that it has.

We receive emails and correspondence from around the world through our music. They tell us how much listening to our music has enhanced their daily lives. One woman shared that she and her husband purchased one of my CDs one day, took it home and played it all afternoon. That evening her husband passed away unexpectedly. She wanted me to know that our music had made the last day of his life so peaceful. This has proven to me something SGI President Ikeda has always said: that we are all here to fulfill our individual missions and it is up to us to fight to do so with our daily practice of this Buddhism — to live a life of true joy and to share

this with others.

Chris was so encouraged by all of this that he started to chant from time to time. Recently due to the reorganization of the membership, we have joined Canoga Park District. With the support of members in our new district, he is chanting every day now. And we have lots to chant about. Being in business for ourselves is great, but it is also an enormous challenge, not to mention the fact that we run the business together — we both have very strong opinions about how it should be done! That part is still a work in progress.

The past 16 years have been an incredibly difficult and rewarding journey. With the help of many counseling sessions, lots of chanting and encouragement and the right antidepressant medication, I am a different person than I was in 1990. Although I still struggle at times with depression, this has forced me to be more in tune with my life and to respect and take care of myself better. I tend to overextend myself, putting everyone and everything else first. I'm learning if I don't take care of myself, I can't give the best of myself to others.

I am so grateful for my friend Olivia, my husband and this wonderful SGI organization, and the amazing opportunity I've had to practice this Buddhism!

I know that without them I would not have the kind of life I'm living today.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

How Does Buddhism View Doubt?

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT SENIOR ADVISOR

Q From the faith perspective, how should we view doubt in our Buddhist practice?

A In Buddhism, doubt is defined as one of the five poisons of life (the other four are greed, anger, foolishness and arrogance).

It is well known that we strive to establish doubt-free faith in our Buddhist practice. But it's important to understand that in Buddhism, doubt-free faith does not mean blind, unquestioning faith.

Doubt-free faith is a life-condition in which we are totally secure and comfortable in our belief. It is not a static state, of course. Within our security, we continue to strive to deepen our understanding of Buddhism and strengthen our faith — our state of life.

Yet new doubts can always arise. But it's also possible that our enlightened nature can always win over new doubts to the point that our faith becomes absolute conviction in the Law, as exemplified, for instance, by Nichiren Daishonin.

When believers asked Nichiren Daishonin questions about various principles of Buddhism, the Daishonin would always first praise their seeking mind. He appreciated the opportunity each question afforded for him to clarify an essential aspect of his teaching. Without questions, there could be no answers.

That said, I want to share the three points that T'ien-t'ai cites in Chapter 6 of *Great Concentration*

self means you despise yourself, thinking you are unworthy and unable to carry out the Buddhist practice." Thus, he points out how self-doubt can prevent us from obtaining benefit and can even lead to us giving up on our Buddhist practice.

Sadly, we live in a very skeptical age, in which people easily doubt everything, including themselves. Many people have no confidence in politics, education,

more. One of the great goals of Buddhism is to wipe out this disbelief in oneself from the surface of the earth and help each individual establish true self-confidence.

President Ikeda once stated to the effect that "Because it's not easy to trust ourselves, we put trust in the Gohonzon, thereby making our faith in the Law the basis of our confidence in "our inherent Buddhahood — our-

it wonder about it or wishing for it." We often hear such statements at SGI-USA discussion meetings. Such words where altruistic self-identity or strong determination for the future is established are actual proof of the self-confidence gained through this practice.

The following are tips that can be gleaned from the principle of the nine consciousnesses for all of us to increase our self-confidence and develop a stronger Buddhist practice.

First, we should simply make the conscious effort to chant with a sense of trust in the Gohonzon. Then, we have to exert 100 percent effort in dealing with the challenges of our daily lives. This prayer-and-action combination will enable us to win over each small issue, day by day, and gain self-assurance.

Second, as we continue to make such conscious efforts, they will gradually become part of our make-up, meaning that we will start trusting ourselves subconsciously (seventh consciousness).

Third, as we further continue this process, to trust ourselves will become our tendency, which is called karma (eighth consciousness) in Buddhism.

Fourth, Buddhism teaches that, as we continue to practice Buddhism with such positive feelings in our hearts and thoughts in our minds, our joy and self-confidence will gush forth to the point where we can truly enjoy living, where we can experience the joy of the Law. This is the proof that we have strengthened or manifested our Buddhahood (ninth consciousness). In this life-condition, our self-confidence is unshakable. Doubt has become a stranger.

And here we see another vicious cycle that if we are the type of people who cannot trust ourselves, it follows that we cannot trust our mentor or the Law wholeheartedly. But this is the very reason why we are encouraged to practice and study Buddhism spontaneously for our own human revolution. Buddhist practice, together with good friends in Buddhist practice, is a great tool that helps us turn our lack of confidence into conviction. It is everybody's challenge to grow strong in faith using every possible means to do so. Buddhism guides us to deal with weakness in every aspect of our lives.

Buddhism teaches us that we can trust the beauty and potential of our lives. Nichiren Daishonin showed us how to penetrate our shallow selves and awaken to the greater self we each really are, the self that penetrates the deepest realm within us — our Buddhahood, the ninth consciousness.

"I used to always do my own thing. But now, I can pray for the happiness of others." Or "I have hope for the future." Or "I will do it instead of just worrying about,

Self-doubt adversely affects our ego and sense of self worth, which ultimately degrades society even more. One of the great goals of Buddhism is to wipe out this disbelief in oneself from the surface of the earth and help each individual establish true self-confidence.

and *Insight* as obstacles that hinder our Buddhist practice. They are: 1) doubting oneself, 2) doubting one's mentor and 3) doubting the Law.

Self-doubt is the worst kind of doubt. Regarding self-doubt, T'ien-t'ai states, "Doubting your-

self means you despise yourself, thinking you are unworthy and unable to carry out the Buddhist practice." Thus, he points out how self-doubt can prevent us from obtaining benefit and can even lead to us giving up on our Buddhist practice.

Sadly, we live in a very skeptical age, in which people easily doubt everything, including themselves. Many people have no confidence in politics, education,

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

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AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

Encounter With a Mentor

SGI President Ikeda shares UCLA professor Bernard Weiner's view that encountering a mentor leads people to self-motivation.

Recently Masao Yokota, president of the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, reported to me on his interview with Dr. Bernard Weiner, professor of psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Weiner is well known as one of the world's leading motivational psychologists.

What does Dr. Weiner identify as playing a very important role in motivating an individual and cultivating his or her spirit of initiative? The encounter with a mentor.

From that perspective, Dr. Weiner expresses a strong understanding of how SGI members deepen their faith and expand their movement for world peace based on the mentor-disciple bond. Dr. Weiner remarks: "President Ikeda always attributes everything to his mentor, Mr. Toda. He's always saying how much he learned from him: 'Everything I know is from Mr. Toda.' He believes in mentorship because he's so grateful for his own mentor. That's important. If you have a mentor, you realize how important it is to pass on. If you don't have a mentor, you may not understand the importance of that relationship."

•••••

When the founding president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, was imprisoned for his opposition to Japanese militarism during World War II, the attitude of his disciples — who until then had treated him with respect and regarded him as their mentor — changed abruptly. Suddenly, instead of "Makiguchi Sensei," they were saying "That idiot Makiguchi" or just calling him "Makiguchi," without even a "Mister." The fickleness of people's hearts is a frightening thing indeed.

My mentor, Josei Toda, would often relate the following to me: "After I became second president of the Soka Gakkai, there was an arrogant group of troublemakers in the organization who declared they weren't Toda's disciples but the disciples of President Makiguchi. I had never particularly asked them to be my disciples in the first place. So why were they suddenly proclaiming themselves to be Mr. Makiguchi's disciples? In short, because it suited their vanity. 'Mr. Makiguchi's disciples' had an im-



Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

pressive ring to it. But were they actually doing anything in their actions and behavior to show that they were Mr. Makiguchi's disciples? No. They were simply running away from reality and living in a dream world. In other words, they were using Mr. Makiguchi. They weren't really his disciples at all.

"Had they been true disciples of Mr. Makiguchi, they would have inherited his spirit and joined me, the person who was doing his utmost to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism. That was Mr. Makiguchi's profound guidance, after all.

"In Buddhism, mentor and disciple are one. Given this principle of the oneness of mentor and disciple, for Mr. Makiguchi's disciples to support and follow the second president who had inherited Mr. Makiguchi's spirit would have been a way of repaying the profound debt of gratitude they owed their departed mentor. I am not particularly referring to my case, but I believe that Buddhism must always be based on the mentor-disciple relationship as a core principle and as a formula for perpetuating the Mystic Law."

All those who called them-

selves Mr. Makiguchi's disciples and refused to follow Mr. Toda eventually abandoned their faith, betrayed the organization and drifted away from Buddhism. No matter what excuses they might have made to justify their behavior, their words were clearly nothing more than the false, empty arguments of shallow individuals ignorant of the true depth of the mentor-disciple relationship.

In 1950, a year before becoming the second president of the Soka Gakkai, Mr. Toda, whom we all respected as our mentor, suddenly resigned as general director, at that time the top position in the organization, and handed it over to another person. His resignation was prompted by his wish that the dire financial situation of his business might not cause any trouble for the Soka Gakkai.

But I simply couldn't conceive of the Soka Gakkai without Mr. Toda. I immediately went to see him and asked, "If you resign as general director, who will be my mentor?" Without hesitation, he replied, "Although I cause you nothing but hardship, I am, and always will be, your mentor." I wrote about this exchange in *The Human Revolution*. For me it was

an unforgettable scene in the drama of mentor and disciple.

•••••

It goes without saying that we regard Nichiren Daishonin as the original Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. Based on that foundation, the Daishonin's Buddhism teaches the importance of the mentor-disciple relationship.

The Daishonin's successor, Nikko Shonin, says: "The Daishonin teaches following the correct path of mentor and disciple to attain Buddhahood. If one makes even the slightest mistake in the way of mentor and disciple, then, even if one upholds the Lotus Sutra, one will fall into the hell of incessant suffering."

Consequently, not seeking out a mentor who practices the Law correctly, instead being intent only on getting others to obey and follow you in a relationship resembling that between a boss and his underlings, is not the correct path of Buddhism. This is because practitioners of the Mystic Law work together in the unity of "many in body and one in mind" (itai doshin). All are equal.

For this reason, Buddhism is a teaching of mentor and disciple,

expounding as it does the oneness of the Buddha (mentor) and living beings (disciples). The Lotus Sutra is a great path that provides the underpinnings for the solemn principle of mentor and disciple — a path that, when this principle is faithfully followed, leads to our eternal development as human beings.

Dr. Weiner's observation that the SGI owes its growth to the relationship of mentor and disciple is certainly incisive.

•••••

The Goshu repeatedly urges us to "part with bad friends and seek out good ones" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213). We must steer away from bad friends. We mustn't associate closely with people or leaders who pretend to have faith but are actually driven by personal ambition, self-interest and arbitrary views.

