

World TRIBUNE

IN THIS ISSUE



EXPERIENCE:

Bob Zuehlke fulfills his mission as a diplomat.

page 3

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427

No. 3250

\$2.00

JULY 9, 1999

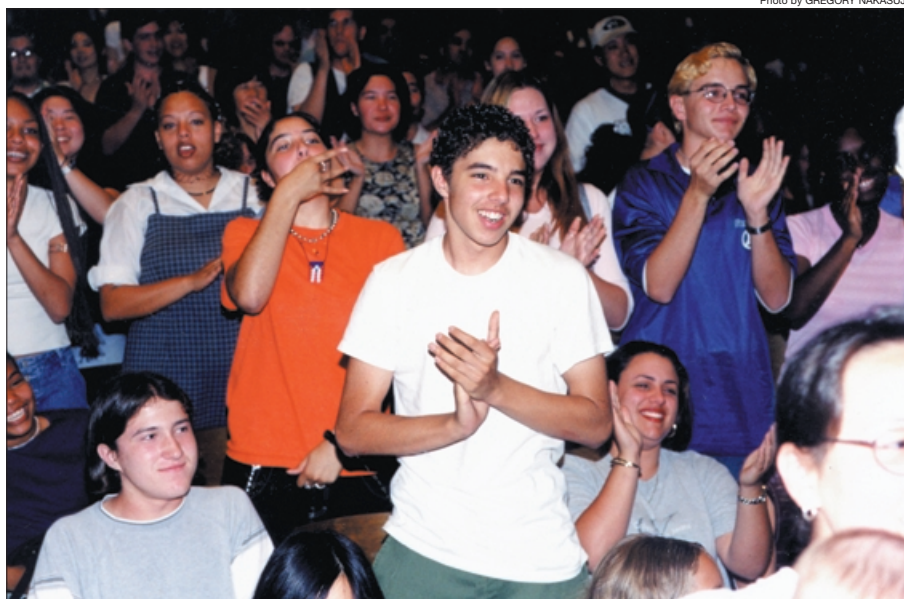


Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

On June 27 at Pasadena High School, 1,800 Southern California youth attend a kickoff for the SGI-USA Youth Grand Culture Festival to be held this fall in Los Angeles.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE

America Determines the 21st Century

The following message was read to an audience of Southern California youth at the June 27 kick-off meeting for the SGI-USA Youth Grand Culture Festival to be held this fall in Los Angeles.

My dear members of the youth division, to you who shoulder the glorious future of the United States of America:

I offer my most sincere congratulations on the holding of this assembly, this fresh departure toward boundless new horizons. You are endowed with such a grand mission!

Why do I say this? Because what becomes of America will determine

what becomes of the world in the 21st century. And what becomes of America will be determined by its youth — the protagonists of the coming century — and the way you lead your lives.

It is young people like yourselves, you who embrace, share in dialogue on, and practice the philosophy of peace and happiness, who shall drive the transformation of your respective communities and society as a whole, for time without end.

After pondering the meaning of the century-ending fin-de-siècle, one philosopher noted this: A fin-de-siècle does not imply a certain year, but a time when youth lose their ideals. Likewise, when youth are impassioned by ideals, that signifies the dawn of a new century.

So it is with deep admiration that I say the new century dawns here, among those of you who have gathered today!

I have been informed that you have begun a signature-collecting campaign on your own to promote nonviolence. I would like to ask that you proceed with this drive with joy and the freedom to exercise your utmost initiative to make it a resounding success, so that the memories of this campaign will remain forever golden in your hearts.

Nonviolence is a testament of our humanity. It signifies the triumph of the human spirit. Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed that the power of the human spirit is mightier than an atomic bomb. This towering belief in humankind is tantamount to the Buddhist principle of *ichinen sanzen*, or 3,000 realms contained in a momentary existence of life.

When America shines with hope, the world is alight. When America loses its light, then the world must suffer in darkness. For good or bad, yours is a country that possesses an extraordinarily vital and mystic mission. America is the first in history to be created by the will of its people, a unique land upholding ideals that inspired wave upon wave of immigrants to its shores.

What are these ideals? As it states in the Declaration of Independence, "All men are created equal, that they are endowed with... certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." They are ideals representing a paean to humanity, principles that stand in perfect consonance with the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism and the profound respect it pays to human life.

The Founding Fathers, the bearers of the great American renaissance, the selfless principals of the American civil rights move-

ment led by Dr. Martin Luther King and Mrs. Rosa Parks — all of them fought to establish these ideals as a social reality that you enjoy today.

And it is you, my friends, who must follow with pride and dignity in their hallowed footsteps. To realize this long-cherished dream of your esteemed predecessors, to establish a utopian world for all of humanity, even more consummate than these great men and women ever knew was possible — that is your lifelong mission.

To do this, you must stand alone. For the resolve of a single individual is what will determine everything.

Walt Whitman wrote:

Henceforth I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune

Henceforth, I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,

Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,

Strong and content I travel the open road.

Let us embark upon this most sublime of journeys! Let us advance toward this magnificent Utopia that humankind has so longed for!

I wish to conclude my message with my sincere prayers for the continued good health of each and every one of you gathered here today, and for your epic victory.

My congratulations again to the youth division of the SGI-USA!

June 27, 1999

Daisaku Ikeda

TEMPLE ISSUE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Shouldn't We Just Self-Reflect?

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches the oneness of life and its environment — that our lives are intrinsically linked with the universe around us. When we change ourselves for the better, the environment surrounding us has to improve, too. When we quash negative attitudes, everything responds in the positive.

Given this principle, if the SGI keeps criticizing the teachings of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, aren't we forgetting something important about Buddhist practice? Can't the whole temple issue be seen as a reflection of our negativity? If we stopped being so critical of Nichiren Shoshu and just looked at ourselves more, wouldn't the temple issue naturally disappear? These are some of the questions I've heard from members.

the U.S. temples have been trying to persuade SGI-USA members — especially inactive members — into the temple organization to confuse them with erroneous views of the Daishonin's Buddhism. The temples have been teaching, for instance, that ordinary people are lesser beings than priests — especially the high priest, whom the temple now says is some kind of a supreme being. This goes against the Daishonin's teaching that all people are equal, that all people are potentially Buddhas. So, what can each of us do about this situation? This was discussed at the June session of the Central Executive Committee, and the following three guidelines were agreed upon:

1) Prayer: Each of us can offer strong prayers about the temple issue as part of our daily practice. We can set our own

3) Outreach: Each of us can visit inactive members whom we know, create friendships with them, and encourage them to participate with us in SGI-USA activities. We can pursue dialogue with temple members, and through deepening our relationships with them, lead them to the true practice. We can also teach our guests to meetings the difference between the temple and the SGI as part of the introduction process.

All of these ways of reaching out are compassionate actions. The Daishonin says, "I am fully aware that if I do not speak out, I will be lacking in compassion" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p.

95). He was troubled by all the religious confusion and injustice going on around him, and to alleviate this, he took action: He distinguished all the incorrect practices from the correct practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. He spoke, wrote and proved the truth.

Seeing all the suffering being caused by the confused religious world of his day, what if the Daishonin had said: "This is all just a reflection of my negativity. I better just chant about myself and not say anything to anyone?" None of us would be practicing now.

Sometimes the change in attitude that we need to make in our Buddhist practice involves

mustering the courage to take action — to do something concrete about our situation. When we do this kind of human revolution, there are no circumstances that we cannot change.

This is not to say that we don't need to self-reflect — we do, always. We continually need to self-reflect about our practice. Again, we need both: inner change *plus* self-motivated action.

Five in a series

Sometimes the change in attitude that we need to make in our Buddhist practice involves mustering the courage to take action — to do something concrete about our situation. When we do this kind of human revolution, there are no circumstances that we cannot change.

The concept of the oneness of life and its environment, however, doesn't teach that we can change our environment *only* through self-reflection. In fact, this Buddhism emphasizes inner change *plus* self-motivated action. As SGI President Ikeda says in a recent speech: "It all comes down to whether you are taking action. Without personal effort, Buddhism does not exist, kosen-rufu cannot be realized, and there is no true glory" (June 18 *World Tribune*, p. 8).

