

World TRIBUNE

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EXPERIENCE:

Deanna Pino takes responsibility for her life.

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Photo by KEITH KAWAMOTO

Hula performances open the West Side Youth Exhibit Festival held in Waianae, on the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

New Poem: 'Your Noble Voyage of Life'

SGI President Ikeda writes a poem to the men's division members, encouraging them to always remember their mission in life (see pages 6-7).

Exuberant is the music that fills our life!
We walk in this garden of our eternal destiny—
How admirable is our way of life!

The hearts of all who do so
Enjoy the heavens' eternal felicitations
Which encompass all things—
Stars, moon, forests and clouds.
This path is true!
It is the path of the self's true mission—
A path without regrets!

SGI-USA Participates in West Side Youth Festival

BY CAROL PELEKAI, BARBARA GEOLINA
AND JOANNE TACHIBANA
HAWAII CORRESPONDENTS

The youth of zip code 96792, the Waianae coast of Oahu, were spotlighted at the West Side Youth Exhibit Festival, held Aug. 21-28. The theme, "Our Precious Youth, Show Your Treasures," was showcased by a gigantic grassroots effort including the SGI-USA West Side, businesses and community groups all uniting to create a successful event for the young men and women.

The normally quiet Waianae Mall hosted the event, bustling with hundreds of volunteers who sported hand-screened T-shirts with the festival's logo. More than 150 donors contributed to the event's success. People from all over the island came to spend the day. More than 250 young people shared their treasures, displaying art work, crafts and collectibles. On stage they performed the hula, sang, did Hip-Hop dancing and gymnastics and played in bands.

Months of groundwork were spent preparing for this event. West Side SGI-USA members brainstormed ways to make a dif-

ference in this "Year of Victory in the Community." Once they hit on the idea of the event, committees were formed and groups went out into the community to solicit support and involvement. At first there was no response. The members regrouped, chanted at the Makaha Community Center, and determined to make this a great success. Doors began to open, and support from a variety of organizations and merchants came pouring in.

Convincing family and friends to have their children bring their "treasures" was not an easy task. Obstacles were overwhelming.

But, in reply to President Ikeda's expectations, the West Side members persisted.

The University of Hawaii's Matsuunaga Institute for Peace cosponsored the event. Both Hawaii Governor Ben Cayetano and Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris proclaimed Aug. 21-28 as Waianae Youth Week.

The opening ceremony began with the traditional *Oli*, or chant, welcoming everyone to the festival. Dr. Ralph Summy, the Matsuunaga Institute's executive director, greeted the crowd, and messages sent from Hawaii's congressional

delegation were read by youth. A surprise visit from U.S. Representative Patsy Mink highlighted the ceremony; she expressed her joy at seeing so many young people displaying their talents. Mayor Harris offered his heartfelt congratulations and aloha.

Representatives Emily Awae and Mike Kahikina, Senator Colleen Hanabusa and Councilman John DeSoto also sent congratulatory remarks.

Leeward District Deputy Superintendent Bruce Nagauwa also congratulated everyone for their focus on youth, stating that

it will pay high dividends in the future. Through his many years as an educator, he said, he had witnessed a lot of success from Leeward area students which often went unnoticed.

In fact, the vocational program at Waianea High School is one of the best in the state. He emphasized the importance of parents believing in their children, and that they have the potential to be number one. Supporting the students and their dreams will help them grow up to succeed in the world.

SEE WEST SIDE, 10



Photo by JOANNE TACHIBANA

Three students read their dreams at the opening ceremony.



Photo by KEITH KAWAMOTO

Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris (center) with the cosponsors of the festival.

How Does the SGI's Stance Toward Nichiren Shoshu Accord With Our Stated Religious Tolerance?

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Buddhism stands for tolerance. Our religion seeks to build bridges among all people, among people of extremely different backgrounds.

The Preamble of the SGI Charter expresses this in saying that our organization will "raise high the banner of world citizenship, the spirit of tolerance." We will, "based on the spirit of Buddhist tolerance, respect other religions."

If this is an important part of the SGI's mission, why is the SGI so critical of Nichiren Shoshu? Why doesn't the SGI show more tolerance toward the priesthood? Are we contradicting ourselves?

With good reason, the SGI does not tolerate the current

course of Nichiren Shoshu. As SGI President Ikeda puts it: "The N i k k e n sect, which ignores the challenge of social involvement, has forgotten what Buddhism is. They have lost their faith and are doing their best to try to destroy Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism" (Feb. 12 *World Tribune*, p. 10).

There is something fundamentally different about Nichiren Shoshu, then, from other religions in the world: It is the one and only religious group taking action to eradicate the Daishonin's Buddhism. Nichiren Shoshu is against the Daishonin's Buddhism—but

it's pretending to be the Daishonin's Buddhism! And it's spreading.

The SGI Charter's Preamble expresses our desire to work with other religions toward common goals like protecting the people, to work with other religions based on mutual respect.

don't respect others and try to corrupt them—Buddhism does not ignore it. The Daishonin thus spoke up against the many religions of his day that were confusing people and leading them into deep suffering. He even says, "I am fully aware that if I do not speak out

Our temple issue education campaign today should be conducted with the same kind of caring.

President Ikeda explains in his 1996 lecture at the Simon Wiesenthal Center that passive tolerance, "the indifference and apathy that is so prevalent in

'Active tolerance is inseparable from the courage to resolutely oppose and resist all forms of violence and injustice that threaten human dignity.'

The Preamble never says that we want to work with religions that share no goals with us, that hold our philosophy in contempt or that are trying to bring about the end of our religion.

Buddhism seeks to embrace all people, but when people act unfairly, unjustly—when they

[against such sects], I will be lacking in compassion" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 95). His intolerance of religious injustice was an expression of his great heart; he attacked slanderous teachings to save people from misery.

modern societies," is at odds with this caring (*Addresses in the United States—June/July 1996*, p. 19). We would cut ourselves off from the heart of this religion, from the active tolerance that the Daishonin practiced, if we just let religious corruption occur right in front of us and did nothing. As President Ikeda puts it, "Active tolerance is inseparable from the courage to resolutely oppose and resist all forms of violence and injustice that threaten human dignity" (*ibid.*).

The current course of Nichiren Shoshu requires a response from us—one of active tolerance, not passive tolerance.

Youth Plan Los Angeles Area World Peace Prayer Meeting

It all started after our March 16 meeting: Lilia Williams and I were talking about how cool it would be if the junior high and high school divisions could be in charge of a world peace prayer meeting. After our youth division leaders and men's and women's division leaders okayed it, Lilia and I got together with many of our members in May to get ideas about what kind of meeting to have. In June, we went on a home-visit campaign for the whole month toward the meeting. Then in July, we really started to turn up the heat by having planning meetings once a week and rehearsals.

Our men's and women's division members asked how they could help out and support us. All we could say was that we needed help with rides and promotion of the Aug. 8 meeting.

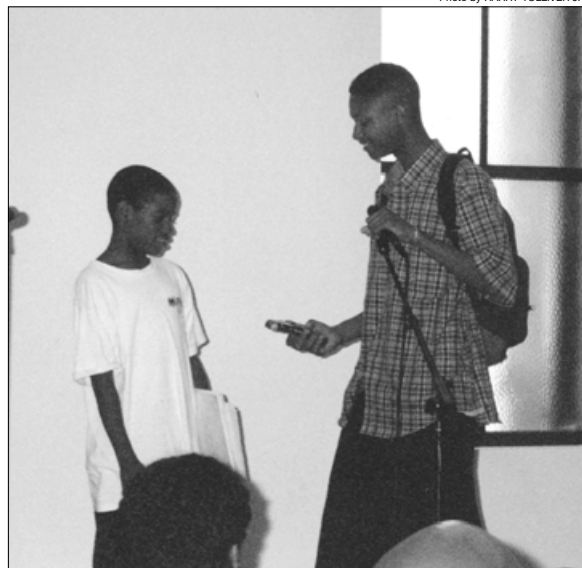
The most difficult part was the skit: We wanted to make it real to the point of showing people what the junior high and high school division members go through every day. In the skit, a young man avoids a violent confrontation by chanting with his

parents, calling a youth division leader for encouragement, and then refusing to buy a gun. It ends with the Los Angeles Area youth making their own Victory Over Violence pledge:

- We will stop violence against ourselves and stand up for all people when we witness any forms of violence.

- Our vision is to see that the world stop promoting violence in cartoons, videos, music and the media. By everyone taking action in our environment, we can stop the violence and increase the peace.

- We hope to have all cultural differences settled through dialogue and not war! We will work together to create a society without violence, making it possi-



Kevin Ross (left) and Chad Marshall in the youth skit about the violence they experience at school, at the Los Angeles Area Aug. 8 meeting.

ble to create world peace.

- We, the youth of Los Angeles Area, vow to ded-

icate our lives to ending violence in the 21st century.

—HARRY TOLLIVER, JR.

Seven in a series

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EXPERIENCE — JOSEPH CHOO, HONOLULU

The Absolute Power of Prayer

Photo by JOANNE TACHIBANA

Five years ago, my father, George Choo, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease — the degeneration of the central nervous system — coupled with Parkinson's disease, a progressive nerve disease marked by tremors. For those five years, my father required 24-hour care. My mother, who worked at night, was the care-giver during the day, and my wife, Kumiko, and I took care of him at night. We provided loving care, while devoting ourselves to SGI activities. In May of this year, my father's condition worsened. He needed professional care and was placed in a nursing home.

On July 16, my father aspirated his food, which went down the wrong passage and lodged in his lungs. I received a call at work and was informed of his condition. I called my wife, who immediately called her friends and leaders in the SGI. They began chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo for my father.



George Choo

An ambulance was summoned, and when I arrived the paramedics were frantically working to revive him. Eventually he was transported to the hospital with respiratory failure. I was informed that en route to the hospital, my father's heart stopped three times, but fortunately he came out of it.

In the emergency room, they determined that he was in critical condition and transferred him to the intensive care unit. He was so weak that he could not breathe on his own and was placed on a ventilator and a life-support system. Due to the trauma, he was infused with one set of drugs to keep his heart beating and another to lower his unbelievably high blood pressure (250/125). He also had a fever of 104 degrees.

As my father lay unconscious during this ordeal, hooked up to tubes and wires, and convulsing from all the drugs, my wife — who has been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for over 39 years — and I were chanting for his recovery. We knew that of the senses, hearing is the last to go. We chanted for eight or nine hours next to my father's bedside; his condition remained the same.

The next morning, I woke up relieved that we had not received a late night call from the hospital, and resumed chanting for my father. Kumiko and I then returned to the hospital and continued chanting at my father's bedside. He remained unconscious and in very critical condition.

My mother informed me that my father had a living will — a legal document signed a decade earlier — asserting that his life not be prolonged artificially. As I read it, I was overcome with unspeakable grief. It broke my heart to realize that this was the state my father was in, explicitly described in the will. He did not wish to be kept alive.

As family members gathered in the waiting room, the ICU doctor approached. He gave us a clinical report about the gravity of my father's condition, complicated by pneumonia, and asked us to make a decision about my father's living will. As laypersons not familiar with medical terminology, this crucial decision to remove my father from the life-support system was exceedingly stressful. Our minds raced and naturally we had questions. The doctor, rather callously we thought, urged us to make a decision, explaining that since my father had a living will, legally and ethically he was not responsible to explain the details of my father's condition. We were incensed by his demeanor, but afraid if we challenged him he would not do everything possible to save my father.

After briefly conferring with family members, we notified the doctor of our decision to honor my father's request. He told us that when someone as weak as my father was removed from the machines, they usually pass away quickly. My father could not breathe on his own, and his heart could not beat without the drugs that were being administered throughout his body.

