



**EXPERIENCE:**  
Law student  
Angus  
MacDonald isn't  
afraid to share  
this Buddhism.  
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Photo by ROB HENDRY



Members from Italy and Brazil meet with Japanese members at the Saitama Culture Center in preparation for exchange meetings in various areas during the SGI Training Course, June 30-July 4.

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JULY 3 SPEECH —PART 2

# Human Revolution: This Religion's Purpose

*SGI President Ikeda explains that the purpose of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is 'human revolution — the inner reformation of each individual.'*

The ancient Greek writer Aristophanes wrote a comedy called *Assembly of Women*, in which women infiltrate the all-male Ecclesia, the Athenian assembly, and take over the government, wresting it from the men's control.

*The Athens women disguise themselves as men and, through their brilliant powers of oratory, form a government of women.*

There is a scene where the women rehearse what they will say in the Assembly. The women's leader, Praxagora, pretending to be a man, makes a bold appeal: "I say that we must hand over the city to the women! For in fact, we use them in our households as ad-

ministrators and treasurers." She further declares: "So, gentlemen, let us turn over the city to them [the women], and not babble nor inquire about what they intend to do, but simply allow them to rule, considering this alone: That being mothers of soldiers first, they will desire to save them. Next, provisions: Who would send a soldier more [provisions] than the one who bore him?"

Being a comedy, Aristophanes' play is not, of course, entirely complimentary to women, but the fact remains that in any nation, women are sharp observers. They possess great strength. If we pay attention to what women have to say, our families and our societies will flourish. This, I believe, is a truth that applies to all nations.

I have constantly asked that

everyone treat the women's division members with the highest respect. But no matter how many times I say it, there are some men who can't break the habit of looking down on women.

Any man in our organization who looks down on the women's and young women's division members, who are striving so hard for kosen-rufu, is utterly unqualified to be an SGI leader. I want to take this opportunity to say once again, with the strongest emphasis, that our male leaders should have supreme respect for women.

Nichiren Daishonin, to an astonishing degree, valued and praised his female followers, who dedicated themselves to their Buddhist practice with utmost sincerity. Respect for women is the spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

## New England Culture Center Holds Open House

Photo by MARION F. SHAPIRO



Reverend Roger N. Jacques takes his turn at planting a tree, while Waltham City Councillor Rebecca H. McCullough and Dr. John Montgomery of Harvard University look on.

"Where are they all coming from?" someone asked. "There are people everywhere." The New England Culture Center's June 27 open house attracted citizens of Waltham, SGI members, their families, friends and acquaintances. Bringing the excitement up another notch, former members of SGI-New England, now living elsewhere, took advantage of the occasion to drop in on old friends in faith in their new home.

First-time visitors, including many neighbors who remembered the building from one or more of its former uses — wrestling arena, playhouse, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers meeting place, etc. — availed themselves of guided tours through the large building. Others went directly into the auditorium and viewed the exhibits highlighting the many levels of activities sponsored by the SGI. Also, in a room flanking the auditorium, children created a "peace garden" and a "peace tree" — a live tree to which children attached construction-paper leaves, on which their determinations were written. What really captivated onlookers was the sight of preteens guiding the efforts of their juniors in creating the garden and tree.

The day's central activity, the planting of a plum tree, took place in midafternoon. During the tree-planting, the announcement was made that the Massachusetts House of Representatives had issued a proclamation designating June 27, 1999, SGI Day in the Commonwealth.

— FLETCHER DALTON

Anyway, who wants to be on women's bad side? Who wants to be the kind of husband whose wife, after he finally dies, exclaims, "At last he's gone!" It's a pretty sad, miserable way to live. There also seem to be a lot of men who lord it over women in the organization, only to turn into henpecked husbands the minute that they get home.

It is important for men to be big enough to accept and value women. I hope that all our male SGI members from overseas here

will take this message back to their home countries.

**Action without a purpose is the same as groping in the dark.**

During World War II, when Mr. Makiguchi was Soka Gakkai president, the organization put out a monthly journal called *Value Creation*. Nine issues were

SEE PURPOSE, 4

# Speaking Up for Who We Are

By PATRICIA FORD  
LAWRENCE, KANS.

*If in this present existence I am so fearful for my life that I fail to speak out, then in what future existence will I ever attain Buddhahood? ... I decided that I must begin to speak out. ("Repaying Debts of Gratitude," The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 4, pp. 253-54)*

Nichiren Daishonin wrote this treatise upon retiring to Mount Minobu. He wrote it in gratitude to his first teacher, Dozen-bo, who was chief priest at Seicho-ji, the temple Nichiren Daishonin first came to at age 12.

Nichiren Daishonin sent this to Joken-bo and Gijo-bo, who were senior monks at the time he came to the temple. He asked that this writing be read at Seicho-ji as well as at the tomb of his late teacher.



## IN MY LIFE

NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

When he says in this treatise that "I decided that I must begin to speak out," he is expressing his determination to spread the truth of this Buddhism — that we are all potentially Buddhas — and to attain his enlightenment. One lesson I take from this is how important it is to respect ourselves.

I have been into the Gothic sub-culture of music, art, literature and fashion for almost 10 years. Even though I am in graduate school and have gone through many personal changes, I feel comfortable saying I'm someone in this sub-culture.

I have struggled to be who I am. Buddhists and many more non-Buddhists over the years have told me to

## TEMPLE ISSUE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

# Should We Ignore Nichiren Shoshu?

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

After Nichiren Shoshu announced last year that the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) was to be destroyed, the SGI protested. We could have paid no attention to this move specially designed to anger our members — and to the many other annoying things that the priests have done in recent years, from cutting down the cherry trees to excommunicating all of us twice.



Why validate the priests by making a big deal about the mean-spirited actions that they take?

The SGI has chosen not to remain silent out of a deep respect for the SGI membership, to protect all the SGI members. The Lotus Sutra says that "[if you see a person who accepts and upholds this sutra,] you should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha" (The Lotus Sutra, p. 324). This is the basic spirit of the SGI. To not respect and support sincere practitioners of the Lotus Sutra — to instead persecute them as Nichiren Shoshu has done — is the very definition of slander in this Buddhism.

wear more color and listen to music I do not care for. In other words, to change — because I didn't fit their image of what I should be. Maybe I didn't fit their image of what a Buddhist should be.

Over the years, this berating wore me out, and I started to not like who I was. I wouldn't speak out and defend myself anymore.

When Nichiren Daishonin says that we should speak out, this means that we should not only stand up to injustice, but we should defend ourselves and others when attacked. That means we should respect ourselves, ultimately. After all, we all have a Buddha nature.

SGI President Ikeda once told someone who had gone through many struggles: "I know about you. Don't ever change who you are!" I never forgot that.