In the case of the temple issue, what kind of action is appropriate to take? Since 1991,

chanting goals about the temple issue. And those of us who know temple members can keep praying specifically for the happiness of those friends.

2) Study: Each of us can continue to educate ourselves and our fellow members about the differences between the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu. We can study the various materials available on the temple issue, like the pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, President Ikeda's speeches in the *World Tribune*, and the *Living Buddhism* series "Untold History of the Fuji School."

Denver Culture Department Holds 'Nonviolence in the 21st Century' Seminar

Photo by CAROL DIMEFF



Dr. Sudarshan Kapur (far right), head of the Gandhi-Hamer-King Center in Denver, discusses with members humanistic solutions to violence.

"Nonviolence in the 21st Century — Challenges and Choices," sponsored by the Denver Culture Department, was inspired by an article of the same title by Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. The event was initiated as both a commemoration of SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's visit to Denver in June 1996 and as a response to the violence perpetrated at Columbine High School on April 20.

Much of the evening's discussion focused on the principles set forth in Arun Gandhi's insightful article. The article explains that passive violence generates physical violence, and that unless we change individually, no one is going to change collectively. Dr. Gandhi encourages each of us to meet the challenge of non-violence, "being the change we want to see," by moving away from the negative attributes that govern our lives and standing up for truth and justice, no matter what the cost.

Kush Mirchandani, a recent high-school graduate, related an experience about how he had convinced his school to use Arun Gandhi's article as the basis of a

forum for student discussion on violence in the coming year. A brief discussion of the tenets of the Earth Charter (currently being circulated worldwide for public discussion and input) and a discussion of the importance of teaching non-violence in schools were also included.

Dr. Sudarshan Kapur, head of the Gandhi-Hamer-King Center in Denver, attended the meeting, conveying his pleasure and satisfaction with the attitudes and opinions he heard expressed. He emphasized the importance of using the world's resources wisely, making the point that the misuse of our environment is also a form of violence.

— PAM NELSON

A Knight To Remember

Bob Zuehlke fulfills his mission as a diplomat who contributes broadly to world peace through developing friendships around the world.

I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for 28 years. I have come to the conclusion that my entire life has been building to a crescendo, preparing me for being right here, to accomplish my mission in Northern Virginia. I am going to touch upon two aspects to my life that I consider tremendous inconspicuous benefits. First, I have confidence that I belong where I am, in the geographic sense. It seems like most of my life I always felt "If only this changed," "if only that changed," "if only I could get out of home and away from my mother," "if only I had a job where I could use my intellect," "if only my wife understood me," "if only I had a lot of money." My wife, Yuko, and I have had the good fortune to live in several countries and continue to have friendships with

people around the globe. Just to realize there is nowhere else in the world and no other people I need to be around than you right now is a great benefit. Second, I feel that my Buddhist practice has brought me rhythm to solve nagging medical problems by being in the right place at the right time.

First, let me talk about the geographic perspective.

I could not possibly have envisioned the mission I had when I started practicing Buddhism at age 19 in the small town of Jackson, Mich., where my sponsor and I were the first members. I was a hippie and had just dropped out of college. As soon as I started practicing, however, lots of our friends started, as well. It was as if with my first gongyo, a huge wave welled up and I feel that I have been a surfboard riding the tip of the wave ever since.

Nine months after I started practicing, a couple dozen of our friends had already received the Gohonzon. I was then offered a full-time job in Lansing with the United States Postal Service. I had been going to activities six days a week and suddenly I was working evening shift with split days off and alone. I realized that either my practice would slowly weaken or else I would have to make a very strong, deeper determination. I wrestled in front of the Gohonzon in Lansing and pulled out the determination to stand up and DO IT!! That transformation, I am convinced, determined the course of the rest of my life. By consistently introducing people to this Buddhism, in time others joined and moved to the area; eventually a group, district, chapter, and multiple chapters developed in that area.

After getting married and starting a family, I went back to school full time while working full time, with the determination to start off in a new career direction. The postal pay was pretty good but I wanted a job in which I could use my intellect more and contribute more broadly somehow to world peace. After getting my degree, I passed the Foreign Service selection process, to be among the 175 people who got jobs from the more than 22,000 examinees the year I took the exam. I really felt that

to overcome those odds was part of my mission. So, on Jan. 1, 1984, I drove away from Michigan with my wife and three sons, saying goodbye to that chapter of my life.

Following nine months of training in Washington, D.C., my first assignment was in Zurich. In Switzerland, we had the pleasure of practicing with members from many different countries. The dialogue we shared with people from so many cultures helped us more deeply appreciate the universality of this practice. Next in Hong Kong, I became the district chief of the district for English-speaking members. Our district made a very significant contribution to the 9th SGI Youth Culture Festival and was able to welcome SGI President Ikeda on behalf of the members. In Bangkok, I helped a Thai district for four years, which enabled me to get to know many ordinary Thai people from different parts of society in ways that none of my fellow diplomats were able. We really loved living in Thailand. We found Thai people and culture to be particularly charming and graceful. In coordination with the SGI-Thai leadership, I also formed a group for English-speaking members. Our Rainbow Group was vibrant, with members from 14 different countries.

Following Bangkok, we were in the Philippines for the two years immediately before coming here. We were fortunate during that time President Ikeda opened the Grand Peace Culture Center, a splendid training center overlooking a vast volcanic lake that contains within it another mountain peak that has a volcanic lake in it. President Fidel Ramos welcomed President Ikeda to the Philippines on behalf of the fraternal order, the Knights of Rizal. Around this time, I became interested in this group, dedicated to humanistic social action on behalf of people suffering from injustice. As a diplomat, I have met many prominent people and politicians, but a certain percentage is clearly arrogant and focused on self-advancement. I found the Knights to be refreshingly humble, despite, for the most part, being people from prestigious positions in government, business and society. Through the Knights of Rizal, I was

EXPERIENCE — BOB ZUEHLKE, VIENNA, VA.

Photo by MATTHEW TUNG



Bob and Yuko Zuehlke with sons Robert, 13, Kai, 17, and Eric, 20.

able to meet Dr. Henry Kissinger and King Juan Carlos of Spain, who were honored by the group during my time there. Kissinger, by the way, surprised me for the fervor with which he expressed his respect for President Ikeda, after I casually brought up the subject in conversation. How ironic, I thought, that Bob the hippie all these years later in Manila would be talking with Henry Kissinger, whom I considered a monster for his support of the Vietnam War, and about Buddhism of all things!

As a result of this involvement, the Knights benighted me. They invited me to New York this past Memorial Day weekend to address their international meeting. My talk followed a great personal message from President Ikeda to the assembly. I was also able to accompany the senior knights on a tour of the SGI New York Culture Center.

Now, let me briefly touch upon the physical breakthroughs to which I alluded earlier. *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* points out that as we continue our practice, each of our senses become purified. I have experienced this.

First, taste and touch. In the early '70s, I had a few bouts with a rare and painful malady in which many of my mucous membrane cells died and caused open raw blisters, making even breathing tortuous. Fortunately, I happened upon a doctor in Michigan who had seen this syndrome twice and knew how to treat it with steroids, even though he knew no name for it. Subsequently, I have not had that problem again.

Second, smell. I had recurring sinus infections since high school. A British doctor we met in Hong Kong in the late '80s specialized in a unique type of sinus surgery, rebuilding my sinus passages, which eliminated the sinus infections and cured the problem.

Third, although not really affect-

ing one of the senses, I developed sleep apnea. My wife noticed about three years ago I stopped breathing while sleeping at night. I was able to recognize the symptoms because my mother had the disorder; the University of Michigan identified the problem while I was on leave two years ago and prescribed a treatment before I had a stroke or heart attack, which many people suffer as a result of untreated apnea.

Fourth, sight. In Manila, I was able to have my distance vision corrected with laser surgery, essentially for free. I now see 20/15 in both eyes after wearing glasses since fifth grade. And finally, hearing. In early June this year, I had surgery to replace the bones in my inner ear, which has restored the hearing I had lost in my left ear over the past 15 years. My Buddhist practice has enabled me to be in the right place at the right time to take advantage of the advancement of medical science.