The Daishonin warns: "Bad friends use honeyed words to deceive and flatter. They are so skilled in the use of words as to know instinctively how to pander to the ignorance in people's hearts and destroy their goodness and integrity" (*Goshu Zenshu*, p. 7).

We must have the wisdom and discernment to see through the deceptions of such individuals.

•••••

In "The Opening of the Eyes," the Daishonin writes, "To call a person a good friend means that he is neither one's teacher nor one's disciple" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 113). The Daishonin is teaching us that, as comrades, we must be good friends to one another, encouraging one another and learning from one another.

Soka Gakkai leaders are nothing but good friends. In a sense, the future presidents of the Gakkai may be regarded as standing at the forefront of these good friends.

Moreover, it is essential that the presidents of our organization strive to be people who can be esteemed as mentors with respect to the depth of their faith and their sense of mission in thoroughly devoting themselves to kosen-rufu.

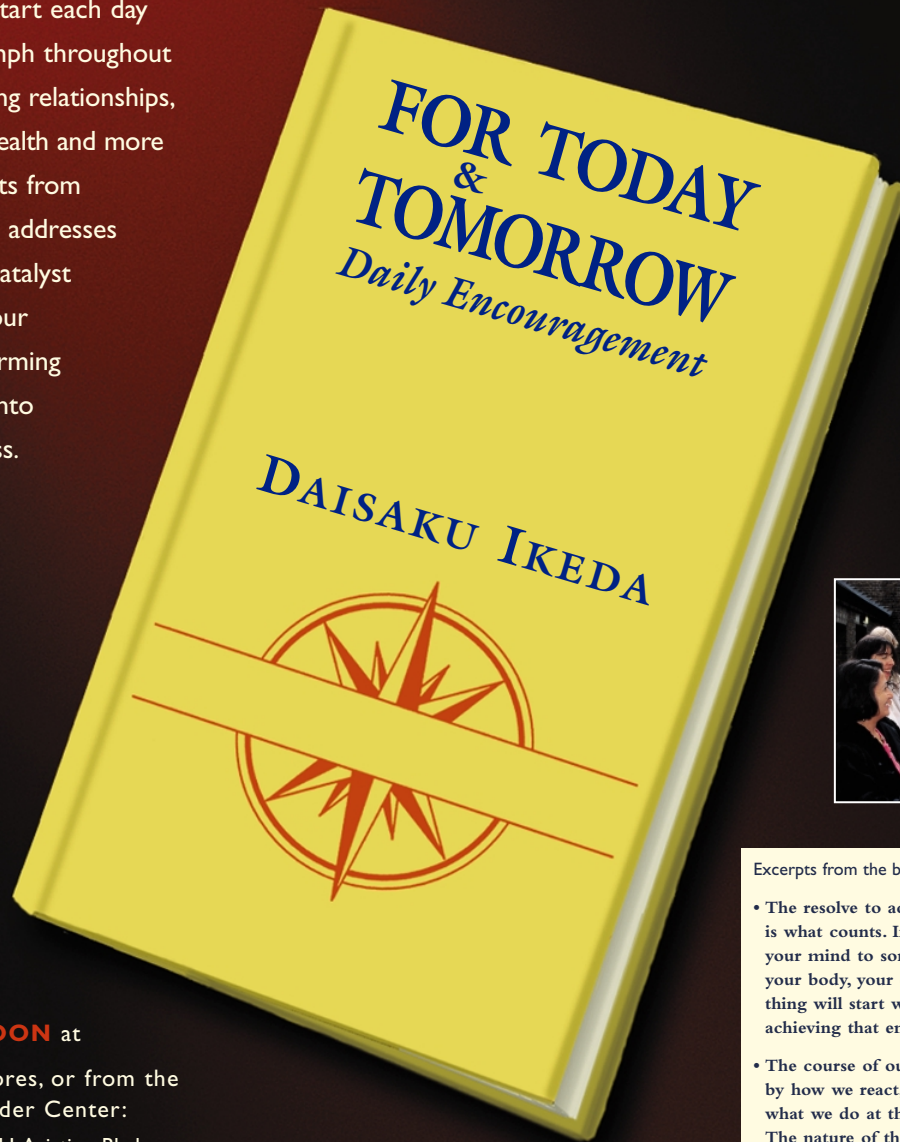
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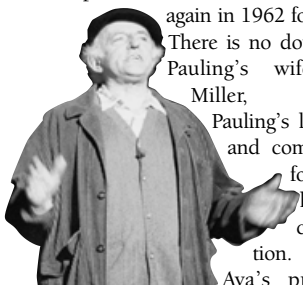
Excerpts from the book:

- The resolve to accomplish your goals is what counts. If you earnestly put your mind to something, your brain, your body, your environment, everything will start working toward achieving that end.
- The course of our lives is determined by how we react, what we decide and what we do at the darkest of times. The nature of that response determines a person's true worth and greatness.
- Those who say, "I'll do it," who are willing to take on a challenge even if they are alone, are true winners. The determination, the commitment to take action yourself, is the force that leads to victory.

“Play pays homage to a great love”

In addition to supporting the “Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century” exhibition, the Los Angeles youth created and produced a play about the life of Linus Pauling. The following article provides background on the play as well as some actors’ impressions.

The *Essential Bond* endeavors to unite the life and work of Linus Pauling with the remarkable love story between Pauling and his wife, Ava Miller. Dr. Linus Pauling undoubtedly defines a scientific era; he holds the distinction of being the only individual in history to receive two unshared Nobel prizes, in 1954 for chemistry and again in 1962 for peace.



John Astin as Linus Pauling.

There is no doubt that Pauling’s wife, Ava Miller, defined Pauling’s life, love and compassion for the human condition.

Ava’s profound conviction in humanity’s value creating potential infused her husband’s otherwise wholly scientific passions into a concerted effort to better the lot of humanity. *The Essential Bond* spans the history of the Pauling’s relationship in a blend of precisely constructed multi-media vignettes to maximum effect. Performed by an accomplished ensemble of young actors, and written and directed by Shan Serafin and produced by Cory Taylor, the play spans Pauling’s more than forty-year career. It begins with his meeting the intelligent and vivacious Ava Miller as a young professor and deftly covering all the major milestones in the Pauling’s life. The play’s strength lies in its ability to remain faithful to the spirit of the Pauling’s relationship. Showing that a great relationship has the foundation of trust, mutual respect and perseverance at its core.

The actors, who have been immersed in the biographical details of this unique partnership, shared some

of their impressions and experiences of working on the production.

Q: How has participation in this play changed your views on the meaning of world peace?

Matthew N. Ashford (who plays Dr. Linus Pauling)

Matt: My looking into Linus Pauling’s life for this role has given me a new respect for the peace movement.

I realize that it’s something I had virtually taken for granted because from the time I was born it was already in place...in the midst of perfectly horrible things there were people willing to stand up and take decisive action.

I realize that my efforts on a daily basis will make a difference. Justice takes place on many different levels. For instance in a friendship—sometimes it’s not easy to stand up but there’s the potential to deepen the relationship.

It’s important to look for good examples around us to help us do that.

Q: What is the biggest lesson you’ve learned from the story of Ava and Linus?

Julie Ann Taylor (as Ava Pauling)

Julie: Playing a great woman, and trying to make it a personal challenge to embody her characteristics in my own daily life...but also trying to become this kind of woman in my own life—expanding my own life to care like Ava—that’s what [SGI President Ikeda] is talking about.

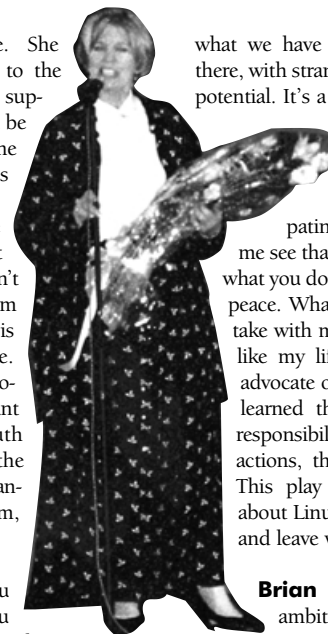
Ava Pauling was never elitist, never hung up on formality. I heard a wonderful story about the Paulings. They had planned a dinner party with some very important guests; Ava memorized the names of 100 dinner guests rather than make distinctions with seating arrangement cards....

Q: What has been the most enjoyable aspect of working on the play?

Julie: Meeting new people. The creative process. Finding everything there is to discover with these characters together [with the cast].

Ava’s views in terms of justice and upholding the values of world peace are

very inspiring to me. She has said something to the effect that those who support injustice cannot be trusted to make the right decision. That’s harder to perceive, like in terms of the priesthood issue, but it means that if I don’t do anything, then I’m like someone who is supporting injustice. Ava believed that “people are more important than scientific truth alone.” From the standpoint of humanism and Buddhism, this is really true.



Linda Pauling-Kamb, Linus Pauling’s daughter.

Q: How do you plan to take what you have learned into the world when the play is over?

The ensemble members of the cast:

Sherry Finsand: To be even more flexible than I have been up until this point. To be a better listener. In everything that I’ve experienced with the other actors, I see what each person’s special attribute is—and you get reminded that you’re not just in a room with actors but other Buddhists.

When I go back into the dog-eat-dog world, I just hope that I can take what I’ve learned from each person even if it’s only a little, only one small thing, that I can use to be a broader human being....

I realize that it’s possible to create

what we have here [in rehearsals] out there, with strangers. They have the same potential. It’s a reminder of how great it can be all the time.

Jessica Ann Bogart:

Participating in this play has made me see that being present and doing what you do every day is part of world peace. What I’m learning here I will take with me into other activities — like my life. For one, I’m a huge advocate of vitamin C [laughs]. I’ve learned the importance of taking responsibility for yourself, for your actions, the way the Paulings did. This play allows people to learn about Linus and Ava Pauling’s work and leave with some insight.

Brian McKenzie: Put more ambition into what I do — everything that I do. It makes you really look at people. I want to be sure that my efforts are toward that goal....

Julie Arden (the youngest member of the ensemble, age 14): I enjoyed meeting everyone and seeing so many points of view. I think I understand more about peace — that it is something that we have to fight for. That people had to fight for that they believed and that we’ve come a long way. I learned that a relationship can mean more than just love, it can be more like friendship, having a companion who supports who you truly are — that’s a lot more than what

(“*Essential Bond*” continued on page B)



Linus Pauling dancing with Ava Helen Pauling at the White House, from “*The Essential Bond*” play.

Audrey's EXPERIENCE



Audrey Yiadom, Washington, D.C.

My name is Audrey Yiadom. I am 15 years old and was born into the practice of Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism. I have been practicing this Buddhism on my own consistently since 1994. At the beginning of eighth grade, I started thinking about what high school I wanted to attend. My goals were to attend a high school that

would prepare me for college, be academically challenging and be the safest and happiest place for my life. My neighborhood high school where I was assigned did not offer any of the things I desired.