President Ikeda had the courage to tell this person that it was all right to

One lesson of the temple issue, then, is that this Buddhism takes a strong stance on respecting people. When great, wonderful people like the SGI members are being disrespected, we have to do something, say something. As Buddhists, we can't just ignore that this is going on.

While Buddhism seeks to embrace all people, believing all of us equal, all of us potentially Buddhas, it also declares that those (especially those in positions of power) who abuse the people should be countered. As the Daishonin puts it: "[My disciples] are like an infant emperor wrapped in swaddling clothes, or a great dragon who has just been born. Do not despise them! Do not look on them with contempt!" (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 6, p. 225).

Throughout the Buddhist scriptures and the Daishonin's writings, there are many examples of ill-intentioned influential people who looked down on good people. In the Lotus Sutra, there is Devadatta; the Daishonin had Hei no Saemon; today, Nikken and his fellow priests resemble these men.

All of these figures play an essential role in Buddhism, showing us the road not to take; their bad examples are an education for us.

You have to wonder if what's right and what's wrong would be as clear as they are without these examples. In fact, the Daishonin writes that "Devadatta more than anyone else proved the

validity of Shakyamuni's teaching. In this age as well, it is not one's friends but one's enemies who assist his progress" (MW-1, 186).

The appearance of these enemies also accords with the Lotus Sutra's prediction that as the Law spreads, those who are leading the way for it are sure to be attacked. Nichiren Shoshu's actions are one proof, then, of the SGI being on the right track. The temple issue is something for us to be very happy about. At the time of the Atsuhara Persecution, the Daishonin writes: "From a mundane view, I, Nichiren, am the poorest person in Japan, but in light of Buddhism, I am the wealthiest person in the world. When I consider that this is all because the time is right, I am overwhelmed with joy and cannot restrain my tears" (MW-3, 296). We can experience the same joy now because of the current situation.

The SGI has introduced the offensive acts of Nichiren Shoshu to the world not because we're just miffed, not because we've given in to anger and emotionalism, but because we have this joy: We are facing today what was predicted 2,500 years ago by Shakyamuni.


Based on our respect for all people, we'll continue to show the world who we are and what we're contributing — and how hard we're working for all people's happiness.

Six in a series

be who he was. I thought about what he said every time someone called me names in high school (or even more recently than that).

Buddhism has always said that we should be who we are. Shakyamuni Buddha, for instance, renounced the caste system of his day in India. This system discriminated against people based on their social class.

His condemnation was radical for his time, as this social system was deeply ingrained in Indian culture. He stood up for all people to be who they were and condemned a system of oppression so ingrained in people's lives.

We are told in our culture not to discriminate against someone based on race, ethnicity, religion, class, etc., yet people are still discriminated against for what they wear, the kind of music they like and what kind of art they enjoy. Speaking out against this kind of intolerance is another step in respecting the Buddha within us all. 



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EXPERIENCE — ANGUS MACDONALD, SAN FRANCISCO

# Up Front With the Law

*Law student Angus MacDonald lands a summer associate position with a top law firm and overcomes his shyness by naturally sharing his enthusiasm about Buddhism.*

I had the great fortune to be born into this wonderful practice of Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism and have accrued tremendous benefits as a result. However, I have tended to be reluctant when talking about Buddhism to people whom I don't know. Part of the reason for this diffidence may be because I attended religiously affiliated schools for a great part of my life, and part of it may stem from my own shy nature. I recently had a great opportunity to overcome this when I set about looking for a job for this summer.

Currently, I am in between my second and third years at law school at the University of California at Davis. At the beginning of each school year, law firms from all over California and other states come to Davis, as well as other schools, to interview second-year students for summer associate positions. These positions often lead to full-time employment; as a result, on-campus interviewing is a very competitive process. The firms that participate in on-campus interviews tend to look only for students in the top 20–25 percent of the class, which I'm not in, though I'm in the top half. The initial step for law firms is to screen dozens of résumés before they select whom they plan to interview, and needless to say, everything in one's résumé is very crucial.

Under my "personal interests" section of my résumé, I listed Buddhism as my first entry. Prior to submitting my résumé, a couple of people who looked at it suggested that I may want to consider deleting Buddhism because of the conservative nature of law firms. I decided to keep it. After all, what is this practice without faith?

At this time, I was consistently participating in as many activities as I could in the Davis and Sacramento areas. Among other things, I was chanting to receive maybe a handful of on-campus interviews, but fortunately, I got a lot more interviews than I expected. These on-campus interviews usually last only 15-20 minutes, so it's

important to make an immediate impression. If a law firm likes a candidate, then it invites him or her back to the firm for a round of call-back interviews.

I can think of no better way to prepare for job interviews than to sincerely chant with a strong determination, which I did. During the interviews, I could really feel my strong determination and character exude. It gave me a lot of confidence despite my average grades. As a result I received several call-back interviews.

My first interview was in Los Angeles, where I was flown at the firm's expense. I was pretty nervous, but the first thing the interviewer wanted to know was if I had ever heard of "Nikiren Dai-something Buddhism." I was immediately relaxed. Apparently, this woman had just moved from New York, where a friend had introduced her to Buddhism shortly before she left for Los Angeles. We had a very pleasant conversation about Buddhism, and I gave her the phone number for the head office in Santa Monica and encouraged her to get in touch with the members in Los Angeles.

Throughout subsequent call-back interviews at this and other firms, a lot of people had shown interest in my Buddhist practice. It was a very natural way of overcoming my shyness in talking to others about Buddhism, and I was very enthusiastic in discussing this topic. Also, it was a great opportunity to engage in a friendly, congenial dialogue about Buddhism. For example, at one firm in Sacramento, three of the attorneys with whom I interviewed had theology backgrounds, and I had a very warm exchange of philosophical ideas — something that President Ikeda really encourages all of us to do.

I had strong preference to work in San Francisco, but I also realized it's a tough market to crack, especially with so many top law schools in the Bay Area. As a result, I interviewed wherever I could. Additionally, I wanted to work in intellectual property law, which deals with computers, patents, copyrights,



Angus MacDonald (left) and his family at his sister Heather's high school graduation. (L-r) Angus; his mother, Machiko; his sister, Heather, his father, Steven; and brother, David.

the Internet and other high-tech areas. Because of the strength of the Silicon Valley and our economy, intellectual property law is a very dynamic area of law. However, it's also very competitive to get into since the vast majority of law firms specializing in intellectual property law require that candidates have a technical degree, preferably an advanced degree. This was an obstacle for me because I studied political science and history as an undergraduate, and had no technical experience.

In particular, there was a firm, which I knew about before I started law school, that I really wanted to work for. This firm is an established intellectual property firm in San Francisco with a great reputation. My chances of landing a job with them were very low considering my lack of a technical background, my average grades and a lack of significant work experience in the legal profession. Nevertheless, I sent them my résumé and cover letter.