So, here I am in Northern Virginia. Certainly, by no means am I claiming to be a completed work of art physically. However, I have had firsthand experience seeing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism help people from many different cultures. I have come to view Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and this Buddhist practice as sunshine, fertilizer and rainwater, which enables all human life to thrive.

My family and I look forward to the opportunity to share more of our experiences in the coming months and to learn from the members here, whom we like and respect, which is itself a benefit. I have many struggles and challenges in my life now. I am determined to follow the example of the bulbs and seeds we planted in our garden in spring — to take in the rainwater and sunshine, learn to enjoy the dirt and grow further. **WT**

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org Subscriptions Office: (800) 835-4558; FAX (310) 260-8970; E-mail: SGISUBS@aol.com

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427

Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$110 for Three Years



Printed on 100% recycled paper

Copyright © 1999 by SGI-USA. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 16 SPEECH

Complete Rejection of Violence

At the graduation ceremony of the Soka Junior High and High Schools, SGI President Ikeda says that 'the complete rejection of violence is a fundamental principle' of Soka education.

For me, the happiest, most meaningful days of the year are the graduation and entrance ceremonies of Soka Junior High and High Schools [SokaGakuen] and Soka University.

Though the weather report called for rain today, that gloomy prediction has been overturned. We are blessed with sunny skies. I hear that it is also bright and sunny in the Kansai region. Congratulations!

Let me make a suggestion: Let us have the names of all the teachers from both Tokyo and Kansai Soka Gakuen who are gathered for this occasion engraved on a plaque to be displayed in the new Central Tower of Soka University. I want to praise and commemorate for all time the marvelous efforts of all our teachers, who have made such an enormous contribution to the building and development of Soka Gakuen.

And, as an eternal memorial, let us also include the names of all those whose efforts have been so important from the schools' founding and the names of students who died while enrolled in our schools. I would be most happy if my proposal would be considered at one of the directors meetings in the near future.

I want to start by saying something I hope you will all bear in mind for the future. A recently published book graphically describes school violence in Japan: students insulting and attacking their teachers; teachers harming their students, both physically and psychologically; and students fighting among themselves. But schools are places of learning. They are centers of education, where character is built.

Ignoring their true purpose and turning schools into places of insult and violence is a terrible thing. Such behavior reflects the state of Animality. If places of

learning in Japan and the rest of the world are reduced to arenas of violence, the future of humanity can only be one of never-ending violence.

Students are in school to learn from their teachers. I believe that students should respect their teachers. To this day, I still feel tremendous respect for my elementary school teachers.

People who can respect their teachers throughout life are truly "good students." On the other hand, those who fail to respect their teachers are nothing more than "talented animals," as Nichiren Daishonin would say.

The complete rejection of violence is a fundamental principle of Soka Gakuen. If a violent person should appear in the schools' midst, I hope you, the students, will make an effort to discuss the problem and join together to protect your schools from violence.

The same holds true for families. How sad it is for parents who have devoted their lives to raising their children only to have them turn on them violently as they grow older!

There is a story in the Buddhist scriptures about a son who killed his father — this is the story of King Ajatashatru. After encountering Buddhism, Ajatashatru felt deep remorse for his actions and reformed himself.

The way of true humanity is to love and care for your parents and to avoid worrying or troubling them. You may think your parents are always nagging you, but try to take it in stride, with composure and a big heart. Say to yourself, for instance: "He's under a lot of stress and doesn't have any other way to let off steam!" "She's having a hard time, so I'll let her rant and rave, if it makes her feel better!" Be kind to your parents, and make an effort to create a happy, cheerful home life.

When the times are fraught with difficulty, one must go where the need is greatest.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there lived a great Swiss educator, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. When I was young, I wrote an article on his life and achievements. Pestalozzi addressed the graduates of the school he founded as follows: "You have received a fine educa-

tion! You have become outstanding people! You are now ready to serve humanity, and you are taking the initiative in doing so.... My friends, perfect yourselves in your own chosen course of endeavor!"

In that same spirit, I offer my praise to our graduates, who have achieved such astonishing growth. My congratulations to all of the graduating classes of Tokyo and Kansai Soka Gakuen, as well as the Soka Elementary Schools! You all worked very hard. Today is a victory celebration, a gathering of young men and women who have won the crown of learning. You are all winners!

As of today, Tokyo's High School has graduated 10,215 students, and Kansai's High School 7,602 students. A solid flow of talented individuals has been established. Soon the 21st century, the Century of Soka, will begin.

Graduation certificate number 10,000 has been presented to Ms. Yuriko O'uchi. She commutes two hours to school every day from Funabashi in Chiba Prefecture, and she is very active in the Koto [Japanese Zither] Club. One of her younger sisters is also a student at Tokyo Soka Gakuen and another younger sister will enter the school this April. My congratulations also go to Noriko Udagawa and Yoko Oshikane, recipients of graduation certificates 9,999 and 10,001, respectively. I am aware of your activities as well.

Indeed, all of you graduating students without exception are ever present in my thoughts. Therefore, please continue, with confidence, to make excellent progress in your endeavors.

In June 1996, just a few months after this year's graduates started junior high or high school, I visited Cuba. At the time, there was tremendous tension between Cuba and the United States, and many opposed my visit. Several of my American friends expressed their concern. But I am a lion.

It is precisely when the times are so fraught with difficulty that one must go where the need is greatest. This is my view of life. For the sake of the people, for the sake of peace and for the sake of the future of humanity, I have always acted according to my beliefs, with complete sincerity and



SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, attend the unveiling of a bust of Linus Pauling at Tokyo Soka Gakuen, March 16.

utter lack of fear of any consequences. I want you all to be lions, too.

While in Cuba, I received an honorary doctorate from the University of Havana, a highly esteemed institution of learning with a proud 270-year history. Incidentally, in just the last three years, I have accepted, as the founder of your alma mater, 26 honorary doctorates and similar awards from universities and institutions around the world. If future conferrals of which I have been notified are included, the total number of such honors comes to 82.

Mentor and disciple are one — this means that all these honors have also been conferred upon you, our students. I am the means; you are the end. I am only here for your sake.

The conferral ceremony for the honorary doctorate from the University of Havana was held in a grand hall. Beautiful murals on the walls and ceiling symbolically depicted the joys of learning. Then, in the midst of the ceremony, a violent thunderstorm began, which led me to say, as I stepped up to the podium: "What marvelous thunder! It is the music of the heavens, the resounding drum, the resplendent symphony of the skies, congratulating the progress of humanity toward the victory of peace. And what wonderful rain! The skies are telling us that we must not allow ourselves to be defeated by trouble!

We must advance courageously through the storm of adversity!"

President Ikeda's spontaneous remarks on that occasion won the warm applause of the audience and transformed the mood of the ceremony.

In that address, I spoke of the great Cuban hero José Martí. He was a champion of independence who fought and risked his life for freedom and justice in Latin America in the latter half of the 19th century.

A dialogue that I am conducting on the subject of José Martí, incidentally, will be serialized in the monthly magazine *Ushio* from the June issue. My partner in this dialogue is Dr. Cintio Vitier, the founder and president of the Center for the Studies of José Martí in Havana.

As you know, I have published dialogues with many of the leading intellectual lights around the world, in which we have discussed such subjects as peace, human rights, philosophy and education. And I continue to engage in such dialogues — why? Because life is short. And the challenge is to see how much one can do, how much one can put one's mind to good use. I wish to continue creating as much value as I possibly can.

Through studying hard, we can repay our parents' sincere love and devotion.

José Martí, who saved his nation and changed history, was the eldest son of an ordinary Cuban family. He had seven younger sisters. His father was frequently out of work, and the young Martí was forced to quit school just before his elementary-school graduation to work in a grocery store. But he was still determined to study, and at 12 he went to the nearby junior high school and asked to be allowed to study and work at the same time.

Today, the unveiling ceremony of a bust of the world-renowned scientist Linus Pauling was held at Tokyo Soka Gakuen. Dr. Pauling also came from a very poor family and lost his father at an early age. Because of his family circumstances, he had to work his way through school.

Affluence does not necessarily equal happiness. In fact, great people may be more likely to come from poor families. When one is surrounded by the comforts of wealth and takes them for granted, one tends to be spoiled and unmotivated.

