

**EXPERIENCE:**

Towner Galaher earns a master's degree in jazz performance.

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DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

# Why Go to College?

*SGI President Ikeda tells the high school division members, 'I hope you will study hard in your youth. As part of that study, or as an extension of it, I also want you to go to college.'*

**SGI President Ikeda:** My entire focus now is on the 21st century — on how human beings can triumph in the coming century, on how we can make it a wonderful, positive age. That is my sole concern.

And the starring roles in that century will be played by you — the high school division members. It's all up to you. Your victory will be the victory of the 21st century and my victory as well.

**Teruhiko Yumitani:** Thank you very much. As leaders of the high school division, we are striving to do our best, very much aware that our greatest mission is fostering the members of the high school division.

The theme for today's discussion is college and future career paths.

**Ikeda:** This is a most practical, important subject for high school students.

**Yumitani:** Not only students who are in their senior year of high school but those in lower grades are concerned about what direction they should take after they graduate.

**Ueda:** Some of them, unfortunately, seem to lack confidence in their ability to study and have given up before they even try to take the college entrance exams.

**Yumitani:** Other students say that they are confused about what kind of school to attend. Their seniors have warned them that their level of education — be it high school, vocational school, two-year junior college, or four-

year university — will determine the kinds of jobs they can get, as well as their earning power and advancement in the workplace. For that reason, they've been told it would be better to go to a four-year university.

**If you have the courage to take a risk, then the way forward will definitely open.**

**Ikeda:** You're absolutely free to choose your own path. It's your life. You yourself have to decide what's best for you.

Certainly, there is some truth in those seniors' words, but the school you graduate from doesn't determine your entire life. Far more important is that you have the strength and depth of character to earnestly ponder the question "How should I live my life?" How much inner strength and depth you possess will determine how satisfying your life will be.

In the period of chaos after the war, Mr. Toda's company, where I worked, was on the verge of bankruptcy. One of my seniors said to me, "No matter what circumstances you may face, you have to live with the spirit 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained.'"

That may seem rather simple advice, but it teaches us an important truth about life. If you have the courage to take a risk, then some way forward will definitely open.

Your future is not determined by the school you graduate from. It's determined by you and who you are as a human being.

Is one assured a happy life just because one graduates from a prestigious school? No, we know that's not true. And does graduating from a so-called



Photo by ADAM PRETTY/ALLSPORT

Students of Santa Sabina College of Strathfield in Sydney, Australia.

second- or third-string school mean your life is a failure? Of course, it doesn't. Many great people have only completed elementary school education.

It all comes down to this: Those who succeed in the challenges they set for themselves are winners and lead happy lives. This is the key.

**Ueda:** Whatever path you choose to follow after high school graduation, you must never forget to challenge yourself.

**Ikeda:** That's why it's such a pity to give up on the college entrance exams just because you lack confidence in your grades or your ability to study. A spirit of challenge is what forges a person who can take on any challenge. And no matter what the result of your efforts, I hope that you have the sense of satisfaction from having tried.

The same applies when you take your place in the workforce as well.

**The time of youth is the ideal time to study.**

**Ueda:** One student says that her family is not very well off. She wonders whether she shouldn't get a job right after high school to help her parents out.

**Ikeda:** That is something that each individual must decide. I know many people who only have a high school education and are now making wonderful contributions to society.

Mr. Makiguchi, who was a great educator, used to tell his students that even if poverty prevented them from graduating from any level higher than elementary or junior high school, they should aim to become people who would one day manage or employ graduates from prestigious universities. Such people, even though they may not have a university degree, can be called excellent students of the university of life.

To you, the high school divi-

sion members, however, I have to say that I hope you will study hard in your youth. As part of that study, or as an extension of it, I also want you to go to college. Here in Japan, where there is peace, you can study in relative ease and comfort.

The time of youth is the ideal time in your life to study. Without a doubt, studying in your youth will prove an invaluable asset for your whole life.

When I was your age, Japan was at war. Even though I wanted to study, it wasn't possible to do so freely. The study of English was forbidden because it was regarded as an "enemy language."

It was difficult to study in the troubled times following the war, too. It was also a hard period financially.

Still, I wanted to study, so I went to night school. And I hungrily devoured whatever books I

# It's the Spirit That Counts

By DAVID TEMPEST  
LOS ANGELES

When I observe what people are doing, I realize that although they profess faith in the Lotus Sutra and clasp its scrolls, they act against the spirit of the sutra and thereby readily fall into the evil paths.... Even if one embraces, reads and praises the Lotus Sutra, if he betrays its intent, he will be destroying



**IN MY LIFE**  
NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS IN ACTION

not only Shakyamuni but all other Buddhas in the universe. ("Letter to Niike," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 253)

During the several years of the temple issue, it has not always been clear to me exactly

why the temple members aren't practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism correctly. But in light of the above passage, it is crystal clear to me. Although all of us have a Gohonzon, do gongyo and chant daimoku, the SGI and the temple members are on two completely separate paths. Setting aside any doctrinal differences and looking at the issue from a purely secular standpoint, it is clear that the SGI is practicing in accord with the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, whereas the temple is not.

Going back to the earliest days of the Soka Gakkai, it was former SGI presidents Makiguchi and Toda who were persecuted because of their faith. They were the ones who stood up to the authorities and subsequently imprisoned because of their stance.

No priests joined them in their fight to stand up for this Buddhism; in fact, the priesthood acquiesced to pressures from the government.

When Toda emerged from prison, most of the members in Japan began practicing because of the efforts of the Soka Gakkai

members, not because of the priests. Since then, the Daishonin's Buddhism has spread around the world because of the efforts of SGI President Ikeda and the SGI members.

It is alarming to me when I hear temple members criticize the SGI. If it weren't for the SGI, most of them would never have encountered this Buddhism.

Additionally, the SGI is receiving praise and commendation from all realms of society for its efforts to spread peace and humanism around the world. President Ikeda has published many dialogues with leading thinkers who are also committed to building a peaceful, prosperous future. And the SGI president has received tremendous recognition for those efforts.

The priesthood doesn't appear to be making any efforts to live up to the Daishonin's spirit.

On the contrary, they appear to be going against that spirit through actions such as defaming Mother Teresa (as happened recently in Argentina, which led to the government deporting the priest), or ignoring the millions of voices both within and outside of the SGI protesting the demolition of the Grand Main Temple.

Nikken himself seems most renowned for the Seattle Incident. I don't recall him receiving any honorary degrees from esteemed colleges or publishing any dialogues with leading

## Guidelines for the Women's Division

This summer, SGI President Ikeda has been dedicating new guidelines to various groups in the SGI organization. The following are those he wrote for the women's division in commemoration of Aug. 24, the date on which he joined the Soka Gakkai 52 years ago. The *World Tribune* will continue to introduce his new guidelines to the many different groups that have been working hard for the development of kosen-rufu in their respective fields and communities.

- Win in your daily life.
- Win in faith and practice.
- Win in your activities for kosen-rufu.
- Win in your organization.
- Win in your health.
- Win in your life.
- Win your own glory.

world thinkers. Has anyone read a peace proposal from him?

The intention of the temple is ultimately to destroy the SGI, as was evidenced by Operation C. And by saying that people can only attain Buddhahood through obedience and worship of the high priest, they have undermined all of the Daishonin's efforts to teach people that no intermediary is needed to attain enlightenment.

They have betrayed the intent of the Lotus Sutra.

President Ikeda always reminds us that the organization exists for no other purpose than to help people become happy. We have to be vigilant in our efforts to ensure that our activities are based on this spirit—and that we don't take the road the priesthood has taken.

The spirit of the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin's Buddhism is to relieve the suffering of the people and enable them to awaken to the joy, wisdom and good fortune that lies dormant in their lives. When we ask ourselves who is acting in accord with this spirit, who is fighting day and night to make this spirit a reality, the answer is very clear. **W**

# Sunflower District Creates Its Own Linus Pauling Mini-Exhibit

Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

Mark Jones (right) created a mini-Linus Pauling exhibit along with some of the Sunflower District members in Lawrence, Kans. The exhibit is on display at the Kansas City Community Center.

Jones first conceived the mini-exhibit when he visited Los Angeles and heard SGI members talking about hosting the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition at the California Institute of Technology. Through research and study, Jones learned about Pauling, the father of modern chemistry, and what he stood for.

What he learned became the six panels of the mini-exhibit, which explain Pauling's youth, progressing through his scientific work and anti-war activism, and culminating with photos of the dialogues between Pauling and SGI President Ikeda in the 1990s.

— CHERYL UTLEY



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EXPERIENCE — TOWNER GALAHER, NEW YORK CITY

# Realizing My Biggest Dreams

I am a professional drummer, and after working for 10 years in Oregon, I moved to New York in September 1986 because I wanted to advance my career and improve my drumming skills. I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism by my drumming teacher, Mike Clark, five weeks after I arrived. I experienced incredible benefits and quickly came to appreciate the practice and the SGI.

Along with the benefits came the obstacles, including a major illness, several sour relationships and severe financial straits. At one point, I was eight months behind on my rent.

In January 1990, I made the determination to find out about the mentor-disciple relationship, which I had heard repeatedly was the essence of Buddhist practice. For some time I had been feeling at a loss for someone to look up to as a great example of character, integrity and wisdom that could inspire me. I decided to read SGI President Ikeda's novel *The Human Revolution*. I was awestruck by the degree that the youthful Daisaku Ikeda struggled to reply to his mentor, second SGI president, Josei Toda. I quickly gained tremendous trust and respect for him and was experiencing great results in applying his guidance to my daily life.