My father was immediately taken off all life support, and



Joseph and Kumiko Choo.

the family gathered around his bedside. My wife and I never stopped chanting as we held his hands. I pleaded in his ear to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Given the gravity of the situation, I demanded my sister and brother chant too. For the first time in their lives, they did so. Within 15 minutes, my father stopped breathing and passed away. We continued to chant, knowing how important it was

'As Nichiren Daishonin states, "One day of life is more valuable than all the treasures of the universe."'

for him to continue hearing our chanting as he crossed the threshold from life to death.

A few minutes later, I noticed faint breaths from my father. We continued chanting and watching over him. Ten more minutes passed, and I noticed that his breathing was getting stronger. I called the nurse, who took his vital signs and discovered that his heart rate, which was 29 just prior to his death, was up to 49–52 beats. His blood pressure normalized. The nurse couldn't believe it. We continued to chant and noticed that as the hours passed, his condition, though

extremely critical, was stabilizing. My father actually opened his eyes, which he had not done for two days, and even regained strength in his grip.

The doctor informed us that the provisions of the living will would still be enforced. He would no longer have access to life support and would be placed in a regular hospital room where he would be treated like a regular patient.

In this critical state, my father was transferred. We continued to chant. After many hours, we went home to rest and wait for the inevitable call from the hospital.

The next morning, once again relieved that there was no emergency call from the hospital, I called to check on my father's condition and was informed by the nurse that my father was conscious, lucid and able to answer questions! After chanting, Kumiko and I went to the hospital and were astonished to find him sitting up in bed and talking.


A short time later, the doctor who had so insolently informed me the day before to plan for my father's funeral walked in. He saw my father sitting up in bed and asked how he was. My father responded that he was okay. The doctor said: "Amazing. This is amazing." I told him that it was amazing because we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, and many SGI members also chanted for him. The doctor said

the chanting must have really helped because it was amazing that my father was still alive.

Within a day, my father was able to eat solid food, which the doctor thought would never be possible. Within five days my father was discharged from the hospital to a rehabilitation program.

I wrote this tremendous experience in a letter to SGI President Ikeda on July 19, to share our deep appreciation for the Gohonzon and for all the SGI members who chanted for my father.

On Aug. 1, my father peacefully passed away. I am extremely grateful to the SGI for the wonderful memorial service. What I want all the SGI members to know is that because of our prayers to the Gohonzon, my father was able to live two extra weeks after being taken off life support. He didn't just merely survive, he actually thrived. He was able to eat, talk, laugh and sing. As Nichiren Daishonin states, "One day of life is more valuable than all the treasures of the universe" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 231).

I began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism more than 13 years ago, and I can confidently say I really appreciate my father. This experience proved to me that the power of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is absolute, and that by chanting sincerely to the Gohonzon, you can overcome any obstacle in life. 

DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

A Questioning Mind

Discussing college education, SGI President Ikeda says it is important 'that we help students develop a questioning mind, so that they will always ask themselves for what purpose a given thing is being done or pursued.'

Yoshiko Ueda: Many of our high school division members are seriously pondering what vocational school or university to attend after they graduate. One high school graduate, who is spending an additional year studying after failing the university entrance exams, says she feels lonely and isolated.

In addition, she finds herself easily distracted from her studies. This is causing her a great deal of anxiety. She wonders if she should simply enroll in any university that accepts her.

SGI President Ikeda: If you have the opportunity to attend a university, even if it's not your first choice, it may be wise to do it. Entering a top school doesn't guarantee that you'll become a top-class person. It is through your own efforts that you succeed. You must never forget this.

A university is just a means to an end. And you are that end. Your goal should be to become a fine human being and a victor in life. The ultimate success or failure of your life will be determined in your last years. Just because things don't go as you had hoped at the start doesn't mean that in the end you won't be a winner.

Remember, there are many people who have entered the "best" universities and ended up with unhappy lives, or worse, criminal lives.

Teruhiko Yumitani: Everyone is saying that various key areas of Japanese society — for instance, its political, financial and economic circles — are in a virtual state of collapse right now. When you think about it, the leaders of these spheres are almost all graduates from the "top" universities.

Knowing how to apply the knowledge we have acquired — this is where wisdom comes in.

Ikeda: One of the causes of the chaos in Japan is a confusion between knowledge and wisdom. Knowing how to apply the knowledge we have acquired — this is where wisdom comes in. We can accumulate all the knowledge we like, but without guiding wisdom, it is useless. It produces nothing of value.

Memorized information always remains on the level of the conceptual. Wisdom, in contrast, operates on the level of real life. It is a source of power for living, for surviving and coping. It is wisdom that leads to our success and happiness.

Knowledge alone cannot produce happiness. Most people don't understand this; they are sadly deluded on this point.

Ueda: Some have put scientific knowledge, for example, to destructive uses.

Yumitani: And others have put business and economic knowledge to selfish purposes, using it to enrich themselves at others' expense.

Ikeda: A society that values only knowledge and lacks wisdom is bound to reach a dead end. A certain philosopher points this out as the fundamental failing of Japanese culture.

Ueda: It's the relationship between knowledge and wisdom that is crucial, then.

Ikeda: Knowledge gives rise to wisdom. If you like, knowledge is the pump; wisdom is the water that we get from the pump. If we can't obtain water, the pump is useless. At the same time, without knowledge, without the pump, we won't be able to obtain water.

No matter what changes we make to the system, they're meaningless unless we change our basic philosophy.

Ueda: Doesn't it seem that Japan's educational system is on the wrong track?

Ikeda: As it stands now, students undergo highly competitive examinations to get into college but then graduate easily without having to study much. This is completely against reason! It is an example of our sorry state as individuals, as a society, as a nation. Our national and education policies directed toward young people are terribly mistaken.

Yumitani: Recently, the influential educational advisory body the University Council re-

leased an interim report, "The University in the 21st Century and Educational Reform." The Council offers several suggestions for reforming the present system, which allows students to graduate from college without serious study. Among the proposals are preventing students from taking an excessive number of credits each semester, for which they fail to attend the classes and take only the exams. The grades would be based on attendance and the successful completion of homework and term papers.

Ueda: Some have criticized such suggestions as turning university into high school.

Yumitani: At the same time, the report suggests allowing students with excellent grades to graduate in three years instead of the usual four; allowing students to enroll from the fall semester, too, instead of only in the spring, as is now the case; and introducing one-year intensive graduate school courses.

Ikeda: In terms of population, the number of young people in Japan is decreasing. It is estimated that by 2009, every high school graduate who wants to go to a university will be able to. Of course, that will be too late to help our present high school division members — by that time, you'll probably all be leaders whose job it is to foster the next generation of junior high and high school division members!

Needless to say, the present university entrance examination system is far from ideal. We must improve the whole educational system at the university level as well. But no matter what changes we make to the system, they will be meaningless unless we change our basic philosophy.

It is important, I feel, that we help students develop a questioning mind, so that they will always ask themselves for what purpose a given thing is being done or pursued.

Ueda: When you see the elite students graduating from the top schools and becoming leaders in the government and bureaucracy, where all they seem to care about is fulfilling personal ambition, you can't help

Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD



'Overcoming hardship and suffering is happiness replete with true fulfillment.'

but wonder what they think the purpose of their university education was.

College actually exists precisely for those who can't attend it.

Ikeda: Some say that our universities are producing "knowledgeable barbarians." If universities produce people who look down on those who couldn't attend college, what good is it?

In one sense, college exists precisely for those who can't attend it. Those who are privileged to attend a university should spend their lives working for the sake of those who couldn't enjoy the privilege.

Yumitani: The reason that tuition at national universities is less expensive than at private universities is that they are subsidized by our taxes. This is the first thing that university officials should say to new students at the entrance ceremonies: "You are able to attend this university because of the hard work of many, many others, who could not attend. Pursue your studies so that you may serve them in some way."

Unfortunately, the focus at most Japanese universities has not been serving the people but acquiring the authority to control and dominate them. It's completely backward.

Soka University is committed to producing people dedicated to serving their fellow human beings.

Ikeda: That is the reason I founded Soka University. I wanted to create a university truly committed to producing talented people who are dedicated to serving their fellow human beings.

Mr. Makiguchi once said to Mr. Toda: "In the future, we must found a school based on the theory of value-creating (*soka*) education that I have been formulating. If we can't do it during my lifetime, you do it during yours. We will build a school system of value-creating education, starting with elementary school and continuing all the way through university."

On another occasion, he said: "I really want to start a university. If we do that, we'll produce truly talented people."

Mr. Toda first spoke to me about founding Soka University in late autumn 1950, in the cafeteria of Nihon University in Tokyo. "Daisaku," he said, "let's found a Soka University. It would be great if we could realize it while I am still healthy, but it may not be possible. If that should be the case, Daisaku, then I will leave it to you. Let's make it the best university in the world."

Mr. Toda said this to me when his business had failed, and he was in the direst of financial straits. Despite this serious personal setback, his spirit remained undaunted. It burned with boundless hope for the future. In that desperate time, during his life-and-death struggle, Mr. Toda entrusted me with the mission of establishing Soka University.

I resolved, no matter what, to realize this dream of my predecessors, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. I established Soka University with the intent of making it the best university in the world, just as had been Mr. Toda's wish. I chose as the university's founding date April 2, the anniversary of my mentor's death.

Yumitani: Soka University is founded on the solemn spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple.

Ikeda: The name *Soka University* appears on the main gate

to the school in Chinese characters, in a reproduction of Mr. Makiguchi's calligraphy that he left in Mr. Toda's care. I, in turn, inherited this piece of calligraphy from Mr. Toda and took care of it until we had it reproduced for the gate. Soka University truly reflects the spirit of both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda. It is my very life.

On a bronze statue outside the main administrative building, I had these words engraved: "For what purpose should one cultivate wisdom? May you always ask yourself this question!"

I did this because I want all Soka University students to become individuals who serve the people, individuals who never forget the sufferings of the people.

The higher one's position, the greater one's duty to others.

Ikeda: There's the wonderful French expression *noblesse oblige*. It means "nobility has duties"—the higher one's position, the greater one's duty to others. This is the fundamental leadership philosophy of Europeans. They believe that those in leadership positions have a duty to protect the people, to demonstrate superior courage and ability, to have self-discipline, integrity and selfless dedication.

Yumitani: I have heard that in the United Kingdom, a higher proportion of Oxford and Cambridge students died in World War I and World War II than from other schools. They felt a strong sense of duty to defend their country and their comrades, so they always fought in the vanguard on the battlefield.

Ikeda: I think that this same sense of responsibility should be found in all who receive a higher education—they have a duty to serve society.

Buddhism is win or lose — there is no halfway.

Ueda: Soka University's correspondence course has also produced many talented individuals. I recently heard the story of a young man who had gone to a municipal high school in Tokyo's Nerima Ward. A member of the baseball team, he put all his energy into the game and little else.

As a result, his grades were only average. It wasn't until the final baseball season when his high school career was over—that is, in the middle of the second term of his last year at school—that he finally began to study for the university entrance examinations.

He was highly motivated to pass the exams, so from that

FROM SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

New Guidelines for the Behind-the-Scenes Groups

To the Byakuren

- Sound judgment first.
- Precision first.
- Reason first.
- Cooperation first.
- Safety first.
- Sharpness first.
- Fortune first.

To the Soka Group

- Always with the Soka Gakkai.
- Always with your comrades.
- Always with justice.
- Always with the goal of kosen-rufu.
- Always with courage.
- Always with victory.
- Always with hope.
- Always with conviction.

To the Gajokai

- Be foremost in your sense of mission.
- Trust that the Mystic Law sees all you do.
- Protect the Soka Gakkai absolutely.
- Refute slander and reveal justice.
- Be in good health and take vibrant action.

To the Stage Crew

- Be a hero like the lord of a castle.
- Be a hero who protects from the outside.
- Be a hero of complete victory.
- Be a hero of perfection.
- Be a hero of triumph.
- Be a hero of firmness.
- Be a hero of justice.
- Be a hero crowned with treasures.

time on he studied very hard—up to five hours a day on weekdays with an additional 10 hours in the library on Saturdays and Sundays. But he failed to get into any of the universities of his choice.

