



EXPERIENCE:

Lillian Wilner
beats
Hepatitis C.

page 3

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S POEMS

You Are Ambassadors of Happiness

SGI President Ikeda dedicated the following poems to participants in the SGI Training Course (June 30–July 4) in Tokyo.

Ambassadors of happiness —
Shaking hands in friendship,
Let your jubilant cheers
For kosen-rufu
Ring out across the globe.

...

Bodhisattvas of the Earth
From around the world
Have arrived here at last —
The lively bustle filling the Castle of Soka
Brings me great joy.

...

Ambassadors of kosen-rufu
From 52 countries,
Advance cheerfully
On this sure, eternal path.

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Northern California youth welcome SGI President Ikeda prior to the start of the first SGI Youth Division General Meeting at the San Francisco Culture Center, March 14, 1993.

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

San Francisco: Overflowing With Poetry

Remembering his first visit to San Francisco, SGI President Ikeda declares. 'How beautiful and overflowing with poetry is San Francisco in each of the four seasons!'

*The winds of the Future wait
At the iron walls of her Gate.*

This is how the acclaimed American poet George Sterling described San Francisco in "The Cool, Grey City of Love." It was into those "winds of the Future" that San Francisco-bound United Airlines Flight 98 headed as it took off from Hawaii's Honolulu Airport at 9:00 a.m. on Oct. 3, 1960. As we rose high in the sky, I looked protectively down on Hawaii — tranquil island of peace, realm of eternal calm — and chanted daimoku.

Having arrived there at 11:00

p.m. two days before, I had actually only spent a day in Hawaii. However, during that short stay, I put all my energy into sowing the seeds for the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law throughout the world for the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law. I prayed that the sun of the Mystic Law would shine forever, just as the immortal sun shines day after day. As Nichiren Daishonin says, "Even a single seed, when it is planted, will grow and produce much fruit" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 971).

Hawaii, brilliant starting point of my travels for worldwide kosen-rufu, has shown astonishing growth since my first visit. The

single district I established then has grown to 93 districts. And membership has increased at a remarkable pace, too, from the dozen or so members in 1960 to a dynamic force of more than 10,000 Bodhisattvas of the Earth today.

Among those who came out to greet me on that first trip was a family with a big, strong, 10-year-old boy. I remember shaking his hand. Today that young boy, Bert Kawamoto, is leader of the Pacific Zone, which includes Hawaii, Guam, Saipan and Samoa. He is exerting himself at the forefront of the kosen-rufu movement.

SEE SAN FRANCISCO, 7

Children Are Our Greatest Gift

By JOHN PLUMMER
NEW YORK

Even if the Buddha had not taught [that children are a treasure], you could tell as much simply from the evidence before your eyes.... Surely, there is no treasure greater than a child, no treasure greater than a child! Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. ("The Treasure of a Filial Child," The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 6, pp. 301-04)

Less than a month ago, my wife gave birth to our first child, a boy. A new "fortune baby." His name is Charles Faulkner Plummer-Guest, a mouthful to be sure; we just call him Charlie. He weighed 8 pounds, 3 ounces and measured 21 inches long at birth. He has blue eyes, which is standard for Caucasian babies at birth, and strawberry blond hair and a lusty cry. And he is the cutest, most charismatic little fellow his mother and I have ever encountered, and we have known a fair amount of infants in our day. (But then, of course, we are terribly biased, we know.)

The truth of the above passage has never been more apparent to me than since Charlie's arrival here. I have always had an overweening fondness for kids, frequently preferring their company to the larger-sized variety of human being.

But everything is different now that a kid of my own exists, and the Daishonin's wisdom is cast in a brighter, warmer, more incandescent light. Of Buddhism's three treasures — of the body, the storehouse, the heart — it is clear to me under which category a child, the "greatest" treasure, falls. Children, especially but certainly not

Don't Sleep Through Your Human Revolution

PERSPECTIVE

By SEAN GROVER
NEW YORK

Has this ever happened to you: You're at a planning meeting and the leader asks, "Who would like to take charge of this activity?" You remain silent, avoid eye contact, perhaps taking a moment to study your socks. Maybe you hide behind the person in front of you, awaiting for someone else to speak up and volunteer.



This is my ongoing personal struggle, to accept responsibility. I'd much rather fight behind the scenes for the success of an activity than take responsibility for it. Ultimately, I

resist taking responsibility out of fear I will fail. But when I let fear guide my decisions, I always doubt my capability. Not only that, I end up feeling miserable. As a result, my practice, and my daily life, stagnates.

As Ted Morino notes, "Self-doubt is the worst kind of doubt...self-doubt can prevent us from obtaining benefit and can even lead to us giving up our Buddhist practice" (June 25 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

solely one's own, are our heart's greatest treasures.

The Daishonin seems almost giddy as he repeats his sentiment, "There is no treasure greater than a child, no treasure greater than a child!" He seems to want to insure that we do not miss the message.

Children are the future in the present. They are our greatest bounty, and must be recognized and valued as such.

Charlie needs, more than anything, love. He responds to society and is clearly nourished by the sounds, sights, and touch of his fellow human beings. And he is remarkably specific already. I have never met another infant who grunts with such ferocity to preface his poops. He has this particular way of pursing his lips in moments of intense concentration. And he smiles his toothless grin in a way that is, as all smiles are, unique. (But then, of course, I am terribly biased, I know.)

The three presidents of the Soka Gakkai all struggled while taking responsibility for the organization. One could even say, struggle was the training ground for their leadership. Today SGI President Ikeda still experiences tremendous persecution because he accepts the responsibility of being president of the SGI. Imagine if, as a young man, he remained silent during planning meetings, if he gave into the fear of his own limitations, where would the Soka Gakkai be today?

To doubt myself is no benefit to anyone. Avoiding responsibility is a short-term solution that only diminishes happiness and benefit. By remaining silent, I was choosing to sleep through my human revolution.

To overcome this tendency, I set out to study the basics of our practice. I longed to recapture the wonder of my first years of chanting. Starting with gongyo, I struggled to understand the significance of the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Amazingly, whenever I felt lost or confused, President Ikeda's guidance was there to gently lead the way.

During gongyo, every morning and evening, I chant *ji ga toku burrai*. This translates as "since I attained Buddhahood." President Toda noted, "From the standpoint of the Daishonin's Buddhism, *ji ga toku burrai*, means to attain, on one's own, the three enlightened properties [of the Buddha]" (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life*

Span" Chapters of Lotus Sutra, vol. 3, p. 98). President Ikeda continues, "Ultimately, Buddhahood is attained on one's own, not through someone else's efforts. It is something we achieve through our own efforts" (*Ibid.*, p. 102). I now realize taking the responsibility for activities is the training I need for taking responsibility for my life, my happiness and the happiness of others.

Whether or not I manifest Buddhahood is up to me. *Ji ga toku burrai*, since I attained Buddhahood, implicitly means *me* — not someone else. Taking responsibility for the SGI, an organization dedicated to realizing kosen-rufu, is the most expedient means for raising my life-condition and accumulating benefit. Every opportunity to take responsibility for a district meeting or an activity is an opportunity to do human revolution. What's more, when I base my decisions on faith, not fear, my capacity expands to meet the new challenges. Fear melts away and wisdom emerges. Then the process of human revolution becomes a thrilling ride.

So for those of you who sit silently at planning meetings, letting fear be your guiding force, (and you know who you are), I leave you with the words of Martin Luther King from a sermon titled, "Antidotes for Fear": "Fear knocked on the door. / Faith answered. / There was no one there" (*A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King*, p. 517). ☐

In My Life

NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS IN
ACTION

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EXPERIENCE — LILLIAN WILNER, SPRING GREEN, WIS.

The Key Is Inner Revolution

Lillian Wilner shares how a change in life-condition based on her Buddhist practice freed her from an unhappy marriage and the Hepatitis C virus.

We were both young in faith, not knowing how to properly lead meetings and encourage people. It was a struggle to find others to practice with, however we were determined to hold meetings twice a week and chant two hours a day.

This is how I began my practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in 1975, as a pioneer along with one other person in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. We met in Montreal and moved to Edmonton to join the Alberta Ballet Company. While touring with the ballet company, we were forced to chant together a lot. In this way we overcame many of our differences, did human revolution and eventually united more in our efforts. Because of this, it wasn't long before two, three, and four other people began to practice. Within two years we were made a district and in six years a chapter.

I've overcome many problems and difficult situations since I began practicing this Buddhism. One such problem was being married to an on-again, off-again drug addict and alcoholic whom I supported financially most of the time. After 10 years of marriage and eight years of chanting, he had grown increasingly negative about my Buddhist practice. His drug and alcohol problem led him to paranoid and violent episodes, occasionally threatening, with a knife in hand, to go out and kill someone. He insisted that I had to go with him; I chanted desperately inside with all my heart and somehow it would never happen.

Based on encouragement I received while on a training course

in Japan, I chanted to become the best wife in the world. But the more I chanted and no matter how hard I tried, my husband became more negative.

At wit's end and out of fear for my life, I chanted to be with someone with whom I could work for world peace, and if indeed it was this man, I had to know! Almost immediately my prayer was answered, although I didn't realize it right away. He approached me about getting a legal separation. His reason was because he wasn't working and didn't want to work; he would go on welfare and file for bankruptcy on his overcharged credit card. We both agreed with the intentions of getting back together. However, as soon as he moved out, I realized that my prayer was being answered.

Within two weeks I went out with a man whom, after our second date, I knew would be my future husband. Four years later we were married. He tells me almost every day that I'm the best wife in the world. We share a wonderful and special relationship. Sheldon fully supports my Buddhist practice.

Today we are living in beautiful Spring Green, Wis., 40 miles west of Madison — our home for almost 10 years. I have my own school of ballet and my husband is managing director of an outdoor classical theatre, the American Players Theatre.

Two years ago, I received a letter from my ex-husband's wife informing me that he recently died from the Hepatitis C virus. I knew he had Non-A, Non-B hepatitis, but it never occurred to me that I could get it. A month later, I tested positive for Hepatitis C. I was shocked and scared! The only thing I knew about the virus was that my ex-husband had just died from it at age 49.

As I researched, I discovered that in the United States, an estimated 4 million people are infected, and 2,000 more people die each year from Hepatitis C than from AIDS. It is also the number one cause of liver transplants in the United States. Even though it is such a great health threat, I was amazed to learn how little people — physicians included — know

about it.