This determination proved to be a major turning point for my Buddhist practice and for my life. I got a day job, my first music teaching job in New York and met my wife all in that year. I was deeply appreciative.

At the close of 1990, the priesthood issue broke out. Nichiren Shoshu High Priest Nikken Abe, made a series of false accusations about President Ikeda in what I came to clearly see was an attempt to bring all SGI members under his control in a state of subservience. In short, they were out to defame President Ikeda and destroy the SGI, the very things that had become the most precious to my life. This prompted me to seriously read Nichiren Daishonin's writings in order to clarify exactly what constituted correct faith and practice.

What I learned was that the priesthood's actions perfectly matched the type of people described in the Lotus Sutra that would appear to obstruct the advancement of kosen-rufu. One passage that stuck in my mind reads: "Something uncommon also occurs when an ordinary person attains Buddhahood. At such a time, the three obstacles and the four devils will invariably appear, and the wise will rejoice while the foolish will retreat" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 288).

I began to make further efforts to deepen my understanding of this issue and to educate others.

By 1994, at 39, I was feeling a sense of a lack of accomplishment in my life. Also, realizing that faith equals daily life, I wanted to show much greater actual proof in society, while continuing to deepen my understanding of the mentor-disciple relationship. I came across President Ikeda's guidance that stated: "Everyone wants to shine, to be the best they possibly can. How do we achieve this? By struggling against the one fundamental evil that dwells in our lives. By that, I mean struggling with the key issue that lies at the root of all our problems.

"In our human revolution, too, each of us has "one fundamental evil"—one basic fault—that stands in the way of our personal growth. Some of you may think you have many faults, but in most cases, all those faults derive from one fundamental fault—for instance, cowardice, or rudeness, or sentimentality, or a short temper, and the list goes on.

"We must become aware of that fundamental fault or evil in our lives, chant with all our hearts and take thorough action to overcome it. This is the practice of human revolution. We will achieve no progress as long as we just float through life aimlessly. Practice is what counts. If we can overcome our fundamental fault, everything will open up dramatically. We will shine. And even tendencies that we previously thought of as failings will be illuminated as strengths."

This really hit home and I realized that I need to win over my

own weakness. I was lacking the courage and confidence to directly pursue the things that would enable me to find fulfillment in life. Also, I saw that I was living on the edge of society, hesitating to jump into the thick of things. I realized that I would have changed this if I wanted to show the kind of actual proof that I now sought. I realized I must make a plan of action and follow through, without retreating.

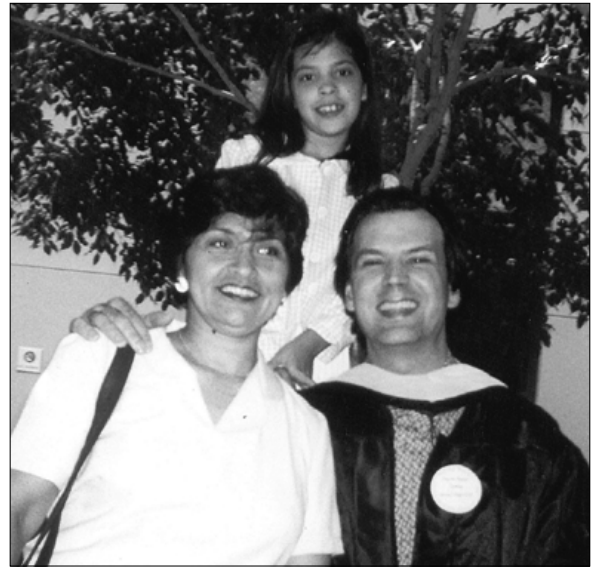
I had been studying at a music school in East Harlem when the Director of Jazz studies encouraged me to enroll at Empire State College for a bachelor's degree. I had never considered going back to school, but having a daughter made me think about it seriously. I applied and received two grants that covered 100 percent of my tuition and expenses.

Again the obstacles appeared one after another as if to test my resolve. Back in 1991, my mother had been diagnosed with bone cancer and was expected to live only a month or so. I chanted a lot for her and she extended her life by three years. One month after I started college, my studies were abruptly interrupted when she took a sudden turn for the worse and plunged toward the brink of death.

I took an emergency flight to Hawaii, where she was living, and as I managed to chant 50 hours in 10 days, she made a stunning comeback. I stayed with her for three weeks. All along I had chanted for her to have no pain. I knew my prayers were being answered when she told me during this visit, "bone cancer is supposed to be excruciatingly painful, but with what I've experienced, I can say this is really no big deal."

Our family became much closer during this time and a number of deep conflicts were resolved. Six months later, my mother passed away peacefully.

I decided to challenge myself to get a master's degree in jazz performance at Queens College. I applied and was accepted. Throughout this time I also managed to fulfill my responsibilities as a men's division leader. I finished my bachelor's degree in September '97,



Towner Galaher with his wife, Lilia, and daughter Whitney, 8, on graduation day at Queens College.

just days before the first day of classes.

Our second daughter was born one month later. I was working at three music schools, playing gigs, going to school full time and struggling with insomnia. It was torture but the efforts I had made to study about the temple issue had given me a better understanding about the nature and significance of obstacles—and I remembered my determination not to retreat.

I never missed a day of work or school and successfully completed my first year. However I lost one of my teaching jobs, so I took a job in a show in Virginia over the summer. While I was away, my wife faxed my updated resume to several school districts. The day that New York City schools opened, I was not employed, but by that afternoon I had a full time job with full benefits for my family at Public School 80, an elementary school in Queens.

More than 75 percent of the students were from broken homes and came to school with a multitude of problems. The atmosphere was very intense and volatile. Fights would frequently break out in the classroom and the vice principal would scream at the children through a bullhorn all day long. In short, everyday was extremely stressful and challenging. I began to wake up at 5:30 a.m. to chant an hour for life-force and wisdom to deal with the situation. Even so, by 3:00 p.m. I felt like a towel that someone had squeezed dry with all their might—and then I would go to attend the three-hour-long classes at Queens College.

The mid-terms that came at

the end of March demanded intense amounts of energy. I did extremely well but when I finished with them, I was totally exhausted. The following passage from President Ikeda's revised poem, "Youth, Scale the Mountain of Kosen-rufu of the 21st Century" encouraged me as I threw myself into completing my finals and gave me the energy to cross the finish line: "You must ascend./ Step by step./ And one by one./ The mountains large and small./ That confront you each day./ For the value of a deeply fulfilling youth/ Can be found only in the lives/ Of those who strive to conquer/ The treacherous mountains of life and society/ Only by pursuing this path/ That you have deeply resolved to follow/ Can you develop with quiet strength/ A self as inexpressibly vast and boundless/ As an infinite field./ And thereby lead a life of unshakable confidence!"

In my 12 years of Buddhist practice, I managed to recognize that all of these challenges were, in fact, a direct response to my determination to win over my own weakness and to build the kind of inner strength that enabled me to realize my biggest dreams. I can say that I am proud to have my master's degree, but my true treasure is the struggle that I went through. Having a great mentor in life has enabled me to grow and achieve my goals far beyond what I would have without one.

In closing, I'd like to express my appreciation to my wife and children and my SGI leaders and fellow members for their continuous support. ☐

# Another Temple Secedes From Nichiren Shoshu

On Aug. 20, another Nichiren Shoshu temple, Zencho-ji in Hiroshima Prefecture, seceded from Nichiren Shoshu. This is the second temple to leave Nichiren Shoshu this year.

Reverend Yuren Fujita, the chief priest of Zencho-ji, held a meeting with representatives of the temple parish to explain why he had made his decision: He believes that Nichiren Shoshu is off-track, and that the heart of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is no longer found in the sect. With the leader of the laity's agreement, a resolution to leave Nichiren Shoshu was agreed on.

Reverend Fujita then sent Nikken a notice that Zencho-ji had severed ties with Nichiren Shoshu. The chief priest submitted a strongly worded "Letter Explaining the Reasons for Secession" (see below) to the head temple, also sending a copy to SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters.

Reverend Fujita will now join the Association of Priests Concerned About Nichiren Shoshu and Devoted to Protecting the Law.

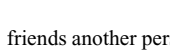
—JEFF FARR

# A Chief Priest Speaks Out

'Letter Explaining the Reasons for Secession'

Nichiren Daishonin states in his "Letter to Lord Ohta and Others": "If I, Nichiren, do not say this, fearing how society will react, I will become an enemy of Buddhism. Chang-an remonstrates with Buddhist scholars of future generations: 'One who destroys or brings confusion to the Buddha's teachings is betraying them. If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, one is in fact his enemy. But one who reprimands and corrects an offender is a voice-hearer who defends the Buddha's teachings, a true disciple of the Buddha. One who rids the offender of evil is acting as his parent. Those who reproach offenders are disciples of the Buddha. But those who do not oust offenders are betraying the Buddha's teachings.' Since I have taken these words of Chang-an to heart, I will stake my life on scrutinizing this matter" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1003).

Reverend Yuren Fujita of Zencho-ji temple



Ever since I became a priest at age 31 in 1986, I have been part of the lower ranks of the Daishonin's disciples. Over the years, I have devoted myself to praying for the achievement of the great desire of

kosen-rufu and spreading the Law to the best of my ability, although I am a man meager in virtue and heavy with defilement.