Unexpectedly, I received a call-back interview from this firm. On the morning of my interview, I did a strong gongyo with my mother and sincerely chanted. My interviews with this firm went well, and although Buddhism was not brought up, I left feeling that I gave it my best.

Two days after interviewing with this firm, I received an offer from a Sacramento firm, which was pressuring me to accept their offer within a day or two. I called the San Francisco

firm where I wanted to work knowing that it often takes several weeks for them to make a decision, and asked them if they were at all considering me. To my delight, the recruitment coordinator said my interview scores were among the highest of all the candidates, and that she would try to let me know either way in several days.

I have no doubt that the positive remarks from my interviews were the direct result of my Buddhist practice. I immediately turned to the Gohonzon because of the significant life decision that was involved. While the Sacramento offer was a sure thing, I did not want to lose the opportunity to work in the San Francisco firm. Either way, I had to make a decision whether to accept the offer from the Sacramento firm. I chanted to be in the best place to fulfill my mission for kosen-rufu.

The next day, I went to San Francisco to hand-deliver some thank-you notes to the people who had interviewed me at the firm where I wanted to work. When I came home after delivering the notes, the San Francisco firm had left me a message on my answering machine offering me a summer associate position, which I thrillingly accepted. At the crucial time, everything came together.

I am currently working there, and would like to work at this firm after law school. While the work is pretty challenging, I am completely enjoying what I am doing. My fellow summer as-

sociates all have very impressive credentials, go to top-notch law schools, and over half of them have advanced degrees in the technical sciences. I have no doubt that I would not be working at this excellent firm, with these people, without my Buddhist practice.

In conclusion, President Ikeda wrote the following to the youth of the SGI: "Youth should never be swept away by materialistic greed or desire for superficial fame. In other words, youth should not be like old men who selfishly avoid hard work and pursue their own gain alone. Justice, courage and passion are the lifeblood and privilege of youth."

This passage has particular relevance to my experience because the legal profession, as we all know, can be a very materialistic profession, where status and gain become barometers of success. Indeed the lawyers and summer associates at my firm are well paid; however, I realize that money is illusory and means nothing when you're unhappy.

As a member of the youth division, it is with justice, courage and passion that I strive to live happily each day — overcoming and welcoming my daily obstacles. I am determined to live a full life where SGI activities play an integral role. In addition, I am determined to use this actual proof as a springboard for developing a mission for encouraging my colleagues, classmates and others to practice this great Buddhism. ☸

FROM PURPOSE, 1

published before the military authorities ordered the Gakkai to cease publication, the first issue appearing in July 1941. At that time, Japan had already invaded a number of its Asian neighbors and was heading into the Pacific War, which began five months later [with the December attack on Pearl Harbor].

One of Mr. Makiguchi's lectures, titled "Establishing a Sense of Purpose," was carried in the journal's first issue. In this lecture, Mr. Makiguchi lamented the fact that Japan had come to a dead end and had absolutely no vision of its future.

Makiguchi had a completely different viewpoint from the irresponsible political, military and academic figures of the day, who had no clear perception of where Japan was going. Mr. Makiguchi put his finger on the source of Japan's troubles: a lack of a sound philosophy and sense of purpose. Action without a purpose, he said, is no more than blind groping in the dark. It would never succeed.

Some people back then thought that if they saved up enough money, they would lead a good life and be happy, but that goal, Mr. Makiguchi pointed out, is very different from having a true sense of purpose. A life based on that way of thinking is like starting a journey in the dark, hoping to reach a certain point where at last you might be able to see where you are going.

Nothing can be more uncertain than setting forth without a clear aim. Short-term goals cannot be determined without first setting one's long-term goals, one's ultimate purpose, he declared. And he was right. He had identified a fundamental problem on both the individual and social levels.

**Only by putting into practice respect for life can we achieve happiness for both ourselves and others.**

How, then, does one discover one's ultimate purpose? Mr. Makiguchi said that this can never be done as long as one remains closed up in one's self, one's family and one's nation. One has to open one's mind to encompass the world!

"Unless you know the world," he says in this lecture, "you will never know your own nation."

*Mr. Makiguchi goes on to say: "The livelihood of the family can never be secure unless the livelihood of the nation is secure. Thus, to secure the livelihood of the family, first the livelihood of the nation must be secured. Likewise, unless the livelihood of the world is secure, the livelihood of the nation cannot be secure."*

When Mr. Makiguchi talks about knowing the world, he doesn't mean its superficial present appearance. "We cannot un-

derstand the world unless we understand the eternity of life throughout the three existences of past, present and future," he says. "Only when we understand the law of cause and effect operating across the three existences can each individual secure their present lives. This cannot be achieved through the natural sciences, which can affect only the present existence."

This is why the correct teaching of the Daishonin's Buddhism, which elucidates the eternity of life throughout the three existences, is indispensable. Only by putting into practice the principle of the dignity and sanctity of life can we live with the ultimate purpose of achieving happiness for both ourselves and others. This was Mr. Makiguchi's bold assertion. It is a clear philosophy. Mr. Makiguchi was truly an outstanding teacher. And we are his disciples.

Armed with this ultimate purpose of life, all of you are advancing down the most correct path, just as Mr. Makiguchi urged. You are, in actuality, bringing happiness to people with far greater effect than any celebrity or self-important political leader. I hope all of you will take pride in this fact.

**The fundamental direction of the Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu started to diverge in the days of Japanese militarism.**

The Sino-Japanese War got under way in earnest in July 1937.

Two months later, Mr. Makiguchi published a treatise, *Practical Experimentation in Value-Creating Educational Methods Through Science and Supreme Religion*. In it, he argued emphatically for the realization of world peace: "There can never be a revolution in education unless it is based on the ultimate truths of Buddhism. And unless education is revolutionized, world peace will never be attained, no matter how many international conferences are held."

In striking contrast, at the very same time, Nichiren Shoshu's acquiescence to Japanese militarism was growing daily more evident. The priesthood even held ceremonies to pray for Japan's victory in its invasions of other nations.

Thus, here was a situation where the Soka Gakkai was dedicated to peace on the one hand, and Nichiren Shoshu was cooperating with the warmongers on the other. Already from that time, there was a marked divergence in the fundamental direction of the Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu.

Mr. Makiguchi called for a complete restructuring of the human spirit as the means to attain world peace and happiness for all: "The fact is, that unless the very foundation of the human spirit is transformed through a religious revolution, all human affairs will remain in chaos forever." In other words, a religious revolution, a spiritual revolution, was necessary to put an end to the chaos and disruption of human society, he proclaimed. In all things, it is the spirit, the heart, that is crucial.