Hepatitis C is an insidious virus that has the ability to change its form frequently. Often, the immune system can't keep up with identifying and destroying all the mutations it makes, leaving the virus free to multiply. The liver is its favorite place to live causing, among other things, cirrhosis, liver cancer and liver failure. It can take decades before any symptoms occur and by then the liver damage is substantial.

At a district meeting, I made a determination that in one year I would completely clear the virus from my blood. To help me in my determination, I turned to a writing by Nichiren Daishonin called "The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra." In the letter, the Daishonin says, "No matter how earnestly Nichiren prays for you, if you lack faith, it will be like trying to set fire to wet tinder. Spur yourself to muster the power of faith. Regard your survival as wondrous. Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other. Then, just as the sutra says, 'All enemies are crushed'" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246).

In the explanation to the letter, there's a quote from former President Makiguchi which reads, "We often hear experiences of members who have recovered from illness, but, that much is a matter of course. Rather than merely enabling a recovery from illness, our faith should allow us to change the workings of illness into some positive benefit or growth."

I decided that the key was to do an inner revolution, to really change something inside my life. I also read an experience from a women's division member who had struggled with tuberculosis. She had chanted for three hours a day to be cured and her condition only worsened. When she went for guidance, she was told, "Faith is not a business transaction, it's not 'Let's Make a Deal.'" She was told that the bacteria in her body were in the life-condition of Animality. She had to raise her life condition higher, to that of the Buddha, then she would be cured. Reading this, I immediately rec-



Sheldon and Lillian Wilner.

ognized that the virus in my body existed in the state of Anger. For several years I have struggled on and off with a relationship at work that has progressively worsened. I determined to face the situation head on. I began to notice that when I was feeling really stressed out and upset about the situation I would experience pain in my right side by the liver. I realized that my low life-condition was contributing to the Hepatitis C.

This was an incredible awakening. I began to chant about my work relationship and the Hepatitis virus as if they were definitely connected. I saw overcoming my ill feelings as the direct link to clearing out the virus. Besides doing my usual morning and evening prayers, I began chanting inside all the time, in the car, whenever I could.

It was extremely difficult for me to remember that this situation was entirely my responsibility. Every fiber of my being wanted to rebel against that thought. One minute I would tell myself, "She's so arrogant, I have every right to be upset," or "she's so mean to me, why should I be nice to her?" Then I would remind myself that everything in my environment was a reflection of my life and that I needed to change myself from within.

Every bone in my body resisted, but eventually I started seeing her suffering and was able to feel some compassion for her life. I felt like I was cleaning dirt out of my life. I think I've gone deeper into my life than ever and I'm beginning to understand what courage really is. In "The Strategy

of the Lotus Sutra" it also says, "A coward cannot have any of his prayers answered" (MW-1, p. 246). President Ikeda also says about courage, "whether or not you have courage will determine your happiness or unhappiness in life." I realized it takes much more courage to face the demons within than the demons outside us. I've also come to the conclusion that doing human revolution can sometimes be a painful process, but it surely leads to absolute happiness.

In the process of all this, my doctor wanted to do a liver biopsy. I was tested every two months for a particular liver enzyme that could indicate liver damage. In the past, I had two slightly elevated readings. I was very reluctant to have a biopsy and was chanting that I would not have to have one. In the mean time, he decided to retest my P.C.R., which indicates how much virus is in the blood.

Much to my doctor's amazement and my own, my P.C.R. test came back negative, which means I've completely cleared the virus from my blood. I feel such incredible appreciation for my Buddhist practice and to the SGI for the encouragement I received. Apparently, the virus can still be harboring in my liver, so this ordeal may not be over yet. The doctor said I have to test negative for three consecutive years in a row before he will say I am completely cured. I am determined to continue to do human revolution, work for world peace and be 100 percent clear of the virus by the year 2001. W

Photo by ANDREA LYNCH

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA JUNE 17 MESSAGE

What Is Happiness, Anyhow?

SGI President Ikeda writes to the YWD members that 'it is extremely important to understand just what happiness is.'

To the 1 million Soka Gakkai young women's division members, who are advancing into the 21st century with newly appointed leaders.

What was the first country in the world where women won suffrage? It was New Zealand, an island-nation that gleams like a jewel in the South Pacific. The year was 1893.

Rotorua was the first city of that pioneering land of gender equality to issue a declaration for the abolition of all nuclear weapons. On June 16, my wife received an honorary citizenship from that beautiful city of forests and lakes. She was the first woman to receive such a distinction from the city. And it was also the first time, I have been told, that a husband and wife were both so honored.

Rotorua bestowed honorary citizenship on President Ikeda in November 1998.

My wife's award was conferred to coincide with Soka

Gakkai Women's Division Day, June 10. Both my wife and I regard it as an accolade given to her as a representative of all the women of the SGI around the world, and we are both filled with deep appreciation for this honor.

My wife met first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi at the age of today's junior high and high school division or very young YWD members. So from an early age, she received encouragement from Mr. Makiguchi.

After the war, under the leadership of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, she fought hard as a YWD member and later as a member of what today we call the young mothers group of the women's division. How wonderful it must have been to meet both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda!

What a proud, unsurpassed history of life one can write, when one participates energetically in SGI activities from one's youth! All of you, the YWD members who are dedicating yourselves to your great mission, are so important.

I am confident that 30 years from now, 50 years from now, you will be admired and looked up to by all as shining examples of world citizens and pioneers of the new century of women. And I am confident that you will be wholeheartedly enjoying lives of

supreme good fortune, repute and success.

•••••

I want to mention the subject of happiness. The fundamental goal of life is happiness. It is also the goal of faith. It is the goal of Buddhism.

It is extremely important, then, to understand just what happiness is. I think it is fair to say that people in all times and all places have desperately sought the answer to the question "What is happiness?" And yet the question remains fundamentally unanswered.

There are many people who possess great material wealth but are unhappy. Some of them might be mean or do nothing but fight and quarrel with others. Likewise, it is certainly possible to be very poor and yet be pure of heart, to see beauty in all things with the spirit of a poet and to enjoy great happiness.

Happiness is something very personal. Of two people in similar circumstances, one may be unhappy and the other happy. People are all different and perceive things differently. The reality of people's lives is infinitely diverse.

For instance, there are many women who, though they seem to have good fortune when they are single — possessing youth, beauty and wealth — end up extremely sad and unhappy when they get married. Living like a princess in a palace, eating food from plates of gold and wearing lovely, spotless finery is not happiness. In fact, it is stifling and boring, illusory and empty.

Though such a person may seem to be very happy, it is all a show. In reality, their happiness is extremely fragile and fleeting.

•••••

On the other hand, there are also many people who may appear to be suffering misfortune, but are, with strong determination and dignity, forging a life-condition of immense happiness — a life-condition like a magnificent painting to behold.

This month, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the SGI Hong Kong Cul-



Photo by ERIKA LAKATOS

'You, the YWD members, who are living lives of unsurpassed happiness and a sound, productive youth together with the SGI, must have the wisdom and discernment to see through to the heart of things and never be swayed or frightened by anything.'

ture Centre held an exhibition of the paintings and calligraphy of Chinese artist Fang Zhaoling. Madame Fang, noble mother of art, is 85 this year. Her works of the last three years have been especially well received as breaking new ground and achieving a new level of strength and beauty.

Madame Fang's husband died early, leaving her with eight small children to raise on her own. Throughout, she continued, like a pure, inexhaustible wellspring, to produce beautiful works of art. Her life epitomizes a drama of golden triumph, showing us that by surviving the tragic misfortunes of youth and experiencing many times the hardship of others, we can lead lives that many times richer. She also shows us how, in the final chapter of our lives, we can live with tremendous vitality and spirit.

If everything always goes our own way, we'll never fully savor real happiness. It goes without saying that the treasure of happiness cannot be found in a life of

ease and idleness. The diamond of happiness can only be found by making our way into the deep mountain recesses of life with great effort and exertion. It is not to be found in idly seeking fun and pleasure amid the bustle and bright lights of the city or in some lazy existence.

In "Epistle to Davie, A Brother Poet," the renowned Scottish poet Robert Burns had this to say about happiness:

*If happiness hae
not her seat
An centre in the breast,
We may be wise,
or rich, or great,
But never can be blest!
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang:
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us
right or wrang.*

In other words, all happiness and unhappiness is to be found within us. Our heart, as the Dai-

Topics for Discussion Meetings

Happiness

From This Message:

The fundamental goal of life is happiness. It is also the goal of faith. It is the goal of Buddhism. It is extremely important, then, to understand just what happiness is. I think it is fair to say that people in all times and all places have desperately sought the answer to the question "What is happiness?" And yet the question remains fundamentally unanswered.

1. How would you define happiness?
2. How do you believe the personal goals you are working on now relate to your future happiness?
3. In the future, are you confident that you will be a lot happier than you are now?
4. What makes you happiest in your life today?
5. How do you think that we can make a happier society and world?

shonin says, is what matters most (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 246).

The Daishonin also says, "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" (MW-1, 161). Chanting daimoku is the way to supreme happiness.

Our happiness throughout the three existences of past, present and future is determined by what we base our lives on, what we take as our fundamental ideals in life. Through the very act of chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, we do our human revolution and accumulate good fortune and benefit. We can also chant for the eternal happiness of the deceased.

In "The True Object of Worship," the Daishonin writes, "[The world of] Buddhahood is the most difficult to demonstrate" (MW-1, 53). The only way to achieve the state of true happiness that is Buddhahood is to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and work for the sake of the Law, for others and for society. The essential conclusion of the Buddhism of Shakyamuni and the Buddhism of T'ien-t'ai is the same as the Buddhism of the Daishonin.

In Buddhism, those who have compassion are happy. And those who propagate the Law are the most praiseworthy of all. Compassion, put another way, is

courage. To courageously chant daimoku and spread the teaching of Buddhism is compassion, and it is happiness.



There are no impasses in Buddhism. As its practitioners, we possess an eternal path of infinite hope, a garden of eternal youth. We must never forget that we embrace the Daishonin's Buddhism, the Buddhism that teaches how true inner happiness is the source of inexhaustible hope.

Reality can be ugly. There are many lowly, craven people. This is only to be expected, since we live in the evil age of the Latter Day of the Law.