However, knowing and hearing of scores of evil doings by Chief Administrator Nikken Abe [the high priest is also the chief administrator], I have gradually developed a suspicion I cannot ignore about where the correct Law and teaching really exist.

And it was revealed last month that Chief Administrator Nikken Abe, appallingly, had once asserted his belief that the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism is a forgery. This incident inspired me to directly reproach the evil of Chief Administrator Abe and the current sect. The following is part of my personal feelings, as Zencho-ji now departs from the Nikken sect.

I was astonished at the report in the *Association Newsletter* of the Association of the Priests Concerned About Nichiren Shoshu and Devoted To Protecting the Law that Chief Administrator Nikken once asserted that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery. According to this publication, the chief administrator's outrageous opinion was recorded in a memo taken by Reverend Jitoku Kawabe, chief priest of Nissho-ji temple, after he met with Chief Administrator Nikken. The memo discloses the astounding fact that Chief Administrator Nikken had handwriting analysis done on the Dai-Gohonzon using

various methods and came to the conclusion that it is counterfeit.

Needless to say, the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, inscribed on Oct. 12, 1279, fulfilled the purpose of the advent of the Daishonin, the founder of this Buddhism. It should be the basis of faith of Taiseki-ji, the head temple.

Concerning the supremacy of the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, Nikko Shonin, the Daishonin's successor, calls it the "Dai-Gohonzon of 1279 endowed upon myself, Nikko" ("The Transfer Document from Nikko to Nichimoku"). The 26th high priest Nichikan, also states, "The Dai-Gohonzon of 1279, or the Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, is the ultimate Gohonzon of all. Its inscription signifies the ultimate of all reasons for the founder's advent. It is the supreme basis of the Three Great Secret Laws. Therefore, it is the true object of devotion for all humanity in the whole world" ("Exegesis on 'The True Object of Worship'").

However, Chief Administrator Nikken asserted that this supreme Dai-Gohonzon is counterfeit. This is a totally erroneous view—a view deeply connected with the tarnished legacy of the five senior priests who betrayed the Daishonin after his death.

No high priest has ever committed such grave slander in the history of Nichiren Shoshu. I can't fathom the depth of anger on the part of the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin in this regard.

Yet no explanation has come from Chief Administrator Nikken about this, despite how significant this matter is. If the report in *Association News* is false and groundless, the chief administrator himself should present clear proof of the report's

# Nikken Doubts the Dai-Gohonzon

Earlier this summer, it was revealed that Nikken, before he became Nichiren Shoshu high priest, stated his belief that the Dai-Gohonzon is a forgery. The revelation came when a memo taken in February 1978 by a priest now stationed in Hokkaido, Reverend Jitoku Kawabe, was leaked.

In what is now being called the Kawabe Memo, Nikken, then Nichiren Shoshu Study Department leader, is quoted as saying: "The Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism is counterfeit. I found

this out through various forms of analysis (such as examining the brush strokes of the Chinese characters)." Nikken believed that the Dai-Gohonzon was completed either during the time of the 6th high priest Nichiji or 9th high priest Nichiu, well after Nichiren Daishonin's death.

Despite Kawabe's recent claim that he simply misunderstood what Nikken was saying in 1978, the Kawabe Memo has created a great stir among the priesthood.

—TED MORINO

falsity and thereby clear up any doubt within the sect. The fact that he can't provide a convincing explanation means that Chief Administrator Nikken tacitly admits the righteousness of the *Association News* report.

I thus have become convinced that the justice of the Daishonin and the pure current of faith no longer exist in the sect led by Chief Administrator Nikken. Now that this is the case, I will follow Nikko Shonin's admonition to "not follow even the high priest if he goes against the Buddha's Law and propounds his own views" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618).

It is my duty as a Nichiren Shoshu priest to take the erroneous teachings of Chief Administrator Nikken severely to task. This is the fundamental reason why I have resolved to leave the sect.

I cannot forget what happened in the twilight one evening last April: Chief Administrator Nikken suddenly carried out his plan to transfer the Dai-Gohonzon from the Grand Main Temple just as a thief does his business in the night.

I was told that even many senior priests of the head temple had not been informed of the transfer ahead of time. We, many chief priests of local temples, just could not believe it.

This action is no longer such a mystery, now that we know Chief Administrator Nikken once asserted that the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism is counterfeit. In other words, he has been slighting the Dai-Gohonzon in his heart all these years. He has all along been opposed to the Daishonin's correct teachings. This has now been clearly proven.

In the final analysis, he has no seeking mind and no faith.

In the first place, it was a grave slander and denial of his mentor

that Chief Administrator Nikken destroyed the Grand Main Temple, which the former high priest, Nittatsu, once declared "the great edifice that should be the High Sanctuary of Homon-ji temple at the time of kosen-rufu."

Also, I have been questioning whether Chief Administrator Nikken legitimately inherited the heritage of Buddhism from the former high priest. Now, learning of his denigration of the Dai-Gohonzon, his grave slander of his mentor and his arrogance, my doubt about the purity of his lineage has changed into a conviction that the lifeblood of Buddhism is not pulsating in his life at all.

Chief Administrator Nikken is applying incredible pressure on the priests and lay believers of his sect toward the accomplishment of a pilgrimage of 300,000 participants and the construction of the Hoando temple in 2002. Toward this, he hopes to collect \$150 million from local temples and temple members over the next three years.

The idea of the Hoando temple came out of Chief Administrator Nikken's desire to enshrine the Dai-Gohonzon there. Now that it is clear that he denies the legitimacy of the Dai-Gohonzon, on what basis can he proceed to gather such a colossal amount of money from priests and lay believers? Many people in the sect must be questioning the validity of his cause.

Meanwhile, on July 26, I was summoned to appear at Josen-ji temple in Tokyo. What awaited me was a unilateral attack on me by the sect's General Affairs Chief Gikan Hayase and its vice chief, Shinsho Abe [Nikken's son].

Then, on Aug. 6, both of them visited my Zencho-ji temple and again denounced my supporters and me. This incident proved Mr. Shinsho Abe's authoritarianism and ab-

# About the Dai-Gohonzon

After the onset of the temple issue, SGI President Ikeda stated: "Nothing has changed in the way we view the Dai-Gohonzon: It was inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin for the happiness of all humanity and is the basis of our faith." The SGI has always upheld the validity of the Dai-Gohonzon, even during these years when we have not been able to see it.

Now that the Nikken sect uses its physical possession of the Dai-Gohonzon at the head temple to entice lay believers to join the priesthood's organization, we should clarify what is the correct attitude toward the Dai-Gohonzon.

First, the power of any Gohonzon, including the Dai-Gohonzon, can be tapped only through the power of faith. In other words, we should be clear that it is wrong to think that the Dai-Gohonzon alone has some kind of unique mystic power that no other Gohonzon possesses. The Dai-Gohonzon and our own Gohonzon are equal.

What is most important is the power of our faith and practice, which enables us to tap the power of the Buddha and the Law in the Dai-Gohonzon and in all other Gohonzon, and within ourselves.

In this respect, the Daishonin states: "The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, 'Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood'" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213).

The Daishonin does not directly refer to the Dai-Gohonzon, which he inscribed on Oct. 12, 1279, in any of his known writings. However, in the following passage from "On Persecutions Befalling the Buddha," which he wrote just 11 days before this date, he refers to the fulfillment of his

life's purpose: "The Buddha fulfilled the purpose of his advent in a little over forty years; T'ien-t'ai took about thirty years, and Dengyo, some twenty years. I have repeatedly spoken of the indescribable persecutions they suffered during those years. For me it took twenty-seven years, and the persecutions I faced during this period are well known to you all" (MW-1, 239). Because the Dai-Gohonzon was inscribed some 27 years after the Daishonin embarked on his course of propagation, this passage is taken to mean that he considered that inscription the purpose of his advent.

The inscription of this particular Gohonzon was triggered by the occurrence of the Atsuhara Persecution, where lay believers, many of them new to the practice, had displayed their staunch faith in this Buddhism. This prompted the Daishonin to create an ultimate Gohonzon for the happiness of all humanity, whose inscription he called the fulfillment of his advent in this world.

And as is indicated by a note written on the Dai-Gohonzon, it is true that this Gohonzon holds special significance: It is the Gohonzon "to be enshrined in the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism." But, again, it is wrong to think that, whether we have faith in the Dai-Gohonzon or not, the Dai-Gohonzon is absolute. Faith is what matters.

In the past, visiting the head temple to worship the Dai-Gohonzon was encouraged in the SGI. It was done so in the spirit of supporting the head temple.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda originally initiated the SGI pilgrimages to the head temple after World War II, when Nichiren Shoshu's condition was extremely destitute. He

also did this to teach members to have a seeking spirit and pure faith through their experiences of praying to the ultimate object of devotion that Nichiren Daishonin left for all humanity of the Latter Day of the Law.

With a challenging seeking spirit, the obstacles that came with participating in the pilgrimages strengthened the members' faith and practice to their own Gohonzon. If the Dai-Gohonzon had been brought to their doorstep, the results faith-wise would not have been the same.

It is important to understand that since Nikken is using the Dai-Gohonzon to try to control people — requiring that they join the temple and pay in order to see it — visiting the head temple is no longer a good cause. If we do, we fall into the trap that he has set. Because Nikken's actions and intent have consistently been to undermine and disrupt the movement for kosen-rufu — the spread of the Daishonin's teachings — to support him financially is equivalent to supporting that negative intent. That, from the standpoint of Buddhism, is a very negative cause.