Japan today is experiencing an unprecedented period of economic hardship. I hope that you all appreciate the tremendous efforts your mothers and fathers are making to enable you to attend Soka Gakuen. Let's give them all a hearty round of applause right now!

I hope that in the future, you will all try hard to ease the burden of your parents. I hope you will be big-hearted and do something special for them. Take them on a trip overseas, or treat them on an evening meal in the restaurant of a nice hotel.

Most of all, to repay your parents' sincere love and devotion, which are as deep as the ocean itself, I hope you study as hard as you can and cultivate your abilities to the utmost. Learning is a human prerogative that no one can take from you. The harder you study, enduring all pains and sufferings, the broader and better a human being you will become. You will become a deeper, richer person.

Animals cannot study as humans do. Even among human beings, evil people lack the spirit of learning in the truest and best sense of the word.

Stretching our intellect stretches our humanity.

On March 14, I met and talked with the president of Queens College of the City University of New York, Dr. Allen Sessoms,

who is also a leading physicist. With immense pride, he told me that he believed that the pursuit of learning involves difficult challenges. And he added that when we stretch our intellect, we stretch our humanity, too.

Let us return to the story of José Martí: He was able to make an arrangement with his junior high school to work and study at the same time. He lived at the school, assisting the teachers in preparing for their classes and doing janitorial work. And he studied diligently.

It was at this school that he met his great mentor in life, the school's principal, Rafael María de Mendive, a man of outstanding personal integrity and character. Martí's mentor had tremendous intellectual breadth and was also a poet and a passionate man of action. At the same time, he was strongly committed to justice for the people, and he actively opposed, with his full energies, the arrogant authorities who oppressed them.

I believe that the same can be said of all the teachers and staff of Soka Gakuen.

Students are the first priority. True educators regard their students as more important than their children, their own family.

The youthful Martí completely devoted himself to his mentor. He absorbed all that his mentor had to offer. He read voraciously and polished his language skills until he possessed a brilliant command of words and became a warrior of free speech.

He also assisted the principal in his work. He recorded and collected Mr. Mendive's lectures. The "Discussions on Youth" series — conducted between myself and leaders of the high school division in Japan, which came out in book form today in Japan — is also a work compiled by similar behind-the-scenes efforts.

Victory is attained by enduring tests and trials — and surviving.

When Martí was only 15, his beloved mentor was baselessly attacked, accused and imprisoned. Martí's school was shut down.

But in the midst of this turmoil, the loyal disciple did not quaver. He visited his mentor daily in prison. He comforted his mentor's terrified wife, saying: "Please don't worry. I will have revenge on his enemies. Just you wait and see!" How well I understand Martí's state of mind at that time. I served Mr. Toda with ex-



Dr. Allen Sessoms, president of Queens College of the City University of New York, meets with President Ikeda, March 14.

actly the same devotion.

Last December, when we had a commemorative photograph taken together, all of you sang "Atsutamura," a song about Mr. Toda's hometown of Atsuta Village in Hokkaido. Your voices still ring in my heart.

Today is March 16. Forty-one years ago today, just a short time before Mr. Toda's death, an important ceremony was held. Mr. Toda had invited the Japanese prime minister to attend that ceremony, but though the latter had agreed to do so, he failed to show up.

However, today, I, Mr. Toda's disciple, have deep relations of trust and friendship with presidents and prime ministers around the world. On March 12, Prime Minister Vasily M. Vlasov of the Sakha Republic of the Russian Federation visited me, bringing with him an official invitation from President Mikhail E. Nikolaev to visit that country.

I want all of you to be active on the world stage, too. The Japanese people, with their narrow "island mentality," tend to be jealous of the achievements of others. There is no need to concern yourself with such a petty-minded world.

The hand of the oppressive forces of authority soon reached out for the young Martí. He was imprisoned, driven from his native land and exiled to Spain. All this took place in his late teens, when he was about the same age as all of you, our young graduates today.

How significant are things such as being scolded by your teachers or having difficulties with your studies when compared to being exiled from your homeland? Endurance is the key. Victory is attained by enduring tests and trials — and surviving.

Martí endured and survived numerous trials. He called out: "Why do we live? So that we may

Topics for Discussion Meetings

Endurance

From This Speech:

Endurance is the key. Victory is attained by enduring tests and trials — and surviving. Cuban hero José Martí endured and survived numerous trials. He called out: "Why do we live? So that we may become stronger than all the obstacles and difficulties that we face!" He maintained that there can be no victory without strong determination. He firmly believed that "the presence of one just person is stronger than an entire mob that is unconcerned with justice."

1. Have you experienced achieving victory through endurance?
2. What were the things that helped you to endure?
3. What does it mean to you to "become stronger than all the obstacles and difficulties that we face"?
4. Do you have an experience of achieving justice in your life?

become stronger than all the obstacles and difficulties that we face!" He maintained that there can be no victory without strong determination. He firmly believed that "the presence of one just person is stronger than an entire mob that is unconcerned with justice."

Our society today is rudderless and lacks a solid philosophy and principles. That is why I urge every one of our students to build a self that is brave and unshakable! Stand up like a towering Mount Fuji!

Martí valued sincere friendship over any treasure, regarding it as the most valuable thing in life; this constitutes an immortal drama. He was determined not to live a life that fades into the darkness like the lives of base traitors but to live facing the sun and fighting hard as a decent human being to the end. He lived with this spirit throughout his life.

Rector Zhou Li Gao of the University of Macau, who is attending our Kansai ceremonies today, experienced the cruel barbarism of Japanese forces invading and occupying his hometown during his childhood. Yet he weathered that adversity and later studied at China's Tsinghua University. He has gone on to work for peace on a global scale, earning the respect of all as a person of wisdom and courage.

At just about the time that Rector Zhou was born, future Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and his wife, Deng Yingchao, were engaged in a ferocious struggle for their nation. They were "rank-and-file soldiers," along with many others, in the battle for a new China.

Deng Yingchao used to encourage her comrades: "Let's do

our best. We have the conviction and ideals of our revolution. We refuse to be defeated. If we give in to fear, all is lost. We are right, and right is never defeated."

The new century is right before our eyes. You are all suns of Soka, rising at the dawn of the new century. You have no need to feel sad, dispirited or alone. I hope that — whatever you face in life — you will always be strong, honest, upright and positive, as you make this noble life one of regal triumph.

May you all mount white chargers and gallop forward on the long journey into the 21st century with perfect health and limitless glory! That is my daily prayer for you all.

I will conclude my speech with two poems for you:

*The talented students
Of our schools
Are leaving the nest.*

*Our children
Leave their nest
And take flight
Into the sky of their mission.*

Everyone graduating today receives a Founders Award. You are all equal. You are all proud, fine individuals. You are all very, very dear to me. When you get home, declare proudly to your parents that you have received the Founders Award!

Congratulations!

SGI President Ikeda's speech at the Tokyo and Kansai Soka Gakuen graduation ceremony, March 16. (President Ikeda, the schools' founder, attended the Tokyo ceremony, which was televised live to the Kansai campus.)

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

The Hard-working People of Scotland

SGI President Ikeda says that 'the people of Scotland have endured and overcome a harsh natural setting and history. They are hard-working, honest and patient.'

*With honest pride, I scorn
each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's
esteem and praise.*

These are lines of verse by the great Scottish poet Robert Burns, whom I read fondly in my youth.

Recently, a wonderful letter came along in the mail from Scotland. It was from Dr. J. Forbes Munro, professor of economics and social history at the University of Glasgow, and his wife, Sylvia.

On June 15, it will be five years since I received an honorary doctorate from that university. Dr. Munro kindly enclosed some photographs of that time as a memento. I can only join my hands in reverence at this warm, unchanging friendship.

Dr. Munro, in his capacity as clerk of the university senate, delivered an address during the dignified conferral ceremony, in which he explained the university's reasons for presenting me with an honorary doctorate.

•••••

The ceremony was steeped in the loftiest traditions of European higher learning. Celebrating its 550th anniversary in 2001, the University of Glasgow is truly a most hallowed, venerable institution.