So, in January 1997, I took the admissions test to enter the Science and Technology program at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, one of the best schools in Prince George's County (Maryland) and located just 10 minutes from my house. I was sure I would pass the test because I had very good grades and performed well on other standardized tests. I did not worry about the test at all and was very confident until the day of the exam. When I was taking the test, I became so nervous that I skipped a number, and messed up my whole answer sheet.

By the time I realized my mistake, it was too late to correct it. After the test was over, my intuition told me I had failed. I tried to be positive, but it didn't help. About two months later, I learned that my prediction was right — I had failed the test. I wasn't sure what to do, but I was still determined not to attend my neighborhood high school. The only

thing I knew to do was to continue chanting and doing gongyo.

The next morning I went to my principal to talk to him about the situation. He said there was nothing he could do. I went home discouraged and chanted for about an hour. I prayed that even though I had failed the test, people would still realize that I belonged in the program. I went to school the next day feeling confident. My prayers had been answered. My principal had a change of heart and was eager to help me get into the school. It was as if he had a split personality!

I continued chanting to get into Roosevelt. My school administrator really helped me, and assured me that I should be able to take the test over because I had skipped a number. He told me I should write a letter explaining my circumstances. The testing board agreed to let me take the test over again in July 1997.

The first time I took the test, I did gongyo and chanted, but my attitude was different. I didn't take the time to prepare for the exam. I didn't study and the night before the exam, I didn't get enough sleep. This time I was determined that I would pass the test because I was not going to any school other than Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

I was happy but scared because I knew I would have to do a lot of studying and chanting. And that is exactly what I did. I bought a practice book of the SSAT, a standardized high school admissions test, to study. Both my algebra and English teachers helped me to study for the math and verbal sections. The school year ended with me feeling confident that I would be going to Roosevelt.

Over the summer, I chanted and studied whenever I would worry or get nervous about taking the test. The day of the test I was well prepared. My chanting and studying helped me to maintain my confidence. I was very happy and energetic while taking the test. Afterwards, I was sure I passed. And still, I continued chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

You can imagine how devastated I was when I found out that I did not pass the test again. This time

I thought there was a conspiracy against me! However, I still did not give up, and even though I was mad and disappointed, I continued to chant.

My friend who is an SGI member helped me to maintain my confidence and kept encouraging me to keep trying. I wrote another letter and even met with the testing board in person. But I was still denied due to lack of space. I found out that 2,000 students applied to take the Science and Technology admission test, but there were only 200 spots available. I had no other alternative but to continue chanting.

Around that time, my best friend's parents also encouraged me to attend Roosevelt, and that's what I actually did for my freshman year. My prayers were to go to Roosevelt, and I did. I didn't attend the Science and Technology program, which is why I was taking the test. Regardless, I was at Roosevelt and I was happy, but I felt the whole experience left me asking myself whether or not Roosevelt was really the best place for my life and was I happiest there.

Even though the high school I was attending was the best school in my county, I started to look for the best schools in the area. My older sister, Cheryl, agreed with me, and started calling private schools for information. I had previously tried to apply to private schools before, but never finished the applications. I guess it was not the right time. I began to apply to private schools and discovered I had to take the SSAT, which I had been studying for all along.

I became concerned because I discovered that the private schools had many advantages as well as disadvantages. For example, they were not as diverse; I would be leaving my friends; and the schools were far from home.

I started visiting many schools that were in great learning environments, including Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C. I had a lot of fun, and by the time my visit was over I had already made some new friends. The school offered me the type of education I wanted, but what made it even more appealing were the class sizes. There were only 15

(“Audrey's Experience” Continued on page D)



Linus Pauling with students from “The Essential Bond” play.

(“The Essential Bond” Continued from page A)

romance might appear to be on the outside. I'm almost 15 and a relationship like the Paulings had is inspiring to me.

President Ikeda, in speaking about relationships, makes the following comments:

“A healthy relationship is one in which two people encourage each other to reach their respective goals while sharing each other's hopes and dreams. A relationship should be a source of inspiration, invigoration and hope” (*Discussions on Youth*, vol. 1, p. 116).

The Essential Bond manages to capture the heart of this truth. It shows us how a great love between two people can have a broad, far-reaching effect, creating value for many. ♪

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"GENERAL STONE TIGER"

The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 226

HOW DO WE CHANGE POISON INTO MEDICINE?

Ken Saragosa, Philadelphia

In the eighth volume of the *Maka Shikan* and in the eighth volume of Miao-lo's *Guketsu* it is said, "The stronger one's faith, the greater the god's protection." This means that the protection of the gods depends on the strength of one's faith. The Lotus Sutra is a keen sword, but its might depends upon the one who wields it. (MW-1, p. 226)

In this letter, Nichiren Daishonin is writing to thank Shijo Kingo for tending to him while he was ill. As a samurai, Kingo had to work for Lord Ema, and this lord had almost complete power over Kingo's fate. Though he was once in Lord Ema's favor, when this letter was written, Kingo was in constant danger. His lord reduced his wealth and property, the other samurai used his faith in the Daishonin as a way to criticize him, and they made no secret of their desire to kill him. Kingo was, by nature, a very hot-tempered and impulsive man, so the Daishonin used every opportunity to encourage Kingo to deal with this situation through faith.

Since Kingo was the object of so much envy, traveling gave his enemies an opportunity to ambush him. Since he was both hot-headed and extremely talented, he was likely to take risks, believing himself to be better than his opponents. Also, perhaps because he was such a devout follower of the Daishonin, he expected that his faith would protect him from any harm.

Sensing this, Nichiren Daishonin used this simple thank-you note as an opportunity to teach Kingo a lesson about faith, a lesson about changing poison into medicine.

In this letter, the Daishonin writes: "...if one's illness is caused by immutable karma, even the most excellent medicine will turn to poison, but if he believes in the Lotus Sutra, poison will change into medicine" (MW-1, p. 226).

Here, though the Daishonin is using this example from Buddhist scriptures as a way of thanking Kingo, more importantly, he is explaining a profound concept: If someone has accumulated enough negative karma, even their best efforts will not bear fruit. Try as they might, no amount of strategizing or action will help. In fact, "even the most excellent medicine will turn to poison." We've probably all experienced or seen situations like this. Situations where, when confronted with a certain difficulty, not only did our best efforts fail, they in fact made things worse.

But the Daishonin also says that "if he believes in the Lotus Sutra, poison will change into medicine." This doesn't simply mean that we can overcome our problems. It means that by overcoming them, we will actually be better off than we were before, that going through those difficulties actually helped us.

We have heard this phrase many times. Whenever we encounter difficulty, our seniors in faith will encourage us to "change poison into medicine." This is a very nice-sounding idea, but really, what does that mean? *How* do we change poison into medicine?

This particular letter spells out quite a clear lesson for Shijo Kingo, but this is certainly applicable to us today.

First, the Daishonin outlines very detailed advice, telling Kingo not to risk long journeys, even to visit Nichiren Daishonin himself. He also tells Kingo that if he does come, he should spare no expense in making sure he is well equipped and has trustworthy companions on his journey.

This seems like very sound advice, but it also seems to correspond to "strategies"

that one might take to solve problems, and doesn't seem to have much to do with faith. But then, immediately after giving Kingo such detailed advice, the Daishonin wrote the passage above. Because of our strong faith and practice, we *can* count on the protection of the Buddhist gods, but the strength of that protection is in exact proportion to the strength of our faith. A serious attitude in faith is expressed in how seriously you make efforts to deal with the problems in your life. Conversely, a carefree attitude about your problems — "Oh, it'll work out. I'll just chant." — expresses a carefree attitude in faith. Therefore the Daishonin cautioned Kingo: Only by taking every possible precaution could one count on the protection of the Buddhist gods. "This means that the protection of the gods depends on the strength of one's faith. The Lotus Sutra is a keen sword, but its might depends upon the one who wields it."

But let's be clear. Actions alone, strategies alone, *may* work. But as this letter says, if the problem stems from deep-rooted karma, your best efforts won't be enough. If we have firm faith in the Daishonin's teaching, then our best efforts will have their best effects. So *here* is the practical formula for changing poison into medicine that the Daishonin gives us: Faith + Best Effort = Victory. When confronted with difficulties, if we exert ourselves in our practice, every bad situation will ultimately become a benefit, and poison will change into medicine.

WHO IS SHIJO KINGO?

This is summarized from the book, *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*.

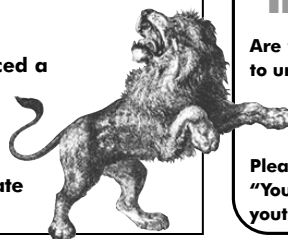
Shijo Kingo was one of the most devout followers of Nichiren Daishonin. He was a samurai warrior and a trained physician. He was also a lay believer — that is, someone who practiced Buddhism within society, as opposed to a priest who renounces society to practice Buddhism. He is well known because he stood by Nichiren Daishonin through some of his most difficult circumstances. Because of Kingo's firm faith, he was entrusted with many of the most profound and important of the Daishonin's writings. (The Daishonin evaluated people according to their strength of faith, not according to their position in society. Therefore, many of his most profound teachings were given to lay believers.)

In 1274, Kingo tried to convert his lord — the person he worked for — to the Daishonin's Buddhism. However, many other samurai who worked for Lord Ema and were jealous of Kingo's position used this as an opportunity to criticize Kingo to the lord, hoping to undermine him. Lord Ema, in fact, did reduce Kingo's wealth and position. Though he was a very hot-tempered person and inclined to lash out in anger at the unjust treatment he received, he was encouraged by the Daishonin to regard his service to his lord as a key part of his practice of Buddhism. He was encouraged to change poison into medicine. Kingo's struggle lasted many years. Ultimately, however, Kingo's dedication paid off. Lord Ema became quite ill, and Shijo Kingo used his medical skills to cure him. It was fortunate for Kingo that he had done nothing rash to further alienate his lord, so that at this time of crisis, Lord Ema naturally turned to Kingo. Kingo's willingness and ability to help proved to Ema that Kingo was a sincere and faithful man, and not only did he restore Kingo's wealth, Ema actually increased it beyond what Kingo possessed earlier.

Finally, as we can see from this particular letter, Kingo constantly exerted himself to protect Nichiren Daishonin, by seeking out his guidance; making offerings of food, clothing or money; and even tending to the Daishonin when he became ill. He is a model of faith, a model of practicing and protecting Buddhism in the midst of hardship, and a model of showing proof of victory in our lives. ♪

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Can you think of examples of "poison" in your life? Have you ever experienced a situation in which "poison" changed into "medicine"?
2. Share an experience about overcoming a difficulty based on faith. What lessons about taking action based on faith in the Gohonzon can you share?
3. Has the fact that you practice Buddhism ever caused a problem for you — with friends, family, or in some part of your life? How did you handle it? Can you relate to or learn anything from the example of Shijo Kingo?



HOW DO YOU LIKE the Youth Study Page?