In this respect, President Ikeda states: "Some say that you have no faith or won't attain Buddhahood unless you want to directly see the Dai-Gohonzon of the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism. This is of course a wrong idea.

"The Gohonzon enshrined at our home carries the same significance as the Dai-Gohonzon. They are as beneficial as the Dai-Gohonzon, in accord with the Buddhist principle of "dispersing the body of the original in different forms" (Jpn *funjin santai*).

"In one of his writings to Lord Matsuno, whom he had never met, the Daishonin extends his

heartfelt encouragement to this believer. Lord Matsuno must have never seen the Daishonin. However, the Daishonin's response to him is that "even if we have never met each other, you have taken faith in my teaching. How wonderful! You will definitely attain Buddhahood" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1379). As the Daishonin also says, "What matters is one's heart" (MW-5, 289).

"What determines whether you attain Buddhahood is not a physical encounter with the Daishonin or the Dai-Gohonzon. In this vein, it is not only totally wrong but also totally in opposition to the Daishonin's teaching to contend that you have no faith unless you have the spirit to visit Taiseki-ji to see the Dai-Gohonzon. You will gain no benefit even if you see the Dai-Gohonzon, if you oppose the heart of the Daishonin that was behind his inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon."

Since the Dai-Gohonzon is made of wood, its physical longevity is naturally limited. But the essence of the Dai-Gohonzon, the Law, will never perish because it inherently exists in the universe and within each of us.

President Toda used to use the expression "the Dai-Gohonzon in my home," meaning that the Gohonzon we worship at home is essentially the Dai-Gohonzon itself. The millions of SGI members who have achieved numerous victories in their lives have done so through their practice to their own Gohonzon. This is because we have been practicing the Daishonin's Buddha's correctly in accord with the compassionate spirit behind the Daishonin's inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon. This awareness is more important than ever today.

— TED MORINO, SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT SENIOR ADVISOR

## The Latest in the Seattle Incident Trial

On Aug. 10, a special edition of *Daihyakuho*, the temple members' newspaper in Japan, attempted to discount the testimony of former Seattle police officer Ronald Sprinkle in the Seattle Incident trial.

According to Nikken's attorneys, Officer Sprinkle, who as a defense witness corroborated Mrs. Hiroe Clow's testimony, was not with the Seattle Police Department, but the Air Force at the time of the incident.

But on Aug. 14, the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, rebutted with evidence proving that while Mr. Sprinkle did serve in the Air Force reserve at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis in late 1962, he was back with the Police Department well before the Seattle Incident occurred. He was, indeed, on police duty the night of March 19–20, 1963.

Prior to calling Mr. Sprinkle as a witness, the Soka Gakkai defense team conducted a thorough investigation of his background. His military records show that he had only served 30 days as of September 1964, not the six months the temple is claiming he served in late 1962 and early 1963.

Attorneys for the Soka Gakkai also promise to present more evidence proving the temple's accusations false in upcoming court sessions.

— JEFF FARR

### FROM SPEAKS OUT, 4

normality, as well as the Nikken sect's violent, discriminatory nature that has been frowned upon by many in the sect. This incident was a crystallization for me of the distortion and stagnation that I have been sensing in the sect, ever since I became a priest of Nichiren Shoshu.

After graduating from the Science Department of Kyushu University, I worked in the business world. At that time, a great desire to become a priest and contribute to the happiness of all humanity arose within me.

For me, someone who had experienced how things are in society, the reality of Nichiren Shoshu

was shockingly anachronistic. The seven years I spent at the head temple constituted the gloomiest period of my life. What I witnessed there was daily violence, the bullying of juniors by seniors, discrimination based on family relations, discrimination against those of us who joined the priesthood later in life by younger priests who were born into priests' families, etc. It all proved the irrationality of the society of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood.

The sect's manipulative nature came to the surface when Chief Administrator Nikken abruptly dismissed Soka Gakkai Honorary President Daisaku Ikeda from the position of the head of all Nichiren

Shoshu lay organizations at the end of 1990 and excommunicated 10 million SGI members toward the close of 1991.

In those days, I was just an acolyte, and I felt strong indignation at the sect's irrational behavior against the SGI members — especially against Honorary President Ikeda, who had been the most instrumental person in enhancing Nichiren Shoshu.

Though disillusioned at the plight of the sect, I am still determined to create harmonious unity between the priesthood and laity some day. I am deeply resolved to be a priest who is pure in faith, like a lotus blossoming out of a muddy pond, in the same spirit of

the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin.

Ten years have passed since the temple issue began. As exemplified by the recent disclosure of Chief Administrator Nikken's questioning of the legitimacy of the Dai-Gohonzon, his slanderous acts have now reached the point where they cannot be corrected from within the priesthood.

Thinking people naturally wonder what has happened to this sect to bring it to this point. While the Gakkai continues to grow constantly as it promotes the Daishonin's mandate of world kosen-rufu, the Nikken sect has been rolling down the slope of self-destruction. When we look at the conspicuous contrast between the

two, it is easy to tell where the Daishonin's correct teachings now reside. Obviously, the sect has distorted the Daishonin's teachings.

I hereby take action to secede from the sect and to strongly question the responsibility of Chief Administrator Nikken, who has put the sect on the brink of destruction. I thus demand that he resign immediately. I vow to fight the evil of the current Nichiren Shoshu, aiming toward the day of Nikken's resignation.

To Nikken Abe, Nichiren Shoshu Chief Administrator

From Yuren Fujita, Chief Priest of Zencho-ji

August 20, 1999

## FROM COLLEGE, I

could get my hands on. Everything I learned then has stayed with me and been of use to me in life.

**Yumitani:** Compared to your situation, worrying about whether we should join the workforce after high school or go to university or a two-year college is a real luxury!

**Ueda:** What should students do when their parents don't have enough money to send them to college and urge them to get a job instead?

**Ikeda:** I can understand the parents' feelings, certainly. If students in such a situation still want to go to college, though, they can always attend night school or take a correspondence course. The rest is up to the effort that they make. They can work their way through college, doing part-time jobs to support themselves and pay for their own tuition, for instance.

There are many complex situations in life. Sometimes things don't work out as we'd like.

The same is true in society. The important thing is not to be defeated by such setbacks.

Life is long. Things won't always go our way. Indeed, it's a fact of life that things often don't go the way we hope. That's why life is a struggle, and we suffer so much inner torment. How can we reach our personal summit of achievement that we can be satisfied with? That challenge is what life is all about.

Today, there are also scholarships and special student loan programs available for financially disadvantaged students. If you make an effort, you can frequently avail yourself of these for college study.

These types of programs are more advanced in other countries, and in many respects Japan lags behind. Japan needs to make greater investments in this area for the sake of the future.

**Yumitani:** In Japan, scholarship loans offered by the government-sponsored Japan Scholarship Foundation as well as those offered by local, regional and national government agencies are available. Many major newspapers, too, have programs where students can work their way through college by delivering newspapers. Soka University also has an independent scholarship loan program.

In the six years I studied as a graduate and undergraduate student at Soka University, I

supported myself with part-time jobs and a scholarship loan I received from the Japan Scholarship Foundation. As a result, I now have a debt of ¥5 million to pay back!

**Ikeda:** A debt incurred to build the foundation of your future is nothing to be ashamed of. People in Japan tend to be very narrow-minded and regard taking out a loan as a sign of poverty. But that kind of thinking is extremely shortsighted. I hope that you won't fall into that trap and be too embarrassed to take out a loan or be afraid of the work required to pay it back.

It is people who have no desire to study who are poor. Those who are filled with enthusiasm for learning, on the other hand, are rich.

**Yumitani:** We have a high school division member who received his high school diploma by studying at night school and then made it into a four-year university. He had originally started out at a regular, daytime high school, but he couldn't seem to find any purpose in studying. And he also had personal problems with other students. So after a few months, he just stopped going to school.

One day when he was really down on himself, he came across one of your speeches, President Ikeda. There was a part where you said: "No doubt there will be times when you find yourself in a situation where you feel completely worthless or incompetent. Such times are in fact opportunities for you to bring forth new potential." Profoundly moved by these words and deeply regretting his attitude, he decided to go to night school, resolving to study harder than anyone else.

He worked at a gas station during the day and attended school in the evenings. After class, he would go to baseball practice as a member of the school's team.

But just before he was to take his university entrance examinations, he found himself in another slump. On that occasion, too, he was inspired by some words of yours from *Discussions on Youth*. You said: "I studied at night school. Like many others in those turbulent years following World War II, I had no money, so I had to work during the day to put myself through school in the evening. It was a painful struggle, but it was an experience I will always be proud of" (*Discussions on Youth*, vol. 1, p. 18).



'Nothing great is achieved without serious effort. There is no easy road to learning.'

**Ikeda:** At any rate, the question of where you study—whether at a vocational school, a two-year college or a four-year university—is something that only you can decide, based on many factors including your family circumstances, academic ability and personal desires and ambitions. If you make the decision yourself, you'll have no regrets later.

Of course, in deciding what to do, it is important to consult others—your parents, teachers, seniors and friends. But once you make your decision and put it into action, you mustn't look back. You mustn't live a life filled with indecision and lingering regret.