Today, at the turn of the century, in a world that lacks a sound philosophy, intelligent and concerned people throughout the globe are beginning to recognize the genius of Mr. Makiguchi's thought.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was born in Niigata Prefecture in 1871, exactly 600 years after the Daishonin's exile to Sado Island, which is also part of that prefecture. And when he was arrested by the wartime military authorities, on July 6, 1943, he was in Izu, another place to which the Daishonin was exiled. The following year, Mr. Makiguchi died in prison, upholding his beliefs to the end.

His true disciple, Josei Toda, who shared his heart as his own, was released from prison on July 3, 1945, 54 years ago today. From that day forward, Mr. Toda began his indefatigable struggle, carrying on Mr. Makiguchi's legacy and holding high the ideals of the Daishonin's life philosophy, reli-

gious revolution and human revolution. July 3 is a day of immeasurably profound significance.

**Our movement of peace, culture and education is the best way to make contribute to global society.**

British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, with whom I held a dialogue in the early 1970s, told me that with the decline of Christianity three new religions were born: 1) faith in progress through science, 2) nationalism and 3) communism. But, he asserted, none of them had proven satisfactory. They had all failed. They could not bring true happiness to humanity.

He then said that he hoped for the emergence of a new higher religion that would provide humanity with the strength to "contend with, and to overcome, the evils that are serious present threats to human survival" (*Choose Life: A Dialogue*, p. 318)

Such was the conclusion of one of the great scholars of our time. And what religion did Dr. Toynbee look to and hold out hopes for? Mahayana Buddhism.

That is how he came to express an interest in meeting me. We met and shared our ideas for a total of more than 10 days in 1972 and 1973, talking from morning until night. How fondly I remember those times!

Dr. Toynbee had immense faith in what the Soka Gakkai was working to achieve. The published record of our dialogue has now appeared in 21 languages, and leaders around the world have read it.

The 21st century is the century in which the Daishonin's Buddhism — the quintessence of Mahayana Buddhism — will prove itself on the international level.

What is the aim of the Daishonin's Buddhism? In contemporary terms, human revolution — the inner reformation of each individual. Our movement of peace, culture and education, based on human revolution, is the way to make the greatest contribution to global society.

Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda blazed this trail. My contribution has been to consolidate this path through practical, concrete efforts and to extend it around the world. And you are the pioneers carrying out this momentous experiment in the history of humankind in countries everywhere around the world.

Your efforts may not be flashy. They may not attract the media spotlight. But what you are doing is thousands of times greater than the deeds of any celebrity or warmongering political leader. You are shaping the currents for a

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complete transformation of human history. I am certain that Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda would have only the highest praise for your efforts.

I want to share a few more anecdotes with you, stories that I hope you will find spiritually enriching. Rosa Parks, the mother of the American civil rights movement, is a precious friend of the SGI. At 86, she remains healthy and active. Recently, Mrs. Parks received the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor from the U.S. Congress.

When my wife and I learned that Mrs. Parks was to receive the award, we immediately sent a congratulatory telegram dated May 3, SGI Mother's Day. Mrs. Parks sent a reply inviting us to the presentation ceremony on June 15. Unfortunately, we were unable to attend, so we asked Dr. Tomoko T

akahashi, dean of the Graduate School and professor of linguistics and education at Soka University of America, Calabasas, to attend on our behalf. [Dr. Takahashi has translated a number of Mrs. Parks' books into Japanese].

Mrs. Parks also sent the following message, which I want to share with you: "Please give my very best to President Ikeda and the entire Soka family. I am deeply grateful for their friendship."

*President Clinton attended the presentation ceremony at the U.S. Capitol and said, "We must never ever, when this ceremony is over, forget about the power of ordinary people to stand in the fire for the cause of human dignity."*

At an event celebrating the award, held a day before the presentation ceremony, one of Mrs.

Parks' favorite poems, "Still I Rise" by African American poet Maya Angelou, was read. The words of the poem rang out as Mrs. Parks sat listening.

*You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.  
.....  
You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.  
.....  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.*

Now, together with Mrs. Parks, the SGI women have risen! You are the hope of the new age. You are the ones who will realize the dream of the new century.

**We should wake up every morning ready to take on the world.**

Dr. John Kenneth Galbraith, world-renowned economist and professor emeritus of Harvard



Rosa Parks receives the Congressional Gold Medal, June 15. Mrs. Parks was awarded this highest civilian award given by Congress in a ceremony attended by President Clinton, civil rights leaders and members of Congress.

University, is 90 years old and continues to work at a steady pace. Even now he is writing a new book.

We have been friends for 20 years. I have visited him at his home in Boston in 1993, and he has met with me here in Tokyo in 1978 and 1990. He was kind enough to act as a respondent on the occasion of my second lecture at Harvard, "Mahayana Buddhism and Twenty-first Century Civilization."

Something that Dr. Galbraith said during our 1990 meeting made a deep impression on me. "Next week," he said, "I will be 82, but I think of it as my very first birthday. I believe that the older we get, the more there is to learn."

This is the philosophy of life of the ever-youthful Dr. Galbraith. He also offered his view that having firm goals or plans for the day ahead when we get up in the morning is important in terms of staying alert and healthy.

We should wake up every morning ready to take on the world. In that regard, a vigorous morning session of gongyo and daimoku, which enables us to start the day fresh and energetic, is a wonderful way to stay healthy.

**Our voice reaches all the protective functions of the universe.**

Reciting gongyo and chanting daimoku are a sublime ceremony in which we bring the microcosm of our lives into harmony with the fundamental rhythm of the macrocosm, the universe. We join our hands in prayer before the Gohonzon and recite gongyo and chant daimoku. Our voice

reaches all Buddhas, bodhisattvas and heavenly deities — the protective functions of the universe. Though we cannot see them, they gather round us to keep us safe from harm. We are in their midst.

When we do morning gongyo, we face the east and greet the sun, the representative of all the heavenly deities. And when we do so, we offer those deities a taste of the Law. Then, when we turn to face the Gohonzon again, all the heavenly deities of the universe join us in facing the Gohonzon, palms pressed together in reverence, dedicated to carrying out our wishes.

How awesome is chanting daimoku! All the protective functions — Buddhas, bodhisattvas and heavenly deities — become our allies. That is why we have the power and ability to lead humanity to happiness and also why it is our mission to do so.

**There is no retirement from faith.**

Dr. Galbraith also said that "the biggest mistake that elderly people make is to retire from their work. Unless you have work to do, you cease to exert physical and mental effort. And it is very bad, especially, to stop exerting mental effort."

This applies all the more in the realm of faith: there is no retirement from faith. Our SGI activities for kosen-rufu are the greatest mental and spiritual effort. They strengthen our life-force, and as such are a fundamental means for staying in good health.

I asked Dr. Galbraith about his vision for the 21st century, and he answered: "I can state my vision

for the 21st century in very few words. This is my personal hope, but I want the next century to be a time when it is a joy to be alive. I want it to be an age when everyone shares a belief that a better life can be lived, that they can attain happiness, and that there is an end to killing."