That we of the SGI are often attacked and discredited, and that hatred and jealousy toward us abound, accords exactly with the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin's writings, which warn of the persecutions that will befall the Mystic Law's practitioners.

The SGI, which has won one resounding victory after another while undergoing persecution because of our efforts to propagate the true teachings of Buddhism, is a champion of the highest justice and truth. You, the YWD members, who are living lives of unsurpassed happiness and a sound, productive youth together with the SGI, must have the wisdom and



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

'The diamond of happiness can only be found by making our way into the deep mountain recesses of life with great effort and exertion.'

discernment to see through to the heart of things and never be swayed or frightened by anything.

In "Repaying Debts of Gratitude," the Daishonin writes, "A hundred years of practice in the land of Perfect Bliss cannot compare to the benefit gained from one day's practice in this impure

world" (MW-4, 272). I hope you will deeply ponder this passage, and engrave it in your lives.

In closing, let me share with you the words of Katherine Mansfield, a well-known New Zealand author: "We've got, in the long run, to be our own teachers. There's no getting away from that.

We've got to win through by ourselves."

To all of you, my beloved YWD members, I offer this prayer: May you enjoy good health! May you be filled with hope! May you be sunny and bright! And may you be victorious!



TV Program Highlights 'Daisaku Ikeda: The Man'

On June 27, KSCI-TV Channel 18 in Los Angeles aired a one-hour program in Japanese on the life of SGI President Daisaku Ikeda called "Daisaku Ikeda: The Man." The program, produced by Yoshio Senshu and Keiko Kimura, was broadcast to six Southern California counties and more than 3 million cable households.

The program chronicled President Ikeda's family background, accomplishments as the head of the Soka Gakkai International and encounters with world leaders such as Premier Zhou En Lai, from China, Premier Alexei Kosygin and former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev from the Soviet Union.

In this rare interview with Keiko Kimura in Tokyo, Japan, President Ikeda declares his vision for the new millennium: "Restoring the humanity of humankind must become our goal. We must return to a state of society where people can live as people.... I believe the coming century will be one spent in pursuit of these ends.

"People want to enjoy a life blessed with more wisdom, more stability, and more peace. This will begin with the human revolution of one single individual.... I'm convinced the 21st century will see an upswell of a mighty movement to plant the seeds of peace, of happiness and trust, the seeds to allow people to lead truly humane lives, in each of our hearts. This may seem like a long path, but it's actually the only route left to us."



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

— STEPHANIE CELANO

TV producer Keiko Kimura interviews SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, in Tokyo.

South Bay Members Take Entrance Exam in English

A single page of the *World Tribune* took her a week to read — even though she was at the advanced study level. But Asako Cooper decided to take the April 25 Entrance Exam in English anyway, basing her decision on the women's division motto for 1999, "Breaking Through the Barriers of Our Own Limitations."

"For a long time, I couldn't speak English," says Asako. "For the exam, Japanese people got together for one or two hours. We couldn't understand the questions. Each time we met, we took a long time looking up each word. But after the exam, I remembered a lot of them. Now I read the *World Tribune*

more than before." The South Bay Area (especially districts in Torrance and Gardena, Calif.) consists mostly of Japanese-speaking members — many at the advanced level of study. However, as Kazuko Yoshida explains: "We cannot really explain Buddhism to Americans. I really feel bad about that." So, with fellow Japanese speakers in North Torrance, she studied together with American members, putting the focus on English, as they tried to answer the Entrance Exam sample questions.

Another South Bay member who took the exam in English, Naomi Sato, says that "my main purpose in taking the exam was to learn Buddhist terms in English



Many non-native English speakers in the South Bay Area (Los Angeles) took the SGI-USA Entrance Exam in English.

and utilize the knowledge for future efforts to introduce people to this practice. We have a hard time explaining terms to Americans. We all had a good time. It's a golden memory for us."

— MARIANNE WINFIELD

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 16 ENCOURAGEMENT

Who Is Most Praiseworthy?

SGI President Ikeda attended a conference June 16 in Shinjuku, Tokyo, with representatives from the United States and Bolivia. Speaking of the high expectations people around the world hold for the SGI and the wonderful praise and accolades the organization has recently been receiving, the SGI president voiced his hope that leaders will challenge themselves to grow and become capable leaders for the new century. "I want you to be leaders who are generous and big-hearted," he said, "embracing people warmly, giving hope and inspiration to them and helping each individual develop into a capable person for kosen-rufu."

President Ikeda also commended SGI members' devoted efforts to kosen-rufu, saying: "Who is most praiseworthy? Those who are working with all their might for kosen-rufu. Those who dedicate their lives not to self-centered ends but to the Mystic Law. In the eyes of the Buddha, such people are thousands and millions of times more admirable than those who merely enjoy fame or position in society. Such people are genuine emissaries of the Buddha."

FROM SAN FRANCISCO, I

After five-and-a-half hours in the air, we were greeted by the Golden Gate Bridge. San Francisco is two hours behind Hawaii. When we landed in this city known as the most beautiful in the United States and often called the Paris of the West, the clock in the airport lobby read 4:35 p.m.

I was accompanied by five fellow members: Youth Division Leader Einosuke Akiya (current Soka Gakkai president), Vice General Director Hiroshi Hojo (now deceased), Director Yasu Kashiwabara (current Executive Advisory Council vice leader), Director Yoshihei Kodaira (current senior adviser) and Director Tsugio Ishida (now deceased).

Several local members had come to greet us, and we began a brief conference right there about schedules and other subjects. A member who had originally belonged to Tokyo's Kamata Chapter was present, and she spoke with some nostalgia of my wife and children attending discussion meetings in Kamata.

The scale of America is so big that it dwarfs the sufferings of a single individual; it is as expansive as the spirit that burns with noble aspiration, soaring into huge, open skies. The vibrations of America's youthful vigor resounded in my heart, seeming to call out, "Friends from Japan, look intently at this land overflowing with unlimited potential and future promise!"

I also realized that we must not rush kosen-rufu in the United States. It is important to start by raising one person who will have a solid commitment to faith. The key is for that one person to truly experience and understand just how joyous, fulfilling and wonderful the world of the Daishonin's Buddhism can be. In this way, this individual will become a nucleus.

From this one person, the message of Buddhism will spread to another and then another, expanding outward exponentially and bringing forth an unending stream of capable people who will propagate the Mystic Law. This was my firm conviction and passionate determination based on the principle of emerging from the earth.



That night, together with some local members, we ate in a cheap diner that served Japanese food. The diner was dimly lit and nearly empty. In those days, strict foreign exchange regulations in Japan limited the amount of U.S. currency Japanese travelers could purchase to just \$35 a day per person. Our motto on the trip was "Thrifty," and we did everything we could to save money. We wanted to keep as much aside as possible for the purpose of encouraging the local members we were visiting.

At our next stop, Seattle, we decided to eat inexpensive steaks for nourishment. They were as tough as leather, and I remember that I came down with a terrible rash, partly as a reaction to the food and partly due to the strain of our demanding schedule.

Certainly, no one could have imagined that decades later the high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, Nikken, would be exposed for his involvement in a deplorable scandal that took place in Seat-

tle on his first overseas trip back in 1963.

In San Francisco, as elsewhere, everything started from a discussion meeting. I announced the formation of a district in San Francisco to the 30 or so members gathered. I also decided to establish a district in the neighboring state of Nevada. That district would be led by the energetic and committed Joseph and Yaeko O'Rayeh, who had driven five hours to join us in San Francisco.

I appointed two women as leaders of San Francisco District: Sachiko Garcia as district leader and Kiyoko Thoma as district women's division leader. The Daishonin says, "There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Nam-myohorenge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 93). I also appointed their husbands, who were both Americans, as district advisors. One of them was not yet a Soka Gakkai member, and his appointment surprised some. But in the world of the SGI, every individual is equally precious. I wanted our friends in America, land of the free, to value and respect each other, and to live wonderful lives filled with optimism, vitality and unhindered growth.



The majority of those attending this discussion meeting were Japanese women who had moved to the United States. I urged them to achieve three practical goals: become American citizens, obtain driver's licenses and learn English.

When we dedicate our lives to fulfilling our mission, there is no time for wallowing in self-pity. It is vital that we attain happiness for ourselves and others where we are right now. The teachings of Buddhism provide us with the golden wisdom to set concrete goals for our self-improvement and advancement.

The next day, I had a photo taken with these mothers of kosen-rufu in the New World in front of the statue of Columbus atop Telegraph Hill, overlooking the sea. Their eyes were shining. They sparkled with hope, with strength, with a dynamic enthusiasm to move forward.

As the fresh sea breezes caressed us, I told them that 20 or 50 years later, we would mark this day as an important anniversary of kosen-rufu in the United States. True to my promise, 20 years later, my wife and I stood on that same hill and joined these women, their faces shining with victory, in a commemorative photograph, creating another page in the unfolding story of the journey to propagate the Mystic Law.



When I was in the United States in October 1960, a world-famous scientist was summoned to testify before a U.S. congressional subcommittee. He, along with other scientists, had prepared a petition against nuclear weapons testing. They collected some 13,000 signatures and presented them to the United Nations. Now, he was being asked by the subcommittee to name those who had assisted in the petition.

Who was this scientist? None other than the father of modern chemistry, Linus Pauling.

Dr. Pauling remained steadfast in the face of the harshest intimidation. Both he and his wife, Ava Helen, maintained their firm commitment to justice and humanity.

Because of these qualities, Dr. Pauling insisted that the power of the people must be used to ensure that the political authorities stayed on the right course. And that to achieve and maintain peace, citizens should unite to put pressure on those authorities. He recognized the Soka Gakkai as a leader in that direction, and he continued to support us to the end of his life.

I met with Dr. Pauling four times, our final meeting taking place in San Francisco. Dr. Pauling, although 92, traveled specially there to see me. It was at that meeting that I suggested the holding of a Linus Pauling exhibition, and Dr. Pauling gladly agreed to my proposal.

The "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition that was realized as a result opened in San Francisco last year and is now beginning to tour the United States. It is being received with high praise from many areas of society, including the U.S. Congress.



The parliament of humankind, the United Nations, also began in San Francisco. I visited San Francisco again in March 1993, on the last leg of a trip to nine cities in six North and South American countries. It was my fifth visit since my very first, 33 years earlier.