"Right in the middle of the exam," he says, "I was suddenly overcome by a sense of pointlessness. I saw myself getting into a good school, enjoying myself and having a good time for four years, then getting a good job.... But I didn't want that life!"

He began to think long and hard about the purpose of university study and the purpose of life itself. At that juncture, he encountered your writings, President Ikeda. The enthusiasm of the junior high and high school division leaders also spurred him to find the profession he wanted to dedicate his life to.

He enrolled in Soka University's Department of Correspondence Education. He says that when he attended a special on-campus session for correspondence students, he was inspired by the passion of his fellow students, who were of many different ages and professions.

A year later, he took an examination to change his status to a full-time student, and he passed. Having decided to become an attorney, he began to study for the national bar examination. He took the bar exam five times before he finally passed, and today he is busily, happily employed as an attorney.

"Through my experience," he says, "I came to truly understand these words from President Ikeda: 'Only labor and devotion to one's mission give life its worth.' It was my feeling of responsibility and mission to become a person who could make a contribution to society that kept me going until I finally succeeded. I intend to keep on moving forward, never forgetting to challenge myself!"

Yumitani: One of my se-

niors at work told me his story: Though he had quit high school once, he later got back on track and was eventually accepted into the prestigious Waseda University School of Political Science and Economics.

He related that in his first year of junior high school, he started playing the guitar. He joined a band and performed with them, and he never really wanted to go to high school. Even though he ended up going to high school, all he really cared about was his band.

In a class of 180 students, he usually ranked about 160. He was also rebellious toward his teachers, and he dropped out of school in the middle of repeating his sophomore year of high school.

He worked at part-time jobs, but he began to worry about his future. At that time, a senior from the young men's division paid him a visit. "You're escaping from reality," the senior told him. "Naturally, going to college isn't everything, but shouldn't you try to do something to challenge yourself?"

That YMD member had only completed junior high himself, but he worked hard to contribute to society. He kept visiting and encouraging the young man for an entire year.

Eventually, my colleague was roused to action, and he began to study hard and chant daimoku an hour every day. After a year, he passed the high school equivalency examination. The next spring, he sat for the university entrance examinations and failed.

He was extremely discouraged by the setback, but once again the YMD member encouraged him, and after a year of studying and waiting, he took the exams again and was accepted by the college of his choice.

My colleague told me: "It all depends on your drive and will to succeed. I can never fully express my gratitude to my senior

Byakuren: The Byakuren Group is a behind-the-scenes group for young women who support members through reception, performing duties to create a pleasant environment and general facilitation of SGI-USA activities.

Soka Group: The Soka Group is a behind-the-scenes group for young men who support members at activities by handling parking and traffic control, as well as public safety outside the community centers.

Gajokai: The Gajokai is a behind-the-scenes group for

young men who support members at activities inside the SGI-USA activity centers, creating a safe and enjoyable environment by maintaining room set up, including seating and sound systems, the centers' alarm and fire security systems and general upkeep.

Stage Crew: The Stage Crew is a behind-the-scenes group open to all members by supporting SGI-USA activities through a variety of artistic projects including exhibits, cultural events etc. They design exhibition spaces, build sets, sew costumes, painting signs and other creative endeavors.

in the YMD who helped me find and bring forth that drive and motivation."

Ikeda: The SGI is a wonderful organization, isn't it? It is important to win in life, to triumph over one's weaknesses, to succeed in society, to be successful in exams. The important thing is to first be victorious. And then gain the nourishment you need for your happiness.

Life is about winning. Buddhism is about winning, too. Society is concerned with reputation; government is concerned with punishment and reward; and Buddhism is concerned with winning or losing.

Society is based on opinion, whether others say good things or bad things about us. The nation rewards those who do good things and punishes those who do bad. Both society and government operate based on such relative values.

But Buddhism is win or lose—there is no halfway.

What is life's purpose? To be a winner, to be happy.

What is happiness, then? At its essence, it is fulfillment. When you are fulfilled, you wear

the golden crown of your own, deep, personal satisfaction.

What, then, is fulfillment? It is fighting against difficulties. Without difficulties, without challenges, there can be no fulfillment. And without fulfillment, there is no happiness.

There is no happiness without hardship; it simply can't exist without hardship.

Everyone forgets the process—the road—of battling hardships and searches only for the end result—the destination—of happiness. Overcoming hardship and suffering is happiness replete with true fulfillment.

Yumitani: This is a lesson that applies to us all, whether we decide to attend a university or not.

Ikeda: Whatever path you choose, I want all of you to live positive, happy lives and be able to say, "I have won!"

The conclusion of a discussion on going to college among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Teruhiko Yumitani (young men's leader) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women's leader). Part 1 appeared in the Sept. 10 World Tribune.

FROM SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

Your Noble Voyage of Life

SGI President Ikeda composed the following poem to the members of the men's division on March 26.

—Dedicated to my most respected and esteemed men's division members

He was a nameless elementary school principal;
He was unknown, yet a master geographer;
He was a hero of kosen-rufu,
Who practiced as the Buddha taught.

And he was the founder
Of the Soka Gakkai
With its tradition of shakubuku,
The practice of the Lotus Sutra.

He died a martyr to his beliefs
As a towering practitioner of the Mystic Law,
The ultimate law of life
Revealed by Nichiren Daishonin.

In 1928,
At the age of 57,
Our great predecessor Tsunesaburo Makiguchi
Began his selfless struggle to propagate the Law.
Later speaking of his jubilation, he said to his disciples,
"With an inexpressible sense of joy,
I transformed the way I lived my life for almost 60 years!"

At the age of 59,
Our first president Mr. Makiguchi
Founded the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai —
Society for Value-creating Education.

He stood as firm as a rock,
Defeating countless onslaughts,
In his battle against the treacherous authorities,
And in his struggle against base, evil priests
Who looked down on ordinary people.
He advanced with powerful conviction,
Giving his crimson lifeblood to the struggle.

At times,
His family and followers
Looked at their noble father
beseechingly,
Fearful of possible persecution.

At times
His followers paled at the sight
Of their stern father
Clad in the armor of indescribable suffering.

In his path lay the obstructions of autocratic authorities;
In his path loomed persecutions by the military.
Yet he refused to retreat,
Boldly advancing instead as a lion,
Pressing forward, ever forward.



On Aug. 14–15, more than 50 Northern Ohio Area men's division members and guests celebrated Men's Division Day at the Atwood State Metro Resort Park in north central Ohio. The two-day retreat focused SGI President Ikeda's guidance on the basics of faith, practice, and study; on the third stage of life; and on supporting the youth division's Victory Over Violence campaign.

Many of his disciples wandered lost
In a desert wasteland.
But he alone,
The lion championing lofty beliefs,
Crossing valley after valley,
His glinting gaze focused on the future,
Never ceased in his quest.

In prison,
Having kept his fight for justice alive
Until the final moment of his life,
Having faithfully upheld the banner of peace
And left the mark of his struggle forever in history,
Mr. Makiguchi died
At the age of 73,
Giving his life for his beliefs.

The membership of 3,000
That had followed him
Had been crushed and cast asunder
By the unrelenting religious persecution of the military.
But Mr. Makiguchi's peerless disciple,
Josei Toda,
Whose heart was at one with his own —
A disciple serving his true and eternal mentor —
Shook with rage and wept bitter tears
In his own dark, cramped prison cell,
The news of his mentor's passing
Sending him almost mad with grief.

Driven by sorrow, pain, anger
And a burning desire for vengeance,
Josei Toda began a spiritual odyssey,
Determined to triumph proudly without fail
Over the evil powers
That had caused his beloved mentor,
A great champion of justice,
To die in prison.

Josei Toda was eventually released from prison,
Carrying within him a monumental state of being.
He began an eternal movement to rectify
The insidious and violent abuses of authoritarian power.
It was the bold, new start
Of a war on falsehood and arrogance.

His tireless efforts
Ignited a flame from heart to heart
And comprised a continuous struggle,
Leaving his disciples with his will and testament
To carry on his work if he should fall.
He lived each moment of this precious existence
As if it were his last,
Continuing to fight with the indomitable force
Of a charging lion.

It is already more than 40 years
Since the great Josei Toda,
Passed from our midst
Like the ebbing tide.
Convinced of life's eternity,
We comrades of like mind who were his disciples
Resolved to carry on his work without fail.
I, as befitting a direct disciple,
Stood in the vanguard amid the gathering storm,
Many disciples in turn following my lead.

Both first president Makiguchi
And my mentor, President Toda,
Would have been members
Of what is today
Our proud men's division.

They had no crown, no fame.
Enduring criticism and abuse,
They pressed on,
From one struggle of the Law to another,
In complete accord with the teachings
Of Nichiren Daishonin.

My mentor Josei Toda
Often used to say:
"Let cowards depart!
Let deserters leave!
Let critics say what they will!"

The burning entity of our beings
Is directly linked to the Daishonin
And to the spirit of kosen-rufu.

We have tears of compassion
And the strength of the noonday sun.
In dark times of hardship, too,
We have beautiful and noble hearts.
We are embraced in the greatest treasure
of the universe,
Faith.

Both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda cried
out:
“Come, come and join us, heroic youth!
Youth who will advance intrepidly into
the storm!
Disciples who will not weep at ap-
proaching persecution,
But who will fight on with composure!
Youth who will continue the glorious
advance
To the infinite ends of the earth!”

No one can help but be awed by
The solemn life-to-life bond
Of mentor and disciple,
The highest of all human bonds.
Traitors will suffer inevitable defeat
and disappear;
Cowards will unquestionably incur
negative effects.

Celebrating with magnificent music,
The heavenly deities throughout three
existences
Will protect this noble march of
mentor and disciple.
Those who are jealous of, and who
criticize and attack,
Our procession of kosen-rufu, of
mentor and disciple,
Are of zero significance.

Joyous is our song of glory!
Exuberant is the music that fills our
life!
We walk in this garden of our eternal
destiny —
How admirable is our way of life!

The hearts of all who do so
Enjoy the heavens' eternal felicitations
Which encompass all things—
Stars, moon, forests and clouds.
This path is true!
It is the path of the self's true mission—
A path without regrets!

Poet and fighter Victor Hugo sang,
“Life is a voyage!”
Proclaiming himself an invincible lion,
He kept moving forward vigorously,
without ceasing,
Pushing back the angry, surging waves
That threatened to engulf him!

He lived a regal drama,
Surmounting all persecutions
And plots of exile.
He cried:
“Thunder, roar as you will!
For I'll roar back even louder!”

Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai,
Who dedicated his life to revolution
And to the construction of a new China,
Maintained,
“Victory cannot be achieved

By sitting and waiting for it to happen;
It must be won through struggle.”
His heart remained ever youthful
Regardless of his advancing years;
He always stood at the head of the
struggle,
Becoming the driving force for victory.

We who are advancing kosen-rufu,
The noblest of all humanity's
endeavors,
Must never be afraid!
Must never be defeated!

If we cease in our efforts,
The Daishonin would sorrow
And humankind would be destroyed by
barbarism.
We would fall under the pall of eternal
darkness,
Set adrift amid interminable suffering
And an unending cycle of misery.

Nichiren Daishonin writes:
“Now Nichiren and his followers
Who invoke Nam-myoho-renge-kyo
Are like a great wind blowing.”
“Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar
of a lion.”
What supremely confident words
these are!

The fainthearted may despair;
The weak-willed may flee.

But we will write a noble history of
life,
Day after day, year after year,
Our hearts—yours and mine—burning
ever brightly,
As we pursue the journey of life across
eternity,
Laughing aloud at the world's frenzied
criticisms,
Seeing, appreciating and extolling
All that is most beautiful in this world,
In this age of the Latter Day of the Law,
Which is ruled by a dark destiny.

Sharing heart-to-heart ties
With so many precious, treasured
friends,
How joyful and boisterous will be our
lives,
Even after death, and across the three
existences!