He was expressing his sympathy with our movement and its goals, for our SGI is an organization working to build an age in which all people can lead joyous lives. With his words, I want to bring today's "World Kosen-rufu Conference" to a close.

*President Ikeda then suggested that the Soka Gloria Wind Orchestra play "March Toward the 21st Century" and "Song of World Kosen-rufu." When the performance began, President Ikeda came down off the stage to shake hands with and offer words of personal encouragement to the visiting overseas members.*

I pray that all of you will stay healthy and active. Please take care of your health. When you return home, please give my best to your fellow members. I am praying for the victory of all our members in Japan and throughout the world. May you each enjoy success, happiness, health, long life and peace and harmony!

*The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 35th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, July 3 (Day of Mentor and Disciple).*

#### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

## The Power of Prayer

From This Speech:

Reciting gongyo and chanting daimoku are a sublime ceremony in which we bring the microcosm of our lives into harmony with the fundamental rhythm of the macrocosm, the universe. We join our hands in prayer before the Gohonzon and recite gongyo and chant daimoku. Our voice reaches all Buddhas, bodhisattvas and heavenly deities—the protective functions of the universe. Though we cannot see them, they gather round us to keep us safe from harm.

1. How do you feel when you do a great gongyo or have a great daimoku session?
2. What do you do when you feel your gongyo or daimoku is not up to par?
3. What does it mean to you to be in rhythm with the universe?
4. When we talk about the protective forces of the universe, what are we really talking about?

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'EARLY SPRING'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 5-6

How the first chapter in Europe was formed in 1963.

In September 1962, following the arrival in West Germany of young men's division members Koichiro Sada and Michiya Moro'oka, a young women's division member named Matsuko Takaishi—an ear, nose and throat physician—came to live in West Germany.

Takaishi had realized her long-cherished dream of becoming a doctor, graduating from the Department of Medicine of the highly regarded University of Chiba in Japan. Yet she found herself having difficulties in her relationships with friends, and her confidence in her abilities as a doctor was beginning to wane.

She joined the Soka Gakkai in 1958 at the encouragement of her sister-in-law who, through faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, had managed to recover from an illness that the most advanced medical science had failed to cure. As she engaged herself wholeheartedly in her Buddhist practice and Gakkai activities, Takaishi was able to secure a position as a research assistant at her alma mater, Chiba University. Getting the job came as a great surprise to her and served to convince her further of the power of faith.

Shortly thereafter, Shin'ichi Yamamoto was appointed Soka Gakkai president, and the term worldwide kosen-rufu became increasingly familiar to the members.

Inspired by this, Takaishi decided to go abroad to study in West Germany. She even dreamed of welcoming President Yamamoto there one day.

But when she took the exam in Japan to qualify as an exchange student, she failed. This was a terrible shock to Takaishi, who since childhood had been praised as an exceptional student and had never failed a school exam.

She began to feel that perhaps it was not her mission to work for kosen-rufu on the global stage. Worse, she began to have doubts about faith and the validity of the claim that no prayer goes unanswered. Though participating in Gakkai activities, she felt unhappy and distressed. She wished that she could receive personal guidance from President Yamamoto.

Toward the end of 1961, Takaishi went with one of her seniors in faith, a fellow doctor, to see Shin'ichi at the Seikyo Shimbun offices in Tokyo. After inquiring about her family, Shin'ichi asked Takaishi, "What level are you in the Study Department?"

"I'm not a member of the Study Department yet," she replied.

Takaishi had failed the Entrance Exam that would qualify her as a Study Department member, not having bothered to study for it seriously. While failing the exam to become an exchange student came as an incredible shock to her, failing the Entrance Exam hadn't caused her the least concern. This reflected her tendency to place a high priority on social position and title while taking the world of faith lightly.

"So you're saying that even though you've graduated from university, you're incapable of studying Buddhism?" Shin'ichi asked.

These words pierced Takaishi's heart like a knife. They were clear-cut guidance to help her correct her attitude in faith. Takaishi suddenly realized that, although she had thought she was striving earnestly in her Buddhist practice, somewhere in her heart she had been treating Buddhism lightly. With such an attitude, she thought, it was understandable that her prayers hadn't been answered.

In January 1962, Takaishi prepared to take the Entrance Exam once again, determined this time to start all over in her Buddhist practice from the very basics. She applied herself with a fresh resolve, sincerely and humbly studying Buddhist principles and theory, and earnestly chanting daimoku.

As she did, she developed a keen awareness of the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism. This time she passed the exam. For her, this meant that her faith had received a passing grade.

A short time later, Takaishi realized her dream of studying abroad, gaining the opportunity to study as an intern in the Otolaryngology Department of a hospital attached to the medical school



Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

of the University of Heidelberg in West Germany.

Alighting joyfully on West German soil, Takaishi worked with the YMD members already there—the coal miners Sada and Moro'oka—becoming with them a core member in that country. Their youthful energy gave powerful momentum to the development of the kosen-rufu movement in West Germany.

By January 1963, the membership in West Germany had grown to more than 50 households, far exceeding the original target of 30 that Shin'ichi had set for Sada, promising him that, if that figure were reached, a chapter would be established.

The morning of Jan. 12, 1963, Eisuke Akizuki and the other Soka Gakkai leaders from Japan held Study Department exams at their hotel for the local members. The grading of the exams was to be conducted at a special meeting with President Yamamoto when they met up with him in Paris.

In the afternoon, the inaugural meeting marking the formation of the chapter in West Germany was held in a small conference room they had booked at another hotel for the occasion. More than 30 members attended.

Eiji Kawasaki, the central contact person for Europe, delivered the opening speech, and a number of members shared their experiences in faith.

Eisuke Akizuki, Soka Gakkai vice general director, then spoke: "Some time ago, President Yamamoto set a goal of establishing a chapter here, when the membership surpassed 30 households.

"Today, West Germany has a membership of more than 50 households. This is solely due to your hard work and devoted efforts, day in and day out. Thank you all very much.

"President Yamamoto is currently in the United States. Before his departure from Japan, he told us, 'The time has come at last for us to establish a chapter in West Germany. I want you to go there and create a chapter.'

"Since then, while keeping in close touch with President Yamamoto in the United States, we have been making preparations for the chapter's formation. And today, at last, the time has arrived for us to establish in West Germany our first European chapter. My sincerest congratulations!"

Smiles lit the participants' faces, and there was loud applause. Tears glistened in Sada's eyes.

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

## Women in the Workplace

I was very surprised and excited to read about Verlette Allen in the April 16 World Tribune. I have been trying to track her down for a couple of years, but thought she was still in Washington, D.C.

The reason for this is that my husband is a member of the Plumbers Local #5 here in D.C. From where I stand, the Plumbers Local and the contractors' associations still are laboring under some illusions about women in the workplace. Some of these attitudes create a lot of hostility on the part of male members of the local.