On that occasion, I was invited to the War Memorial Performing Arts Center, which had been the scene of the historic adoption of the U.N. Charter. Together with my fellow San Francisco members, I accepted honors for my contribution to spreading the ideals of the United Nations and promoting international cultural exchange.

Among the members who joined me at the ceremony was Orlando Cepeda, the former major league home-run king, who was this year elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. He is a proud district leader in the Bay Area.

During the ceremony, a youthful leader in San Francisco politics pointed out that the SGI and San Francisco, which has always opened new frontiers in history, have three things in common: a respect for cultural diversity, creative energy and the power to inspire hope in all people.

Only our actions can stir the winds of the future. The Daishonin says of the inevitable progress of kosen-rufu: "Though the trees may desire to be still, the wind will not cease to blow; though we may wish spring to linger, it must give way to summer" (MW-5, 201).

How beautiful and overflowing with poetry is San Francisco in each of the four seasons! I am sure that today again, from the city's steep roads, from friends' homes commanding a view of the Golden Gate Bridge, our youthful members in San Francisco, with smiling, confident faces, are sending forth the fragrant, sunny breezes of joy and dynamic progress toward the 21st century.

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Day of New York Rocks Brooklyn

June 19 — a perfect day. The weather was cool with low humidity, the music was fantastic, and the more than 1,000 people who gathered were happy. The occasion was the commemoration of SGI President Ikeda's writing the poem "To My Young American Friends" 18 years ago in New York.

This was the first-ever such event hosted in New York City proper, the previous such festival having been held on Long Island in 1993. The festival, promoted as "One Love, One World, Day of New York," featured poetry, rap, rock 'n' roll, choral, salsa, reggae, Latin and jazz performances primarily by SGI-USA professional

musicians, who generously donated their time and talents.

Through the event, organizers hoped to introduce many people to the SGI-USA or renew their interest in it. Hundreds stopped by the public relations/publications table. Seven members renewed their *World Tribune* subscriptions; many people took subscription envelopes to fill out later. One man asking questions had not practiced with the organization since 1988. He was quickly introduced to the leader of his neighborhood discussion group.

New member Gary Cohen was impressed with the whole scene. "I took the Entrance Exam in

April and just received my Go-honzon on June 6, President Makiguchi's birthday," he said. "This is the first activity like this that I've attended, along with my girlfriend, who introduced me. The overall atmosphere is so peaceful but upbeat because of the music."

A cloud of dust, flashing red lights and a screech of tires kicked off the event as the New York City Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern arrived with his entourage. On behalf of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, he praised the event's intention "to promote unity, harmony and peace among teenagers."

Indeed, teens had a great time. Philip Leung, age 16, said: "It is really fun. I'm enjoying the sports — especially football — with my friends. And the music is good, loud and noisy. I brought a friend from school, and he's enjoying it." Brian Light, age 16, said: "I've spent time with many of the other young members, and we've enjoyed this beautiful day. It is hard for me to decide what I am enjoying the most!"

Jim Corwin, a Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island Region leader and festival performer stressed the importance of supporting these youth. "Our teenagers today are looking for



Photo by ANNE DIGATE

Well-known touring and recording musicians and artists including Veia Williams performed at Prospect Park Music Grove in Brooklyn.

answers," he said, "and adults need to take the lead and set an example of tolerance and respect. Music has always been recognized as the universal language. We believe this celebration has allowed us to rejoice and show that all of us have more in common than we think."

— LEAH BRYANT, RIC ORNELLAS and ROBERT TALIAFERRO



Photo by DEBBIE PARKER

'Only SGI can create weather like this!' declares Deputy President of the Borough of Brooklyn Jeannette Gadson. State Senator Marty Markowitz also conveyed his well wishes.

Artists Meet in New York

"Overcoming Self-Doubt" was the theme of the first New York Arts Division meeting of 1999, which was attended by approximately 200 members and 100 guests. Self-confidence is a trait that SGI artists in New York are striving to develop every day, as they pursue their varied careers while practicing this Buddhism in the cultural capital of the world.

Various members related how their practice has brought victory to their lives through strengthening their self-confidence. Duncan Sheik, a 10-year member and bright new recording star for Atlantic Records, shared his determination to compose words and music that will reach people's hearts. He stressed that his Gajokai and other Buddhist activities led to his first CD release, which sold more than 700,000 copies. He also emphasized that along with doing activities, one must strive every day to perfect one's art and life. Mr. Sheik later played and sang two original pieces, which were met with much enthusiasm from the audience.

Johnny Rozsa, a professional photographer from London, was introduced to the practice in 1983 by singing legend Tina Turner. In 1989, when he discovered he had the AIDS virus, he received guidance from the late SGI-UK General Director Richard Causton to chant to accomplish his mission and lead a long life. Ten years later, despite the loss of sight in one eye, Rozsa has enormous vitality, takes no medication and is busy with a successful career.

A tremendous sense of joy pervaded the culture center as the members



Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD

Duncan Sheik performs at the New York Culture Center.

left the meeting with a renewed spirit to become the best artists for kosen-rufu of the 21st century that they possibly can.

— ROZANNA WEINBERGER and BILL BLACKARD

Part One

Lectures on the
"Expedient Means"
and "Life Span"
Chapters of the
Lotus Sutra,
vols. 2 and 3

Q1:

What is the significance of Shakyamuni revealing that he first attained enlightenment in the remote past rather than in India in his lifetime? (vol. 2, pp. 7–8)

Q2:

Describe the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. (vol. 2, p. 15)

Q3:

What is the significance of adding *Nam* to the title of the Lotus Sutra? (vol. 2, pp. 25–26)

Q4:

What is the meaning of the phrase "At that time," which begins the "Life Span" chapter? (vol. 2, pp. 26–27)

Q5:

Why is the interpretation of Thus Come One's secret and transcendental powers important from the viewpoint of the Daishonin's Buddhism? (vol. 2, pp. 34–35)

Q6:

What is the meaning of "time without beginning" (*kuon ganjo*) from the viewpoint of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? (vol. 2, p. 49)

Q7:

Explain the phrase "casting off the transient and revealing the true" in terms of Nichiren Daishonin's example. (vol. 2, pp. 55–57)

Sample Questions for the Intermediate-level Exam

This year's Intermediate-level Exam will be held Sunday, Oct. 24, throughout the country. Actual questions for the exam will be based on the sample questions that follow. The page numbers that appear in parentheses at the end of each question will direct you to where the answer can be found. We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam. Good luck!

— The SGI-USA Study Department



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Q8:

What is the true intention of the "Life Span" chapter? (vol. 3, p. 7)

Q9:

What does the doctrine of the true cause and true effect state? (vol. 3, pp. 10–11)

Q10:

Why did Shakyamuni "enter extinction"? (vol. 3, pp. 26–28)

Q11:

How is the principle of mentor and disciple revealed in the "Life Span" chapter? (vol. 3, pp. 29, 179)

Q12:

What is the purpose and meaning of the *jigage*, or

verse section, of the "Life Span" chapter? (vol. 3, pp. 84–93)

Q13:

What does Nichiren Daishonin state that the *jigage* represents? (vol. 3, p. 85)

Q14:

What are the three enlightened properties or bodies? (vol. 3, pp. 97–102, 127)

Q15:

What are the three treasures that lead people to happiness? (vol. 3, p. 152)

Q16:

In the phrase "single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha, not hesitating even if it costs them their lives," what does "not hesitating

even if it costs them their lives" mean? (vol. 3, pp. 121–22)

Q17:

What does the phrase "single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha" in the previous question mean? (vol. 3, p. 126)

Q18:

How is the SGI "constantly making many kinds of music"? (vol. 3, p. 148)

Q19:

What does the passage "I am always here preaching the Law" mean? (vol. 3, pp. 108–09)

Q20:

What is the Buddha's constant thought or vow? (vol. 3, p. 176–82)

Part Two

"The Opening of the
Eyes" (1) from
Learning From the
Gosho: The Eternal
Teachings of Nichiren
Daishonin

Q21:

In "The Opening of the Eyes," Nichiren Daishonin proclaims: "I, Nichiren, am the richest man in all of present-day Japan." The next sentence in this passage suggests that the Daishonin developed this rich inner state, which President Toda described as "invincible" and "free from fear," because he had done what? (p. 49)

Q22:

Shijo Kingo received "The Opening of the Eyes" on behalf of whom? (p. 50)

Q23:

What did the Daishonin wish to convey to his followers in "The Opening of the Eyes"? (p. 50)

Q24:

What is the meaning of the title, "The Opening of the Eyes"? (p. 50)

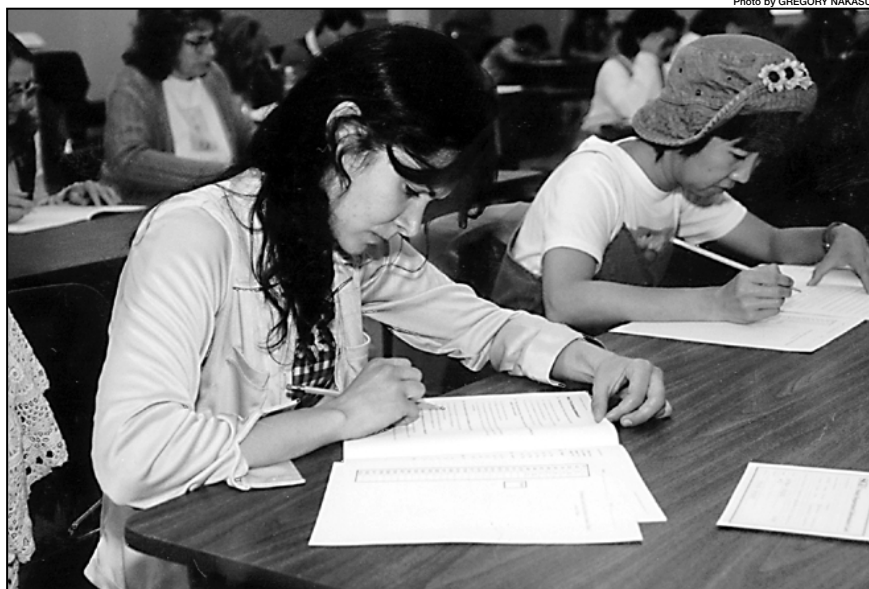
Q25:

In this writing, what does the Daishonin declare himself to be? (p. 50)

Q26:

Through the Nirvana Sutra, the Daishonin points out that even a "good" Buddhist practitioner becomes "an enemy of Buddhism from within" if he or she sees someone destroying Buddhism and fails to do what? (p. 51)

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Q27:
How does Chang-an describe someone who befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him or her? (p. 51)

Q28:
According to Chang-an, what does a true disciple of the Buddha do upon seeing someone who is destroying Buddhism? (p. 51)

Q29:
How does Chang-an describe someone who eliminates evil from a destroyer of Buddhism? (p. 51)

Q30:
How does Chang-an describe those who fail to reproach someone who destroys or brings confusion to Buddhism? (p. 51)

Q31:
How did the Daishonin’s followers react to the persecution that befell them during the Daishonin’s exile to Sado Island? (p. 52)

Q32:
At the end of “The Opening of the Eyes,” the Daishonin addresses the confusion of many followers by posing the question: In propagating this teaching, what merit does it bring, what can you gain, if you arouse the enmity of those around you? How does the Daishonin answer this question? (p. 52)

Q33:
Why is it necessary to reproach someone who tries to subvert Buddhism? (p. 53)

Q34:
What is the ultimate benefit of reproaching the destroyers of Buddhism? (p. 53)

Q35:
What results does taking action in Buddhism yield? (p. 53)

Q36:
What was the source of the Daishonin’s strength that enabled him to triumph over government persecutions? (p. 53)

Q37:
With what intention did Shakyamuni, Taho and the various Buddhas from the ten directions gather in one place in the eleventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra? (p. 55)

Q38:
According to the Daishonin, which Buddhist priest “would tightly shut the gates to the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law so that no one would have access to it”? (p. 54)

Q39:
According to President Toda, how is it that the Daishonin could accept the persecutions of the three powerful enemies? (p. 56)

Q40:
Had the Daishonin not spoken out and proclaimed the correct Buddhist teaching for the Latter Day of the Law, he may have led a peaceful life, but what, in his own words, would he have been lacking? (p. 57)

Part Three
“The Opening of the Eyes”(2) from Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin

(Page numbers in parentheses are from the book, followed by the page number where the chapter appeared in the March 1998 issue of Living Buddhism.)

Q41:
What was the Daishonin’s purpose in writing “The Opening of the Eyes”? (p. 61) (LB, pp. 6–7)

Q42:
Who perfectly possesses all three virtues of sovereign, teacher and parent? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q43:
What is the virtue of sovereign in modern terms? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q44:
What is the virtue of teacher in modern terms? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q45:
What is the virtue of parent in modern terms? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q46:
Which chapter of the Lotus Sutra explains the three virtues of the essential teaching? (p. 61) (LB, p. 7)

Q47:
Which virtue does the phrase “This, my land, remains safe and tranquil” refer to? (pp. 61–62) (LB, p. 7)

Q48:
Which virtue does the phrase “Constantly I have

preached the Law, teaching, converting” refer to? (p. 62) (LB, p. 7)

Q49:
Which virtue does the phrase “I am the father of this world” refer to? (p. 62) (LB, p. 7)

Q50:
Explain the relationship between the three virtues and the SGI’s movement of peace, culture and education. (pp. 63–64) (LB, p. 8)

Q51:
What does Nichiren Daishonin say about the followers of the Tendai school in “The Opening of the Eyes”? (p. 64) (LB, p. 8)

Q52:
The first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, said that, “Of all the Nichiren schools existing today, Nichiren Shoshu most closely resembles the Tendai school of the Daishonin’s time.” Why is this so? (p. 64) (LB, p. 8)

Q53:
How was Shakyamuni Buddha regarded by the followers of non-Buddhist teachings? (p. 65) (LB, p. 8)

Q54:
Those people who thought they were only criticizing T’ien-t’ai and Dengyo were in fact doing what? (p. 66) (LB, p. 9)

Q55:
What does the Daishonin say about being “praised by fools”? (p. 66) (LB, p. 9)

Q56:

President Ikeda says that we should conduct ourselves in such a manner that we win the praise of who? (p. 68) (LB, p. 9)

Q57:

What characterizes the *saha* world? (p. 69) (LB, p. 9)

Q58:

T'ien-t'ai states that the method of propagating Buddhism "should be that which accords with the time." What is it that does not change with the time? (pp. 68–69) (LB, p. 10)

Q59:

What does the Daishonin say of those who propagate the Mystic Law in the Latter Day of the Law? (p. 70) (LB, p. 10)

Q60:

How does the Daishonin conclude "The Opening of the Eyes"? (p. 70) (LB, p. 10)

Part Four

**Questions and
Answers on the
Temple Issue
Pamphlet**

Q61:

A passage in the Lotus Sutra reads, "And since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, how much more will this be so after his passing?" (LS10, 164). How does this passage apply to the Soka Gakkai's situation? (p. 4)

Q62:

The Daishonin states: "If you propagate it, devils will arise without fail. Where it

not for these, there would be no way of knowing that this is the true teaching" (MW-1, 145), and "When I examine these passages, I know that if I do not call forth these three enemies of the Lotus Sutra, then I will not be a true votary of the Lotus Sutra. Only by making them appear can I be a true votary" (MW-4, 20). What do these statements indicate? (pp. 5–6)

Q63:

In late 1990, it became clear that the priesthood of Nichiren Shoshu had been conspiring either to take control of or disband the SGI organization. What was the name of their plan? (p. 7)

Q64:

What was the Soka Gakkai's response to the priesthood's initial nine questions accusing President Ikeda and the Soka Gakkai of misdeeds? (pp. 7–8)

Q65:

What action does Nichiren Daishonin state

believers should take at "a time when truth and error" in Buddhism "stand shoulder to shoulder"? (p. 9)

Q66:

By developing our understanding and conviction about the temple issue, what insights can we gain into fundamental issues affecting humanity? (p. 10)

Q67:

Name two of the ten ways in which Nikken has acted counter to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. (pp. 11–12)

Q68:

Nichiren Daishonin states, "There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-engekyo in the Latter Day or the Law, be they men or women." In contrast to this, what did Nichijun Fujimoto, Nichiren Shoshu's chief administrator, state in a letter to the SGI in January 1991? (p. 13)

Q69:

Nichiren Daishonin states: "Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo." In contrast to this, what does the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood assert? (p. 14)

Q70:

The Daishonin states: "Only I, Nichiren, at first chanted Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, but then two, three and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Likewise, propagation will unfold this way in the future" (MW-1, 93). When Soka Gakkai first and second presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda first encountered Nichiren Shoshu, it was a tiny and impoverished Buddhist denomination. Nevertheless, what did Makiguchi and Toda do to realize the Daishonin's prediction? (p. 17)

Q71:

Presidents Makiguchi and Toda refused to follow the high priest's instructions to incorporate worship of a Shinto amulet into Soka Gakkai members' practice, basing themselves on article 17 of the "Twenty-Six Admonitions of Nikko Shonin." What does this article state? (p. 18)

Q72:

What is the significance of the SGI's decision to issue the Gohonzon? (p. 20)

Q73:

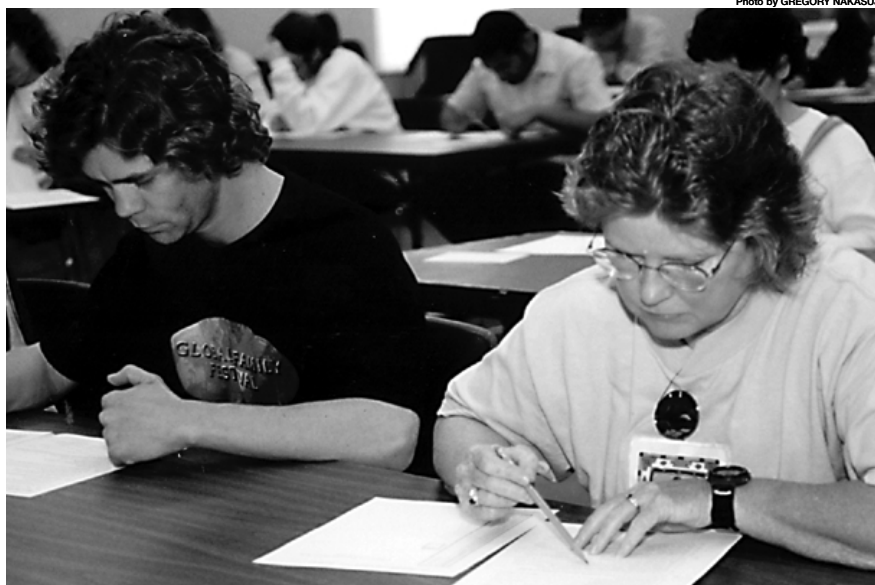
Nichiren Shoshu has called the Gohonzon issued by the SGI counterfeit and unable to lead to benefit because it claims that it has not been authorized by the high priest through the "eye-opening ceremony." In contrast, what was Nichiren Daishonin's view of the "eye-opening ceremony?" (p. 22)

Q74:

Refuting what is erroneous and unjust in terms of the Buddhist Law is a profound good cause. SGI members have returned their Gohonzon transcribed by Nikken in exchange for the Gohonzon transcribed by 26th High Priest Nichikan issued by the SGI. What erroneous teaching of Nikken's concerning the Gohonzon are SGI members refuting by praying to the Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon and showing actual proof of benefit and growth? (p. 24)

Q75:

Based on his writings and



in light of his experience in Kamakura, how would Nichiren Daishonin view false and malicious reporting on the Soka Gakkai by segments of the Japanese mass media? (pp. 27–28)

Q76:

In his letter “On Practicing the Buddha’s Teachings,” the Daishonin states, “From the very day you take faith in this teaching, you should be fully prepared to face the three kinds of persecutions” (MW-1, 99). According to the text, how should we view criticism and attack by entrenched authority? (pp. 27–28)

Q77:

Why should the SGI not agree to meet with the priesthood under their stated conditions? (pp. 29–30)

Q78:

Nichiren Daishonin writes, “It is important to speak with even greater conviction to those who slander [the Mystic Law]” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1123). We should therefore speak about the reality of the temple issue with conviction and compassion. What traits should we employ when talking to temple members or others? (p. 32)

Q79:

What is the Soka Renaissance a struggle against? (p. 33)

Q80:

What can we hope to gain through dialogue about the temple issue? (p. 34)



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUI

Part Five
“An Explanation of
Nikko Shonin’s
Twenty-six
Admonitions” by SGI
President Ikeda

(Page references are from the April 1998 issue of Living Buddhism.)