Are there any Buddhist concepts you'd like to understand better? Any topics you'd like to see addressed? How can we make the study page more useful to deepen your understanding of Buddhism? Please give us your feedback! Look for the "Youth Study Reader Survey" at your next youth study meeting.



by Bobbie Stemple,
SGI-USA Jr. High School Division Leader

I recently attended the Makiguchi Lecture at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. I was shocked and appalled after watching "Unit 731: Nightmare in Manchuria," a film on the barbaric practices that took place during World War II in Manchuria by the Japanese military. I knew about the horrible activities of the Nazi military during World War II, but I never knew about the atrocities committed by the Japanese military. This particular unit conducted similar experiments on prisoners of war that were horrific.

As I was sitting there, I thought of all the terrible things that occur in the name of war. Why is it when people are at war they don't see humans as humans? Unit 731 called all of the people who came to the site "logs." The most terrible thing was that after the war, the American government made a deal with the general, Shiro Ishii, who had created this camp, to grant amnesty to him and all the medical researchers who had committed these acts if they turned over all the data from the human experiments. At that time the United States was developing biological weapons to use against the USSR during the Cold War. So today these people are considered war heroes by the Japanese government, and our government still won't disclose information regarding the transaction.

Afterward I had a discussion with one of the Soka University students about what we can do as common people regarding something that took place more than 50 years ago. We can't change the past, but each of us can do something to prevent this from ever happening again. I believe that each of us must become examples, people of outstanding character who stand up against injustice and work toward developing trust and peace between people. President Ikeda states in *Discussions on Youth*:

Most people have a spark of warmth or human kindness in their hearts. I don't think anyone is born completely coldhearted. But if, as time passes, people bury their warmth deep in their hearts for fear of being hurt, they will become cold and hard. Similarly, those who are self-centered and think everyone is against them gird themselves with the armor of authority, fame, status, callousness or conceit. Such behavior is devoid of humanity; a sign of Animality. (vol. 1, pp. 217-18)

We may wonder what we can do as just one person, but all great people in history were individuals as well. I think of Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. or Rosa Parks. They took action on their own and inspired millions in the process. ♪

APT TO BE APART FROM ART

SOME OF US DON'T LIKE TO READ

by Shan Serafin, editor-in-chief

Some of us don't like to read. We shy away from textbooks, Buddhist books, newspapers — any kind of printed matter, from VCR instructions all the way up to that chief culprit of anxiety, the school-assigned novel. Written words can be daunting. I remember my own grade school days. When assigned a novel to read, I'd wait until the eve of a test before opening the book for the first time and wonder, "Is there a video for this?" Of course, there was no video and fatefully I ended up not reading the book. I spent my time researching the back cover and memorizing the index. My exam score reflected such effort.

So here's a question: Outside of class curriculum reading, why read at all?

Many would answer that reading literary works is a very accessible means to experiencing culture. But, then we ask why experience culture? To answer that let's refer to President Ikeda's remark that "The power of culture may be hard to detect at times, but it is a fundamental force since it transforms the human heart."

President Ikeda acknowl-

edges that many of us have difficulty enjoying art. This is a plight common to young people worldwide — the difficulty of settling in, let's say, to read a good book. President Ikeda advises that "to begin by simply enjoying art is most important."

So where do we begin?

If we're going to start anywhere, we might as well start with the best (the consensus best). With books, someone once defined "classics" as works that everybody likes but nobody reads. Funny enough, but sadly true, many folks take for granted what a classic work of art is. A classic has survived the test of time and scrutiny. As Chinese painter Chang Shuhong states, "True works of art never lose their power to move us, even after thousands of years." A classic touches our humanity and does so in a well-executed style. By studying, reading and, most importantly, enjoying the classics, we hone our mental keenness and develop our own unique taste, our aesthetic, as some say. The task then is to discern what works are good.

President Ikeda says: "Probably the best way [to nurture our ability to recognize great art] is to see and hear as many of the generally agreed-upon masterpieces of world art as you can, which will cultivate and refine your sensibilities. You will naturally learn to distinguish good from bad."

For those needing a friendly starting block, we offer a list of great authors that President Ikeda

has at one time or another cited in his lectures and discussions. Our list is not comprehensive, nor is it truly representative. It's merely included here for suggestion — a guide to sampling the generally accepted authors of "great works." Maybe this will help make for an enjoyable summer.



A sampling of great authors cited by President Ikeda:

- Alcott, Louisa May
- Borges, Jorge Luis
- Cain, Hall
- Cousins, Norman
- Dante, Alighieri
- Dickens, Charles
- Dostoyevski, Fyodor
- Goethe, Wolfgang von
- Hugo, Victor
- Lu Xun
- Mandela, Nelson
- Narayan, R.K.
- Neruda, Pablo
- Pauling, Linus
- Sand, Georges
- Shakespeare, William
- Thoreau, Henry David
- Tagore, Rabindranath
- Tolstoy, Leo
- Toynbee, Arnold
- Twain, Mark
- Whitman, Walt
- Zola, Emile

All quotations from President Ikeda are taken from *Discussions on Youth*.

(Audrey's Experience" continued from page B)

students in each class. I was so happy there and felt very safe and comfortable, I knew this was the place for me!

I chanted for two things: to be able to have the money to go there and to be accepted. My main concern was finances. My family did not have the money to afford this private school. Last year when I came back from activities commemorating March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, I learned that I had been accepted to Georgetown Day School. They had granted me 95 percent of

the \$17,000 tuition, leaving me a small portion of \$800 to pay!

I am very happy that I got a chance to attend Roosevelt for my freshman year. I had some great experiences, and made many lifelong friends. Trying to get into the right school helped me deepen my faith and see how I can have anything I want for my life. My determination was to go to a better school, but I ended up being able to go to a place that I never expected.

I am now in my second

semester of my sophomore year at Georgetown Day School and I strongly believe that, academically, this has been the best decision for my life. The teachers and students at my new school are very helpful and I am learning many things.

My life continues to grow. My school is far from home and my classmates come from very different economic and social backgrounds than myself. Yet, I really want to not only do my best in school, but also make many good friends. ♪

이케다 SGI회장 방한(訪韓)

池田大作 創價大 창립사 답사

池田(이케다) SGI회장의 한국 방문은 올해로 세번째. 90년 9월 21일 문화 대은의 나라에 보답하는 <서양회화명품전>을 개최하기 위해 첫 방한한 이후, 지난해 5월 경희대 '명예철학박사' 학위 수여식과 KSGI 본부 첫 방문의 역사가 있다. 지난해 5월 18일 SGI 한국 불교회 본부를 첫 방문한 자리에서 池田 SGI회장은 한국의 빛의 승리를 축하했으며, 한없는 자애와 기대를 보였다. 또한 수필 『신인간혁명』 중 <한국의 봄>을 집필했고, 올해 5. 3을 기념해 SGI한국 불교회에 보내준 장편시 「사계의 선을 민중의 찬가」등 기회가 있을 때마다 계속 한국의 빛에게 희망과 용기의 메시지를 보내오고 있다. 어느덧 본부 방문으로부터 1년. SGI회장은 영광의 5월을 맞이해 '동양의 하와이'로 불리는 '삼려의 섬' 제주도를 방문한 것이다. 마치 사계직결의 신심으로 좋은 시민 좋은 사회인으로 사회에 공헌하고 창가우호의 연대를 넓혀 온 한국 회원들의 묵묵한 기원과 행동에 보답이라도 하듯. 16일 낮 12시 50분에 제주공항에 도착한 SGI회장은 제주공항 귀빈실에서 조문부 제주대 총장 일행의 따뜻한 환영을 받았으며 환담했다. 17일 오후 2시 제주대로부터 외국인으로서는 첫 '명예문학박사 학위'를 수여받았고, 저녁에는 조총장이 주최한 KAL호텔의 만찬회에 참석. 이 자리에서 제주대는 이케다 회장의 부인 이케다 가네코 여사의 헌신적인 내조의 공적을 기려 최고 영예상을 수상했다. 이케다 회장은 18일, 신라호텔에서 담례연을 열고 19일에는 SGI한국 불교회 대표와 제 2차 한국문화 친선교류단 멤버들과 기념촬영을 끝으로 3박 4일간의 한국방문을 마무리했다. 불법 르네상스의 21세기를 선구에서 열어나가고 있는 SGI한국 불교회가 2년 연속 스승의 방한을 이뤄낸 황금의 역사를 바탕으로 무한한 영광의 발전이 있기를 기대해 본다.

진심으로 존경하는 조문부 총장님 그리고 송대진 대학원장님을 비롯한 제주대학의 여러 선생님들, 그리고 일부러 이렇게 참석해 주신 경희대학교의 조영식 학원장님과 충청대학의 정종택 학장님을 비롯한 내빈 여러분. 21세기를 향해 '뉴 르네상스'의 옥일로 빛나는 귀 제주대학으로부터 지금 최고로 영예로운 '명예문학박사 학위'를 수여받았습니다. 저는 말로 다할 수 없는 감사와 막중한 책임감으로 삼가 받았습시다. 저는 제주도의 바다와 같이 관대하신 여러분의 진심과 우정에 감사여 마침내 꿈이 이루어져 '형인 귀 제주대학교'를 예방할 수 있었습시다. 유원한 한라산으로 둘러싸인 이 얼마나 훌륭한 교육의 이상향입니까. '연산홍'이라 불리는 철쭉꽃들도 실로 아름답습시다. 또 귀교의 정문으로 이어지는 신록의 빛나무 가로수는 너무도 아름다웠습시다. 일본 벚꽃의 뿌리는 제주에 있다고 합니다. 그만큼 제주도의 일본의 교류는 풍부하고도 깊습시다. 귀국으로부터 받은 문화의 대은혜를 일일이 들 수 없을 정도입니다. 생각하면 에도시대의 일본이 무단주의에서 문치주의로 전환해 가는 계기에도 귀국의 지성인의 가르침이 있었습시다. 즉 저 무도하기 짝이 없는 '임진왜란'(도요토미 히데요시의 침략)으로 포로가 된 귀국의 대학자 강항과 대화를 통해 일본의

학자는 평화질서의 사상에 깊이 눈을 뒀던 것입니다. 그것이 당시의 막부를 감화시키고 또 귀국의 문화통신사를 초창하는 것으로도 연결되어 시대의 조류를 크게 바꾸어 갔던 것입니다. 그러나 근대 일본의 만행은 그러한 의도 인연도 짓밟고 귀국의 사람들을 철저히 괴롭혔습시다. 그뿐만 아니라 제주도의 사람들을 강제 노동으로 내몰아 이 '삼려삼보의 섬'을 오키나와와 똑같이 일본의 방패로서 모의했던 것입니다. 일본은 귀국과 우정을 맺고 귀국을 존경하고 귀국의 마음을 배워 간다면 평화와 번영의 방향으로 나아갈 수 있습니다. 그러나 귀국에 대해 오만해져 은혜를 모른다면 일본은 반드시 쇠퇴하고 멸망합니다. 이것이 만대에 걸쳐 생명에 새겨야 하는 역사관이며 또 인간의 길입니다. 그렇기 때문에 저희들은 일본도 물러서지 않고 '인간주의의 철학'과 '생명존엄의 가치관'을 청년의 혼으로 키우고 있습니다. 그리고 양국의 젊은 세대에게 흔들리지 않는 이해와 신뢰의 길을 열어가기 위해 성실한 왕래를 진지하게 거듭하고 있습니다. 지난해 12월, 여러분의 후의에 힘입어 귀 제주대학에서 '창가예술전'을 성대하게 개최할 수 있었습시다. 김대중 대통령각하께서 역사적인 일본 방문에서 제창해 주신