Though I do see some positive change, I think it would be productive to open a dialogue between Ms. Allen's group and the union and contractor's officials in the Washington, D.C. area. Recent articles in the Washington Post in the wake of the Columbine shootings have discussed the vulnerability of boys in the context of the public school setting. Therefore, Ms. Allen's perspective on training of men and women together in a vocational setting seems, to me, to make a lot of sense.

— ZELDA BELL,  
Washington, D.C.

## Regarding SGI Policy

In the June 25 World Tribune in an article about Jean Sidwell,

# WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

the article mentioned that Jean received her Gohonzon soon after she started chanting. Since this is no longer the policy of SGI, I think such deviations from current policy should not be mentioned or an explanation of the difference in policy should be footnoted. I say this as a non/new potential member who has been practicing for three months and has to wait another three months before receiving a Gohonzon. I enjoyed the article. I enjoy receiving the *World Tribune*.

— KEITH BLUME,  
Kingwood, Texas

*Editor's note: Since 1990, the SGI-USA has established membership guidelines. The new SGI-USA membership guidelines were published in the July 23 World Tribune, page 1. The six-month practice period has been changed to three months.*

## More Than Lip Service

I would like to express my happiness and gratitude to the SGI for their contribution to the Kosovo refugees. I have

often been left with the feeling through conversations or guidance that the answer to everything is to only chant—and I've felt upset and frustrated by the omission of praying for the wisdom to take action.

So I am very pleased to know that the action to help in a concrete way was implemented. This was the first time I was aware of the SGI doing this—and it reinstilled my faith that we are paying more than lip service to kosen-rufu. I was also impressed with General Director's Zaitu's letter—fair-minded and strong.

I found Dr. Linus Pauling Jr.'s article very informative, and it was valuable to know from a son's point of view the relationship and impact between his father and President Ikeda. I appreciated his views on the SGI and Buddhism. I also would like to thank Paris Davis for a wonderful experience. I must say that this is, for me, one of the best *World Tribunes* to date. I have had a lot of complaint about what I considered fluff, when other members have been inspired. It is in fairness

and great pleasure that I thank you for a great April 23 *World Tribune*.

— ELLEN LEGER,  
Lexington, Mass.

## Y2K and Others

Perhaps it is time that we as an organization begin to address the Y2K issue. Every other newspaper and magazine are considering the potential problems that this "bug" could cause. Not that our publication comments on everything that the media jumps on—thank goodness. However, a topic as serious and controversial as disruption of services to possible infrastructure collapse ought to merit some attention, yes?

Yet no mention has been made, which leads me to ponder the curious question: Has the computer that contains my subscription information been upgraded? In other words, is the SGI Y2K compliant?

It seems to me that since we involve ourselves in movements such as the Abolition 2000 (nuclear disarmament) and disaster relief efforts, then certainly the manmade 2000 computer crisis is in keeping with our world peace agenda, in addition to the fact that this year's theme focuses on community involvement.

— LAURA NOVAK,  
Sebastopol, Calif.

*Editor's note: After much thought regarding the Y2K problem, the World Tribune has decided not to address the issue due to the abundant information already available on the topic. Rather, the July issue of Living Buddhism deals with the philosophical and underlying principles of the problem in the article "Don't Foul Out of the Game of Life: A Buddhist Solution to Millennium Madness."*

*SGI-USA members can be assured that we, from an organizational standpoint, are Y2K compliant and are doing our best to make sure our suppliers are also compliant.*

*Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the World Tribune. In the "Mailbox," we will publish members' comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the World Tribune. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation. Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Send letters to "Mailbox," World Tribune, 606 Wilshire Boulevard, P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427 or e-mail at wt@sgi-usa.org.*

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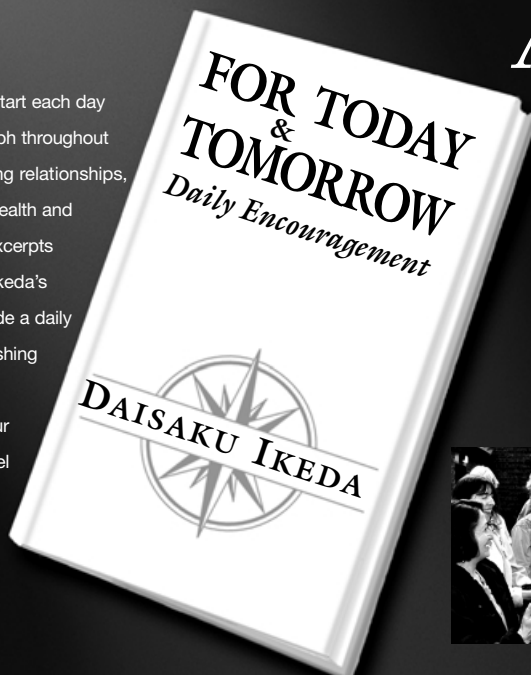
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# Taking Part in Making Pride

## SAN FRANCISCO

Under a spectacular sky, 150 SGI members — gay, straight, young, old, singles and families — participated in the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Pride Celebration. The June 27 parade drew 600,000 marchers and was seen by an estimated 500,000. Held to commemorate the Stonewall Uprising of 1969, the parade was a reminder of our advances in human rights and of the work yet to accomplish.

Alongside other religious organizations, the SGI marched to implement its Victory in the Community for the New Century. Walking behind a beautiful banner, members handed out to the cheering crowds more than 11,000 bookmarks, which contained an introduction to the SGI, a short experience from members explaining why they chant and contact information about the local culture center and its G/L/B/T group meetings. The bookmarks included this quote from SGI President Ikeda: "A third millennium, imbued with respect for the sanctity of life, free from nuclear arms and war, and rich with the rainbow hues of diversity, will only come into being through the efforts of empowered and responsible citizens who don't wait for someone else to take the initiative."

Other members answered questions and shared experiences at an information booth. Receiving many guests from all over the country, staffers gave away *The Winning Life* books, brochures and cards with contact information and articles about Buddhism from national and international SGI publications. Guests were invited to an introductory event on July 11.



SGI-USA members at an introductory booth in the Civic Center area, June 27.

Photo by MIKE MULLEN



A San Francisco member hands out bookmarks to parade spectators.

It was exciting to have heart-to-heart dialogue with several former members who had quit practicing because they had felt they did not fit into the SGI. In addition, several current temple members found it encouraging to learn that the SGI fully supports gays in the organization, including performing commitment ceremonies for same-sex couples, even though they are not legally binding. These individuals expressed a strong interest to start practicing again with the SGI.

— DIANA ELROD

Photo by MIKE MULLEN



SGI-USA members march in San Francisco's Freedom Day parade.