The hall where the ceremony was held was illuminated by soft light pouring through stained glass windows, and the solemn strains of an organ filled the room. The silver mace carried at the head of the procession into the hall was a symbol of the university's dignity that had been passed down from the 15th century.

Each person who was to receive an honorary doctorate took his or her place in turn in a black stone chair that was fitted with an hourglass. Traditionally, hourglasses were used, I was told, to

measure the time during examinations for academic degrees.

A throne of learning that is devoted to the endless pursuit of truth must surely have just this rigor. A palace of education that preserves complete freedom of spirit must be just as awesome and sacred.

The University of Glasgow has always been overflowing with a pioneering intellectual spirit, which has led the way in humanity's development.

At the end of the 18th century, it was this adventurous citadel of applied learning that provided support to the inventor James Watt. Adam Smith, father of classical economic theory and a university member, used to visit Watt's workshop regularly to encourage his efforts. Needless to say, Watt went on to invent the steam engine, which led to the industrial revolution, which completely changed our entire world.

The University of Glasgow is also known for possessing the largest collection of works of the 19th-century American painter James McNeill Whistler anywhere in the world. At a time when Whistler was still a complete unknown, a professor of the Scottish university recognized his artistic achievement and promoted his paintings. As an expression of his gratitude, Whistler left much of his work to the university.

The University of Glasgow also made great contributions to Japanese education in the mid-19th century, unsparingly sharing the light of its learning with a Japan emerging into the modern world.

In all these actions, we see a university that does not merely look on in silence upon those trying to blaze new trails and those exposed to unfair opposition or persecution. Precisely because their work is so difficult, the university extends a hand, supports, encourages and fights alongside

them. This is the wisdom of true humanism.

Firmly defend those who are working for truth and justice! That is the Soka spirit, too.

Wearing a deep blue robe, Dr. Munro stood at the dais and spoke in the confident and well-modulated tones of a fine actor. The words *Soka Gakkai* and *Josei Toda* rang out powerfully again and again. The reverberations of that proud voice echoed in the depths of my heart, from where they will never fade.

•••••

Dr. Munro concluded his speech by quoting a poem of mine:

*Like the waterfall, fierce
Like the waterfall, unflagging
Like the waterfall, unfearing
Like the waterfall, merrily
Like the waterfall, proudly —
A man should have the bearing
of a king.*

I wrote that poem upon seeing the waterfall at Oirase in Aomori Prefecture, Japan. Two months after receiving the honorary degree from the University of Glasgow, I visited Aomori for the first time in 15 years and shared this honor with all my dear comrades in that northeastern region of Japan known as Tohoku.

Glasgow is a city of the north, sitting at 55 degrees latitude. The day we arrived in Scotland, Loch Lomond shone brightly in the sun, but on the day of the ceremony the wind was unexpectedly cold for the month of June. The weather was extremely changeable. My wife said to a friend that in our four days there, we had a taste of each of the four seasons.

In winter, Glasgow begins to grow dark from 3:00 in the afternoon, and by 4:00 the sun is completely gone. At 9:00 in the morning, it is still not fully light. It is a

season of endurance, especially for the Soka University students who study there as foreign exchange students.

What gets the students through those dark days and long nights is the warmth and friendship of Dr. and Mrs. Munro. There is also the warm support of the local SGI members, who are as kind as parents to the Soka University students.

Up to now, including those who have gone to Glasgow for brief study periods, 227 Soka University students have studied at the university, creating memories of hard work and impressive self-improvement that will sustain them throughout their lives. Just the other day, past and present University of Glasgow exchange students sent me a most heartening report on their current activities. They are all challenging themselves earnestly in their respective endeavors.

•••••

The name Glasgow derives from a Celtic word meaning green glen. During my visit, I took a commemorative photograph with the late SGI-UK General Director Richard Causton and SGI family members of Scotland in the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow, surrounded by burgeoning green. I have such fond memories of all of them. And I cherish that photograph to this day.

Led by Scotland Headquarters Leader Richard Porteous and Women's Leader Akemi Porteous, a great alliance of members — based on the spirit of many in body, one in mind (*itai doshin*) — extends today throughout Scotland, centering on Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and the Heart of Scotland.

Wishing to welcome my wife and me to Scotland some day, Mr. and Mrs. Porteous held weekly daimoku sessions at their home for 10 years, continuing for more than 500 sessions until our visit was realized.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Now in the Latter Day of the Law, the daimoku that Nichiren chants is different than that of previous ages. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo entails practice both for oneself and others" (*Gosho Zenshu*,

Continued on next page



Publisher
Fred M. Zaitso
Assistant Publisher
Greg Martin
Editor in Chief
Ted Morino

Managing Editor
Margie Hall
mhall@sgi-usa.org

Associate Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

Staff Writer
Stephanie Celano
scelano@sgi-usa.org

Contributing Writer
Terry Ellis

Contributing Artist
Ellen Brown

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers
Gregory Nakasuji
Kirk Condyles
Jonathan Wilson
Dixon Hamby

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
lishollis@earthlink.net

Bureau Chiefs
Phil Simpson, Atlanta
Fletcher Dalton, Boston
Veronica Evans, Chicago
Terry Ellis, Florida
Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii
Margie Hall, Los Angeles
Cheryl Utley, Midwest
Robert Taliatferro, New York
Dave Shadovitz, Philadelphia
Irene Owada, Rocky Mountain
JL Henriques, San Diego
Ron Baird, San Francisco
Bill Lawrence, Seattle
Wendy DeOre, Texas
Robin Meader, Washington, D.C.

Foreign Language Pages
Chinese: Ingrid Yeh
Korean: Charles Lee
Spanish: Cesarina Caro

READERS COMMENTS
Send to:
Mailbox
606 Wilshire Blvd. PO Box 1427
Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427
or e-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS
1-800-835-4558
or e-mail: SGISUBS@aol.com

FRIENDS FOR PEACE
ffp@sgi-usa.org

SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

FINE PRINT
fineprint@sgi-usa.org

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.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'EARLY SPRING'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 3-4

Two coal miners from Japan get the kosen-rufu movement in Germany going, encouraged by President Shin'ichi Yamamoto.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto was pleased by the youthful enthusiasm of Koichiro Sada, who sought to go to West Germany to help propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in Europe. Shin'ichi made a promise to the young man: "Should the membership in West Germany reach 10 households, we'll establish a district. And should it reach 30 households, we'll form a chapter."

Sada, then 28 years old, took this as a personal goal that President Yamamoto had set for him.

He left Japan on Nov. 1, 1963. Arriving in Düsseldorf, Sada went to see the hotel where Shin'ichi Yamamoto had stayed during his first visit to Europe.

He vowed silently as he stood in front of the building: "In this hotel, Sensei pondered achieving kosen-rufu in West Germany. It is saturated with Sensei's daimoku. I will also do my best!"

Sada got in touch with Eiji Kawasaki, the Gakkai's contact person for Europe. He began his activities by supporting and encouraging three other families who were Soka Gakkai members in West Germany. He also talked to his Japanese coworkers at the mine about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

The central figure for the Japanese Soka Gakkai members working at the coal mine in Gelsenkirchen, meanwhile, was a 23-year-old

named Michiya Moro'oka. Also hailing from Hokkaido, he had started practicing Buddhism in 1956 at age 17. At 18, he became a coal miner and began engaging energetically in Gakkai activities as a young men's division member.

Opening the *Seikyo Shimbum*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, he would read guidance by President Toda speaking of kosen-rufu in Asia and, later on, by the new president, Shin'ichi, sharing his cherished vision of worldwide kosen-rufu. Moro'oka thus developed a strong desire to play a role in actualizing these grand objectives. Like Sada, he felt that there was little chance of fulfilling these dreams. But then he learned that West German coal mines were recruiting Japanese miners, and he quickly signed on.

Being the main breadwinner in his family, however, Moro'oka faced a dilemma. One day, he summoned the courage to tell his parents of his dream. When his father, who had embraced faith before him and was practicing Buddhism sincerely, learned of his son's strong wish, he told him without hesitating: "I understand. Please go, and don't worry about us. Go and do your best for kosen-rufu!"