What an exquisite and indestructible
Achievement of honor it is
To share this voyage of life with
comrades,
Together celebrating our victory,
Bathed in the moon's beautiful light!

How sad and vain are the lives
Of those left behind!
The Daishonin writes,
“The thoughtless are no more than
animals.”
Do not become alienated from the
harmonious community
Of believers dedicated to kosen-rufu
And fall into the hell of loneliness!
Solitude may seem free of
constraints,
But it is like a shattered spirit
That has lost its center.

The Gosho states,
“Buddhism primarily concerns itself

FROM SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

New Guidelines for Top Men's Leaders

- Become a master of the art of achieving victory.
- Become a man of courageous, valiant devotion.
- Become a man who eternally upholds mentor and disciple.
- Become a man of eternity, happiness, identity and purity.
- Become a man of compassion and affection.
- Become a man of courtesy and kindness.
- Become a man who refutes wrong and reveals right.
- Become a leader of the people.

With victory or defeat.”
The Daishonin's great persecutions
For the sake of Buddhism
All arose as a result of false
accusations!
The human heart can be frightening,
Sinister and dark.
The persecution of followers like Shijo
Kingo
Was also the work of treacherous
colleagues.

Why did the priesthood decline?
Because of its arrogance and envy!
Because of its laziness and negligence!
Because of its idleness and chatter!
Because of its smugness and conceit!
Because of its greed and ignorance!
Because of its slander and lies!
Because of its destroying the harmo-
nious unity of believers!

Why did the Gakkai develop?
Because of our selfless dedication!
Because of our unceasing
devotion!
Because of our treasuring the Law more
highly than our own lives!
Because of our brave and diligent
exertion!
Because of our perseverance and
fortitude!
Because of our spirit of oneness of
mentor and disciple!
Because of our unity of itai doshin —
many in body, one in mind!

My friends in the men's division,
It is vital that you win in society
And in the workplace,
That you form bonds of trust and
friendship with many others,
That you be a citadel that provides a
happy haven for your family,
And that, with vigorous good health,
You triumph in the arduous struggles of
daily life!

Your life, your being,
Is yours for all time—past, present and
future.
Thus everything depends on
How you forge yourself,
How you improve yourself,
How you live a happy life—
This is the aim of human revolution.

Buddhism expounds the law of cause
and effect,
Enabling us to transform our lives

throughout eternity.
Buddhism keenly elucidates
The essence of this causal law of life.
This law is strict, it says,
Operating across the three thousand
realms
In a single life-moment.
Buddhism surpasses all other
philosophies
In clarifying the fundamental reality of
life.

The Law does not exist outside our own
lives.
The law of cause and effect
Is the reality of all phenomena in the
universe.
Cause and effect exist simultaneously!
We are swept along by the inexorable
flow of time
That comprises causes and effects in
each moment.

We must know
That there is a profound connection
Between good and evil,
Happiness and unhappiness,
Hell and Buddhahood.

My dear friends, my comrades!
May you strive for good health and
longevity!
For that is the first step to happiness and
victory.

Be big-hearted!
Be deep-hearted!
Be warm-hearted!
Be strong-hearted!
There you will find the banner of
victory
Of Buddhist practice.

Wherever you go,
Be a pillar of strength who brings peace
of mind to all!
Be a person of magnanimous character
who inspires hope!

Become a champion of humanism,
Who makes the place where you are
now
Shine as the Treasure Tower!

March 26, 1999

Daisaku Ikeda
World Poet Laureate

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'EARLY SPRING'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 13-14

Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells the European members, 'Each of you is the sun, bringing the spring of happiness and peace to your family, your community, your workplace and the society in which you live.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's gentle jesting gradually relaxed the members gathered for the meeting. He sat down and, smiling warmly at those present, began to speak: "We packed lots of gifts for you before we left Japan, but Vice General Director Jujo thought they were too heavy to carry all the way to Europe, so he gave them all away in the United States.

"When I asked him what we were going to give our European members, he said we could buy things in Europe for you. But people living in France aren't going to be that excited about receiving a present from France, are they? I knew this would happen, so I put aside some medals, prayer-bead cloths and other items from Japan, and later I will give them to you.

"Surrounded by leaders like this, I'm sure you can see that my troubles are never-ending!" The members all laughed at Shin'ichi's wry humor, and the atmosphere changed completely.

"I want to talk with you today," he continued, "as if we were all conversing over coffee in a café in Montmartre.

"My first visit to Europe was in October 1961. At the time,

there were only about 10 member households in all of Europe. I remember the leaders accompanying me expressing their concern and asking me if I thought our membership here would ever grow. But in the year and three months since then, we have made steady advances in propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in a number of European countries. The foundation for future growth has been firmly established, and this is the product of your efforts, the fruit of your brave struggles.

"In light of this progress, I have decided to establish a Europe General Chapter. All in favor?" Everyone raised his or her hands.

Shin'ichi continued, "I want to ask Eiji Kawasaki, who has been our European contact up to now, to head the general chapter."

He then proceeded to introduce the young men's and young women's division leaders for all of Europe, as well as the leaders of Germany Chapter, appointments that already had been announced in West Germany.

Next he announced the establishment of Paris Chapter and the names of those leaders. Eiji Kawasaki's wife, Yoshie,



was named leader of the chapter, which would include three districts: Montmartre, Champs Elysées and Normandy.

He also announced the establishment of a new district in Norway, with Koji Hashimoto as the district leader and his wife, Keiko, as district women's division leader.

After President Yamamoto announced the formation of Europe General Chapter and Paris Chapter and the new leadership appointments, Vice General Director Eisuke Akizuki shared the results of the Study Department exams.

Following was a Q-and-A session with Shin'ichi, moderated by Kawasaki. Questions

came in a steady stream, topics including Buddhist concepts such as the three assemblies in two places from the Lotus Sutra, and how best to proceed with Gakkai activities.

Winding up the session, Shin'ichi said: "Today we have vice general directors and directors from Japan with us, so why don't you all break up into groups so that you'll have a chance to talk with them at length? I hope you won't hesitate to take this opportunity to ask any further questions you may have or discuss any problems or concerns that are on your mind.

"I have just come from the United States. Traveling around there and seeing the tremendous growth of our organization and the benefit enjoyed by our members in the two short years since my last visit, I felt that spring had come to the United States. And now, seeing your enthusiastic faces, I have a profound sense that spring has finally arrived in Europe, too.

"It snowed this morning, but now the sun is shining. It feels like early spring. Wherever the sun shines, all is bathed in the light of hope. Flowers of happiness bloom in profusion.

"Where does this sunshine that announces the arrival of spring come from? Your hearts.

"Each of you is the sun, bringing the spring of happiness and peace to your family, your community, your workplace and the

society in which you live.

"I firmly believe that as long as that sun shines, the snows of the East-West Cold War will eventually melt away. Let me close by wishing all of you, brilliant suns without exception, boundless success."

The members then divided into groups, each headed by one of the leaders who came with Shin'ichi, to participate in informal discussions. Just as everyone was rising to reorganize the seating, there was a sudden loud crash. One member tripped on her chair and fell, knocking the chair over and breaking it. All of the hotel furnishings were quite luxurious and of top quality. The woman who had tripped went as white as a sheet. She looked extremely upset and anxious.

Shin'ichi flew to her side. "Are you hurt?" he asked.

"No, I'm fine," she replied.

"That's good," said Shin'ichi.

"But the chair!" protested the member.

"Don't worry about the chair. Your safety is all that matters. We can always buy another chair, so there's nothing to worry about."

Shin'ichi smiled, and the woman looked relieved.

Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA



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

EXPERIENCE — DEANNA PINO, NEW YORK CITY

Destined To Chant

The day I met this practice was also the darkest day of my life. I had just stepped off the plane to meet my mother, Betty Santoro, for the first time in 18 years. I was experiencing unbelievable emotional distress and felt like a time bomb ready to go off. It was all so strange. I felt high as a kite, and my adrenaline was pumping. I hadn't hugged my mom since I was 6. Part of me wanted to feel complete the moment we hugged; perhaps my mother could answer some questions and fill the empty void in my heart. But that's not what happened. I was desperately trying to keep it together, but inside I was falling apart.

As I hugged my mother, we both knew something was terribly wrong. My behavior was very odd; I didn't recognize myself. My palms were sweating. I started to hallucinate and became paranoid. My mother knew that I was in trouble. She calmly sat me down on the couch and asked me to repeat these strange but familiar words — Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — and thus my journey began.

The next day I was worse. I woke up in such a state that while eating breakfast I picked up my mother and threw her against the wall. The hallucinations were bad, the voices in my head would not stop, my eyes were dilated and I was foaming at the mouth. I had no idea what was happening. I was out of control and ran out of the house, and was finally arrested for disturbing the peace.

The next day I was taken to the Martin Luther King Mental Facility in Los Angeles. I had suffered an acute psychotic break caused by years of accumulated emotional and sexual abuse by my father.

When I was 6, my father visited me at school and asked if I wanted to go for ice cream. I was so happy to see him since my parents' divorce was taking its toll. I smiled, put my hand in his and joyfully walked away. In the blink of an eye my whole life changed. We were on a plane to Canada to get our passports and then off to Europe. For two-and-a-half years, we traveled from country to country, always on the go. I had no idea if I would ever see my mother again.

When my father thought it was safe to return to the States,

we landed in Boston, his birthplace. We moved from state to state until finally, when I was 10, we settled in Massachusetts, where I stayed until my early 20s.

When I was 12, my mother found us, and I went through a series of custody battles. I met my mother for the first time in six years; however I was carefully watched by my father and his lawyers.

I was never allowed to be myself with her. Deep down, all I wanted was to hug my mother and be with her. By this time, my father had subtly brainwashed me into believing that his love was special and that no one could ever love me like him. He convinced me that my mother wasn't capable of loving me. I was his possession, his special girl. There was no chance for my mother and I to develop any type of relationship. Looking back, it's shocking that the courts decided that my father should have sole custody.

At 24, I graduated from college in Boston and moved to New York City to pursue a career in theater—why I needed more drama in my life I'll never know. I was finally on my own, alone with my thoughts. My father's lies and deceit began to reveal themselves, and for the first time I realized that I had been kidnapped. Being away from him allowed deep memories to surface—memories of sexual abuse—and the pain and suffering of my life became very real. This period was very difficult. My life was changing, and I felt that I needed my mother.

I strongly believe that without the power of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, my life would not be what it is today. I am living proof of endless obstacles that have turned into positive lightness. Somehow, I knew throughout my whole life I would be protected. When I was 15, I received this strange newspaper called the *World Tribune* through the mail; I didn't know what to make of it and often threw it away. I later found out my mother had secretly subscribed for me, in hopes that I would read an article.

Growing up I was always spiritual. I feel that I was destined to meet the Gohonzon. When I later found out my mother had been on a chanting campaign six months before we were reunited, it all suddenly became clear to me. As I was fly-



Deanna with her dog, Jack, in Manhattan.

ing out to see her, I knew I was changing something powerful between us. I am convinced that because of my mother's chanting, I was protected and that we are together again to help others through our experience.

As I lay in that hospital, going over the events of my life, I knew somehow that the connection between my saying Nam-myoho-renge-kyo that one time, while sitting on my mom's couch, had inspired me to want to live and tell my story. The doctors were amazed that I didn't need drugs to keep me sane and how quickly I recovered from this traumatic event. Most people never achieve emotional stability once they experience a breakdown, but somehow I made it through. There was too much happening to call all of this a coincidence. I knew my mother had given me a tool to help me through the rest of my life.

I can't say that I took to chanting right away; chanting was something my mother did, but I chanted on and off for two years and noticed I was getting great benefits. I went from being penniless to having a

good job, a nice apartment, a great therapist, a husband, etc. More than that, chanting was stabilizing me, keeping me emotionally sane. My mood swings and depression were lessening, and I had unbelievable strength and courage to fight for what had been taken away—my freedom.