한일간의 민간차원에서 새로운 문화교류의 개막을 성대하게 장식할 수 있었던 것입니다. 또 올해 8월에는 저희 창가대학의 학생이 귀 제주대학에서 한국어 연수를 받게 될 예정으로 있습니다. 더욱이 제주대의 '섬문화 연구소'와 창대의 '비교문화 연구소'의 학술교류도 금후 크게 기대되고 있는 바입니다. 또한 감사하게도 제주도 출신으로 일본에서 활약하고 계시는 저의 많은 훌륭한 우인과 지인들도 양 대학의 우호를 진심으로 기뻐하며 따뜻하게 지켜보아 주시고 있습니다. 오늘은 영광스럽게도 오사카 본부의 흥단장님을 비롯하여 민단의 선생님들이 참석해 주시고 있어 감사하기 이룰데 없습시다. '창가교육'의 창시자이며 일본의 국가주의와 싸우다 옥사한 마키구치 쓰네타부로 초대장은 독창적인 지리학자로서 '섬'에 커다란 초점을 맞추고 있었습시다. 온갖 어려움을 타고 넘은 섬이 얼마나 눈부신 발전을 이룩해 가는가. 그리고 대양을 향해 '열린 마음'을 가진 섬의 사람들이 세계로 얼마나 새로운 문명의 빛을 발휘해 가는가. 그 무한한 가능성을 마키구치 회장은 역설해 하지 않았던 것입니다. 제주도는 금세기 역사의 시련을 엄연하게 끝까지 인내해 오셨습시다. 다가오는 신세기는 이 동양의 보배의 섬이 어느 지역보다도 '희망'과 '행복'과 '영광'으로 빛을 발해가는 세기입니다. 제주도는 앞으로 많은 사람들이 더욱더 동경하는 낙원으로 아름다운 자연경관에 혜택을 받고 있습니다. 또한 귀국과 중국과 일본을 연결하

는 동북아시아의 요충에 위치하고 있습니다. 그 천혜를 지키고 살리면서 조총장님의 걸출한 리더십 아래 '21세기의 평화의 대거점'을 구축해 오신 위대한 추진력야말로 귀 제주대학입니다. 오늘부터 저도 그 명예로운 일원이 될 수 있었습시다. 따라서 격조 높은 교가에 있듯이 '진리의 탐구자'로서 '문명의 선구자'로서 나아가 '역사의 건설자' 그리고 '민중의 지휘자'로서 저도 지성을 다하여 행동하고 공헌해 갈 것을 여기서 약속드리고자 합니다. 인간교육은 '생명'이라는 무상의 보배를 자타 공히 한없이 가치창조해 가는 '최고의 예술'이며 '영원한 성업'입니다. 저는 귀 제주대학을 비롯하여 귀국의 선생님들과 함께 더 한층 힘을 합하여 '인간과 인간의 연대의 시'를 그리고 '민중과 민중의 결합의 드라마'를 더욱더 창조하며 후세에 남겨질 것을 염원해 마지 않습시다. 끝으로 이렇게도 존귀한 마음이 빛나는 식전을 준비해 주시고, 또 다방한 가운데 참석해 주시고 축복해 주신 여러분들에게 저는 최고로 경례를 올리면서 깊은 감사를 드리는 바입니다. 참석해 주신 모든 선생님들이 더 한층 건승하실 것을 기원해 드리면서 경애하는 귀 제주대학의 젊의 영지의 인재국이 신세기의 무대에서 당당하게 대활약해 가시는 훌륭한 모습을 가슴속으로 그리면서 저의 답사로 대신하고자 합니다. 감사합니다. (한국어로)

도키전답서

- 5, 6월 어서강의 -

석존은 나그네였다. 한평생을 항상 움직이는 사람이었다. "그곳에 사람이 있으므로 나는 간다" - 석존은 지평선 끝을 바라보며 자신을 채찍질하며 걸었다. 석존은 틀림없이 인간을 대단히 좋아했음에 틀림없다. 석존은 각지를 걸어나면서 마음껏 새로운 벗과 만나고 옛 친구의 새로운 모습을 발견하였을 것입니다. 모든 표면적인 차이를 초월하여 오직 상대방의 선의를 끌어내어 자신의 선의와 결합시킨다. 그것을 무상의 기쁨으로 한다. 그런 인간왕자의 마음이었다. 불전에는 이런 에피소드가 있다. 모두로부터 외면당하여 홀로 고통을 받던 병자가 있었다. 그러나 석존은 외면하지 않았다. 석존은 더러운 남자의 몸을 어루만지고 부축해서 집밖으로 데리고 나가 몸을 깨끗히 씻게 해주었다. 그리고 잠자리의 이불까지도 갈아줬다. 주위의 사람들은 의문을 갖게 된다. 부처가 왜 그렇게까지 하는가? 석존은 사람들에게 말한다. "부처에게 봉사하려면 병자를 간호하라"라고. 이것은 불전에 실해진 유명한 설화이다. 병에는 몸의 병도 있고 마음의 병도 있다. 그 병을 고치기 위해서라면 무엇이든 한다. 인간속으로 뛰어드는 이외에 불도는 없다는 것을 석존은 가르치고 싶었던 것이다. 또 부처가 인간을 사랑하는 사람으로 많은 사람들이 그 모습에 이끌려 모여왔던 것이다. 당연히 부처의 주위는 언제나 활기가 넘쳤다. 니치렌 대성인도 그랬다. 대성인의 앞에서는 무슨 말이든 할 수 있는 분위기였음에 틀림없다. 엄격한 스승이었지만 동시에 무엇이든 잘 이해해주고 계신다는 절대적인 안심감이 있었다는 것을 각종 편지에서 엿볼 수 있다. 나이든 어른도 대성인 앞에서는 순진했을 것이다. 뜻하지 않게 본연의 자기 얼굴이 나타났을 것이다. 도키조년도 그런 문화의 한 사람이었다. 도키조닌에게 보내신 편지에서 그는 어머니에 대한 효성이 지극했던 것을

알 수 있다. 그러한 마음을 대성인은 소중히 하시고 있다. 그가 최고의 효도를 할 수 있도록 대성인도 응원하시고 있다. 이번에 배우는 어서에서도 대성인의 큰 인간애를 배견할 수 있다.

단의(안갑이 없는 외견의 옷) 한벌을 받았습니니다. 그런데 불제자 중에 승려가 한 사람 있었습니니다. 기근의 세상에 부처가 오셨으니 드릴 것이 없어서 궁색했을 때에 승려는 가사를 팔아 그 돈을 부처에게 드렸습니니다. 부처가 돈의 유래를 물으니 승려는 사실대로 말하였습니니다. 부처는 '가사는 삼세(과거세 현재세 미래세)의 모든 부처가 해탈(깨달음)을 얻기 위한 법의이다. 가사의 대가에 보답할 힘이 나에게는 없다.'고 사양하니 승려가 '이 가사의 값은 어찌 하오리까'라고 여쭙으셨니 부처는 '그대에게 비모가 계십니까'라고 물으셨다. '있습니니다.'라고 대답하자 부처는 '그대는 이 가사의 대금을 어머니에게 공양하는 것이 좋다'고 말씀하셨다. 그러자 승려는 부처에게 '부처는 삼계(욕도)의 중생이 살고 있는 세계 전체(중)에서 가장 존귀한 분입니다. 일체중생의 (중심이 되는) 안목이십니다. 설사 전우주를 덮을 만한 옷일지라도 또는 대지 전체를 깔만한 가사일지라도 값있을 수 있을 것이 틀림없습니니다. 그러나 나의 어머니는 소처럼 무지하며 양보 다도 어리석습니니다. 어찌 가사의 공양에 보답할 수 있겠습니까?'라고 말했다. 부처는 대답하기를 '그대의 몸을 누가 낳았는가? 그대의 어머니가 낳은 것이다. 이 가사의 은혜에 충분히 보답할 수 있는 분이 아닌가?'라고 말씀하셨던 것이다. (아서 968쪽 1행-9행)

불법의 인간주의가 생생하게 전해져 오는 말이다. 스승을 도우려는 제자, 제자와 그의 어머니를 생각하는 스승. 아름다운 광경이다. 본래 아무리 곤란해도 가사를 팔아서 안

되는 것인지도 모른다. 그러나 제자는 꾸지람을 들어도 좋으니 스승을 돕고 싶었다. 그 마음을 똑바로 받아들이면서 부처는 말하고 있는 것이다. 「나는 이 귀중한 돈을 받을만큼 가치있는 사람이 아니다. 이것이 더욱 어울리는 사람이 있다. 그것은 그대의 어머니이다」라고.