His going to work in West Germany thus settled, Sada left Japan in March 1962. In January 1962, shortly before his departure, he met President Yamamoto when he was

visiting Sapporo, Hokkaido, and told him of his imminent move to West Germany. Before leaving Japan, he also visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo and received some parting encouragement from Shin'ichi.

Both Sada and Moro'oka had made their way to West Germany with high hopes and great expectations, but their work in the coal mines was far from easy. Their inability to speak German made it difficult to communicate with their German coworkers. Their daily work quotas were also quite strict.

Especially for the slightly built Moro'oka, who weighed less than 132 pounds, working alongside the much taller and heavier German miners was much tougher and more demanding than he had imagined. He had to get up each morning at 4:30 and begin work at 6:00. Though he felt at the end of his physical limits, he pushed himself relentlessly each day.

Reminding himself that he had come to West Germany after vowing to work for kosen-rufu there, and that the Gakkai members of his district in Japan had warmly sent him off, he realized he had no right to complain about his situation.

To continue this punishing work routine, Moro'oka had to eat twice the normal amount and build up his



body. Having been raised on Japanese fare, however, he found it difficult to eat typical German food such as black bread with cheese or sausage. He had a real aversion to it. He would force himself to swallow the black bread by washing it down with water, fighting back tears as he did so. His perseverance gradually began to pay off, and his physical build and strength improved, allowing him to work harder than the average miner.

As he continued to show such real proof of his faith and determination, he became more and more trusted at work. And this resulted directly in all the Japanese miners being regarded in a more favorable light.

Moro'oka began his life in West Germany staying in the mining company's dormitory, but he wanted to become fluent in German as soon as possible, so that he could share the Daishonin's Buddhism with others.

So he decided to move out of the dorm and board with a German family. Using the German he managed to pick up, he eventually introduced the head of the family to the practice.

Through the efforts of Sada and Moro'oka, the membership began to gradually increase. They held discussion meetings and spoke of their shared dream of realizing kosen-rufu in Germany.

There were other members in Germany who did not work in the coal mines and were scattered across the country, some several hundred kilometers from where Sada and Moro'oka lived. To go encourage these members and carry out propagation activities in those areas, a car was absolutely essential.

Sada thus made the big decision to take out a loan and buy a used car. To make the payments, he had to economize, scrimping on food and clothing. The car was a Volkswagen.

Sada was happy to own a car that was regarded in Japan as an unobtainable luxury item. He dubbed it *The Young Lion* and began to drive it all over West Germany.

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

Continued from previous page

p. 1022). A life in which we chant daimoku and work for kosen-rufu together with a harmonious assembly of fellow believers will create a rhythm of success, happiness and victory that grows stronger and more vigorous year after year. Those who pursue a solitary Buddhist practice will live a sad, lonely life, without joy or satisfaction.

Sir William Wallace, the great Scottish national hero who rose up to fight against oppressive rulers, was from the region that is now western Glasgow. He was eventually betrayed, imprisoned and cruelly executed, but his fierce fighting spirit lived after him and inspired the Scottish people, who finally freed themselves from English rule. A treatise on human rights composed by the leaders of that resistance movement is said to

have been used as a reference by the drafters of the American Declaration of Independence.

Courage opens the way to all things.

The people of Scotland have endured and overcome a harsh natural setting and history. They are hard-working, honest and patient. With a magnanimity of spirit that enables them to make their home wherever freedom reigns, they have also left Scotland to be active on the world

stage. Mr. Makiguchi, in his book *Geography of Human Life*, made note of this.

In November 1995, a year after I visited Glasgow, I flew to Nepal, the birthplace of Shakyamuni, to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Tribhuvan University. To my surprise, the band played "Scotland the Brave" in my honor. Thinking of all my

friends in Scotland, standing tall and proud as the Himalayan peaks, their faces shining with friendship and goodwill, I listened with a feeling of supreme reverence.

This series is published as "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution in the *Seikyo Shimbum*."



DIVERSITY '99 transcends differences

In an explosion of ruffles and feathers, native costumes and exotic headdresses, the Diversity '99 Festival, hosted by SGI-USA South Florida members, spread a message of joy and friendship for the approximately 1,500 people attending. On a spectacularly brilliant day, May 23rd, the Florida Nature and Culture Center Amphitheater reverberated with the sounds of Latin, Caribbean and other cultural performances. At the same time works of artists, writers and musicians were on display.



Not only were S.G.I. members represented but members of the surrounding community, as well. "Of the 22 artists showing in the art show, 17 were nonmembers," said Monica Lema, the event coordinator. "The purpose of Diversity '99 was to allow people to bring out their individuality and enrich each other by learning about other cultures."

A number of the performing groups were from the community, too. Notably the Bolivia Magica Ballet, a well-known indigenous performing group based in South Florida; Paulo Gaulano Fantasy, a Brazilian costume stylist; Mariachi Band Azteca from Mexico; a Brazilian Capoeira group; Salsa Casino, a latin dance group; and the Frevo Group of martial artists.

"What a beautiful location to have such a unifying event. I have always believed in the power of music and rhythm to bring people together. Today is such a celebration," said Geeta Sacred Song, a Mayan Huichol Indian from Mexico and cultural activist. She was invited by an SGI friend.

"Being from Norway, I am aware of many different cultures in Europe," said Helga Bruland, a student of international business and finance at Florida Atlantic University. "But through this festival I was able to learn a lot about the differences of latin cultures. I especially liked the beautiful costumes and presentations about the different countries. With so much fear about differences, it is refreshing to see cultures presented in a positive way."

Said Miriam Pinilla, a Deerfield Beach resident, who hails from Panama and was involved in producing a literature exhibit: "We wanted to be able to pool our collective abilities to transcend differences in the way we perceive different cultures. In this way, we could overcome the inherent barriers that isolate us." Diversity '99 fit perfectly with the recent changes in the Southern Zone. The new Zone now includes the Caribbean as well as parts of the southeastern United States. Plans for future diversity festivals will include Europe and the Orient, and will further emphasize bringing the community to the FNCC.

For more information about the Diversity Festivals, see Florida Region's website at <http://www.sgi-usa-florida.org/diversity>



Article by Jim Dreisbach.

Photos by Lana Favero, Calvin Ellis, Sueli Negreiros, Celia Bastos and Francisco Palacio.



GUIDELINES

Maintaining Our Momentum

from General Director Zaitso



Fred Zaitso

Dear World Tribune reader,

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your untiring dedication and support of American kosen-rufu. We have arrived at the mid-point of 1999, the last year of the 1900s.

This year, we have begun a system of quarterly focus points: Propagation, Contribution, Publications and Discussion Meeting Participation. Of course, these focus points should not be reason to forget about other important features of our ongoing movement. Rather, based on a consistent foundation of faith, practice and study, we can use these quarterly points to collectively focus our attention while continuing to maintain momentum for all aspects of our kosen-rufu movement. The first two quarters, focusing on propagation and contribution, have already passed with remarkable progress and success. My appreciation for your efforts is beyond description.

What do we study for? According to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, our founding president, it is the interconnected and advancing cycle of faith, practice and study that is prompted by one's self-motivation to study. Study provides a deeper understanding, which inspires one's faith leading to renewed action or practice, which, in turn, requires more understanding and so forth. This process is what is meant by the expression, "turning the wheel of Buddhist practice leading to enlightenment."

If we study only for study sake, however, then it is not Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. The Daishonin

said, "The daimoku that Nichiren now chants in the Latter Day of the Law is different from that of previous times; it is Nam-myoho-rence-kyo for both oneself and others" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1022). Our practice for others means praying for others' happiness. The results of such a prayer can be expressed in many ways; sharing an experience at a discussion meeting or visiting a friend or fellow member to encourage them, for example. But the primary meaning of praying for others' happiness is shakubuku or propagation. I believe we all know this, but Nichiren Daishonin says that true understanding is expressed through one's actions. "Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 95). Action, based on study, is central to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The Central Executive Committee last year determined that two new members per district during this year was a reasonable estimation of what could be accomplished on average by each district throughout the nation. In conversations with people during my travels around SGI-USA, I've come to understand that this information is not widely known or understood. Certainly, dialogue within each district should be the means by which they create their own goals. In this regard, two new members per district should not be considered a goal imposed from above, but rather a stimulation for the districts to discuss how to implement their own propagation effort and what goals are appropriate for them.