Never forget that other people are other people, and you are you. You mustn't feel envious or jealous of others, thinking, "I wish I was like him" or "I wish I was like her." Please forge a solid, unshakable self-identity. Success or failure in life is decided in the final chapter, not the opening page.

**If you concentrate on the challenges at hand, your mission will reveal itself naturally.**

**Yumitani:** A second-year high school student has written: "I just don't know right now what direction I want to take. Do I need to decide what I want to do in the future before entering university?"

**Ikeda:** You can take plenty of time deciding what direction you want to proceed in. There's no need for you to make up your mind right now.

After you start university, study different subjects and are stimulated by new friends, you'll gradually get a clearer idea of the path you want to pursue. The important thing is to always concentrate fully on

dents to attend a four-year college, as many of their parents may wish, and pursue a more specialized field later.

**Yumitani:** One member relates how once, as a child, he was lost and a policeman helped him. The incident made him think that someday he wanted to help others in a similar way. He decided that after high school graduation, he would attend the police academy.

Then an acquaintance said to him: "The desire to help others is very important. But one of the reasons we go to college is to become even more capable to contribute to others' happiness. Even if you ultimately do decide to follow the same path and become a police officer, don't you think it would be better if you went to college first?" This sound advice changed his mind.

**Ikeda:** Attending university and exposing yourself to a wide range of learning is a good way to refine and cultivate your intellect and develop yourself overall. Higher education is an important tool for building character, too.

The common denominator of highly educated and cultivated individuals throughout the world is their possession of broad knowledge and scholarship. Such education provides you the opportunity to lift yourself to a high level of personal development.

It can be likened to climbing a high mountain. The higher you climb, the broader your field of vision and the wider the world that unfolds before you. You begin to see things that you could not see before.

**Ueda:** When I was a first-year student at Soka University, I had the opportunity to study at McGill University in Canada. I know that experience greatly expanded my field of vision.

Reading this, he felt a renewed determination, and he studied as hard as he could. His grades improved dramatically, he took the qualifying examination, and was admitted to the Department of Foreign Languages of Meikai University in Chiba Prefecture.

**Ikeda:** How admirable! He really is to be commended.

The founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, Tokugawa Ieyasu, once said, "Life is like traveling a long road with a heavy load on one's back." There is no life without suffering. There is no youth without suffering.

Therefore, the only choice we have is to win over our suffering or be defeated by it. Faith and the warm support of our fellow members in the SGI organization give us the courage to triumph in this struggle.

**Never forget that other people are other people, and you are you.**

**Ueda:** Other students complain that although they want to attend a technical or vocational college, their parents are insisting that they go to a four-year university.

**Ikeda:** They're lucky to have such parents! But if you are intent on pursuing a specialized vocational field, then you should go for it and try to attend a relevant vocational school. If you're going to study something, you may as well have the spirit and determination "I'm going to be number one in my field!"

**Ueda:** I think that vocational schools and four-year universities each have strong points.

**Ikeda:** In today's society, the person with a specialty in a given vocational field may have an advantage in finding work. But I also think it is an important, wonderful thing for stu-

the challenges at hand. If you do that, your mission will reveal itself to you naturally over the course of time.

**Ueda:** I want to share a story about one of my friends. She wanted to study engineering, and she did. She got as far as graduate school, and then she came across a certain book: Education for Mentally Disabled Children. She was incredibly moved by the book and quit grad school. She then decided to become a teacher and is now studying to do so.

I have another friend who graduated from a two-year college course and then trained as a nurse. She is now working in the nurse's office of a high school.

Like these two young women, many people have found what they really wanted to do in life through such things as a chance encounter with a book, the influence of friends, or actual work experience.

**There is no easy road to learning.**

**President Ikeda:** Yes, friends are a treasure. I remember that in 1972 I visited a dormitory at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. It was an impromptu visit, and the two students in the room that I happened to stop by hastily did their best to straighten the room. I'll never forget what good friends they seemed to be. I'm sure that they encouraged each other, studied together and helped each other grow and develop. I felt sure that this dormitory must produce great people.

Dormitories fulfill an important function; living in a dormitory can be a lesson in life. Not a lesson where one studies alone in isolation and self-absorption, but a lesson where one learns how to forge ties of friendship and build lasting human relationships.

**Yumitani:** Some students complain that they want to get into a certain university but just don't have the scholastic ability.

**Ikeda:** If there's a university you want to get into, then study hard enough to do it. You need to make an effort to succeed. Study many times harder than others do. Playing and dreaming won't get you what you want. Pipe dreams like "Ah, wouldn't it be wonderful if I could learn English overnight!" or "There must be some way to get smart while goofing off!" will get you nowhere.

Nothing great is achieved without serious effort. There is

no easy road to learning. Study so hard that you surprise everyone. This is the way you should be thinking.

That tremendous effort will become a wonderful, noble, fulfilling memory of your youth. It will be a proud medal of honor of those days.

**Ueda:** Some members seem to think that they can get by with a minimum of study because they are praying.

**Ikeda:** That is wrong. It is a huge mistake to compare academic study and faith on the same level. Thinking that you don't need to study hard because you chant is a sign of an erroneous attitude toward faith; it is the kind of misguided thinking we see in escapist religions.

When it comes to study, it is the person who studies hardest who succeeds. This accords with reason. Faith, in contrast, is what forges our spirit so that we can

undergo and endure that effort.

For instance, you can sit praying in front of a rice cooker forever, but if you don't put any rice in it, you will never get any hot, fluffy cooked rice out of it. Similarly, you can have all the faith in the world, but if you don't study, you'll never get anywhere academically. It's like a motor that is only idling but produces no forward motion.

**Yumitani:** Faith is the engine that enables us to study many times harder than others.

**Ikeda:** Mr. Toda often used to say, "You need to have the faith of one and work as hard as three, if you're going to succeed in life." The opposite just goes against reason. It's just fanaticism. Nichiren Daishonin tells us quite firmly that faith that is not related to society diminishes the true greatness of Buddhism. Nichiren Daishonin writes,

"Regard your service to your lord as the practice of the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 270).

During your youth, study as hard as three people and have the faith of one — no, for this period in your life, to have the faith of even half a person is fine. Even if you can't do a full morning and evening gongyo right now, you can strive to challenge yourself gradually in faith and eventually develop a consistent, confident practice.

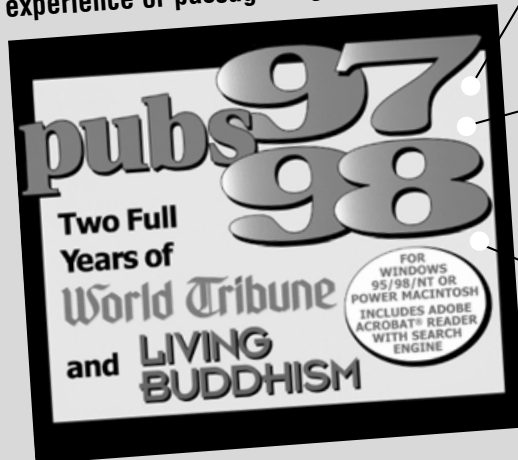
I want you, the high school division members, to be champions of the spirit of challenge. I want you to be unrivaled challengers.

*Part one of a discussion on college and future career paths among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Teruhiko Yumitani (young men's leader) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women's leader). The conclusion will appear in next week's issue.*

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# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'Early Spring'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 11-12

**To express his appreciation for the members' efforts, Shin'ichi Yamamoto picks Paris' historic, beautiful Place de la Concorde as the site for the inaugural Europe General Chapter and Paris Chapter meeting.**

The morning of Jan. 16, 1963, snow fell lightly on Paris. By the time the German youth division members finally arrived shortly before noon, however, it had stopped.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto had been anxiously awaiting their arrival, and he came down to the hotel lobby as soon as they got there. He was relieved to see the bright, smiling faces of the four red-cheeked youths.

"Thank you for coming, and from so far away!" he said, giving them warm, welcoming handshakes.

"By the way, how did you get here?" he asked.

"We came by car, through Belgium. The roads were covered with ice, and we also ran into a blizzard, so I'm afraid we're late," one of them replied.

"When the weather is so bad, you mustn't take unnecessary risks. Your safety is more important than anything. Did your car make the long trip OK?"

"Yes."

"What kind of car is it, anyway?"

Koichiro Sada replied proudly, "It's a Volkswagen, a used one."

"Will you show it to me?" asked Shin'ichi.

Sada was delighted that Shin'ichi

had taken an interest in his car. It was his greatest treasure. He had scrimped and saved to buy it, so that he could use it for his Gakkai activities. Shin'ichi went with the four young men to see the car.

"This is it, Sensei!"

"What a fine car!" Shin'ichi responded.

"I've named it The Young Lion," said Sada, smiling proudly.

"That's an excellent name. You are very brave to drive all the way here through a blizzard. Tomorrow, I want you to enjoy Paris. Let's go sightseeing."

The inaugural meeting of the Europe General Chapter and Paris Chapter was to be held at 1:00 p.m. in a room at the Hôtel de Crillon, where Shin'ichi was staying.

In addition to Koichiro Sada and his three companions, young women's division member Matsuko Takaishi had also traveled to Paris from West Germany. Members from Austria were present as well, as were Kiyoko Ohara from Sweden and Koji Hashimoto and his wife Keiko from Norway.

Hashimoto was the young man whom Shin'ichi had met and encouraged in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) two years earlier. At the time, Hashimoto



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

had been a chef at the Japanese embassy in Ceylon, but in September a year later the ambassador had been transferred to Oslo, Norway, and Hashimoto had accompanied him.