## BOSTON

SGI-USA members marched June 12 in what has become a major expression of freedom, hope and truth: the Boston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Parade. This was the maiden voyage for the 25 members from the New England Region to participate under the banner of the SGI. In this 29th annual parade, there were all kinds of people — bankers, bikers, religious groups, muscle men and drag queens, who caught the eye and tweaked the free spirit in us all.

The largest cheers from the thousands who lined the parade route were for a small group of men and women representing the Boston police force. It stirred something within you as these gay and lesbian officers, some of them holding hands with the same gender, marched in front of their fellow officers, who lined the parade route. The message was that we can live together with respect and dignity for one another!

As the marchers made their way through the South End, their high spirits and joy touched many a parade route spectator. The route ended at the Boston Common, where a stage was set up for music and presentations. Some gave experiences, describing how they are winning in their lives despite living in a world that doesn't always accept them as they truly are. The hot June air was filled with camaraderie, respect and dignity. The vibe was peace, joy and love — and freedom to be who you are.

— LARRY TISH

Photo by ADRIENNE LANDAU



'A New Era' was the theme of Boston's 1999 Gay Pride Week — an appropriate theme for New England Region's first participation in the Pride Parade through historic downtown Boston.

SPECIAL  
PULLOUT  
SECTION

# FRIENDS for Peace

AUGUST 6,  
1999

## Washington, D.C. Kids Go to Camp

By Steve Harvey  
Fallston, Md.

Members and parents of the Washington, D.C. Region Boys and Girls Group gathered at the Jamestown, Va., 4-H Camp for a memorable June weekend of fun, friendship, gongyo, meetings and good.

The camp has become an annual milestone for the boys and girls, where they meet old friends, share experiences and challenge one another at sporting events. For the parents, the event offers the opportunity to discuss future plans for the group and share their determinations for kosen-rufu.

Campers began arriving Friday evening and enjoyed games and crafts until retiring to the cabins for a good night's sleep. Saturday

morning started with gongyo and a study meeting including exercises and a game.

The kids then participated in outdoor classes such as canoeing, fishing, rope-climbing, conducted by 4-H staff. After lunch, a general meeting was held, followed by another 4-H class and free time (a big favorite), which included swimming, soccer, basketball and tie-dyeing. As darkness fell, the campfire was lit and hungry campers ate s'mores (you know — those wonderful gooey things with roasted marshmallows and chocolate) and shared spooky stories. Meanwhile, the soccer game, now conducted by flashlight, continued on a nearby field.

At the Sunday morning farewell meeting, campers shared their impressions with one another, and plans were enthusiastically made for a return trip the following year.

Photo by STEVE HARVEY



Washington, D.C., boys and girls enjoy a weekend of camping fun in Jamestown, Va.



## Welcome to Long Beach, Calif., Mr. Hancock!

June 6 — Look who came to our world peace gongyo meeting: famous jazz musician Herbie Hancock! He took a picture with the Boys and Girls Group and even wrote a message to us. He was very nice and funny, too! This is the message he wrote: "To SGI Students: Thank you for your efforts for kosen-rufu. Continue to grow and develop great wisdom in life. —Herbie Hancock"



## ALASKA BOYS AND GIRLS WALK FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

By Ellen Lockyer  
Anchorage, Alaska

The Alaska Area Boys and Girls Group walked in the annual Anchorage MS Walk and Spring Four-Miler Run in April. Eleven children participated in the four-mile walk around nearby Lake Hood. Boys and Girls Group coordinator Heidi Kretschek got the group involved as part of Alaska Area's efforts toward community service.

Heidi says that at first some of the children were a little bit nervous to undertake the long walk, but everyone who started the walk finished it, and everyone enjoyed it, even the youngest Boys and Girls Group member, who was pushed in a carriage all the way.

After meeting at the community center early Saturday morning for gongyo, the boys and girls first checked in at the starting point and then got to eat breakfast, courtesy of the MS walk organizers.

A number of children took part (ranging in ages from the child in the carriage to teenagers like Paizley Ramsey and Robyn Fields). Several adult SGI members also walked to raise money for multiple sclerosis research. Each walker signed a pledge form to earn a donation for each mile walked.

The day was sunny and cool for the walk, which is a major event in Anchorage each spring. It is the first outdoor event and fun run after "breakup," which is what Alaskans call spring. It took about an hour and a half to walk around Lake Hood, which is used by operators of light airplanes to take off and land. The planes are equipped with pontoons or floats to allow them to operate on water. All the children enjoyed watching the planes and the birds that also land on the lake.

One 6-year-old participant said the best part was the ice cream after it was over. Not only did the boys and girls have fun that day, they learned that there is value in community service.

## EXPERIENCES

### Angela Baesl Coleman, Mich.

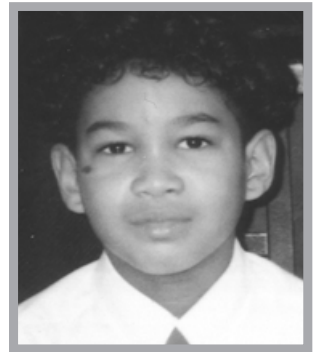
I became an SGI member three years ago. My problem is during gongyo and daimoku, especially gongyo. It is soo hard to read the words. I don't understand one bit of it, but my mom always says, "It's OK not to understand right now." Even my mom doesn't understand a lot of the words, too. She also says that I have an innocent and pure mind, and Gohonzon will protect me if I chant with my heart. We live in a very small town. My mom, brother, sister and I are the only SGI members around here. There's why we all try chanting together and have a small Boys and Girls Group meeting. Every morning I really enjoy reading SGI books and experiences. My goal is to go back to Japan and meet SGI President Ikeda with my grandma. I also hope that someday my dad will do gongyo with us. 🌸



Angela (left) with her brother and sister.

### Daichi DuBose, 9 North Hollywood, Calif.

I'm practicing in North Hollywood area and in Studio Oaks Chapter. My mom and dad told me that I was a fortune baby because I was born in a house with the G o h o n z o n . Sometimes I do not feel like I am a fortune baby, especially when I do not get what I want. But I have received a lot of benefits from the Gohonzon by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.



In February 1995, I was about to turn 5 years old. I had a major asthma attack. I was born with asthma, but I had never had a very big asthma attack before this. I was so scared. The doctor told my parents I was lucky because I could have been dead for sure if they didn't bring me [to the hospital] when they did.

They kept me in the hospital, and I couldn't go home. My mom and daddy chanted for me a lot so I could make it through. Just one month before that happened, my 6-month-old baby brother died, so my parents were determined to not lose me, too.

I got well and was able to come home. My mom encouraged me to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo myself. The more I chant, the less I have asthma attacks. I even started doing gongyo with my big sister. Sometimes it's hard for me to do gongyo and chant, but last year I noticed I was receiving a big benefit: For the first time since I turned 5, I did not have to go to the hospital to get my treatment. Now, every day, I am getting healthier and healthier.