Q81:

What was Nikko Shonin’s primary motivation for writing the Twenty-six Admonitions? (pp. 16, 21)

Q82:

What is the original spirit of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism? (p. 16)

Q83:

How do Nikken and the priesthood interpret article #1, which states, “The doctrines of the Fuji school must not differ in the least from the teachings of the late master”? (p. 17)

Q84:

What is the similarity between the five senior

priests of the Daishonin’s time and Nikken? (p. 17)

Q85:

What was fifty-ninth High Priest Nichiko’s major contribution? (p. 17)

Q86:

Why are the priests of Nichiren Shoshu like “parasites in the lion’s body” of the Daishonin’s Buddhism? (p. 18)

Q87:

The essential spirit of Nikko Shonin is to treasure and base oneself on what? (pp. 17–18)

Q88:

According to Nikko Shonin, how should we regard and treat capable practitioners who are our juniors in terms of position or length of practice? (pp. 19, 22)

Q89:

According to the verse section of the sixteenth chapter

of the Lotus Sutra, what is the Buddha’s constant thought? (p. 19)

Q90:

In contrast to the priesthood, how has the SGI fulfilled the thirteenth admonition, “Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life”? (p. 21)

Q91:

What does Nikko Shonin state in article #17 that makes it clear that he did not consider the high priest infallible? (p. 23)

Q92:

In the spirit of article #17, what did President Makiguchi refuse to do upon being summoned to the head temple in June 1943? (p. 23)

Q93:

Fundamentally, what about the behavior of High Priest

Nikken caused the SGI to refuse to follow him? (p. 23)

Q94:

Why does Nikko Shonin tell us not to “accept offerings from slanderers of the Law” in article #22? (p. 25)

Q95:

How is the SGI following article #16, “Even though they may be lowly, you should deeply respect and regard as your teachers those whose understanding of Buddhism surpasses your own?” (pp. 21–23)

Q96:

How did Nikko Shonin view a high priest who deviated from the principle of sexual abstinence? (p. 26)

Q97:

How did Nikko Shonin view those who violate even one of these admonitions? (pp. 16, 27)

Q98:

What actions by the SGI and the successive presidents have protected kosen-rufu and kept Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism alive? (pp. 23–24, pp. 25, 27)

Q99:

Who does the phrase “skilled in difficult debate” originally refer to in article #26? (p. 27)

Q100:

According to the example cited in the text, who did Nichiren Daishonin appoint to represent him in a debate with a scholar of what sect? (p. 27)

MATERIAL DE ESTUDIO

Julio-Agosto

'SOBRE MI ENFERMEDAD'

Desde el día 17 del mes sexto del undécimo año de Bun'ei (1274), cuando me retiré aquí (al Monte Minobu), hasta el octavo día del duodécimo mes de este año [1281], no he salido de esta montaña. En los últimos ocho años, debido a mi extenuativa enfermedad y a la vejez me he debilitado más año tras año, y el poder de mi mente ha disminuído

He estado enfermo desde la Primavera de este año. Y con el fin del otoño y el comienzo del invierno estoy más débil cada día, durante la noche mis síntomas son aun más severos. En los últimos diez días, apenas he podido comer algo. Mientras tanto, la nieve se acumula más profunda y soy atacado por el frío.

Mi cuerpo está tan frío como una piedra, y la frialdad de mi pecho es como hielo. En tales ocasiones, yo pongo a calentar Sake y consumo Kakko,¹ y es como si un fuego se haya encendido en mi corazón, o como si estuviese entrando a un baño caliente. El sudor me lava el cuerpo y las gotas que caen me limpian los pies.

Mientras pensaba lleno de felicidad cómo podría responder a su sinceridad, se me llenaron los ojos de lágrimas...

Debido a mi enfermedad, yo, Nichiren, me he abstenido ha responder a las cartas recibidas de la gente, pero estoy tan apenado con este asunto (la muerte de Shichiro Goro) que he tomado mi pincel para escribirle. A mí también me queda muy poco tiempo en este mundo. Y creo que con seguridad me encontraré con Lord Goro. Si yo llego a verlo antes que usted, entonces le informaría a él su aflicción.

Gosho Zenshu, págs. 1583-84) ²

El Espíritu de Luchar por otros en Todo Momento.

El Daishonin describe su condición sin adornamiento. Totalmente libre de afectación; él no intenta aparentar o presentarse a otros como alguien que es especial. Y al así hacerlo, revela verdadera grandeza.

¿Qué sentido lógico podría tener que las personas comunes en el Último Día de la Ley se den muchos aires? ¿Qué podrían ellos lograr con semejante actitud? En vez, debemos enfocarnos en pulir nuestro propio ser, esforzándonos siempre en vivir con honestidad y sinceridad, modestia y humildad.

Ya que somos seres hu-

manos, de hecho experimentaremos los cuatro sufrimientos - el nacimiento, la vejez, la enfermedad y la muerte. Lo importante es que resistamos estos sufrimientos y que los superemos con verdadera nobleza.

En una carta escrita varios años antes de ésta, el Daishonin le dijo serenamente a Abutsubo: "Yo he nacido y como ya tengo 60 años, no hay duda de que he experimentado también la vejez. La enfermedad y la muerte es todo lo que queda." (Gosho Zenshu, pág. 1317).

¿Cuán elevada condición de vida! Es como si estuviera en una alta bóveda celeste, desde donde él está serenamente observando las nubes oscuras de la enfermedad y la muerte.

El Daishonin escribió esta

carta a Ueno Ama Gozen en diciembre de 1281-diez meses antes de su muerte-ésta fue en respuesta a una ofrenda de alimentos y medicina que ella le había enviado al saber que él estaba físicamente débil y no estaba comiendo. La ofrenda consistió de arroz, sake claro y de hierba medicinal para el estomago.

Él describe su condición física en de talla. Lo cual sugiere el agradecimiento que él sentía hacia la expresión de sinceridad de Ueno-ama Gozen. Puede que él haya interpretado su cariñosa acción como un indicio de que ella se había recuperado de su aflicción por la muerte de su hijo y había recobrado la capacidad de responder a las necesidades de otros.

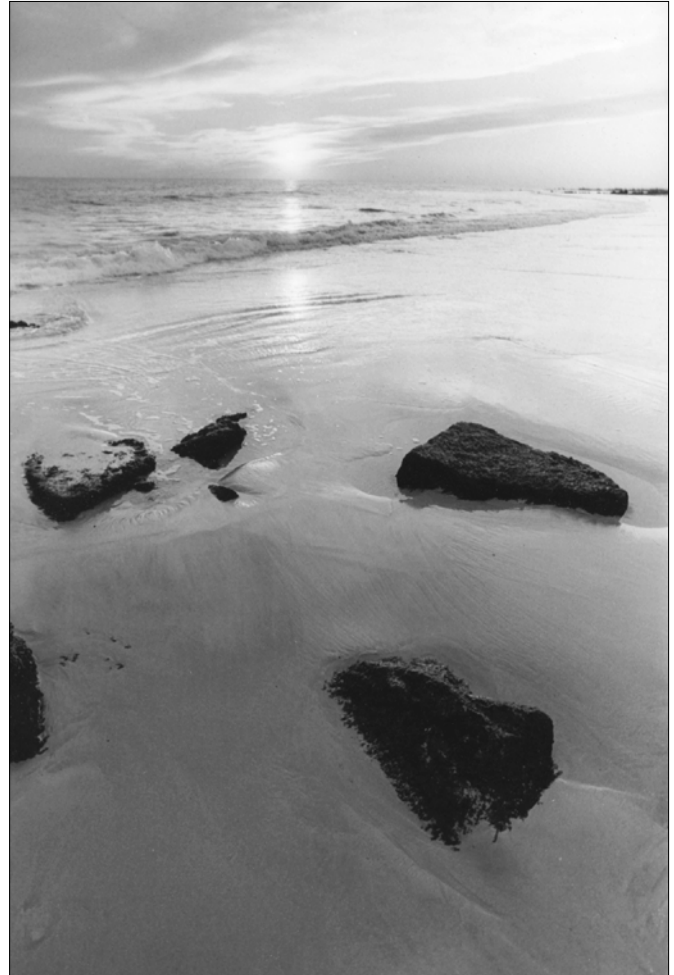
Más de un año ya había pasado desde la muerte de

Shichiro Goro. Se dice, que el tiempo es un excelente médico, que ha medida que pasa cura todas las enfermedades. Pero aun así, un hueco en el corazón no se puede llenar fácilmente.

Una vez más, el Daishonin menciona el fallecimiento de Shichiro Goro, compartiendo la aflicción de Ueno-ama Gozen. Y concluye la carta diciéndole las siguientes palabras: "Si yo me muero antes que usted, me encontraría entonces con el difunto Lord Goro y le informaría a él su aflicción."

Cuando el Daishonin escribió esta carta, estaba tan enfermo y débil, que él no tenía ni siquiera deseos de tomar su pincel para escribir. En este caso, él lo hizo no simplemente para expresar su agradecimiento por la ofrenda recibida, su acción mas

Foto por Kirk Condvles



bien indica lo mucho que él atoraba los sentimientos de Ueno Ama gozen. No cabe duda que él quería escribirle aun tuviese que esforzarse más allá de lo razonable.

El Buda ora continuamente por la felicidad de las personas. La sección del verso del capítulo "La Duración de la Vida" del Sutra del Loto dice:

En todo momento estoy pensando:

¿Cómo puedo hacer para que los seres vivientes ingresen en el camino supremo y adquieran rápidamente el cuerpo de un buda?
(The Lotus sutra, cap. 16, pág. 232.)

Véase Gosho pág. III

EL ESPIRITU DE MAESTRO Y DISCIPULO FUENTE DE ILIMITADA FORTALEZA

(El Presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, pronunció un discurso durante la trigésimo tercera reunión para responsables de sede central, en conmemoración del 3 de mayo, Día de la Soka Gakkai, realizada en el Centro en Memoria del Presidente Makiguchi, Hachioji, Tokio, el 1 de mayo de 1999. Este discurso ha sido dividido en tres partes. A continuación breves comentarios y fragmentos escogidos de la primera parte de este discurso en los cuales el Presidente Ikeda comparte recuerdos y experiencias con su maestro Josei Toda.)