어머니 이상으로 존귀한 사람이 있을가요? 그대는 불도 수행을 하고 있어서 마침내는 부처가 될 몸이다. 그런 그대를 낳은 어머니를 소중히 하는 것이 불법이다」라고. 진실한 효도를 설하는 것을 불법이다. 대성인도 난조도키미쓰에게 「아버지의 은혜가 높기는 수미산도 낮을 정도이다. 어머니의 은혜가 깊기는 대해도 도리어 얕을 정도이다... (중략) 명심하여 부모의 은혜에 보답해 나가시오」(아서 1527쪽)라고 말씀하시고 있다. 나는 도다선생님의 「청년훈」을 상기하지 않을 수 없다. 도다선생님은 청년에게

「분기하라! 「싸우지 않겠는가!」라고 외치며 이렇게 말씀하셨다. 「중생은 사랑하지 않으면 안되는 싸움이다. 그런데 청년은 부모도 사랑하지 않는 사람이 많은데 어찌 남을 사랑할 수 있겠는가? 그 무자비한 자신을 초월하여 부처가 지닌 자비의 경지를 터득하는 인간혁명의 싸움이다」라고. 도다선생님은 불효한 청년에 대해서는 엄하게 꾸짖으셨다. 석존도 돌아가신 어머니를 추모하면서 양모를 소중히 하셨다. 대성인도 어머니를 소중히 하시고 수명도 연장하게 하셨다. 「나의 어머니는 참으로 무지하고 하찮은 인간입니다」라고 말하는 제자에게 그렇지 않다고 가르친 스승 -

세계에서 가장 존귀한 사람은 세계에서 가장 서민을 사랑하는 사람이었던 것이다. 불법의 지자란 「나를 특별한 사람이라고 보고 존경하라」는 사람이 아니라 「그대야말로 그리고 그대의 어머니야말로 소중한 사람이다」라고 외치는 사람이 것이다. 스승의 깊은 마음에 제자는 태양을 우러러 보는 느낌이 들지 않았을까? 마음이 마음을 움직이게 한다. 「대화를 싫어하는 것은 인간을 싫어하는 것」이라는 그리스 철인의 말이

있다. 자기가 마음의 문을 닫으면 상대방도 마음의 문을 닫는다. 반대로 어떤 사람도 자기편으로 만드는 불멸을 주위에 쏟으면 그 사람 자신이 모두로부터 정중하게 대우를 받는다. 이 명쾌한 도리 속에 불법자가 지녀야 할 삶의 자세가 있는 것이다. 마음의 햇별을 널리 일체중생에게 보내고 있는 것이 부처이다. 물론 일체중생을 사랑한다고 해도 우리들은 범부이므로 좋고 싫음이 있는 것은 어찌할 수 없다. 싫은 사람을 억지로 좋아할 필요도 없다. 그러나 부처의 심부름을 하는 일에 대해서는 편파적이어서는 안된다. 지금까지 여러분은 정성어린 기원과 대화로 조개와 같이 굳게 닫은 사람의 마음도 열어왔다. 그 행동이 존귀한 것이다. 그런데 대성인은 왜 도키조닌에게 보낸 편지에서 이 설화를 인용하셨을까? 짧은 편지의 3분의 2는 이 설화로 채워져 있다. 그 이유는 다음 글을 배견하면 명백해진다.

이것은 또 연세가 90이 된 그대의 비모가 사랑하는 아들도 키조닌에게 이 단의를 주신 것이다. 자신의 양안을 가늘게 뜨는 신명을 다해서 만드셨다. 도키전은 자식의 몸으로서 이 단의의 은혜에 보답하는 것은 어렵다고 생각하여 나에게 보내신 것일까? 나치렌도 또한 이 은혜에 대해서는 보답하기 어렵다. 그렇다고 해서 둘러보낼 수도 없다. 왜냐하면 이 단의를 입고 일천의 어전에서 이 자세한 사정을 말씀드리면 반드시 제석 범천 제천신신도 아시게 될 것이다. 단의는 하나 일지라도 전 우주의 제천이 이 사실을 아시게 될 것이다. 이 스승을 대해에 넣고 흠을 대지에 보태는 것과 같은 것이다. 생생애 몇 번 다시 태어나도 없 어지지 않을 것이며 세세 - 내세도 다음 세도 썩지 않을 것이다. (아서 968쪽 9행 - 끝)

대성인은 도키전이 보낸 단의를 보시고 그를 낳으신 어머니의 얼굴을 그림게 회상하셨을 것이다. 대성인은 마쓰바가야 쓰의 법난 후, 도키조닌의 저택에 체재하셨다고 한다. 필경 어머니와 친하게 지내셨을 것이다. 그로부터 10년의 세월이

흘렀다. 90세라고하면 당시로서는 대단히 고령이다.

「이젠 연세가 무척 들으셨을테지. 연로하신데도 바느질을 하는 것은 대단한 일이지요.」 그런 대성인의 생각이 「자신의 양안을 짜내고 신명을 다했으니라」는 일절에 담겨져 있다. 이때 도키조닌 자신의 연령도 60세이다. 상당한 나이가 되어 「부모는 부모, 자식은 자식」일 것이다. 도키조닌도 어머니의 따뜻한 마음에 어떻게 보답해야 할까 틀림없이 생각했을 것이다. 「그렇다. 대성인님에게 공양하자. 대성인님도 어머니님도 기뻐하실 것이다.」 그렇게 생각했는지 어떤지 모르겠으나 어느날 대성인 앞으로 노모가 만든 한벌의 단의가 전달되었다. 받으신 대성인도 감사의 마음과 함께 곤혹스런 심정이었을지도 모른다. 이렇게 정성이 담긴 것을 「그렇습니까?」하고 간단히 받을 수는 없다. 설화를 인용하신 대성인의 마음이 전해져 온다. 그렇다고 해서 둘러보내는 것을 모처럼의 마음을 거부하는 것이 된다. 그래서 대성인은 진심으로 받아들이고 어머니에게 최대의 감사와 격려를 전하신다. 대성인이 이 단의를 접으시면 범천, 제석을 비롯하여 전우주의 제천신신이 모자의 두터운 공양의 뜻을 알게 될 것이다. 그러면 시방의 제천신신은 반드시 모자를 수호하신다. 그 공덕은 세세생생 영원토록 빛나는 것이라고 편지를 맺고 있다. 모자의 기쁨은 어떠했을까? 무엇보다도 도키조닌 자신이 최고의 효도를 할 수 있었던 기쁨으로 대성인에게 감사드렸을 것이다. 「마음이야말로 중요」하다. 자식을 생각하는 어머니. 어머니를 생각하고 스승을 생각하는 제자. 제자를 생각하고 그 어머니를 생각하여 일체를 최고로 살리려고 고심하는 스승. 아름다운 교류이다. 이것이 불법의 세계이다. 어머니는 이 편지가 쓰여진 다음해인 1276년 2월, 도키조닌과 그 부인의 간호하에 돌아가셨다. 일절에는 향년 93세였다. 자식인 도키조닌은 사회적으로도 중요한 위치에서 일하고 광포의 마당에 있어서도 중추로서 활동했다. 조닌의 재혼한 부인(도키야마)에게도 좋은 보살핌을 받았다. 손자 중의 한

사람은 대성인 곁에서 싸웠다. 후에 두 사람의 손자는 다투고 상인 아래에서 활약했다. 어본 불에 감싸인 대만족, 대승리의 인생이었을 것이다. 평범하더라도 무명이라도 진실하게 살아 승리한 여성의 드라마가 있다. 그런 씩씩한 여성이 행복하게 되기 위하여 불법이 있는

것이다. 「이슬을 대해에 넣고 흙을 대지에 보탬과 같아서」라고 말씀하시듯이 광선유포의 근본에 살아갈 때 작은 「소아의 인생」에서 영원한 승리에 빛나는 「대아의 인생」으로 바뀐다. 모든 행동이 「공덕의 대해」가 되고 「복덕의 대지」로 되는 것이다. 여러분도 이미

이 계도에 들어섰다는 것을 확신해 주시기 바란다. 니치렌 대성인도 약속하시고 있다. 그래서 신심의 「마음」이 중요한 것이다. 이 도키전담서는 간결하면서도 따뜻한 편지이다. 대성인과 문화에 통하는 따뜻한 마음과 마음. 이렇게 안심할 수 있는 세계가 있으므로 문하는

시련에 견디고 광포의 투쟁에 전력으로 싸울 수 있었던 것이다. 어떻게 하면 그 사람이 기뻐할까? 힘을 낼까? 노력할 수 있을까? 사색과 대응이 없는 지도자는 인간주의의 세계에는 실격자라고 말할 수 밖에 없다. 근본은 한사람 한사람의 빛을 진지하게 기원하는 것이

다. 대성인도 정성어린 단의를 입고 제천에게 기원하셨다. 성실하게 기원하면서 반드시 격려의 불지가 솟아 오른다. 이 격려의 세계를 넓혀가는 것이 우리들의 광선유포운동인 것이다. (리빙 부디즘 99년 5월)

법화경(法華經)의 지혜(智慧)

- 제 40회 테마 · 상불경보살품 -

이케다 SGI회장: 벚꽃이 아름답게 피었습니다. 「여러가지 일이 생각나는 벚꽃이로구나」라고 바쇼가 말한대로 벚꽃이 필적마다 그날의 벚꽃, 그때의 봄에 있었던 추억이 되살아난다. 도다 선생님이 돌아가신지 40년 - 4월 8일의 고별식 날에도 벚꽃은 휘날리며 춤을 추었다. 꽃잎 하나하나가 생명을 가지고 있는듯 눈부시게 날리고 있었다. 묘법의 대영웅과의 이별을 아쉬워하는 것만 같았습니다. 도다 선생님의 부보를 듣고 달려온 니치렌 상인은 말씀하셨습니다. 「도다 선생님은 정말 훌륭한 분입니다.....부처님이셨습니다」라고. 한평생 서민을 위해 목숨 바친 선 선생님이셨습니다. 한평생을 국가주의의 권력과 싸워오신 선생님이셨습니다. 저는 벚꽃 - 돌이켜 생각해보면 전쟁중에는 국가주의를 위해 벚꽃마저도 이 용당했습니다. 「벚꽃과 같이 미련없이 깨끗하게 일시여」 라는 것이 일본인이다.」라고 하는 등 죽음을 찬미하였습니다. 당치도 않습니다. 사실은 살고 살고 끝까지 살아 가는 것이 벚꽃의 상징입니다. 「꽃구경」이라는 것도 예로부터 꽃이 얼마나 피어 있는가를 확인하는 행사였던 것입니다. 왜냐하면 벚꽃이 많이 오래 피어 있으면 그 해는 풍년이라는 말이 전해왔기 때문이었습니다. **사이토 교학부장:** 그렇다면 미련없이 깨끗하게 일해서 진다는 것은 오히려 곤란한 일이에요... **스다 부교학부장:** 확실히 도쿄 등지에서는 '요보다도 빨리 꽃만 핀다'라든가 '일제히 피어서 일제히 진다'라고 말해지는 특징이 있습니다. **엔도:** 권력이라는 것은 이용당할 수 있는 것은 어느 것이든 이용해 버립니다. 무서운 일이라고 생각합니다. **SGI회장:** 도다 선생님이 '민중의

희망'을 걸머지고 끝까지 살아오셨습니다. 몸은 2년간의 옥중 생활로 금방이라도 쓰러질 것만 같았습니다. 그러나 선생님은 목숨을 귀여이살고 살고 또 끝까지 살아 내셨습니다. 국가악으로 살해당한 마키구치 선생님의 「분신」으로서 - 참으로 기적과도 같은 생명력이셨습니다. 참으로 「수량품」 그 자체였습니다. 도다 선생님이 서거하신 해의 원단에 선생님은 최후의 「신년 강의」로 해주셨습니다. 오랜 투병으로 몸은 쇠약할대로 쇠약해져 있었지만 목소리만은 강력했습니다. 그때 선생님께서 무엇을 말씀하셨던가. 그것은 수량품의 「삼묘합론」에 대해서였습니다. <삼묘합론이란 본인묘(부처의 경을 얻기 위한 근본 원인의 불가사의), 본국토묘(그 부처가 사는 국토의 불가사의)가 합쳐져서 설하고 있다는 것> **사이토:** 최후의 최후까지 법화경 강의를 하셨습니다. 그런데 왜 하필 이때 삼묘합론을 말씀해 주셨을까요. **SGI회장:** 특히 선생님이 힌주어 가르쳐 주신 부분은 니치렌 대성인이 「본인의 부처」라는 점이었습니다. 또 진실한 부처란 사바세계라고 하는 「현실의 세계」를 떠나서는 계시지 않는다는 것입니다. **사이토:** 현실 속에서 싸우며 난을 받는 - 틀림없이 이것은 「불경품」입니다. **SGI회장:** 니치렌 대성인도 「일대의 간심은 법화경, 법화경의 수행의 간심은 불경품이니라」(아서 1174쪽)고 말씀하셨습니다. 불법은 대체 무엇을 실천할 일까요. 그 결론이 「법화경」이며 구체적인 실천은 불경품 이외에는 없습니다. **스다:** 이 어문 바로 뒤에는 그 유명한 일절이 있습니다. 「불경보살이 사람을 존경한 것은 어떠한 일이요, 교주석존의 출세