On Sept. 20, 1994, I received the Gohonzon and have been thankful ever since. This is not an easy practice; there have been moments when I get scared, when it's hard to make the decision to continue for my happiness. Last year, when I attended a youth division meeting, I was so inspired by the experiences. I made a deep and real commitment that I, too, deserved what they had — unshakable happiness and the right to be my true self. This has been an ongoing struggle for me, to know that I deserve to be happy.

I've come a long way and have further to go, but like the lotus flower sitting in muddy water, it takes courage to face your life. One of my favorite passages comes from *Women Who Run With the Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estes: "This

is how to clear the polluted river. If you're scared, scared to fail, I say begin already, fail if you must, pick yourself up, start again. If you fail again, you fail. So what? Begin again. It is not the failure that holds us back but the reluctance to begin over again that causes us to stagnate.... It is better if you meet it head-on, feel it, and get it over with, than to keep using it to avoid cleaning up the river."

What's important to recognize in my Buddhist practice is that chanting hasn't changed me into this everything-is-wonderful-because-I-chant-person. Instead, it's given me the courage and the strength to face my obstacles—the demons in my everyday life. The realization that, while I had no control over my childhood, from this moment forward, I take responsibility for myself and my actions—that can be the greatest empowerment. This is not to say that I don't have my moments of doubt about this practice. But deep down, I know that if I keep shining my "mirror," I will find what I've been looking for. WTP

My Awakening

PERSPECTIVE

By GINA JONES
RIVERSIDE, CALIF.



Iris again. In my heart I knew she'd do anything for me, and I was desperate for a place to live.

Soon after I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. After attending a meeting with me, Iris accompanied me to receive a Gohonzon so I could begin my practice and we enshrined it in her home.

I didn't stay with Iris long. My contact with Iris was as limited as I could get away with—a phone call every six months or so.

Fast-forward another four years. Iris had a stroke and was placed in a nursing home. I visited her, reluctantly. My feelings hadn't changed. Only she had changed—she couldn't walk and her speech was thick

and slow.

She's been in bed now for nearly 12 years. Admittedly, my visits with her throughout the years have been obligatory in nature. I knew it brought her some level of happiness to see me; it seemed the right thing to do.

Early this year I began a campaign to enhance my leadership abilities within the SGI, and to deepen my ability to care for and encourage the members with whom I communicate. I faced a variety of challenges; as many of them had serious problems, yet were not terribly motivated to challenge their lives—some were reluctant to practice Buddhism at all. I didn't really know how to "care" for these members.

For nearly a year after I took leadership responsibilities, I simply made excuses to myself: "Well, they're not interested in practicing" or "I can't change them." In reality, I simply wasn't rising to the challenge before me. But something clicked

and changed early this year; I started chanting for them—serious daimoku, not obligatory. The results have been incredible. In the past six months, one by one, they have been finding joy in their Buddhist practice, begun to make goals and have overcome serious difficulties.

So who should pop up in my mind as I am chanting one morning? Grandma Iris. I realized that I needed to go visit her. When I arrived, two nurses were changing her sheets. She was screaming at them. I'll leave out the expletives, but it was an unsettling scene.

As I entered the room, my eyes met Iris', which were glazed over. I looked deep into them. "Not feeling too well, huh?" I asked her. She murmured phrases of torment and anguish. Strange, this woman who brought me nightmares, whom I avoided for years out of disgust and contempt for her life...I felt deep compassion for her at this moment.

I grasped her hand. She clenched her fingers around

mine. I began to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo into her ear. I pulled back my face and continued chanting, gazing into her eyes, as she tried to remember who I was. I stroked her head, continuing to chant. I stopped, and in unison with me, she said, "I love you." I whispered some more things to her, and continued to chant a while longer. Then I told her I had to go. She smiled at me and said good-bye.

It occurred to me later that there is an obvious correlation between my stretching to care for members, and my ability to transcend my own feelings and care for Iris. I've learned not to underestimate others, the power of daimoku, or myself and my ability to care and have a positive impact. Human revolution or inner change is such a gradual process. And sometimes it seems that progress is at a snail's pace. But over time, I think it's the small encounters like these—the brief moments of significance—that make for a meaningful existence in the end. ❧

FROM WEST SIDE, I

Five trees painted gold created the "Trees of Dreams." Each tree was laden with thousands of paper leaves containing original compositions with the children's dreams for the future. Three of the children read their dreams during the program.

The goal of the event was to share the precious dreams and talents of the Waianae Coast's youth with the people of Hawaii, and, more importantly, to instill a sense of pride and hope for the future in these young people and their community. The collective dream is for a community that is drug free, abuse free and trash free.

To that end, this will be the first of what the community intends as an annual event.

The Trees of Dreams are currently on display at the Waianae Library, the site of the week-long event's culmination.

On Friday, Aug. 27, world-renown sumo wrestler Konishiki, who hails from the West Side, viewed the Trees of Dreams. Since his retirement, Konishiki has dedicated himself to the enrichment of children, and he donated \$5,000 to the festival for youth programs and schools in the area. He expressed his happiness that so many community groups became involved with the same target of helping and encouraging youth.

Konishiki emphasized the importance of education and working to change the Waianae Coast's image. The leeward coast of Oahu often receives negative press, and this event showed a positive side of the young people and their families as they united in support of their community's future.

Through the months of preparation, deep friendships were formed across the community, bringing this diverse cross-section together as *ohana*, or family, and bringing to life the true spirit of our theme by creating victory in the community. ❧

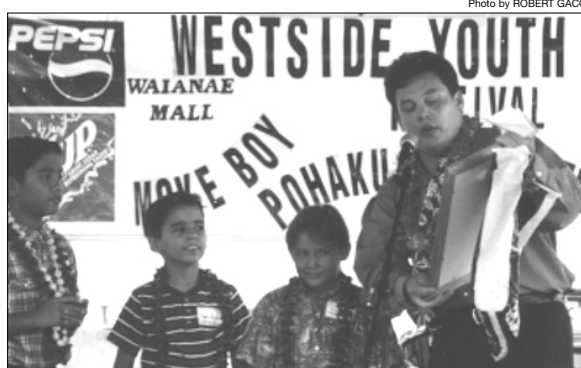


Photo by ROBERT GACO

Proclamation officiating Youth Week in Waianae given by Governor Ben Cayetano and presented by executive director, Office of Community Services Mark Forman to the West Side youth.



Photo by CLARA EDWARDS

Retired sumo wrestler with the West Side Youth Festival Committee and friends at the Waianae Public Library.

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What's Quilting Got To Do With It?

Photos by KATE LLEWELLYN



Orange County Region members work on their quilting project.

I wanted to do something for the university students...and help SGI President Ikeda's dream," says Stacey Minkoff, who lives near the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus. Thus was born a quilting project that encompasses the local SGI-USA Orange County community and ultimately will include members from all over the world.

"I chanted to take President Ikeda's guidance to heart—to act locally and think globally," Minkoff says. "My idea for a quilting group came out of my daimoku. We are going to make quilts for each of the students who enter SUA and for President and Mrs. Ikeda. The goal is for 105 quilts by May 3, 2001."

"I wanted the students to feel welcomed by the community," she continues. "The students are living away from home for the first time [and] can bundle up in homemade quilts."

The Orange County quilting meetings ring of early America, with plenty of room for the traditional sharing and bonding that goes with quilting bees of old. Children play in the background as the women—and a few men—gather around the table to sew.

Quilting is an American art form that dates back to colonial times. The quilting revival of the last quarter century includes a wider artistic expression of forms, from wall hangings to the national Names Project quilt, memorializing those who have died of AIDS.

For the SUA quilts, each 12.5 x 12.5-inch block is made of 100 percent pre-washed cotton materials stitched with ornamental designs that vary from embroidered figures and appliques to cloth patterns sewn together. People who don't know how to quilt have donated materials such as cotton

sheets for backing, or are meeting with the quilting groups to learn the craft.

Each child in the local Boys and Girls Group made one block with fabric paints as one of their group projects, and friends of the SGI-USA from around the world have donated their handiwork as well. As the blocks are finished and signed by the artists, they are pieced together and hand-quilted.

—KATE LLEWELLYN

Greetings From Chicago Men

Photo by CARL JOHNSON



The men's division members in Chicago Region #1, Area #3, at their Commemorative Men's Division General Meeting in August.

—ROBERT PETRIE

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Southwest District — Overland Park, Kans.



Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

Members of Southwest District.

Whether you attend a chanting session, youth division or a district discussion meeting in Southwest District, located in Overland Park, Kans., you will feel spiritually refreshed and a member of SGI-USA's family. Following the geographic reorganization in the Kansas City Area several years ago, a new district was formed with members coming together from different districts and locations in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Initially, no one really knew each other, and the struggle was to get to know each other and to respect each other individually. The determination of the district leaders, Melissa and Gary Fisher, was to make Southwest District the "people's district" and they set their goal to create a family atmosphere during activities.

Melissa shared that as members we have all had different

experiences in SGI-USA and we have brought our successes as "positives" and our failures as "lessons learned" to the district. Based upon SGI President Ikeda's 1990 and recent guidance, as leaders, we do not adhere to an authoritarian leadership style. Our vision for the future is to have leaders and members become closer as friends; to have members take responsibility for activities in their own unique way; and for each member to see the benefits of practicing with each other.

The diversity in our district is very broad with parents, professional and blue collar workers, students, single and married individuals, and kids! Inclusion — not exclusion — because of age, gender, race or lifestyle differences is how we grow together as a district.

We have open dialogue sessions with members deciding how the district should operate; members are encouraged

to ask questions and to find creative ways for carrying out activities; and themes of the district meetings are decided by the needs of the members, not by the leaders. Members are involved in taking responsibility for district activities on a volunteer basis.

Southwest District member Linda Simmons said that the leaders and members wanted to open their lives and hearts to each other in a sincere way and this has made a big difference in how people get along. The basis for creating unity in the district was chanting sessions at group and district levels. When members experienced problems in their daily life, everyone chanted for each others' happiness. Our compassion for each other helped to create a family atmosphere that has brought people together.

— CHERYL UTLEY

Greenville District — Greenville, S.C.

The members of Greenville District in Greenville, S.C. had been encouraged by the efforts of our neighboring districts, particularly Charlotte, N.C., to have open meetings that brought in more guests. So in planning our November Commemorative General Meeting last year, we decided to list our meeting in the local newspaper's weekly church directory.

We had not been this brave—or brazen—before for a number of reasons, including the cost of the ad, the need for a consistent meeting place and the possible attacks from fundamentalists or crank calls. Still, we decided to go for it and placed the ad two weeks before our district meeting last November.

Wow! What a response. For the November meeting and several weeks after, we had over 20 calls from genuinely interested people — and absolutely no crank calls! We had six guests at the general meeting, two of whom became members this past May. Another 10 to 15 guests who couldn't make the November date came to subsequent meetings. And if we didn't have a meeting to suit a guest's schedule, we'd create one.

Of particular note, a student at a local university was very interested in our SGI activities and Buddhist philosophy, so he told his comparative religion professor about our discussion

meetings. Consequently, we've had about 20 students come to meetings for the past nine months as a class assignment.

Also, it just so happened that the local paper was doing a se-

Photo by NANCY Q. GREER



Greenville District young women.

ries of articles on religious tolerance this spring. The reporter came to one of our meetings, and her article about Buddhism brought in even more interested people!

We have had great fun meeting new people and introducing them to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Although a newspaper ad may not be appropriate for every district, the effect of listing our November meeting in the paper brought new life to our activities for months afterwards. It showed us that standing up with a little courage for our Buddhist practice can bring amazing results. I think we'll do it again this November!

— NANCY Q. GREER

Thai Discussion Meeting Held

After returning from the Thai-Cambodian Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center in May 1999, Thai members from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware were determined to form a Thai-language discussion group to help those who don't speak English, better understand the practice, learn the Goshō and participate in a discussion meeting.