Con gran júbilo él líder de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, inició su discurso felicitando a todos los participantes y a la vez expresando su agradecimiento a la División de Damas a quienes nombró 'Madres de la Soka'. El dijo:

"¡Los felicito por el 3 de mayo, Día de la Soka Gakkai! ¡Y un feliz Día de las Madres de la Soka! ¡Quisiera celebrar un día tan especial con mis queridos compañeros de fe, de todo el mundo y del Japón! ¡Bravo por la Soka Gakkai! ¡Bravo por la División de Damas! ¡Bravo por todos los miembros de la SGI! ¡Y muy especialmente, bravo por los miembros de la División de Artistas que hoy nos acompañan! ¡Qué grandiosas son las actividades que hacemos en la SGI!

Contemplar el firmamento

Mañana [2 de mayo], nuestro planeta más cercano, Mañana [2 de mayo], nuestro planeta más cercano, el rojizo Marte, estará muy cerca de la Tierra, a unos 86.5 millones de kilómetros. Hace muchas décadas, recuerdo haber escrito en mi diario [un 7 de setiembre de 1956] sobre otro tránsito de Marte, más cerca todavía, a 56.5 millones de kilómetros.

Ese año, 1956, se llevó a cabo la gran campaña de Osaka que convulsión a la sociedad japonesa y le hizo exclamar que lo imposible se había hecho realidad. Asumí la responsabilidad de esa campaña y me puse de pie por propia decisión. Todos decían que estábamos peleando

una batalla perdida de antemano, y que no teníamos ninguna posibilidad de vencer.

Yo siempre he ido a los lugares más difíciles y me he puesto a actuar, para obtener los resultados más sorprendentes. La fe depende de la práctica. Las personas que no pueden esforzarse en lo concreto con seriedad, las personas que se abren paso en lavida a fuerza de astucia y de maniobras hábiles no son dignas de ninguna confianza.

Inseparabilidad entre maestro y discípulo

Al segundo presidente de la Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, le produjo una felicidad muy especial nuestro triunfo resonante en Osaka. "¡Daisaku, hiciste un trabajo estupendo!" me dijo. En cambio, la campaña de Tokio terminó en una derrota. Mi oración se centraba en una sola cosa: proteger al presidente Toda. Apoyé firmemente a mi maestro, durante un período muy difícil, que llevó a sus empresas al borde de la quiebra. Pagué una por una las cuantiosas deudas que cayeron sobre él. El presidente Toda confiaba en mí con todo su corazón. Me decía: "Daisaku, gracias. Me has salvado la vida. Gracias a ti, puedo cumplir mi misión como presidente de la Soka Gakkai."

No bien terminó la campaña de Osaka, inmediatamente me lancé a la campaña de Yamaguchi. El señor Toda quería asegurar las bases en ese lugar, cuna de la restauración Meiji (1868). Y me confió esta tarea a mí. "Te ocuparás tú, ¿verdad, Daisaku?" "Sí, maestro. Cuenta conmigo." Fue algo que se decidió en un instante.

(La campaña de Yamaguchi se llevó a cabo a lo largo de tres meses: entre octubre y noviembre de 1956, y luego, durante enero de 1957. A fines de setiembre de 1956, antes de que se lanzara la campaña, la Soka Gakkai tenía 459 familias en dicha región. A fines de enero de 1957, la cifra casi se había multiplicado por diez: 4073 familias.)

Los miembros de la Soka Gakkai en Yamaguchi habían ascendido a más de cuatro mil familias, y en un solo mes, en Osaka, se habían sumado a la organización 11,111 hogares.

Todo depende del liderazgo de la figura central y de la oración resuelta al Gohonzon. Cuando uno ora al Gohonzon

por concretar realmente el Kosen-rufu, por dar una verdadera prueba que demuestre la validez de las palabras de su maestro, y por darle alegría a su mentor, entonces los resultados se producen sin falta.

La práctica del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin está dedicada al logro del Kosen-rufu. La fe genuina no se encuentra en ningún otro lugar, sino en nuestra contienda por realizar esta causa. Otra cosa esencial en el Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin es la relación de maestro y discípulo centrada en el Kosen-rufu. Cuando el corazón del maestro y el discípulo son inseparables, no hay oración que quede sin respuesta.

En esas campañas de Osaka y de Yamaguchi, lucharon a mi lado muchos compañeros de fe. Las circunstancias eran muy desfavorables. Tenía que cubrir mis propios gastos de transporte. Trabajaba y me esforzaba incansablemente, mañana, tarde y noche. Tenía veintiocho años, y todas mis energías juveniles estaban puestas en el logro del Kosen-rufu. A veces, llegaba tan exhausto a mi casa, al término del día, que caía literalmente desplomado en el vestíbulo y no tenía fuerzas siquiera para quitarme los zapatos.

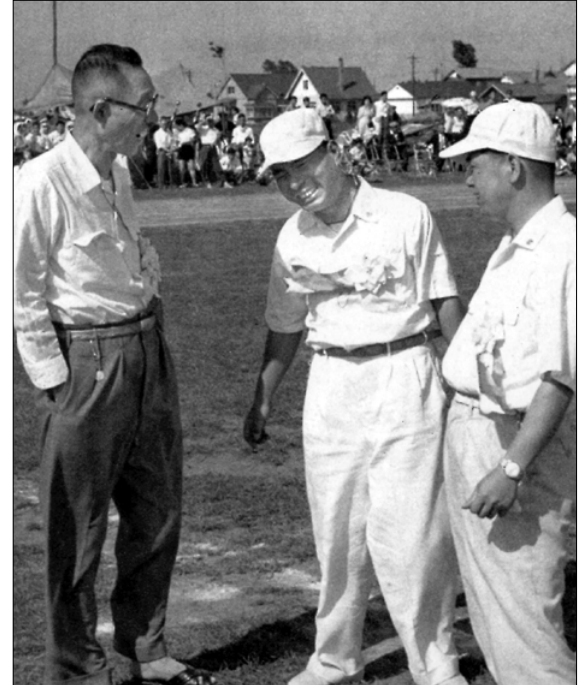
Miraba las estrellas platinadas de la Vía Láctea y pensaba: "Estoy preparado a dar mi vida por Kosen-rufu en cualquier momento." Con esa determinación, luchaba yo. Así construí un cimiento tras otro, para consolidar el Kosen-rufu.

No ha sido una empresa fácil, de ningún modo, sino una historia de durísimo trabajo y de severas pruebas. La SGI hoy es una organización aclamada, pero se construyó a costa de luchas reales y concretas. Espero que nuestros jóvenes sucesores jamás den este desarrollo por sentado y que nunca supongan que todo esto se logró fácilmente, sin esfuerzo, porque no fue así.

La tierra de nuestra misión

Nichiren Daishonin escribe:

La asamblea donde se predicó el Sutra del Loto era tan inmensa que cubría no sólo todo el istema planetario principal, sino también cuatrocientos miles de millones de asamkhyas de mundos, los bodhisattvas, las personas de los dos vehículos, las personas de Humanidad y Éxtasis, y las ocho clases de



‘El Señor Toda era un mentor cariñoso y compasivo.’ Toda (izq.) con Daisaku Ikeda (centro) en Hokkaido, agosto de 1957.

seres no humanos³ que poblaban dichos mundos, todos recibieron el deseo de El Que Así Llega y atesoraron el deseo de difundir el Sutra del Loto en los lugares en que cada uno vivía.

La magnitud del pensamiento budista es enorme: abarca el universo. Estoy seguro de que si pensadores de la talla de Bergson, Kant, Hegel o Marx hubieran conocido la gran filosofía universal de Nichiren Daishonin, todos se hubieran sentido impactados y la hubieran valorado muchísimo.

En contraste con la magnitud gigantesca del budismo. ¡qué pequeños e insignificantes son el poder y la fama mundanales!

Entre todos los astros que pueblan la inmensidad del espacio, hemos elegido este planeta como punto en el cual nacer, para poder propagar la Ley budista. Es fundamental que cumplamos dicha misión. Sigamos actuando decididamente, en bien de la humanidad, de la paz, de la felicidad y la prosperidad de todos.

Durante mi juventud, el presidente Toda me instruyó sobre los clásicos chinos. Era uno de sus tópicos predilectos, aun cuando su especialidad eran las Matemáticas. Hay numerosas citas que recuerdo

haber estudiado con él. Por ejemplo: "El mundo entero está manchado. Sólo yo soy puro." Todavía recuerdo al señor Toda pidiéndome que nunca me apartara de esta conciencia. La única forma de vivir con pureza es basarnos en la fe, basarnos en la Ley Mística. La cita que mencioné corresponde a un poeta estadista del período de los Reinos Combatientes (475-221 a. C.), conocido como Ch'ü Yüan (Qu Yuan), de la antigua China.

Otra cita memorable es: "La persona de corazón bondadoso y mente serena atraerá espontáneamente cientos de beneficios a su alrededor." Son palabras de una obra llamada Caigentan (Discursos de raíces vegetales), escritos por Hung Yingming, de la dinastía Ming (1368-1644).

Desde el punto de vista del budismo, esa "mente serena" corresponde al estado de Tranquilidad, mientras que el "corazón bondadoso" corresponde a invocar Nam-myohorenge-kyo con espíritu renovado y vivaz. Cuando uno hace daimoku de esta forma, su vida se rodea naturalmente de cientos de beneficios.

(Continuará)

Cortesía de Seikyo Press

ANTECEDENTES DEL GOSHO 'SOBRE MI ENFERMEDAD'

El Buda ora continuamente por la felicidad de las personas

"En todo momento estoy pensando cómo puedo hacer para que los seres vivientes ingresen al camino supremo y adquieran rápidamente el cuerpo de buda."

(*The Lotus Sutra*, cap. 16, pág. 232)



Illustrations by Ed Lee

Nichiren Daishonin escribió esta carta a la Dama Nanjo (conocida también como Ueno-ama Gozen) el 8 de diciembre, de 1281. El Daishonin, quién tenía entonces cincuenta y nueve años, estaba residiendo en el Monte Minubo, y amenos de un año antes de su muerte. Esta carta fue escrita en respuesta a las ofrendas que la Dama Nanjo le había enviado al Daishonin.

La carta comienza con una lista en detalle de los regalos: Un saco de arroz, una vasija de sake, veinte envases de metal y una bolsa de hierba medicinal (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1583).