의 본회는 사람의 행동에 있었소이다」(아서 1174쪽) **엔도:** 사람의 행동 - 「인간은 어떻게 살아야 하는가」라는 것을 가르치기 위해 석존은 이 세상에 출현하여 법을 설했습니다. 그 결론이 「불경 보살의 삶의 방식」이었다고 말할 수 있습니다. **SGI회장:** 당연한 말입니다. 불법의 진수를 가르쳐 주시고 있습니다. 이것을 전제로 하여 불경품을 배워나가도록 합시다. **스다:** 수량품의 뒤에 이어진 「분법의 공덕품」 「수회공덕품」 「법사공덕품」의 3품은 「유통의 공덕」을 설하고 있습니다. 그것에 뒤이어 「상불경보살품」에는 법화경을 통통한 사람의 복덕과 법화경의 홍교자를 비방하는 사람의 죄가 함께 설해져 있습니다. **사이토:** 그것도 상불경보살이라는 한 사람의 실천자의 드라마를 통하여 말씀하시고 있는 셈입니다. **SGI회장:** 「상불경보살」이라는 이름에 대해서 여러가지 재미있는 이야기가 있습니다. 우리들이 잘 알고 있는 구라마슈이 번역한 「묘법연화경」에서는 「항상(사람을) 경멸하지 않는다」 보살이라는 의미인데 산스크리트에서는 반대로 「항상(사람으로부터) 경멸당한」 사나이라는 의미였다고 합니다. **엔도:** 그렇습니다. 축범호가 번역한 「정법화」에서도 「상피경만품」이라고 번역되어져 있습니다. 「항상 경멸당했다」라는 의미로 됩니다. <경멸이란 「가볍게 업신여긴다」> **SGI회장:** 창가학회도 그렇습니다. 민중경시의 일본 사회로부터 언제나 바보 취급을 당했습니다. 「가난뱅이와 병자의 집단」이라고 경멸하는 인간들이 많았습니다. 그러나 도다선생님은 「가난한 사람과 병자를 구제하

는 것이 진정한 종교다」라고 사자후하셨습니다. 돈벌이를 피하는 종교는 돈만을 소중히 여깁니다. 빈곤한 사람은 상대하지 않습니다. 하물며 병자를 모아서 무엇을 하겠습니까. 병원을 만들려는 것도 아니고 - 진실한 불법은 괴로워하고 있는 사람을 위해 있는 것입니다. 가장 괴로워하고 있는 사람을 가장 행복하게 하기 위한 것이 불법입니다. 그렇지 않습니까. 이 승고한 마음을 알지 못하는 인간들은 우리들을 항상 경멸하였습니다. 그렇지만 상대가 누구이든 우리들은 괴로워하고 있는 사람이 있으면 뛰어나가 보살펴 왔습니다. 끝어안아 주면서 「당신 마음 속에 있는 불성을 열면 반드시 행복하게 됩니다」라고 가르치고 격려해서 묘법에 눈뜨게 하였습니다. 「한사람의 인간」은 온몸을 다 던져서 격려하고 돌보아 왔습니다. 참으로 「항상 사람을 경멸하지 않았던 보살입니다. **사이토:** 확실히 절복도 지도도, 상대방을 존경하지 않으면 안됩니다. 「저 사람에게는 말을 해도 아무런 보람도 없다」고 단념해 버린다면 말할 필요조차 없지 않겠지요. **SGI회장:** 상불경보살이 언제나 바보 취급 당했다는 것을 표면적으로만 본다면 분명히 항상 경멸당한 보살로 되겠지요. 그러나 한걸음 더 나아가 깊이 그 행동의 본질과 혼에 착안해 본다면 「항상 경멸당하지 않았다」는 해석이 옳지 않을까요. **엔도:** 경전의 「마음」을 꿰뚫은 명해석이라고 생각합니다. **사이토:** 어느 저널리스트가 이케다 선생님께서 「어떻게 해서 학회는 발전하게 되었습니까?」라고 묻는 적이 있었습니다. 그때 선생님은 이렇게 대답했습니다. 「나는 한사람 한사람의 회원과 직접 서로 만나서 이야기하기 때문입니다」라고. **SGI회장:** 특별히 내 말을 하고 싶었던 것은 아닙니다. 각각의 지역에서 여러분들의 노고가 토대가 되었다는 것은 말할 나위도 없습니다. 다만 조직의 힘이 나 명령만으로는 대중이 이처럼 단결할 수 없다는 것입니다. 한 사람 한사람을 진심을 담아 소

중히 하였고 때문에 학회는 강하게 된 것입니다. 학회의 그 「마음」을 강조하고 싶었던 것입니다. 세간의 지도자의 대부분은 명령주의입니다. 자신은 편하고 힘들지 않고 결과만을 훔치려고 합니다. 그런 지도자가 너무 많이 있습니다. 우리들은 이것을 혁명하고 있는 것입니다. **엔도:** 한사람 한사람을 소중히 한다 - 분명히 이것은 피곤합니다. **SGI회장:** 자신이 노력하지 않는 지도자란 사기꾼입니다. 세간의 불행은 자신은 노력하지 않고 손을 떼고 요령 좋게 행동하고 있는 지도자가 너무 많기 때문입니다. 결국 보신이며, 유희입니다. 말할 것도 없이 학회는 착실하게 움직여 노력한 사람, 인생을 진실하게 살려고 노력하고 있는 사람. 그러한 서민들에게 용기를 주고, 행복하게 하기 위해서 있습니다. 그러한 리더가 피곤함을 싫어한다면 어떻게 될까요. 물론 무리를 하라는 것은 아닙니다. 나이에 알맞게 건강에 대한 지혜도 필요한 것이 당연합니다. 다만 불석신명의 「혼」을 잃어버린다면 끝장입니다. 간부도 다른 지도자도 - **스다:** 불경품의 줄거리이지만 「시대설정」은 「무량무변 불가사의의 아승기집」의 옛날로 「위음왕여래」라는 부처가 있었던 때로 거슬러 올라갑니다. 그 부처의 입멸 후 정법시대가 지나 상법시대도 말엽이었습니다. 그 무렵에는 부처의 올바른 가르침도 상실되고, 「중상만의 승려」가 일대 세력을 가지고 있었습니다. 이러한 시대배경입니다. **SGI회장:** 법멸의 때이지요. 상법시대의 「상이란, 초상이라든가 영상이라고 말하는 것과 같이 「모습이 닮았다」라고 하는 것이기 때문에 모양만 있을 뿐, 정법시대와 같은 혼은 없어져 버렸습니다. 불법의 형해화한 시대입니다. **엔도:** 「상법시대의 말」이란 니치렌 대성인이 출현하신 「말법의 초」에 통합니다. 또한 중문에 의해서 니치렌 대성인의 불법이 마침내 「법멸의 위기에 처했을 때, 창가학회가 홍통한 의의에도 통한다고 생각합니다.

스다: 분명히 「중상만의 비구」가 찬탄해 있습니다. 이러한 속에서 불경보살이 출현한 셈입니다.

사이토: 그는 남녀를 불문하고 또 출가, 재가를 불문하고 모든 사람에게 이렇게 말하며 예배하였습니다. 「나는 깊이 그대를 공경하노라. 감히 경멸하지 않다. 까닭은 무엇인뇨. 그대들은 모두 보살의 도를 행하여 마땅히 성불하게 되리라」(법화경 567쪽)

엔도: 지금 인용한 「나는 깊이 그대들을 존경하노라」 이하의 글은 한문 24문자로 되어 있습니다. 그래서 불경 보살이 훌륭한 법화경을 「24자의 법화경」이라고 부릅니다.

SGI회장: 법화경이란 대체 무엇을 설한 것인가. 그것은 이 24자에 응축되어 있다는 것입니다. 「나는 깊이 당신들을 존경합니다. 경멸하거나 깔보지 않습니다. 예나하면 당신들은 모두 보살도의 수행을 하면 반드시 부처로 될 수 있기 때문입니다. 일체중생에게는 불성이 있습니다. 불계가 있습니다. 그 불계를 불경보살은 예배한 것입니다. 법화경의 경문상으로는 「일체의 중생에게는 불성이 있다」고는 명시되어 있지 않습니다. 그러나 엄연히 그것을 주장한 것입니다. 이 이상의 「생명존엄」의 사상은 없습니다. 종교 중에는 「평등」을 설했다 하더라도 인류는 「죄인으로서의 평등」이라는 것을 설한 것도 없습니다. 그러나 법화경은 모두 존귀한 「불자」라고 설하고, 「불계의 당체로서의 평등」인 것입니다. 여기에 커다란 차이가 있습니다.

스다: 자신의 불계를 자각하지 못한 「이교도」라 하더라도 불계의 당체라는 사실임에는 변함이 없습니다. 불경 보살이 예배한 그대로입니다. 그러므로 법화경의 정신으로는 폭력은 절대로 있을 수 없습니다.

사이토: 폭력을 수반한 「종교분쟁」이란 절대로 있을 수 없겠네요.

SGI회장: 온갖 폭력과 정반대되는 것이 「불경보살」입니다. 법화경입니다. 「폭력」에 반대되는 「정신투쟁」이 법화경인 것입니다. 「중상만의 비구는 세력이 대단했다」고 설하는 있는 것과 같이 그들은 위세가 당당하였다. 큰 세력을 갖고 있었습니다. 그 「힘」이나 「지위」를 의지해서 더욱더 중상만으로 되었습니다. 권위, 권력, 경제력, 완력, 지위력, 조직력, 명성, 재능, 지식... 인간, 무언가의 힘을 의지하고 있는 동안에는 결코 겸허할 줄을 모른다. 모든 것을 잃은 뒤에야 비로소 「듣는 귀」를 갖게 되는 경우가 너무나도 많습니다.

인간의 비극입니다. 대부분의 인간이 자기자신의 만심으로 멸망하게 됩니다. 그렇게 되기 전에 「벌거벗은 인간으로서」 자신에게 무엇이 있는가 - 그것을 자신에게 물어보는 것이 중요합니다. 일체의 허식을 확 벗어 던지고 말입니다.