The Hôtel de Crillon, one of Paris' most distinguished hotels, was designed by the great 18th-century architect Jacques-Ange Gabriel. The hotel looked out on the Place de la Concorde, also designed by Gabriel and considered by many to be one of the most beautiful plazas in the world. The waters of the fountain in the plaza sparkled golden in the sunlight that began to stream out from amid the clouds.

Though called the Place de la Concorde — to commemorate the harmonious union of all France — it was called the Place Louis XV, when the plaza was built. During the period of the French Revolution, it was renamed the Place de la Revolution, and it was here that Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and many others had lost their lives to the guillotine.

Centuries later, during World War II, when the Allies made their successful D-Day invasion of Normandy, drove out the Nazis and liberated Paris, Charles de Gaulle led a victory march from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde.

Shin'ichi thought that the Hôtel de Crillon, standing at the Place de la Concorde with its long history of glory and tragedy, was a perfect place to launch a new phase in the kosen-rufu move-

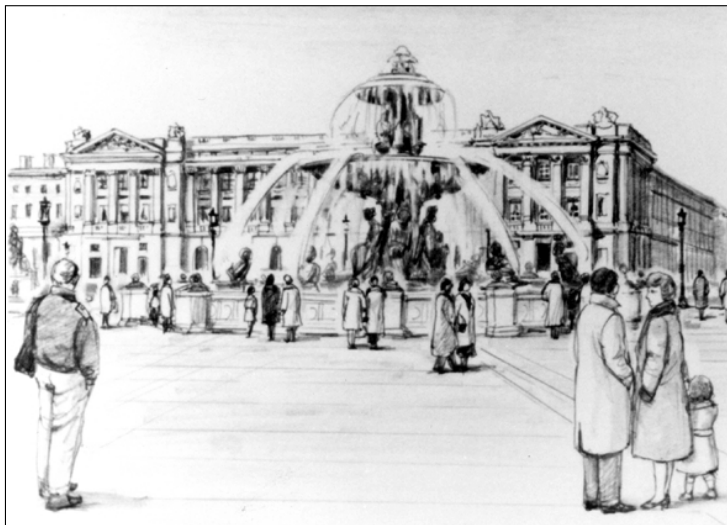
ment toward bringing lasting peace to Europe. He also felt that the members who would gather there that day, though by no means well off financially, all cared deeply for the countries in which they lived and were devoting themselves to kosen-rufu day after day while praying for world peace and the happiness of all humanity. They were, Shin'ichi believed, as important as their nations' leaders.

He selected this beautiful setting to express his respect and appreciation for their efforts. He also wanted them to grow socially confident, so that they could mix with all levels of society and feel comfortable in every situation, including visiting first-class hotels.

Thirty-five members gathered. As they waited for the meeting to begin, they seemed a little overawed by the luxury of the Hôtel de Crillon and even a little uncomfortable. Then Shin'ichi entered the room. He sensed their stiffness at once and said with light humor: "Bonjour! Since I am in France, it is only polite to greet you in French. Ah, yes! We have some German members here today, too. Guten Tag!

"And oh yes: Mekarimakka! (In Japanese, 'Are you making money?') That's hello in Kansai dialect! I know we have some Kansai members here, too."

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



EXPERIENCE — ZENSAKU MUNN, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.

# Tough Times Don't Last

I was born into a family that practices Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism. Currently, I am a senior in the U.S. Air Force Academy. I'd like to share my experience since I enrolled in the Academy in the summer of 1996.

I came to a crossroads in my life where I had to decide on continuing my Buddhist practice without my mother and father pressuring me to do so. Since I was living on my own, I had to really push myself to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and keep faith in the Gohonzon. I realize now how temporary a parent's role is in supporting a child's faith and practice. Once children grow

attribute the continuation of my faith to the youth division that I encountered throughout my life. Each youth plays a crucial role in maintaining good relationships with his or her peers, especially during adolescence, when so many changes are taking place. Another big reason why I keep practicing is to try to set an example for the SGI youth division members that I know.

My most recent experience was on Feb. 26, where I received a new sense of strength in my faith and practice. When I first was accepted in the Air Force Academy — a great benefit within itself — I tried out and made the Falcon Football Team of the Academy. The team had

so whatever happens you can only look to yourself to congratulate or blame.

In my sophomore year, I won the Academy Wing Open Tournament for 156 lb. weight class. It was the greatest feeling of my life to know that I was a champion and one of the best fighters at the Academy. This year I started as early as Christmas break to train for boxing. I wanted to achieve and excel to greater heights than the previous year. I did very well in the early bouts of the tournament. My opponent in the finals was very strong and an excellent fighter.

One week leading up to the Championship Bout, I chanted more than I have ever done

*'If you give 100 percent all the time, then you will never be a loser.'*

up and can no longer rely on their parents for support to practice, their faith is really tested. Of course, I think parents should set an example for their children, but ultimately each person must decide on their own to develop their faith and practice in Buddhism.

I decided to continue practicing based on the amount of fortune and actual proof that I achieved from chanting. I also

12 wins and 1 loss this season and was ranked No. 10 in the nation. Within a month, I got cut from the team because I was too small to play Division I football. A friend directed my attention to boxing for intramurals. I instantly fell in love with the sport. Boxing tests your abilities, physically and mentally. It is a sport where you can put your pride, and manhood all on the line. It is also an individual sport

since being at the Academy. I knew I was going to be in a long fight. Both of us were very experienced and equally had different talents. However, I trained every day and chanted so much daimoku. Just hours before my fight, I was in the Colorado Springs Community Center chanting for hours. I built up so much confidence and I was ready for a fight. While I was chanting, I thought



Zensaku Munn (right) with his good friend Yasuo Torata at the Colorado Springs Community Center.

of my friends and how this experience can be an inspiration for them when I win. The effort I put forth in chanting was surely the proof that was going to shine and influence so many members. I was going to prove to everyone that the power of the Gohonzon is true.

I walked into the ring that night a defending champion. I walked out of the ring a runner-up for my weight class. Of course, I was disappointed about losing. But for the first time in my life I was satisfied with my performance despite the outcome. I was one of the happiest fighters in the arena after the show was over. I gave 100 percent and I have no regrets about the fight. People say that my fight was the most exciting out of all the matches because both fighters exerted so much effort. As bad as I wanted to win, I learned a very important lesson: The greatest fighter, whether in boxing or in your own life, is the one who gives 100 percent every time. No matter the results, the fighter gets back up and fights harder to overcome even greater obstacles. My coach once told me, "If you give 100 percent all the time, then you will never be a loser." I truly understand what that means now. I gave 100 percent and I know it is, in part, due to the daimoku that I chanted.

In *Discussions on Youth*, SGI President Ikeda said: "When you chant, you create the cause for your success. Daimoku is for your benefit. It strengthens your life force and sharpens your

mind. It enables you to tap the vital inner strength to give full play to your talents and abilities."

After 25 bouts or so, I believe I had the best performance of my life, even though I lost. I put everything on the line and now that the fight is over, I do not feel any less of a person than I did before it. Although there may be competitors that think I am crazy, I feel that I have grown from this experience. I used to believe that no one could be satisfied with coming up short, but knowing the effort I made to pour every last ounce of my ability into the fight, I am truly happy with my performance. I do not regret a bit of that effort.

I hope that my experience can encourage the youth all over the world. Now that I look back, I have achieved so much in the past three years. I still have good grades, excellent health, a great car (which I adore), and a chance to become a pilot. More importantly, I have two loving parents who care for me and have given me the opportunity to reach my potential through this Buddhist practice.

I thank the many SGI members from St. Louis, Mo., Colorado Springs, Colo., and Japan who steered me in the right direction for my life; I hope that my experience will somehow direct even one person onto the right path. I also thank President Ikeda for all his guidance. He is an inspiration to me.

In short, I would like to leave you with a phrase that the Air Force Academy Boxing Team lives by: Tough Times Don't Last. Tough People Do!!!



Zensaku Munn (left), in the ring with Lincoln McLeod, giving it his all for the Open Wing Championship in the Air Force Academy in February.

# Change Is Inside and Out

## PERSPECTIVE

DIXON HAMBY  
BELLEVUE, WASH.



your relationships—reflect that internal change. This goes way beyond just the immediate environment. Your life

permeates the company where you work and it becomes more humanistic.

The place where you live becomes beautiful and safe. Your desires are manifest in your world. When you begin to see and feel this happen, it is remarkable.

Some examples of this happening to me are: A family that is harmonious; a solution-oriented workplace that assimilates a new employee into the new culture, in such a way that their contributions are appre-

ciated and they are given the opportunity to change the expressions of their personality that cause problems for others; I start taking Tai Chi and a world champion moves to Seattle from China and teaches near my work so I can take classes at lunchtime; my love of music of different cultures is manifest in a world music festival where the only venue in the United States is near my home; a lifetime love of baseball is manifest in a magnificent new ballpark; after years of working for a large company my division separates and forms a new, smaller company. So without moving or losing retirement benefits, I gain more freedom and become their Web designer; I have been training for this job for years and didn't know it.

Are all these changes coincidence? I don't think so. SGI

President Ikeda said: "All the causes in the past and all the effects in the future are condensed within the present moment of life." It is impossible to implement the three ways of practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism into your life without your desires being answered. Simply impossible. All that is needed is a consistent daily Buddhist practice and a straightforward "dialogue" with the Gohonzon.