Después de expresar su agradecimiento a la señora Nanjo por su consideración, el Daishonin describe su pobre condición física-de aquí viene el título de esta carta, "Sobre Mi Enfermedad." De inmediato el Daishonin consola a la señora Nanjo sobre la muerte de su hijo más joven, Shichiro Goro. Y aparentemente, sintiendo la proximidad de su propia muerte él concluye su carta: "Si yo llego a verlo antes que usted, entonces le informaría a él su aflicción" (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1584).

La Dama Nanjo: Biografía

Familia: El padre de la señora Nanjo era Lord Matsuno Rokuro Zaemon y su madre era conocida como la Dama Matsuno. La familia residió en la Villa Matsuno de la provincia Suruga (hoy en día la prefectura shizuoka, en la colina sudeste del Monte Fuji). Se cree que Lord Matsuno abrazó la fe del Budismo del Daishonin después de haber sido introducido por su hija o por Nikko Shonin.

Matrimonio: La Dama Nanjo contrajo matrimonio con Nanjo Hyoe Shichiro, un empleado del gobierno de Kamakura quién originalmente tuvo base en el Distrito Nanjo, en la provincia Izu (Hoy en día la prefectura Shizuoka), de aquí se origina el nombre de la familia. Más tarde él fue transferido al Distrito Ueno, en la provincia Suruga, y se convirtió en un administrador en dicho distrito.

Conversión: Alrededor del 1263 o 1264, la Dama Nanjo y su esposo conocieron al Daishonin en Kamakura y como resultado abrazaron la fe en sus enseñanzas.

La muerte de su esposo: El 8 de marzo, de 1265, Lord Nanjo falleció, dejando a su esposa con

ocho niños y embarazada de su hijo más joven.

Su maternidad soltera: Actuando de acuerdo a la costumbre de su época, la Dama Nanjo se convirtió en un monja para orar por el reposo de su esposo mientras continuaba con sus responsabilidades secular como madre de nueve niños. Después de la muerte de su esposo, la dama Nanjo también fue conocida como Ueno-ama Gozen, que quiere decir "la dama monja de Ueno." Hoy en día, es difícil imaginar las dificultades de la señora Nanjo para levantar a sus nueve niños, una madre sola en el siglo mil trescientos en el Japón, cuando las mujeres sólo tenían la alternativa de depender de sus esposos o hijos adultos para poder sobrevivir-Lo cuál ella no tenía ninguno de los dos. Persecución (1271-1274):

Ella continuó su práctica en la fe a través de los años turbulentos en los cuales trataron de decapitar al Daishonin, cuando dicho intento falló, él entonces fue exilado a la remota isla de Sado. Y el gobierno shogunato tomó medidas enérgicas contra los seguidores del Daishonin.

Apoyo a su mentor: En julio de

1274. Cuando la familia Nanjo recibió las noticias de que el Daishonin había regresado desde Sado y había tomado residencia en el Monte Minobu, ellos inmediatamente le enviaron ofrendas. Al final del mismo mes, Tokimitsu, el segundo hijo mayor, quién entonces sólo tenía 16 años, trajo regalos al Daishonin a la recién montada montaña. Desde ese momento, la señora Nanjo apoyó al Daishonin consistentemente, ella le envió ofrendas en numerosas ocasiones, apesar de las dificultades económica de la familia.

La muerte de seres queridos: Después de la muerte de su esposo, la señora Nanjo continuó experimentando una serie de muertes en su familia. En el año 1274, su hijo mayor Shichiro Taro falleció. Su segundo hijo, Tokimitsu, se convirtió en la cabeza de la familia y asumió responsabilidad como administrador del área de Ueno. En el año 1280, su hijo más pequeño Shichiro Goro repentinamente falleció. Su muerte le causó mucho pesar a la señora Nanjo, ya que este niño había nacido después de la muerte de su esposo y ella lo había criado sola. Después de cada una de

estas muertes el Daishonin continuó alentando a la señora Nanjo a través de sus cartas dirigidas a ella.

Triunfo: El Daishonin falleció el 13 de octubre, de 1282. Aproximadamente dos años después, el 10 de mayo, de 1284, la señora Nanjo falleció pacíficamente con Tokimitsu y el resto de su familia a su alrededor. Hasta el último momento, ella mantuvo su fe en las enseñanzas del Daishonin. En 1289, Nanjo Tokimitsu invitó a Nikko Shonin to Ueno y le ayudó a establecer Taiseki-ji, de esta forma preservando la integridad del Budismo del Daishonin, protegiéndolo de las corrupciones y distorsiones cometidas por los cinco sacerdotes mayores. Tanto la Dama Nanjo, como su familia, hicieron notables contribuciones para la propagación y protección del Budismo del Daishonin, probando su genuina y firme fe, la cual nunca vaciló, apesar de las enormes persecuciones y sus dificultades personales.

Traducción del Gosho y antecedentes:
Living Buddhism, julio de 1999.
Por: Cesarina Caro.

GOSHO de la pág. I

Esta oración del Buda concluye el capítulo "La Duración de la Vida." El Buda, las veinte y cuatro horas del día, día tras día y mes tras mes. Está constantemente pensando en el bienestar de los demás. Inmutable y continuamente está alentando a las personas. Éste es el mundo de la Budeidad.

Nosotros quienes hemos

abrazado el Gohonzon debemos luchar para verdaderamente proteger a todas las personas en nuestra comunidad y organizaciones-para ayudarlas a ser felices, levantarse y recibir beneficios. Debemos hacerlo así con el espíritu de este fragmento, "En todo momento estoy pensando..." Todo depende en que los líderes puedan tener tal sentido de responsabilidad.

Líderes tienen que siempre tener la sensibilidad y compasión de dar una mano

donde sea necesitada. También deben de impartir orientaciones cálidas y razonables. El aliento del Daishonin es un modelo para todos los budistas y para todos los líderes en la sociedad.

Abrazado por la fe firme de su madre, Nanjo Tokimitsu superó una severa enfermedad y llegó a vivir 74 años. En el budismo, todo tiene significado, puede que Shichiro Goro "haya legado" el lapso de su propia vida a Tokimitsu.

Llevando a cabo la pasión

de su padre y hermano más joven, Tokimitsu dedicó su vida a Kosen-rufu cumpliendo la promesa que él hizo durante su juventud. Y su magnífica vida también atesta la victoria de su madre y de su hermano Shichiro Goro.

NOTAS:

1-Kakko una hierba medicinal, fragancia tamalapatra (sándalo).
2-"Ueno Dono Haha Gozen Gohenji" (*Gosho Zenshu*, págs. 1583-84), escrita en diciembre de 1281 cuando el Daishonin tenía 60 años

de edad.
3-Ocho clases de seres no humanos: seres que protegen el budismo, mencionados en el capítulo "Parábolas y semejanzas" (3) del Sutra del Loto. Son: 10 deidades, 2) dragones, 3) demonios llamados yakshas, 4) deidades conocidas como gandharvas (deidades de la música), 5) demonios llamados asuras, 6) aves llamadas garudás (que devoran dragones), 7) deidades conocidas como kimnaras (de hermosa voz) y 8) deidades llamadas mahoragas.



Miembros representando su tierra natal, de izquierda a derecha, Venezuela, Bolivia, Puerto Rico y Brazil

LA DIVERSIDAD '99

FESTIVAL CULTURAL LATINO-CARIBEÑO SE CELEBRA EN EL CENTRO DE LA NATURALEZA Y LA CULTURA DE LA FLORIDA

Por Monica Lema
Miami, Fla.

La SGI-USA patrocinó este año la realización del encuentro La Diversidad '99 con la presentación de un Festival Latinoamericano y del Caribe, con la representación de invitados especiales de otras culturas como la Japonesa, Americana, Italiana, Coreana entre otros. El evento tuvo lugar el 23 de mayo desde las 12:00 del mediodía hasta las 4:00 de la tarde en el Centro de la Naturaleza y la Cultura de la Florida. (FNCC) por sus siglas en Inglés.

La Diversidad '99 ha sido creada para promover los lazos de amistad entre las personas de diversas culturas como lo son la Latinoamericana, Caribeña, Africana, Europea y Asiática.

Durante los últimos 30 años la SGI-USA ha estado involucrada en la promoción de la Paz, la Cultura y Educación para que éstos sean los ingredientes para un mundo mejor. Mediante los festivales culturales, nosotros cerramos las brechas existentes entre las personas y aprendemos a trabajar juntos por la humanidad. "Aprender de cada uno de nosotros nos permite enriquecer nuestras vidas" así lo expresa el señor Loren Jacobs, Director de la Región de la Florida.

La Diversidad '99 tuvo una exhibición de arte, entretenimiento de varios países y ejecuciones especiales de conocidos artistas como el pianista George Tandy, el

flautista Nestor Torres y el premiado ballet folklórico Mágica de Bolivia. Se presentaron diferentes actos culturales como el Desfile de la fantasía, con trajes típicos de cada país, artesanías, "El mundo mágico de los niños" una actividad especial para los niños también tuvo mucho éxito y por supuesto comidas típicas de los distintos países estuvieron disponibles para la venta.

Los siguientes son algunos de los comentarios de miembros que participaron en el Festival:

Natalia Villegas, Estadounidense, nos dice:

"Es evidente que aprendimos

muchísimo. Transcendimos las barreras de la raza, religión y la cultura. Representar la tierra donde nacieron mis padres 'Colombia' fue un gran orgullo para mí. Esta actividad me ha enseñado como el Presidente Ikeda una todas las culturas a la vez que enaltece la individualidad.

Felipe Pirela, Venezuela:

En tres palabras puedo describir el Festival Cultural La Diversidad '99. ¡Maravilloso! ¡Maravilloso! ¡Maravilloso! Por medio de esta actividad me di cuenta del gran crecimiento que hemos tenido. Nos hemos desarrollado tanto que ya podemos comprometernos con un festival cultural de esta

magnitud. Estoy feliz y lleno de esperanza.

Liv Maimoni, Brasilera.

Tengo 12 años de edad. Para el Festival Cultural La Diversidad '99, escribí un libro para los niños sobre pintores y escritores famosos de países Latinoamericanos y Caribeños. Además tuve la oportunidad de participar en el desfile de la división Juvenil representando a los Estados Unidos. He recibido muchos beneficios como resultado del Festival. Para el evento invoqué daimoku una hora diaria y aun después he continuado sin parar.

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