We picked the following topics for our first meeting: the Ten Worlds; faith, practice and study; and the difference between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

On Aug. 6-8, 12 members and 7 guests met in Dover, Del., for our first summer conference sponsored by the women's division. We showed videotapes of SGI President Ikeda meeting with the King of Thailand and at the opening ceremonies of the new Thai Community Center.

Next year we hope to see more people attending from along the Eastern Seaboard, maybe even as far west as Texas, and eventually including the Thai members on the West Coast. One major goal is to further promote kosen-rufu in the Thai community in the United States.

— PAM THANEMIT



Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

Thai members hold a discussion meeting in Dover, Del., Aug. 6-8.



Daisaku Ikeda

Antecedentes

Nichiren Daishonin escribió la carta "La ofrenda de un hitoe" en el mes de agosto de 1275, en el Monte Minobu, a la edad de 53 años. Es posible que esta carta haya sido titulada más tarde, porque en ésta el Daishonin explica los beneficios que uno recibe cuando hace ofrendas a un practicante del Sutra del Loto.

No se conoce mucho sobre la identidad de los destinatarios de este gosho, ya que el Daishonin escribe: "A pesar de que todavía no nos conocemos" (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1515), cuando el Daishonin escribió esta carta, no se habían todavía conocido.

En la posdata de esta carta, él también escribe: "Ustedes deben reunirse siempre con la esposa de Toshiro y leer esta carta juntos" (Ib, pág. 1515). De la misma forma el Daishonin alienta a Nichigen-nyo, la esposa de Shijo Kingo: "Yo espero que usted lea esta carta una y otra vez junto con la esposa de Toshiro." (MW-2, pág. 194.-2da. Ed.)

A través de estos fragmentos del gosho "La Ofrenda de un Quimono sin Forrar", podemos ver que ésta fue dirigida a una pareja amiga de la familia de Shijo Kingo en Kamakura, la ciudad de asiento del gobierno shogunato.

Al comienzo de la carta, el Daishonin confirma que ha recibido la ofrenda de un qui-

mono sin forrar a la pareja. Él entonces explica que porque él está dedicado a la propagación del Sutra del Loto y de esta forma haciendo realidad las palabras del Buda, él ha sido odiado y abusado por quienes son ignorantes del Budismo y ha recibido las persecuciones autoritarias del gobierno tal y como ha sido predicho en el sutra. "Si Nichiren no hubiera aparecido en el Japón, las palabras doradas [valiosas] del Buda hubieran sido en vano," declara el Daishonin. (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1514).

El Daishonin propagó la enseñanza del Sutra del Loto, tal y como ésta alienta a sus practicantes hacerlo, y como resultado, él experimentó las persecuciones y sufrimientos profesadas en el sutra, y de esta manera prueba su validez.

Desde la perspectiva, de que la ofrenda de un quimono sin forrar hecha al Daishonin, es una ofrenda hecha al devoto de Sutra del Loto es por lo tanto hecha al sutra mismo y a todos los budas que han despertado a esta realidad. El Daishonin alaba la sinceridad de esta pareja y les asegura que sus acciones los conducirán a la Iluminación [Budeidad]. El concluye su carta diciendo: "En esta existencia, su sincera ofrenda es un tesoro y se convierte en una oración para realizar todo sus deseos. En el momento de su muerte... los conducirá a la tierra pura del Pico de Aguila" (*Gosho Zenshu*, pág. 1315).

Antecedentes por el Dpto. de Estudio de la SGI-USA. Traducido del Living Buddhism septiembre de 1999.

"La ofrenda de un hitoe" (un quimono sin forrar)

El Gosho, compilación de escritos de Nichiren Daishonin, esclarece el medio para que todas las personas manifiesten la iluminación, es una enseñanza eterna y una escritura impregnada de esperanza sin límites. Una persona jamás se estancará, mientras esté estudiando el Gosho y poniendo en práctica sus enseñanzas.

Algunos goshos, como es lógico son de naturaleza muy compleja y exponen aspecto doctrinarios. Uno no necesariamente tiene que comprender la totalidad de los escritos que dejó el Daishonin. Lo importante es nutrir un ferviente deseo de leerlos y de poner la propia vida en contacto con el espíritu del Daishonin, aunque más no sea unos pocos minutos por día.

Cuando se adquiere este afán de conocer, uno puede "anclar" de un modo seguro su vida a la órbita de dicha verdadera y profunda, el camino mediante el cual uno logra manifestar su estado de Buda en esta existencia. Y ese espíritu de búsqueda se convierte en el motor que impulsa el Kosen-rufu.

Para dar satisfacción al pedido de los miembros, durante un año estuve explicando los capítulos "Medios hábiles" y "Duración de la vida de El que Así Llega", segundo y décimo-sexto, del Sutra del Loto. Ahora, mi deseo es iniciar una nueva serie de disertaciones sobre el

'LA OFRENDA DE UN QUIMONO SIN FORRAR'¹

PRIMERA PARTE

Disertación del presidente Ikeda: Aprendamos del Gosho, la eterna enseñanza de Nichiren Daishonin

Gosho, con el propósito de ayudar a los miembros a que se fortalezcan en "los dos caminos de la práctica y el estudio".

Tomaré cada gosho en forma individual; algunos, tal vez requieran más de una entrega. En el caso de escritos más largos, quizá me centre en analizar ciertas partes especiales. Pero, en todos los casos, mi objetivo será esclarecer la filosofía humanística del budismo. Iniciaremos, en dos entregas, el estudio de un gosho llamado "La ofrenda de un hitoe" (Quimono sin forrar).

"He recibido el hitoe que usted generosamente me envió"

Esta carta fue escrita casi un año después de que el Daishonin se retiraría al monte Minobu. Había recibido cierta ofrenda un quimono de parte de una pareja de seguidores a quienes aún no conocía en persona. El quimono en cuestión, sin forrar, era una prenda liviana, apta para usar en temporada estival.

A la pareja le habrá preocupado la difícil situación que vivía el Daishonin en medio de las montañas. En su ofrenda, se advierte una auténtica ternura; sí, era un obsequio nacido de la sinceridad.

Probablemente el Daishonin haya aprovechado el corto tiempo que se tomó el emisario antes de regresar a su tierra, una vez cumplida su labor, para tomar el pincel y redactar una carta de agradecimiento. Ese

texto es el que hoy estudiaremos.

Si bien ignoramos el nombre del matrimonio destinatario de la carta, se supone que fueron parientes de la familia Nanjo o bien creyentes oriundo de kamakura. Ya que no conocían personalmente al Daishonin, es probable que no hayan sido figuras muy prominentes entre el grupo de seguidores. Pero, a partir del contenido de la carta, se puede inferir que estaban manteniendo la fe con perseverancia y firmeza.

Lo que más importa son las personas anónimas. La esencia del Budismo resplandece en la labor silenciosa y cotidiana que hacen los creyentes así, par manifestar su fe en el contexto de la vida diaria.

El Daishonin respondió a la sinceridad de esta pareja con palabras de profunda sinceridad; la carta exhibe profusamente esta actitud. Por favor, jamás perdamos de vista la postura del Buda Original.

En cada palabra se transcribe la misericordia del Daishonin, él les asegura que su corazón honesto y sincero sin falta es registrado por todos los budas, y que ambos lograrán manifestar la Budeidad sin falta. Su ofrenda había consistido en un quimono, pero era más que eso; en el obsequio, lo que el Daishonin percibía era el corazón y la mismísima vida de sus seguidores.

No conozco de ninguna otra figura religiosa que haya es-

Véase Gosho pág. II

Gosho de la pág. I

crita cartas de agradecimiento tan consideradas en respuesta a cada ofrenda que le era obsequiada. Casi todas las misivas personales del Daishonin a sus seguidores tenían el fin de expresar gratitud por algún presente recibido.

Las respuestas nacían de su corazón y llegaban directo al corazón del otro. A la sinceridad, respondía con sinceridad mayor aún, y con la velocidad del rayo. Éste fue, también, el proceder de Josei Toda, segundo presidente de la Soka Gakkai. Nuestra organización pudo desarrollarse tanto, precisamente porque, hasta el día de hoy, mantuvimos esta misma postura.

Los seguidores que leían las cartas del Daishonin seguramente se habrán sentido hondamente conmovidos por tanta calidez. A pesar de las tremendas persecuciones que se abatían sobre ellos, no pocos siguieron avanzando junto al Buda sin dejarse inmutar. Y ello se debe a esos vínculos de vida a vida que el Daishonin labró con cada uno de sus seguidores.

Lo mismo se aplica a la SGI. Nuestra organización es poderosa, no por su movimiento estructural, sino porque la sostienen profundos lazos invisibles de corazón a corazón.

Una gran revolución espiritual

"En el pasado, en un país llamado Kirokoku, se solía abandonar a los ancianos. En el Japón de hoy, se hace a un lado al devoto del Sutra del Loto.

Desde el surgimiento de la nación, hubo siete dinastías de deidades terrenales. Entonces, comenzaron los cien reinados de soberanos humanos. Desde el emperador Jimmu, transcurrieron noventa; y, desde que el budismo se introdujo en el país hace más de setecientos años, durante los tiempos del emperador Kimmei [el vigésimo noveno], ya pasaron sesenta reinados.

Durante todos esos años, hubo incontables parricidas, enemigos del emperador, atacantes furtivos de montaña y piratas. Pero nunca supe de alguien que fuese tan odiado como yo, Nichiren, por causa del sutra del Loto. Algunos han sufrido aversión del soberano, mas no del pueblo; otros fueron odiados por el clero, pero no por la población laica; unos fueron blanco del odio de hombres, pero no de las mujeres; algunos han sido aborrecidos por gente ignorante, pero no por los hombres sabios.

Pero a mí me odia más el pueblo regente; los laicos y laicas me detestan más que los monjes y monjas; los sabios me denigran más que el ignorante; los buenos, más que los perversos. Por lo tanto, mi caso no registra precedente alguno. No es probable, tampoco, que alguien vuelva a recibir un trato semejante en las épocas venideras." (Gosho Zenshu, pág. 1514.)

Kirokoku es una región donde se dejaba a los ancianos abandonados a su suerte, para reducir el número de bocas que había que alimentar. Las escrituras budistas hablan de tierras donde era costumbre que se tratara muy mal a los mayores. Cierta sutra narra un episodio en el cual un reino pone fin a esta cruel costumbre: un ministro, aun en violación de las leyes del lugar, decide conservar a su padre anciano en el hogar, secretamente, en lugar de abandonarlo. Tiempo después, el reino es conmovido por una crisis: nadie sabe qué hacer. Y quien salva los dominios de la catástrofe es el anciano padre que vivía en cautiverio. Desde entonces, el regente decide modificar las leyes para que los mayores reciban el respeto que merecen.

Nichiren Daishonin dice que así como ese antiguo país abandonaba a los sabios ancianos, el Japón, estaba desechando al devoto del Sutra del Loto. Ninguna nación puede ser tan necia como la que expulsa a sus hombres sabios, capaces de salvarla del desastre.

La muerte tras las rejas de Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, fundador de la Soka Gakkai, fue el equivalente, en tiempos bélicos, al abandono del devoto del Sutra del Loto que menciona el Gosho. Por lo tanto, Japón adoptó un curso directo hacia la ruina.

Como afirma el Daishonin en ese escrito, nadie había sido tan odiado como él a causa de la fe en el Sutra del Loto. Aunque toda su contienda era para asegurar la felicidad del pueblo, éste le retribuía con hostigamiento. Puede parecer irrazonable, pero ésa suele ser la suerte de todos los que buscan abrir rutas.