SGI회장: 일찍이 도다 선생님은 말씀하셨습니다. 「우리를 자신이 남묘호렌계교이다. 그러므로 맞거나 육을 먹어도 일단 제목을 부른 이상은 물을 마시고 풀뿌리를 씹는 한이 있더라도 목숨이 있는 한은 남묘호렌계교라고 끝까지 부르면서 광선유포를 향해 나아가는 것이다. 이것이 신심이다」라고. 그리고 종교에 대해서는 이렇게 가르쳐 주셨습니다. 「절복에는 농간도 수단도 아무것도 없다. 다만 나는 남묘호렌계교 이외에는 없다!」고 결심하는 것을 말법의 절복이라고 한다. 그 이외는 없다. 어떻게 하면 남묘호렌계교가 흥통될까, 어떻게 하면 남묘호렌계교를 사랑하게 잘 가르칠 수 있을까, 그런 방법론은 관계 없습니다. 내 스스로가 남묘호렌계교다! 남묘호렌계교 이외에는 아무것도 없다고 결심하고 또 결심하는 것이다. 나는 그 이외에는 아무것도 없다. 그것이 나쁘다면 살해당해도 죽어도 아무런 상관이 없다며 자신은 남묘호렌계교라고 결심하고 어본존을 유포하는 것이다」 불경보살도 그렇습니다. 악구를 듣거나 매를 맞아도 24자의 법화경을 「하중」하며 돌아다녔습니다. 상대방이 어땀든, 「나는 이렇게 산다」고 결심한대로 싸워나갔습니다. 그 결과 불경보살은 어떻게 되었습니까?

사이토: 예, 경문에는 이렇게 쓰여 있었습니다. 「(불경보살은 죽음에 이르러) 마침내 목숨을 다 하려고 할 때, 하늘에서 들려오는 소리로 위승왕불이 예전에 설한 법화경의 설법을 듣고 그 모든 것을 신수했다. 그리하여 모든(법사공덕품)에서 설한 바와 같은 육근청정을 얻었다. 육근청정을 얻은 뒤에 2백만억나유타년의 수명을 더하여 널리 사람들을 위해 이 법화경을 설했다」

SGI회장: 그래요. 「수명」을 연장하였습니다. 목숨이 길어졌습니다. 끝까지 살아나갔습니다. 이 「수명」이란 문자 그대로 「오래 산다」는 것이겠지만 「생명력」이라고도 해석합니다.

사이토: 한편 불경보살은 그 뒤에도 태어날 때마다 제불을 섬기며, 법화경의 광선유포를 위해 「마음에 두려움 없이」 싸워 나가겠습니다. 그리고 부처로 되겠습니다라고 맹세하였습니다.

SGI회장: 여기까지 이야기하고 갑자기 석존은 「이 불경보살이란 누구를 지칭하는가? 말할 것도 없이 나를 말하는 것이다」라고 선언하는 것입니다. 참으로 극적인 장면입니다.

스다: 머나먼 옛날이야기라고 생각하고 있었는데 완전히 일변하여 눈앞의 현실 이야기로 바뀌었습니다. 모두 깜짝 놀라셨지요.

거듭합니다. 니치렌 대성인은 「어찌 이인이라 하리요. 즉 나의 몸이 이것이니라(어찌하여 다른 사람이겠는가, 아니 나를 말하는 것이다)」의 경문을 더욱더 깊이 신수하셨습니다. 대난을 스스로 불러 일으켜 다쓰노구치에서 목숨을 다하려고 할 때 발적 현본 하이어 목숨이 연장되었습니다. 그리고 사도로 가시는 도중에 테라다마에서 이렇게 말씀하셨습니다. 「법화경은 삼세의 설법의 의식이라. 과거의 불경품은 지금의 권지품, 지금의 권지품은 과거의 불경품이니라. 지금의 권지품을 미래에는 불경품이 될 것이로다」(아서 953쪽)

엔도: 「지금 권지품에 설해진 삼류의 강적을 불러일으킨 것은 나다」라고. 그것은 과거에 불경보살이 싸웠던 싸움을 지금 이 몸으로 하고 있는 것이며 미래에서 본다면 지금의 나의 싸움은 불경보살과 같음을 알게 될 것이라고.

사이토: 「삼세의 설법의 의식이로다」. 참으로 심심(甚深)합니다.

SGI회장: 「세계는 지금에 있고, 지금은 세계이니라」(아서 916쪽)입니다. 아무런 생각없이 「법화경」을 종이에 쓴 28품이라고 생각해서는 안됩니다. 불법은 「지금」 「여기」의 범부의 「현실」이 외에는 없습니다. 이 「지금」의 오저를 「구원」이라고 말하며, 이 오저를 여는 것을 성불이라고 합니다. 그것을 가르친 것이 법화경입니다. 지금입니다. 이 지금, 광선유포를 위해 「싸우자!」라는 「일념」속에서만 묘호렌계교는 살아있는 것입니다. 「어찌, 이인이지요」

대성인은 「불경보살은 실은 석존이었다. 지금 대난을 맞고 있는 나도 실은 석존이다. 부처다」라고 가르쳐 주셨습니다. 그것은 모르면 법화경을 배우지 않은 것으로 된다고 말씀 하셨습니다.

국가주의란 무엇인가. 그 근본에는 「힘의 승배」가 있습니다. 불경보살과는 정반대입니다. **스다:** 「힘의 승배」가 국가주의의 근본으로 된다 - 어쩔네요.

엔도: 국가주의라고 들어도 머리 속에 쑥 들어오지 않는 사람도 있는데요...

SGI회장: 「권력주의」라고 해도 좋으리라고 생각합니다. 「국가

가 있음으로써 인간이 있다」는 전도된 사상입니다. 잊어서는 안될 것은 국가주의는 고대로부터의 「종교」라는 점입니다.

스다: 「종교」란 말입니까?

SGI회장: 여기에 대해서는 토인비 박사와 차분하게 이야기를 나누었습니다. 전에도 이야기한 적이 있는 것 같은데, 박사는 이렇게 말씀하셨습니다. 「기독교의 후퇴로 서구에 생겨난 공백은 세계의 다른 종교에 의해서 메꾸어졌다」 그 세계의 종교란, 「과학적 진보를 향한 종교」와 「공산주의」 그리고 「내셔널리즘」 즉 국가주의라고 하셨습니다. 그 「국가주의」란 어떠한 종교인가.

그것은 「인간의 집단력」을 신앙의 대상으로 하고 있습니다. 「집단력의 승배」이고, 「국가승배」입니다. 덧붙여서 토인비 박사는 집단적인 인간의 힘을 승배하고 있는 점에서 내셔널리즘, 파시즘(전체주의), 공산주의는 서로 통하고 있다고 간파하시고 있었습니다.

국가주의라는 종교 아래에서의 「인간」은 어디까지나 「국가의 일부분에 지나지 않는다. 수단으로 사용되고 도구로 사용된다. 「인간의 존엄」이 「국가의 예고리즘」에 짓밟혀 버리는 종교입니다.

엔도: 그렇다면 지금의 일본에도 많은 예가 있습니다.

SGI회장: 「집단력 승배」의 두려움은 「신앙을 하여도 가치가 없다는 것을 명료하게 알지 못하기 때문」이라고 토인비 박사는 기술하고 있습니다.

「그리고 개인이 죄를 범하는 경우라면 필시 주저없이 양심의 가책을 받을만한 악업도... 일인칭이 단수에서 복수로 옮겨짐에 따라 자기 중심의 죄를 면하게 된 것처럼 착각하고 있기 때문에 자칫 이것을 대수롭지 않게 생각한다」(『한 역사가의 종교관』이라는 책에서)

스다: 일인칭 - 「나」라는 개인. 이라면 쉽사리 저지를 수 없는 비행도 「우리들」이라는 복수가 되면 태연해진다는 말이군요.

엔도: 적신호도 「모두 함께 건너면 무섭지 않다」(웃음) 두려움은 일입니다.

SGI회장: 전쟁도 그렇다. 보통이라면 사람을 죽이는 것은 「극악」의 행위입니다. 그런데 국가를 위해」로 되면 많은 사람을 죽이는 쪽이 영웅으로 됩니다.

스다: 국가주의라고 하는 전도된 종교에 의해서 인간이 이상해진 것입니다.

SGI회장: 국가악의 두려움을 깨물어 보신 분이 마키구치 선생님이었습니다. 신찰받는 것을 거부하였을 때, 중문 내에서는 「형식이니까 받아 놓기만 한다

면 무슨 상관인가」라는 의견도 있었습니다. 그러나 선생님은 일보도 물러서지 않았습니다. 선생님이 투옥되시기 전부터 좌담회도 특고경찰의 입회하에 이루어졌습니다.

신찰의 이야기가 나오기만 하면 「중지」의 소리가 날아왔습니다. 선생님의 이야기를 탄대로 돌린 뒤에, 신책(집안에 신을 모셔놓은 감실에 관하여 이야기를 꺼내면 또 「중지!」 주위의 간부들까지도 「주의를 주고 있는 것을 알고 있으면서도 왜 선생님은 저렇게 몇 차례도 되풀이해서 말하고 계시까」라고 생각하였다. 선생님의 마음을 잘 모르고 있었습니다.

선생님이 「신찰」을 거부했던 것은 본질은 「국가승배」를 거부했던 것입니다. 「국가보안인간」이 소중하지 않은가! 모두가 불행하게 되어 가는 것을 절대로 그대로 보고만 있을 수는 없다」는 어쩔 수 없는 부르짖음이었습니다.

스다: 일본의 여러 종교는 군국주의의 종교 통체에 따라서 타협하고 말았습니다. 그것으로서 교단의 체계를 지킬 셈으로 결국 간심의 「신심」을 상실하고 안맹이를 때어져 버린채였습니다.

엔도: 중문도 그랬습니다. 「혼」을 상실하고 말았습니다.

SGI회장: 마키구치 선생님, 도다 선생님은 대성인의 「혼」을 지켰던 것입니다. 국가권력과 장철한 싸움에 의해서.

엔도: 게다가 그것은 강대한 「힘」을 가지고 있다.

SGI회장: 마키구치 선생님, 도다 선생님은 사람들을 국가의 「노예상태」에서 구출하기 위해 싸우셨습니다.

인간 누구에게도, 행복하게 될 권리가 있습니다. 자유스럽게 살아가 수 있는 권리가 있습니다. 국가의 부품이나, 톱니바퀴는 절대로 아닙니다. 그런 신념이었기 때문에 국가로부터 박해를 받았습니다. 참으로 「불경」의 행동입니다.

엔도: 국가보다도 인간 - 그것을 이케다 선생님이 행동으로 옮기고 있었던 것입니다.

「종교를 부정하는 나라에 왜 가십니까」라고 묻자, 「거기에 인간이 있기 때문에 갑니다」라고.

SGI회장: 나는 「길」을 열고 있는 것입니다. 청년이 이어주지 않으면 「길」은 「큰 길」로 되지 않습니다. (법령 98년 7월)