Pray to the Gohonzon about what is in your heart. The good and the bad, the terror, love, impossible dreams, anger—everything. What you really desire. You know what that is; not what you think is possible, but what you really want your life to be.

I know it will work for you because it has worked for me—a flawed, sometimes selfish, "clueless" arrogant in-

dividual. And this is how world peace will be achieved. History has shown it won't happen by political or economic movements.

It will only happen when each individual is able to become happy, able to see the desires in their heart manifest in the environment. As President Ikeda stated in his lecture on "The True Object of Worship": "Once he embraces the Buddhism of the True Cause, however, any individual can create a bright future, for the very moment the individual's desire becomes one with his eternal being the desire is simultaneously achieved in the depths of his life. At that very moment karma changes and an immeasurable eternal treasure gathers to become manifest in the future, just as a totally dark room is illuminated the moment you turn on a light." ☐

# No Discrimination Between Men and Women

## PERSPECTIVE

MIKE EVERS  
MEBANE, NO. CAROLINA

As the husband of a woman whose faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is strong, and the father of two young women and two young men, all of whom practice, I recognize the values of equality and diversity. Each one of us brings unique characteristics



to the struggle for kosen-rufu. I especially appreciate the fact that the women of our family take the lead on numerous occasions to encourage, nurture and promote others; to include their family members—and to grow in their faith and practice of Buddhism. They are fully capable of leading—and

often more willing than we men.

In July, a priest from the Nikken sect, accompanied by three acolytes, attended a temple-members' discussion meeting. A woman asked the priest whether or not women could become priests in the Nikken Sect. Claiming to use Nichiren Daishonin's writings as his reference, the priest stated: "There is a passage in the Goshō that says a woman is supposed to live like a woman. And basically what it means to live like a woman is to be a mother and take care of children." With this answer, the woman who asked the question looked very perplexed, and said, "I don't know if I can accept that," and left the scene.

While the Daishonin praised women for their roles as wives and mothers, he also praised them for their dedication, leadership and courageous efforts in society. He stated on numerous occasions that there are no distinctions between men and women when it comes to our practice of faith.

That the priest did not convey the correct teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, that is, the spirit that the four kinds of believers are all

equal—priests (or monks), nuns, laymen and laywomen—is indeed shameful. This concept, that priests and nuns are equal and, in fact, all men and women are equal, is stated clearly by the Daishonin: "The Yujutsu chapter [15th chapter of the Lotus Sutra] states, 'I have taught these people since the remotest past.' There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myōhō-enge-kyō in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women. Were they not Bodhisattvas of the Earth, they could not chant the daimoku" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 93).

Nichiren Daishonin rejected previous teachings that espoused distinctions between men and women. He declared that Ama Gozen, mother of Oto Gozen, would, without a doubt, become a Buddha. "Since you revere the Lotus Sutra, you are a woman who is certain to become a Buddha" (January *Living Buddhism*, p. 10). Not only did this woman have strong, sincere faith, she took the actions of a compassionate leader who cared for those who were struggling to maintain faith. "I

understand that you are looking after the disciples [in Kamakura]. I cannot thank you enough" (Ibid., p. 11). Ama Gozen is one example of many women believers who were praised by Nichiren Daishonin.

He recognized her as a leader of kosen-rufu for taking care of disciples and braving the dangerous trek across Japan to visit him while on Sado. He did not, as the Nikken priests did, relegate her to a stereotypical role.

President Ikeda praises women for their dedication and diligence: "...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.... 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" (Aug. 6 *World Tribune*, p. 1).

How wonderful it is to be a part of this great organization, SGI that does not promote distinctions based upon race, gender or ethnicity. As a member of

the men's division, I am not demeaned by the efforts of the women of the SGI. Rather, I am uplifted and encouraged by their actions. I am proud to be a member of SGI working side by side with so many capable people, both men and women, who, without the robes of authority, humbly continue to "take care of the disciples." And, I am proud to have, as our leader, Daisaku Ikeda, who teaches us to respect, recognize and honor all human beings rather than make discriminatory distinctions.

I appreciate the women of SGI who uphold the Law of Nam-myōhō-enge-kyō and encourage others to practice faithfully. It was a woman who gave me birth so that I could be introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

It was also a woman who gave me birth into faith by introducing me to this practice and who taught me to practice correctly. To both I owe a great debt of gratitude. Neither of these women wore the robes of a priest, but instead wore the bright joyful "robes" of faith, love, courage, hope and compassion. ☐

# WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

## A Thriving District

To Debra and Harry Tolliver: It was so nice to see both of you and your thriving district in the July 23 *World Tribune*. I see you are making great strides with your district, and I'm sure you will continue to grow and develop greatly, becoming a chapter, area, etc. Keep up the good work.  
—PATTI WOOLMAN,  
Pasadena, Calif.

P.S.: You and Debra look great, as do all the members.

## Modernization Trends

To the computer-minded, to the lover of reference texts, to the bodhisattva who wants to find exactly the right words to say, the CD-ROM encapsulation of the SGI-USA publications is a dream come true. No longer do we have to run around searching through piles of old papers to find some key guidance. Moreover, like the "WT-Express," now the medicine of the Goshō and President Ikeda's guidance can stream right across our monitors.

I really enjoyed working on the beta edition of this CD. In doing so, I took the opportunity to invite another member, one who doesn't subscribe, to help me. He was very impressed and is earnestly considering renewing his subscription. Similarly, another member of my district (Mayfair, in Chicago) has decided to begin studying again in earnest and wants all the back issues of *Living Buddhism* in order to read "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra." She is really excited to be able to access these articles electronically. For my part, I would appreciate getting all the publications in electronic format—as they appear—not necessarily in lieu of the paper versions, but as a very handy study tool, for preparing summaries for meetings, cutting and pasting guidance

for my altar or for friends.

Please keep up with these modernization trends. Let's bring enlightenment to people using the cutting edge of technology.

—JOSH SAMOS,  
Chicago, Ill.

## A Vocabulary of Peace

As we enter a new century and reflect on the old, I believe it equally important to welcome in the new paradigm. In this regard, I would like to suggest that the SGI develop and refine a vocabulary of peace. After 28 years of practice, study and reading the *World Tribune*, it would be my great pleasure for a shift to occur in the presentation of written materials. When one talks of peace and uses words like fight, beat, win and the like, the cause for peace is at a reflective distance. With so many words and so much at our disposal, surely our perceptual verbiage can move toward peace. I truly believe that what we say and how we say it as well as what we write for posterity suggests more than just the cutting edge.

—JESSICA C. SHORT,  
San Francisco

## A Wonderful Experience

Thank you to Shelley Fine for a wonderful experience (Aug. 13 *World Tribune*). You made me feel as if I were there with you. Congratulations on your courageous and sincere actions to spread the Law.

—ALAIN BERGER,  
Van Nuys, Calif.

## Inspiring To Read

The paper you put out is fantastic. It is so inspiring to read and enjoy. I have only been a member for six months unofficially, then I got the Gohonzon July 11 this year. I look at the *World Tribune* and feel as if I should practice more and study more. Just wanted to say that it is a great paper.

—CHRISTINE PINSTON,  
Fullerton, Calif.

## An On-line Discussion Group

I recently ran across Dixon Hamby's perSpective (Jan. 17, 1997, *World Tribune*) about the importance of the Web in propagating Buddhist values. As I read through the list of wonderful people whom he met through his website, his words encouraged me: "People freely share information...and inspire and challenge each other."

I thought about the importance of an on-line discussion group in my life and how I have been able to create value with it. During discussions about a television show we share an interest in, I once made a comment about the show's actor, a Quebec native, that triggered a strong response from a Quebecois. At the time, I had been studying and chanting about diversity and, concerned about her feelings, I privately apologized to her for my (accidental) insensitivity. Our conversation took an unexpected turn. She revealed for the time to anyone the toll that prejudice has

taken on her family and her yearning for a world in which every single person is fully accepted. She lives in a world in which no one speaks freely about bigotry for fear of repercussion—her entire family has divided over the issue of French-language dominance and Quebec independence. She receives no support in her environment for being bilingual and loves the on-line discussion group because she can speak freely in English. I shared with her my Buddhist philosophy and gave her total support for wanting to be a global citizen. Her gratitude overwhelmed me and we've developed a warm friendship in the freedom of cyberspace.

In private, I've supported list-members through hard times and let them know I chant for their happiness. I've not done a very good job of sharing this practice face to face (that's one of my weaknesses) but in cyberspace, I've grown courageous with new friends whom I've never met when circumstances are appropriate; first I chant and then I write. Without exception, they've written how much they appreciate that, although their beliefs are very different, I've been able to say the right thing when they were suffering and taught them something new.

Without labeling it Buddhism, I've also shared the values of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in the group discussion. When I stumble over how to be hopeful and uplifting about the show's values, events of the day, a difference of opinion, I turn to the *World Tribune* and find the words I need. As Dixon quoted, President Ikeda said: "The value of friendship cannot be overemphasized. World peace begins with friendship."

—DONNA PARTEN,  
Sacramento, Calif.