Many districts have guests at their meetings. This great desire to introduce the SGI to others has resulted in more than 8,000 guests at the women's general meetings in February and at the youth division March 16 meetings. Authentic care expressed through compassionate action is what will transform guests into members who embrace the Gohonzon. Sincere prayer for our friends and guests to overcome their problems and negative karma prompts dialogue. This dialogue can provide the opportunity to propose, "Let's chant together!" or "Let's read the Gosho to find the answer to that problem." In contrast, passively waiting for our friends to learn about Buddhism and the SGI through their self-motivated questions is not an expression of care. Rather, our courageous initiative to introduce guests to the practice allows them to enter more deeply into the Daishonin's world.

I encountered one district that consistently uses a guest book at the discussion meetings for all newcomers to register their visit. I believe this is a common practice in society. The members of that district then chant about each of these guests and from time to time will call them to see how they are doing and invite them to future activities. Compassion expressed in this kind of action for the sake of another person's happiness is what touches their hearts and is the key to deepening everyone's understanding of the Daishonin's Buddhism. We really chant daimoku for our guests to chant daimoku to become happy. Wisdom about what action is best will result from this kind of prayer.

Now is the time to complete the foundation for the Century of Life in the coming era. How can that be accomplished? I believe it is a solid organizational foundation of districts empowered with a firm grasp of this important point, who are joyfully challenging the goal for propagation that they have set. Districts that proceed without a sense of pressure or obligation toward their goal with a never-give-up commitment will reap boundless benefit and achieve victory for their members and society.

The remaining focus points for the last half of this year are publications and discussion meeting participation. In reality, these are another name for propagation. Without the shakubuku spirit, promoting our publications or inviting members and guests to discussion meetings is rootless. President Ikeda says that leaders should always consider how to advance kosen-rufu. The means for this is making the propagation effort to promote the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* and increase our discussion meeting attendance. It may sound dry and business-like in print, but the drama of growth and benefit that unfold within each life that engages in this pursuit is greater and more meaningful than the best Hollywood can produce! The key is basing everything on serving our members and our friends.

Support Those Who Bring Guests to Meetings

In order to propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, it is vital that the leaders support the sponsors who bring guests to the meetings. We should very naturally engage the guests in dialogue, answer any questions they have, and begin to establish a relationship with them. Some will not be interested at this time. Others, however, will want to know more about our practice or will want to begin practicing. The following is intended as a checklist for leaders to remind us if we are placing a priority on helping the sponsors take care of their guests.

Everything, of course, begins with prayer — wholehearted prayer for the members' happiness, good health and prosperity; and that the members, as a result of their own growth, are very naturally introducing others to this practice. Also, we can pray that the meeting itself will convey the greatness of this Buddhism and inspire all of the guests to want to try this practice or at least to further explore it.

After the meeting, have a warm one-on-one dialogue with the guests. If they are amenable, schedule a time to visit them with their sponsor. Periodically follow up to see how you can help the sponsor with their guest.

Once the guest has decided to begin practicing, ensure that he/she:

- is learning gongyo.
- is regularly doing gongyo and chanting daimoku.
- is subscribing to the publications.
- has an altar set up.
- is connected to his/her group and district leaders.
- is attending discussion meetings.
- is attending new members' gatherings.
- is studying to deepen his/her understanding of Buddhism so he/she can share it confidently with others.
- is inspired to go for his/her hopes and dreams.
- is getting his/her questions answered.
- is getting sufficient personal attention so that he/she develops self-motivated faith.

After individuals receive the Gohonzon, regular follow-up is crucial to help them develop a strong foundation in faith. We must continuously encourage and inspire every person how to utilize this practice to uncover his/her maximum potential.

Fred M. Zaitso, SGI-USA General Director

A New Propagation Movement Based on Each Person's Happiness

The following words were given by SGI-USA YMD Leader James Herrmann at the June session of the Central Executive Committee held at the SGI Plaza in Los Angeles.

By JAMES HERRMANN

SGI-USA YOUNG MEN'S DIVISION LEADER



I really want to express my appreciation to all of you for this great opportunity to really challenge my life as the SGI-USA propagation leader. I really want to work to fulfill the mission SGI President has entrusted us with for American kosen-rufu — to widely spread and declare the correct understanding of this Buddhism here in our country. I will bet my life, to the very last ounce of energy that I have, to realize this.

I wanted to share with you my experience about doing shakubuku with my mother. In the early days of our practice, my mother would take me with her door-to-door in the largest apartment complexes we could find, and we would engage as many people in dialogue about Buddhism as possible. She would always encourage me that as soon as we were done, we'd go to McDonald's and get something to eat! As I watched my mother struggle in front of each of those people who opened their doors, and really try to convey the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — English was not her native language — I was sometimes wondering: "Wow! Why is she really doing this?" Many people closed the door in her face, but I could tell that she really cared about them. And I started to care about them, too.

I can't deny, even in my early years, that after doing these kind of activities, I really felt different. I really felt great afterward. And it wasn't just because of McDonald's. There was some kind of change going on inside.

Shakubuku should always be based on our care and compassion for the person we are sincerely introducing to this Buddhism. That's why it changes us so much.

Although I think that in the past we were very successful at introducing many people to this practice, and even getting them to join, I think that sometimes our focus was based more on getting a result than helping someone become happy. Our new shakubuku movement is based on each person, not based on numbers.

Who do we introduce? I think that regardless of how wonderful people may appear on the outside, everyone experiences some sort of suffering or has some kind of goal in life that they want to achieve. However, in order to really explain the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism to them, we have to identify what their struggle is that they're having in life, and then we also need to find out what kind of goal they have.

When we know those things, we can positively share with them the greatness of this Buddhism, and how they can really overcome their suffering and achieve their goals. President Ikeda says in the June *Living Buddhism* that "no benefit can compare to the joy of dedicating one's life to kosen-rufu. No joy is greater than the joy of propagating the Mystic Law. Nothing is greater than the joy of seeing other people become happy as a result of our efforts and dialogue. And when we rejoice at others' happiness, our own lives become increasingly pure."

In thinking about this, I remembered those early days, and how things had changed after 1990. My mother changed from doing door-to-door shakubuku to really doing a different type of shakubuku. My mother is a widow now, and her English is getting better. She actually — after I left Texas and moved to Los Angeles — joined a gym. I never thought my mother would join a gym. When I called and asked her why, she said: "For two reasons. One was to improve my health, and the other was to do shakubuku." She so far has successfully introduced two people from her gym who are now practicing Buddhism.

I want to go over some points that we talked about at the Central Executive Committee meeting in June. I think, as leaders, that we should start speaking at meetings about the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism and seizing every opportunity to do so. In *The Human Revolution*, volume 10, President Ikeda initiates a great shakubuku campaign in Osaka. He starts with the re-shakubuku of all the members and leaders; he told them about the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism again. And that gave them confidence to go back into society and introduce others to this practice.

Also, as leaders, many of us give personal guidance. When giving personal guidance, I think we should reemphasize the importance of shakubuku. In

general, I think our lack of attention to this basic component of our practice has resulted in many members whose inner focus is directed on themselves rather than on kosen-rufu.

The third point I want to share is that we should share our personal experiences of doing shakubuku. At the CEC, the new zone youth leaders shared our experiences of doing shakubuku — the good and the bad. The bottom line was that as youth we really have to use our voice. We have to use our voice to introduce others to this practice.

A New York leader was sharing his experience about using his voice. He was encouraged by a shakubuku champion that youth must use their voices. If you don't feel that you can use your voice, begin by talking with a dog, this shakubuku champion says, and then work your way up to human beings. Anyhow, let's not shakubuku dogs — let's not be afraid to use our voices to introduce our friends in society.

SGI-USA has the goal of two new members per district this year, and we're 25 percent toward that goal — but more than half the year is gone. How do we get back on track? First of all, we need to help and support each district in achieving a victory. I think that's so important, because this goal of two shakubuku per district is one that we really want them to achieve. Again, I have to emphasize, this is not a numbers campaign but a way for the members in each district to be victorious.