"Si la Ley Mística es correcta", le preguntaron una vez al presidente Toda, "¿por qué es tan difícil de propagar?" Y él explicó:

"A la gente le cuesta aceptarla, justamente porque es correcta. Por ejemplo, lo correcto es que los hijos obedezcan a sus padres. ¿Pero es usted, realmente, un ejemplo de consideración hacia los suyos? No es fácil hallar personas que retribuyan a sus padres del modo

más correcto. Todos sabemos lo importante que es estudiar, pero eso no quiere decir que todos estudien con denuedo. Aunque no disponen de dinero como para andar malgastando ¿cuántas personas hay que, utilizan hasta el último centavo en bares y copas? Lo que está enseñando el Daishonin es que cuanto más correcta es una enseñanza, más detractores hallará."

Los hombres no sólo no hacen lo correcto, sino que, además, reaccionan negativa y subjetivamente en contra de las personas justas y rectas. Así es la naturaleza humana.

En especial, las autoridades manchadas por la soberbia no toleran que nadie les haga frente y proclame la verdad en bien de la justicia. Y ello se debe a que se consideran superiores al resto del mundo. Suele ser un principio invariable.

"A raíz de ello, en estos veintitantos años, desde que tenía treinta y dos [cuando el Daishonin proclamó el Budismo] hasta ahora, que cuento cincuenta y cuatro, me expulsaron de templos, me desalojaron de mis sitios de residencia, hostigaron a mis padres y allegados, me atacaron en horas nocturnas, me atacaron en combates armados, me sometieron a innumerables calumnias, me golpearon e hirieron, asesinaron a mis discípulos, y a mí así me decapitaron, además de enviarme dos veces al exilio.

Durante estos más de veinte años, no he conocido una sola hora o instante de paz. Minamoto no Yoritomo, en sus siete años de lucha contra el clan Taira, seguramente habrá tenido algún respiro. Mi contienda supera sin duda la de Minamoto no Yoriyoshi, quien batalló doce años para sofocar la rebelión de Mutsu."

"Durante estos más de veinte años, no he conocido una sola hora o instante de paz", revela el Daishonin. Y todo lo hizo por nosotros. ¿Qué hombre tan generoso en su misericordia! La suya fue una contienda grandiosa por la revolución espiritual, más intensa aún que cualquier otra batalla.

Desde la época en que el Daishonin estableció su enseñanza, a los treinta y dos años, no dejaron de ceimirse sobre él persecuciones del más amargo tenor. Pero, así y todo, nunca dio un solo paso atrás.

Los hostigamientos que menciona en este escrito son sólo una parte de las dificultades a las que se vio sometido. Repasémoslos: fue expulsado del templo seicho-ji [donde recibió su primera instrucción

sacerdotal y donde, también, proclamó su enseñanza por primera vez]; lo obligaron a marcharse de su tierra natal, Awa; atormentaron continuamente sus padres y familiares; lo atacaron en medio de la noche, mientras pernoctaba en una eremita; lo emboscaron por asalto en Komatsubara; echaron a correr los más injuriosos rumores sobre su persona; fue objeto de insultos continuos.

En la persecución de Komatsubara, al Daishonin le partieron el brazo izquierdo, y recibió una herida cortante de espada en la frente, pero a los discípulos que lo acompañaban los mataron durante el enfrentamiento. Cuando Hei no Saemon llegó para arrestarlo, Sho-bo (también conocido como Shofu-bo) lo golpeó en pleno rostro blandiendo el rollo de un sutra como si fuese un garrote. En la persecución de Tatsunokuchi, estuvo a punto de ser decapitado. Y, como si con ello no bastara, lo exiliaron dos veces: a Izu y a la isla de Sado.

El Daishonin siguió de pie con arrojo. "Pero todavía no me he desalentado,"¹³ dice. "Cuando lo supe, me regocijé y dije que hacía largo tiempo que esperaba ese desenlace."¹⁴ "Así y todo, las cosas son tal cual yo esperaba."¹⁵

Aceptó todo eso por el bien del pueblo. El Daishonin sobrellevó cada prueba por nuestro bien. No quiso nada para sí mismo. Si su deseo hubiera sido una existencia plácida, podría haberla tenido. Sabía muy bien que, si proclamaba la verdad, tendría que hacer frente a múltiples persecuciones. Pero, no obstante, tuvo el coraje de ponerse de pie.

En la carta, cuando enuncia la sucesión de hostigamientos, no se advierte la menor nota de amargura o de queja. En cambio, para él constituía un inmenso orgullo haber sido capaz de resistir tamañas persecuciones. Y es en esos rasgos donde uno puede comprobar el latido ferviente de un indomable león rey.

Nosotros somos discípulos de un hombre así; estamos continuando su lucha. Éste es el honor más grande que pueda existir. Pero recibir un puñado de insultos no es nada, comparado con las tremendas adversidades que enfrentó el Daishonin.

El presidente Toda escribió sobre el período de la contienda bélica, cuando los militaristas descerrajaban la opresión más inclemente contra cualquier desidente:

"Eran tan tremendas la sorpresa y la confusión de los creyentes, la perplejidad de las

personas afiliadas al Templo Principal, que uno se sentía incómodo de sólo imaginarlas y movido a la risa cada vez que le tocaba escucharlas. Al presidente Makiguchi, a mí y a todos los miembros que nos acompañaban se nos prohibió peregrinar al Templo Principal; se hablaba de nosotros sin el menor reparo, como si fuésemos enemigos públicos de la nación. Y todo era tan absurdo que, aun cuando reflejaba la realidad de la época, no dejaba de resultar cómico.

También fue patético lo sucedido con los que fueron a la cárcel. Algunos veían derumbarse sus negocios, sufrían por sus familias indefensas ante el acecho de los acreedores o, simplemente, incapaces de procurarse la subsistencia. Y los parientes que estaban del otro lado de la cárcel, al igual que ellos, no tenían la menor idea de cómo enfrentar la situación.

Fue así como las familias tornaron a abandonar la fe y comenzaron a dudar. Esto se debió a que no poseían convicción y a que sólo comprendían parcial y superficialmente las enseñanzas del Daishonin. Uno por uno los que estaban presos fueron abandonando la fe. Eran personas totalmente débiles; no tenían coraje ni fe firme. El proceder demostrado por los que no pudieron reconocer al Daishonin como Buda original fue, de veras, digno de lástima."

Aun en medio de semejantes circunstancias, el señor Toda sentía profunda gratitud hacia su maestro, el presidente Makiguchi, a quien le diría tiempo después, en una ceremonia recordatoria: "Su misericordia fue tan vasta e ilimitada, que no permitió acompañarlo aun hasta el presidio". Esto resume con elocuencia la solemne y magnífica relación de maestro y discípulo que los unió,

Como lo expresa aun este breve Gosho, el Daishonin podía ser, al mismo tiempo, durísimo y severo con las autoridades arrogantes e infinitamente considerado con las personas sinceras. En ambas actitudes debe verse la manifestación de su misericordia y la síntesis del humanismo sublime que caracterizó a Nichiren Daishonin.

NOTAS:
1-Hitoe Sho, escrito en agosto de 1275, cuando el Daishonin tenía cincuenta y cuatro años.
2-Gosho Zenshu, pág. 1514.
3-Los principales escritos de Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, pág. 166.
4-Ib., pág. 175.
5-Ib., pág. 30.

AFP foto/Don Emmert



El comisario de béisbol Bud Selig y el presidente de la junta directiva del Salón de la Fama Edward Stack presenta una placa a Orlando Cepeda durante la ceremonia de ingreso.

LA JUVENTUD DE LA SGI-USA RECIBE CERTIFICADO DE HONOR

A continuación se transcribe un mensaje de la líder de la División Juvenil Femenina, Renu Jiandani:

"Les estamos muy agradecidos por todo el apoyo y los esfuerzos realizados en pro de la Campaña Victoria sobre la Violencia. Gracias a todos sus esfuerzos se ha creado un grandioso empuje, empuje creado por ustedes. Los reportes que hemos recibido han sido maravillosos. ¡Felicitaciones! Acabamos de recibir un certificado emitido por la oficina de la Representante Grace Napolitano de California, para la Campaña Victoria sobre la Violencia. Este certificado fue presentado de manera espontánea por su oficina, luego de que jóvenes residentes en su distrito realizaran una presentación de la Campaña Victoria sobre la Violencia en un centro comunitario local, la cual contó con la presencia de personal perteneciente al staff de la Representante Napolitano. Yo considero que este es sólo el comienzo de una grandiosa campaña. Deseamos compartir estas noticias con todos los miembros, a la vez que los felicitamos por todos los esfuerzos realizados.

Corbyssandy felsenthal



EL MOMENTO TRIUNFAL DE ORLANDO CEPEDA

Comenzando en una niñez marcada por la pobreza hasta llegar a una deslumbrante carrera de 17 años en el béisbol de grandes ligas para luego caer en la prisión y la desgracia, Orlando Cepeda, mejor conocido como el "Baby Bull" ha logrado emerger desde los círculos más bajos del infierno, ascendiendo de nuevo a las alturas, una y otra vez.

Su momento estelar ha sido el ser finalmente admitido al Salón de la Fama del Béisbol en Cooperstown, New York, el 25 de

NOTICIAS-SGI-USA

julio. Cepeda logró coronar su mayor victoria de una manera muy hermosa. Frente a una entusiasmada audiencia de más de 50.000 personas, transmisión en vivo a través de la cadena ESPN y 900 periodistas de todo el mundo, Cepeda, miembro de la SGI-USA desde hace ya quince años, logró sintetizar sus sentimientos al finalizar su discurso de reconocimiento al honor recibido, haciendo un sincero tributo a la SGI y al Presidente Ikeda.

"Hoy quiero decirles, que me siento muy orgulloso de pertenecer a esta maravillosa organización de la SGI, organi-

zación liderada por Daisaku Ikeda, quien me ha ayudado mucho a ser la persona que soy," indicó Cepeda al final de una estruendosa ovación a la audiencia récord que asistió en este caluroso y soleado día de verano. "A través de su orientación y enseñanzas, he aprendido a ser una mejor persona. He aprendido que con la amargura, la ira y la negatividad no se llega a ninguna parte. Gracias a todos mis líderes, quienes me han apoyado en cada paso del camino; y muchas gracias a tí, Sensei."

World Tribune, agosto 13, 1999

NOTICIAS SOKA GAKKAI INTERNACIONAL

SGI

EL PRESIDENTE DE LA SGI Y LA SEÑORA IKEDA RECIBEN HOMENAJE DE UNA CIUDAD BRASILEÑA.

La ciudad de Magé, perteneciente al estado de Río de Janeiro, Brasil, brindó un reconocimiento al presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, mediante un certificado de ciudadanía honoraria; la nominación convierte al señor Ikeda en el primer ciudadano japonés que recibe ese honor de parte de la ciudad brasileña. En la misma oportunidad, la señora Ikeda fue galardonada con un certificado especial de reconocimiento.

UNA CIUDAD BRASILEÑA ESTABLECE EL "DÍA DE LA SOKA GAKKAI"

La ciudad de Curitiba, perteneciente al estado de Paraná, Brasil, resolvió establecer el 3 de Mayo como el "Día de la Soka Gakkai". La ciudad de Curitiba ha rendido un previo homenaje a los sucesivos presidentes de la Soka Gakkai, en reconocimiento a la labor que realizó la SGI para impulsar la paz sobre la base de los principios budistas.

EL PRESIDENTE DE LA SGI SE REÚNE CON EL JEFE DE ESTADO COLOMBIANO

El presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, se reunió el 12 de mayo, en Tokio, con el presidente de Colombia, Andrés Pastrana Arango. Durante su encuentro, el señor Ikeda obsequió al presidente Pastrana con un

poema que había compuesto en su honor, titulado "El amanecer de Colombia - Alborada de la esperanza".