I enjoy practicing in the Boys and Girls Group. And I am looking forward to meeting and performing for SGI President Ikeda this fall.

Thank you, Gohonzon, and thank you, everyone, for listening to my experience. 🌸

### Philippe DiBiase, 3-1/2 Danbury, Conn.

Hi. I have been chanting since I turned 3 years old. At first, I could only say "Nam-myo." That was when I was 2 years old. I started talking when I was 1-and-a-half years old, and I could use three and four words in a sentence. I am happy because I am a Buddhist. I have fun with my dad. Last week we went to an Indian pow-wow in Massachusetts. I like to go to Buddhist meetings. 🌸



### Lana Di Costanzo, 6 Westchester, N.Y.

A few months ago my best friend Adrienne decided she didn't want to be my friend anymore. She found a new best friend. Even though I was sad, my mommy and daddy told me not to worry and to chant and do gongyo every day. My mommy told me that I am my own best friend, and that I could chant to have lots of good friends. Now Adrienne and I are really good friends again, but I am still my own best friend. 🌸



"Friends for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 606 Wilshire Blvd., P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1427.

## Giving a Hand Up



The SGI Boys and Girls Group in Phoenix recently participated in a community service project to help feed members at the New Day Center, an emergency and short-term shelter for families in need.

The 20 SGI-USA volunteers were between the ages of 5 and 11. Approximately 15 adults supported the children's efforts, but the children were the only ones who served lunch to the 85 men, women and children housed at the shelter. Each of the participating members of the Boys and Girls Group also donated a bag of their own toys for the children at the center.

The facility houses, feeds, clothes and offers toys to families while helping the adults of the family earn their GED, college courses, or skills to go back to the work force.

"I loved giving the people the food even the toys," said Peyton Horne, 6. "It was really fun. Also, I feel bad about the people because they have no home. But we helped them that day." 🌱



## In the Pacific Northwest: Children's Exhibit Is a Star

**Alex Croll, 8, Port Orchard, Wash.:** We went to the Children's Rights Exhibit in the Union Station at Tacoma, Wash., in June. We are very fortunate to have almost everything. Some other country's children don't have anything.... From on, I'll try not to waste food and not be so greedy.

**Elina Croll, 11, Port Orchard, Wash.:** After I went to the exhibit, I felt sad that there are a lot of kids who do not have stuff like we do.... We should think about them every time we buy or eat something.

**Jeremy Croll, 13, Port Orchard, Wash.:** We need to spend less money on junk and more on good things. This poem is from the Cree Indians:

Only when the last fish is caught,  
Only when the last buffalo is killed,  
Only when the last river is polluted  
And the last tree felled,  
Only then will mankind realize that he cannot  
eat money. 🌱

## POEM



## Blossom

*By Michelle Berger, 9  
Sherman Oaks, Calif.*

A blossom is like  
A bundle of joy  
wrapped up in one ball  
but that's when I start to  
think  
when will I see  
this bundle of joy?  
when will its color, its  
beautiness  
open and open  
like the sun peeking up  
above the mountain  
when will the day come  
when  
my heart beats as the  
flower opens  
and greets me with its  
beautiness  
then the flower calls to  
me and says  
"sing Michelle sing"  
and so I did  
I sang of all the happiness  
and joy  
the flower gave  
how it was a bundle of  
joy  
the sun peeking up above  
the mountain  
when I was done with my  
song  
the flower wasn't there  
but instead there were a  
million flowers  
call to me  
"sing Michelle sing"

# GOSHO GOODIES

## RESPONSIBILITY

Deep in the Snow Mountains lives a bird called Kankucho which, tortured by the numbing cold, cries that it will build a nest in the morning. Yet, when the day breaks, it sleeps away the hours in the warm light of the morning sun without building its nest. So it continues to cry vainly throughout its life. The same is true of people. ("Letter to Niike," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 255)

Nichiren Daishonin, using the example of the foolish bird Kankucho (Bird Suffering From Cold), encourages us not to be lazy or foolish, but to take responsibility for our lives. SGI President Daisaku Ikeda encourages us:

When we have the spirit to take full responsibility for everything ourselves, then we'll never be off the mark in whatever we're trying to accomplish. (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 2, pp. 208-09)

Our lives are created from what we do, how we live, every day. For that reason, we should strive to live each day so as to continually improve ourselves.... As a member of the organization known as school, you need to be committed to making it a better place. As a member of the organization that is your family, you need to make efforts to create the best possible environment. That spirit is vital. It is also common sense, and Buddhism accords with common sense. The correct way to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is to have the attitude that "I will be the driving force for change!" ☸

*Words, like feathers, fly  
In the wind, in the  
wind.*

*Reaching far and wide,  
In the wind, in the  
wind.*

*Careless words, tossed  
about,  
Cannot again be swal-  
lowed up.*

*Tongues like swords can  
cut the heart.*

*Words fly out.*

*The rumors start.*

*Cruel words, like feath-  
ers, fly.*

*Cruel words reach far  
and wide.*

*Try and try to gather  
them again,*

*But they fly away in the  
wind.*

A woman whose tongue was sharp and unkind was accused of starting a rumor.

She was brought before the village rabbi, protesting,

"What I said was in jest, just humor!

My words were carried forth by others. I am not to blame."

But the victim cried for justice, saying, "You've soiled my own good name!"

"I can make amends," said the woman accused. "I'll just take back my words and assume I'm excused."

The rabbi listened to what she said and sadly thought as he shook his head, "This woman does not comprehend her crime. She shall do it again and again in time."

And so he said to the woman accused,

# Feathers

**As you read this story, think about what you can learn from it about taking responsibility.**

- How do you feel when someone praises you or says something positive?
- Have you ever said something to someone that you later regretted?
- Do you take positive responsibility for your words and actions?

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"Your careless words cannot be excused until ...

You bring my feather pillow to the market square.

Cut it and let the feathers fly through the air.

When this task is done, bring me back the feathers — every one."

The woman reluctantly agreed. She thought, "The wise old rabbi has gone mad indeed!"

But to humor him she took his pillow to

the village square.

She cut it and feathers filled the air.

She tried to catch. She tried to snatch.

She tried to collect each one.

But weary with effort she quickly discovered The task could not be done.

She returned with very few of the feathers in hand.

"I couldn't get them back. They've scattered over the land!

I suppose," she sighed as she lowered her head, "like the words I can't take back from the rumor I spread."

*Cruel words, like feathers, fly.*

*Cruel words reach far and wide.*

*They leave the mouth a bitter rind.*

*May all your words, my friends, be kind.* ☸

# TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Look for these words below and circle them:

- |        |         |
|--------|---------|
| Praise | Improve |
| Change | Efforts |
| Action | Create  |
| Spirit |         |

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