## Greetings

Yes, we're back home in Puerto Rico and would like to express our most sincere THANK YOU for all those who took time to be with us. And those who could not, well, it gives you a reason to visit us! GRACIAS!!—The Willoughby family (Ian, Evelyn, Angie and Alex)

WANTED: Members and interested persons who live in or near Laughlin, Nev., or western Arizona, that is Kingman, Bullhead City, Lake Havasu City, Parker, or Needles, Calif., who are looking for SGI. Mohave District is here and anxious to welcome you. Contact Ruth Colvin at (520) 768-9732, or at rcolvin@ctaz.com

Beloved Ravenswood District—Our heart-strings will forever keep us connected! Thank you for your swift response, your powerful prayers and your selfless spirit. My father, Hector Vasquez of the El Paso SGI, heard all of our prayers and is recovering wonderfully. Our dream that he live to fulfill his destiny alongside his wife, Maria Teresa, as a Bodhisattva of the Earth, has come true! From the entire Vasquez family, a huge "GRACIAS COMPANEROS" to the Ravenswood and El Paso members! —Lucina & Greg Sarber (Ravenswood District, Chicago)

Patrick Hawes from Gurnee, Ill., was recently selected for promotion to Musician Second Class (E-5) in the U.S. Navy. Patrick is a clarinetist with Navy Band Great Lakes. Patrick wishes to express his deep gratitude to all of the members who have been supporting him through the years, especially his district chief in Chicago, Tom Friese, along with the members in Baltimore, Norfolk, Va., and Asheville, N.C. "I love you all and can't thank you enough for all you have taught me about the greatness of the SGI and Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I promise to continue to show actual proof!"



## Lost and Found

I'm trying to locate members from Blossom District, Rising Sun Chapter, Atlantic HQ 2 from Long Island, N.Y. I began my practice there in 1989 and have since moved to Istanbul, Turkey. Anyone from Blossom who'd like to get in touch, please do! Thanks so much!

Diane Conti  
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mobile: +90-0532-267-2599

To Tony Clair: Dear Tony, I don't know where you are these days, but I hope it's somewhere where you receive the *World Tribune*. I will be practicing 27 years this Sept. 13, a date you should remember, since you shakubuked me. Actually I've been chanting longer than that, as Sept. 13, 1972, was the day I received my Gohonzon. I am doing great, and besides keeping up my career as a social worker, I have been writing a character that I want to develop into a comic strip and then into an animated film. Are you still involved in animation? I would love to hear from you either way. I hope you are doing really well. Best wishes. Your old college pal and shakubuku. —Patti Woolman; pattis@earthlink.net

Are there any members in Nigeria who might know Okey Uhiara? He is the son of a Nigerian chief who came to Bellingham, Wash., around 1980 to study geology as a graduate student at Western Washington State University. He ac-

tually thought that WWSU was in Washington, D.C. when he first enrolled. In any case, we met in Bellingham and became very close friends. He joined NSA in my district and practiced as a very enthusiastic member of the young men's division for a number of years until his visa ran out. He continued to write to me in Nigeria, but eventually, my letters went unanswered. I have not heard from him for many years. If you have any information, please send e-mail to pbanne@metlife.com, or write to me, Peter Nathan Banne, at 5007 Palmetto Ave. #41, Pacifica, CA 94044. Telephone (650) 755-7873

On Aug. 18, Ms. Hiroko Heard celebrated her birthday and I celebrated the beginning of my 10th year of practice. The wonderful Ms. Heard provided me the nourishment to build the foundation of my Buddhist practice and for this I owe her everything! Unfortunately, I have lost contact with her over the last few years and am searching for her. Hiroko, I hope you will receive this birthday wish and know that I think of you often, and always send daimoku! Please contact me at (713) 868-3137 or (713) 440-7976 (wk). I miss you and your dynamic spirit. Leslie Golden, 6907 Alameda, Houston, TX 77021

I am hoping to contact two long lost friends: Vanessa McKenney (spelling?) and Kate Pascoe. Vanessa and I practiced together in Seattle in '86 and '87, and we marched at least a thousand miles for Koteikaitai practice! Then I moved to Europe and we lost touch. I practiced with my Australian friend Kate in Paris, France, in 1988, and when I moved to England and she returned to Hong Kong, we lost touch. Her parents lived in the Phoenix, Ariz., area for a while, and I'm hoping someone might know how to contact her through them. Thank you, —Cynthia Toomey; cktomey@earthlink.net

## Milestones

Just wanted to let everyone know that Beverly Halverson, an SGI member in Topeka, Kans., passed away on Jan. 25 of this year. I apologize to anyone whom I may have forgotten to tell. Beverly had so many friends that I am sure I missed some. Sincerely, Dave Halverson

Thirty years ago in 1969, David Hudson was coaxed into a Buddhist meeting in Hollywood. After that meeting he stayed with us and became a founding member of the unforgettable Hollywood Bowl District, whose members are now practicing throughout the U.S., England and Europe. David soon married another new member, Shirley, and they had three strong and delightful children Brad, Becky and Beth. David opened his heart and his home, contributing to kosen-rufu for 30 years. He passed away peacefully with family and friends at his bedside on Aug. 10. He will be greatly missed. We thank each SGI member for the support and daimoku you sent to him. Stan and Norma Gittelman, Laura Aved, Nancy Kennedy. —Nancy E. Kennedy, Rye, N.Y.

Our beloved Shizuko Waller passed away peacefully July 26 after bravely battling cancer for the last two years. Shizuko touched many hearts in Nashville as our Tennessee Volunteer Area Women's Division Leader. She was always moving and quick to respond to anyone's need, never failing to teach us how to live courageously and with compassion. Although Shizuko spent her last 15 years here in Nashville, she also gained many friends in faith across the U.S. Shizuko is survived by her son, Toby Waller and her former husband, Orman (Wally) E. Waller. —Meredith Green, Nashville

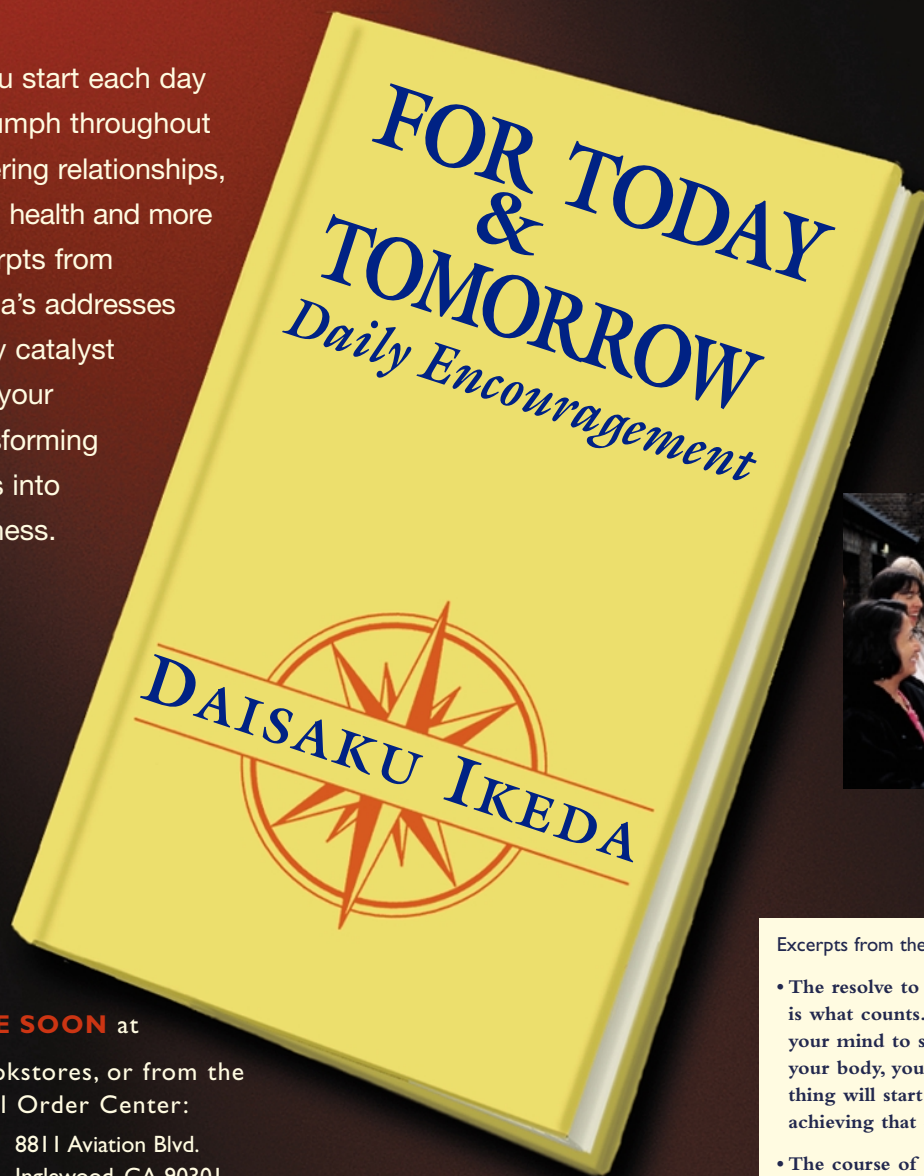
We will, Shizuko and all of us, be together always. The bonds that link us are strong and bear the righteousness of our union in the Great Law, where we worked, laughed, cried and chanted together for kosen-rufu. —Steve Shouse

BACK IN STORES SEPT. 17th

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- Those who say, "I'll do it," who are willing to take on a challenge even if they are alone, are true winners. The determination, the commitment to take action yourself, is the force that leads to victory.