Finally, I think that from now, within the next three months, if each district can succeed in doing one shakubuku, that will put us back on track by the end of September.

Again, I want to express my determination: I'll definitely do my best, and if there's anything I can do to support you in your efforts, please feel free to call me at the SGI Plaza.

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Spreading the Message Via Publications

The following words were given by SGI-USA YWD Leader Renu Jiandani at the June session of the Central Executive Committee held at the SGI Plaza in Los Angeles.

By **RENU JIANDANI**

SGI-USA YOUNG WOMEN'S DIVISION LEADER



Thank you so much for this opportunity to share my determination toward the next quarter. Today, I was appointed Publications Promotion Leader and I feel so appreciative that Mr. Zaitzu, Mrs. Clark and Mr. Sasaki have boldly entrusted me with this responsibility. I also feel their tremendous support when they told me that together we will absolutely create a great victory.

Traditionally, it has always been the women's division who consistently promote and encourage members to subscribe and read our publications, the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. Most youth of the SGI-USA do not have experience in promoting the publications. This will be a new challenge but through this activity, we can learn from the great spirit of the men's and women's division members who have made tremendous efforts to build this organization.

Our goal is to encourage each person in each district to subscribe to the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, using it as a tool to grow in our practice and study so that we can confidently propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

I'd like to share a brief experience related to promoting the *World Tribune*. A few years ago, one of my friends was struggling in her life and she was pregnant at that time. I encouraged her to practice this Buddhism and she began right away. She had her baby shortly afterward and was unable to attend activities. Even though I was very busy and I could not visit her every day, I encouraged her to subscribe to the *World Tribune*. She did and was so encouraged by reading the *World Tribune* that she kept chanting on her own. A year or so later she decided to receive the Gohonzon. She is a strong member today and her children practice in the Junior High and High School divisions.

I realize the value of encouraging even one person to receive the *World Tribune* so they can strengthen their faith and deepen their understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Watching my friend grow and become happy in her life has been a great joy for me and has truly deepened our friendship.

By the beginning of July, each region will receive Publications Promotion Kits for each district in the region. This kit will include: a *World Tribune* poster; bumper stickers for new subscribers and those who promote; a button for the district *World Tribune* promotion rep; special *World Tribune* issues to be used for guests and new subscribers; and subscription envelopes. Also, during the months of July and August, the subscriptions office will provide for each region

a weekly report of new subscriptions and renewals processed during the previous week. We hope this service will be of assistance in addition to the lists of current subscribers by district, which have already been sent out to each region.

"A New Era" chapter in *The New Human Revolution* states: "Shortly before their plane landed in New Delhi, Shin'ichi turned to Masaki and asked, 'By the way, what sort of names do American newspapers have?'"

"Masaki responded, 'In America we have such famous papers as the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *Chicago Tribune*.' 'What is the meaning of the word *tribune*?' Shin'ichi inquired.

"It originally meant guardians of ancient Rome who were sworn to protect the common people from the nobility. I think it was chosen as a name of a newspaper because it signifies a voice that advocates justice and protects the people."

"Is that so?" Shin'ichi said. "Tribune would be a good name then. Since our objective is to build world peace and protect the happiness of humankind, what about calling our American paper the *World Tribune*?"

"Shin'ichi then said with even greater emphasis: 'It is very significant that we decided on the name *World Tribune* while flying over India, a land so closely connected to Shakyamuni Buddha. It is an omen that Buddhism is about to spread throughout the world.'"

I was so moved when I read that. Having been born in India and now fighting for kosen-rufu in America, I feel a sense of mission to reply to President Ikeda through showing my care for others by sharing with them and encouraging them to subscribe to and read the *World Tribune*. It is a paper that has led me to the Gohonzon and connected me directly to President Ikeda's words and heart during many difficult times. With appreciation, I'd like to carry this determination in my heart always.

The following is excerpted from a speech presented by SGI-USA YWD Leader Renu Jiandani at the June 27 kickoff for the SGI-USA Youth Grand Culture Festival to be held this fall in Los Angeles.

I was so moved when I read in *The New Human Revolution* that President Ikeda came up with the name *World Tribune* for our American paper while he was flying over India over 36 years ago. It has the potential to be a newspaper from America to the world!

In 1996, during his last trip to America, President Ikeda spoke about Gandhi's movement for independence through nonviolence. As I read



Photo by ANNE DIGATE

this once again, it made me more appreciative about our victory over violence, shakubuku and promoting the *World Tribune* activities toward this fall.

Gandhi's greatest weapon in his struggle to communicate his ideas to the people was to create his own newspaper! Gandhi believed that a newspaper's sole purpose is to serve the people. He began to write in prison and tens of millions of Indians waited eagerly to read each installment. The most encouraging part is that it was the youth who spread Gandhi's message, conveyed to them via the newspaper!

President Ikeda describes: "With newspaper in hand, the youth of India set off and spoke of Gandhi's spirit of nonviolence. It was through the selfless efforts of these courageous yet unrecognized youth, the spiritual message of Gandhi permeated every corner of Indian society and inspired the people to unite and take action. All of you, my dear friends of America, are spreading the message of Nichiren Daishonin."

The Spirit of Propagation

Words to the Wise



Therefore one should by all means persist in preaching the Lotus Sutra and causing them to hear it. Those who put their faith in it will surely attain Buddhahood, while those who slander it will establish a “poison-drum relationship” with it and will likewise attain Buddhahood. (“Buddhahood Through the Lotus Sutra,” The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 6, p. 197)

FROM SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA:

Propagation does not mean trying to force something on someone, nor is it for the sake of the organization. Propagation is an act of venerating the Buddha nature in the lives of others. Therefore, our efforts in shakubuku should be motivated by a spirit of the greatest respect for the other person. (February 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 30)



The words shakubuku and shoju are not exclusive to Buddhism. They reportedly were in common use in ancient Indian society. Shakubuku is the translation of the Pali term niggaha, meaning to reproach, and the Sanskrit term abhivaha, meaning to defeat through superior strength. And shoju is the translation of the Pali term paggaha, which means to extend help or shower blessings. (September 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 34)



It is a mistake to think that shakubuku means trying to force someone to take faith. Doing shakubuku essentially means speaking the truth. Since the Lotus Sutra explains the truth, it is called “the sutra of shakubuku.” (February 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 28)



We should do abundant shakubuku out of sincere conviction in the Daishonin’s teach

ing.... All we need to do is teach people earnestly and gently. The important thing is that we have this spirit to teach.... It is important to share Buddhism with a spirit of compassion. It’s almost like being in love. (February 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 28)



Mr. Toda often said, “We should not agonize over doing shakubuku. We have to do shakubuku with a sense of joy.” (February 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 29)



In seeking to propagate Buddhism after the Buddha’s passing, difficulties are inevitable. Therefore, it is necessary that we have a spirit of forbearance and patience. We need a spirit to endure. Enduring is neither retreating nor conceding defeat. We have to persevere and win. (February 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 31)



We invite a friend into a compassionate life space and warmly embrace them; we sit down in the same room and discuss life as equals. We discuss things and learn from one another as fellow human beings, and together we strive to improve our lives. Creating such a warm and welcoming space for dialogue and exchange is in itself shakubuku. (February 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 30)

All efforts to teach people about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in the Latter Day constitute shakubuku. Basing ourselves on the spirit of shakubuku to teach others about the Mystic Law without selfish concern, at times we might strictly refute a person’s mistaken views, while at other times we might explain the truth with a broad-minded spirit of tolerance for the other person’s beliefs. (September 1997 Living Buddhism, pp. 33–34)



While teaching his followers the shakubuku spirit of not begrudging one’s life, Nichiren Daishonin also emphasized the importance of showing people genuine courtesy and respect, and of conducting oneself with wisdom. (September 1997 Living Buddhism, p. 34)



No benefit can compare to the joy of dedicating one’s life to kosen-rufu. No joy is greater than the joy of propagating the Mystic Law. Nothing is greater than the joy of seeing other people become happy as a result of our efforts in dialogue. And when we rejoice at other’s happiness, our own lives become increasingly pure. (June 1999 Living Buddhism, p. 31)