El presidente Ikeda habló sobre lo que el señor Pastrana había afirmado en su discurso de asunción. El señor Ikeda alabó al líder colombiano por actuar de acuerdo con sus principios y agregó que su labor contaba con el apoyo de gente esclarecida de todas partes del mundo

ENCUENTRO ENTRE EL PRESIDENTE DE LA SGI Y EL EX SUBSECRETARIO GENERAL DE LA ONU

El presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, y el ex subsecretario de la ONU, Yasushi Akashi, se reunieron el 25 de junio en el Centro en Memoria del Presidente Makiguchi de Hachioji, Tokio. Ambos mantuvieron un fructífero diálogo sobre los diferentes aspectos de la vertiginosa globalización del mundo actual y sobre la seria cuestión de lograr la paz en medio de un torbellino de incesantes conflictos. La reunión contó también con la presencia del presidente de la Soka Gakkai, Einosuke Akiya.

El señor Akashi se incorporó en las Naciones Unidas en 1957 y desempeñó diversos cargos dentro de la organización, como el de subsecretario general de información pública (1979-1987).

El señor Akashi ha demostrado siempre una profunda comprensión por las actividades en pro de la paz que la SGI lleva a cabo en coincidencia con la labor que realizan las

Naciones Unidas.

El presidente Ikeda puso énfasis en la importancia de la educación y recalcó la necesidad de que las personas experimentaran un cambio en lo más profundo de su vida para alcanzar una paz genuina.

Al observar que las Naciones Unidas habían designado el 2000 el "Año Internacional de la Cultura de la Paz", afirmó que, para establecer esa "cultura de la paz", era imprescindible la acción de un movimiento de no violencia a escala mundial. El señor Akashi se mostró de acuerdo y aseguró que había que transmitir a los jóvenes cuán vital era la paz y qué difícil era generarla y mantenerla.

El líder de la SGI explicó luego que las divisiones juveniles de la SGI-USA habían iniciado una campaña para lograr "la victoria sobre la violencia" en su país.

Tal vez se trate de un movimiento aún pequeño", sostuvo el presidente Ikeda, "sin embargo, partir de un comienzo modesto y crear algo sustancial sobre esa base es el único camino posible". Y citó, al respecto, palabras del Mahatma Gandhi, quien afirmó una vez que si una persona de coraje y de gran visión se ponía de pie, a la vanguardia de un movimiento de no violencia, el "invierno de la desesperación" se convertiría de inmediato en un "verano de esperanza".

Noticias de la SGI, Cortesía del 'SGI Newsletter.'

¡ARDAN DE PASION POR EL KOSEN-RUFU!



Foto por Martin Cohen

A continuación se transcribe el discurso pronunciado por el presidente de la SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, durante la trigésima cuarta reunión para responsables de la Soka Gakkai, realizada en forma conjunta con la cuarta reunión general de la División de Jóvenes de Kansai, en el Auditorio de la Paz de Kyoto, Kyoto, Japón, el 27 de mayo de 1999.)

Bienvenidos! ¡Muchísimas gracias! ¡Vamos a hacer una reunión estu-

Quiero agradecer a todos los que han viajado desde regiones tan alejadas como Chubu, Chugoku y Shikoku, y a los que han venido del exterior, para acompañarnos en este día.

Hoy, 27 de mayo, se conmemora la muerte de Jawaharlal Nehru, primer dignatario de la India emancipada. Falleció en 1964, hace treinta y cinco años. El segundo presidente de la Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda, a menudo decía que quería conocer en persona al señor Nehru, con quien estaba seguro que congeniaría rápidamente. Por desventura, al maestro Toda le fue imposible encontrarse con el primer ministro indio. Sin embargo, de una extraña manera su deseo se concretaría muchos años después, en forma indirecta. Y en esto uno puede apreciar la función precisa e inescrutable que opera en el Budismo. Lo digo porque yo, su discípulo, pude cultivar la amistad del nieto de Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi (ex primer ministro de

la India) y de su familia. Luego de habernos conocido en el Palacio de Huéspedes de Honor sito en Tokio, en 1985, Rajiv Gandhi tuvo el cálido gesto de decir que había conocido a un auténtico japonés. Aun luego de su trágico asesinato, en 1991, seguí conservando la amistad de su viuda, la señora Sonia Gandhi, y de su familia, en especial, de su hija Priyanka.

El primer ministro Nehru visitó el Japón en octubre de 1957, y en esa ocasión también viajó a Kyoto. Las crónicas de su viaje nos permiten saber que lo impactaron la belleza y el diseño de proporción exquisita de los jardines japoneses tradicionales.

Los líderes revolucionarios son invariablemente perseguidos

Durante su juventud, Nehru fue encarcelado por participar en la lucha revolucionaria por transformar el destino de su país. El presidio es el emblema de los verdaderos revolucionarios. Ponerse de pie para luchar en bien de una revolución implica, en cierto modo, exponerse al riesgo de la muerte. La cárcel o la difamación y las críticas insidiosas son parte de lo que debe soportar un revolucionario. Si uno no encuentra persecuciones o ataques es que no está luchando con la suficiente seriedad; se está conformando con el mínimo esfuerzo.

Los niños son adultos

Nehru pasó muchos años

en prisión. [Fue encarcelado en nueve oportunidades y pasó un total de nueve años tras las rejas.] Sin embargo, a pesar de su confinamiento, escribía cartas a su hija Indhira y le enseñaba cómo era el mundo. Creo que esta actitud se relacionaba con el deseo de que su hija llegara a ser una líder de verdadero calibre.

Algunos dirán: "¿Qué puede comprender una niña sobre asuntos que son propios de los adultos?". Pero, en realidad, los niños tienen más madurez que lo que pensamos. Las palabras, cuando vienen cargadas de suprema sinceridad, sin falta despiertan la comprensión y el interés de los pequeños.

Lo mismo se aplica en las familias de los miembros que integran la SGI. Es importante enseñarles a los niños las metas y la historia de la organización, y el significado del kosen-rufu, desde temprana edad.

Para Indira Gandhi, en ese entonces una niña de trece años, el encarcelamiento de su padre fue el catalizador que la llevó a participar en el movimiento emancipador de la India.

[Años después, Indira Gandhi sería la tercera primera ministra de su país independiente, y madre de Rajiv Gandhi.]

Barrer las telarañas de la mente del pueblo

En una carta dirigida a su hija desde el presidio, Nehru escribe: "Debemos barrer de este país la suciedad, la pobreza y el sufrimiento".

El presidente Toda también atesoraba el deseo profundo de eliminar la pobreza y la enfermedad del pueblo de Kansai.

Ambos coincidieron en este punto. El espíritu es el mismo. Vivían pensando de qué manera práctica podían aliviar el sufrimiento del pueblo. Ninguno de los dos recurre a teorías abstractas o a intelectualizaciones. En la misma carta, Nehru prosigue:

"También debemos limpiar, hasta donde nos sea posible, las telarañas de la mente de tantas personas, que les impiden pensar y cooperar en la gran tarea que tenemos por delante. Es una gran obra, y probablemente requiera tiempo. ¡Al menos, démosle un gran impulso!... ¡Inqilab zindabad! ¡Viva la revolución!"

El kosen-rufu también es

una "gran obra". Debemos despejar de la mente de las personas la "telaraña que les impide cooperar", en esta tarea tan digna. "¡Haré lo que sea, por pequeña que sea mi contribución! ¡Daré lo mejor de mí!". Así es el espíritu revolucionario, el espíritu del kosen-rufu. El kosen-rufu es la revolución suprema. En consecuencia, una vida dedicada a esta causa respaldada de nobleza suprema.

Avanzar dinámicamente hacia el nuevo siglo

El siglo XXI ya está frente a nuestros ojos. Ha llegado la hora de que cada miembro de la División de Jóvenes se esfuerce a la vanguardia del movimiento por el kosen-rufu.

Con la conciencia y la convicción de que Kansai es la fuerza motriz de esta grandiosa contienda, por favor construyan, agiten, inflamen de poder la ola dinámica de cambios que pondrá en marcha al siglo desde esta región. Aunque la superficie del océano se vea lisa y mecida por suaves olas, en lo profundo hay corrientes submarinas de potencia y fuerza insospechada, que se extienden a lo ancho y a lo largo. Quisiera que Kyoto y toda la zona de Kansai fueran así. Por favor, sean la orgullosa fuerza combatiente de la Ley Mística, como fueron antaño los shinsengumi, célebre grupo selecto de espadachines. Y avancen con osadía, para guiar a la gente hacia la felicidad y hacia la comprobación de su propio potencial.

Fortaleza en la perseverancia

"Los fuertes perseveran; los que persisten son personas de verdadera fortaleza." Son palabras de Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), famoso académico japonés e íntimo amigo del fundador de la Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.

Las personas que actúan con entereza son poderosas; se caracterizan por su notable personalidad y por su coraje. Al Buda también se lo conoce como "El Que Puede Resistir". En cambio, los débiles y cobardes no pueden soportar la adversidad. Fue lo que ocurrió con muchos que abandonaron nuestra organización. Eran muy hábiles en el arte de dar pretextos y justificarse; siempre daban excusas y ponían mucho cuidado en eludir la dificultad y el trabajo más duro. No estaban

preparados para resistir persecuciones en bien de la Ley y afrontarlas personalmente.

El antiguo filósofo romano Séneca dijo: "Ingrato es quien niega el beneficio recibido; ingrato, quien no lo restituye; pero de todos, el más ingrato es quien lo olvida". Los ingratos no tienen conciencia de lo mucho que deben a los demás; en cambio, sólo buscan recibir más y más; sólo piensan en satisfacer sus propias ambiciones y deseos. Este aspecto de la naturaleza humana existe tanto hoy como siglos atrás, en la antigua Roma.

En mis discursos hablo de muchos temas, para ampliar sus conocimientos y profundizar su comprensión de la realidad. Sepan que el saber acuñado por todos los héroes e intelectuales, del pasado y del presente, resuena profundamente con el Budismo. Por lo tanto, quisiera que aprendieran de ellos todo lo que les fuera posible. Cuando este estudio se combina con el daimoku, se encontrarán transitando por el mismo camino de verdad y justicia que venían estudiando.

Por ejemplo, tomemos el lanzamiento de un cohete. Los cálculos matemáticos pueden ser precisos y correctos hasta la milésima de segundo, pero si la impulsión del motor es débil, el cohete no podrá llegar a la órbita prevista. Para nosotros, el daimoku es lo que brinda el impulso necesario para que nuestra vida se proyecte y se eleve como un cohete.

El pensador norteamericano Emerson dijo: "El que ha volcado íntegramente sus fuerzas en acciones correctas recibe la recompensa más rica, que es la sabiduría." Estas palabras se aplican a todos ustedes.

Cuando dan todo de sí mismos en las actividades de la SGI, naturalmente su empeño concuerda con la sabiduría más elevada. Hacen su revolución humana y acumulan buena fortuna: todo, en suma, beneficia su propia vida.

(Continuará)

單衣抄

池田大作講解

二二七五年(建治元年)八月五十四歲作於身延

拜讀御書的心尊貴無比

這本救濟人類的書——御書，是「永遠的經典」。

御書是充滿「無限希望」的一本書。只要遵循御書去行動，絕可暢行無阻。

當然，也有內容艱深的御書，並非得全部理解不可。重要的是要有「來拜讀御書」、「多了解一點日蓮大聖人的心意」的這份「心」。

這信心的「心」，會使自已走上「一生成佛的軌道」。此份「心」，既可鞏固幸福的軌道，亦可成為步上廣布軌道的動力。我應大家的要求，用一年的時間講解了法華經方便品、壽量品。

現在則要與大家一起學習御書，但願對各位的「行學二道」有所助益。

原則上，一篇御書以一次或分為數次講解，長篇御書則可能只摘取其中一部分，希望藉此一起學習佛法的人性主義。

《本文》

單衣一領送到，敬謝！

《通解》

獲得單衣一件，確實領受。謝謝！

《講義》

這是大聖人入身延山一年多的事。一對未曾謀面的信徒夫婦送來一件「單衣」。單衣是指沒有裡襯的單層衣服。

可能是由於體察到大聖人在山中生活拮据吧！從中可感受其濃厚的人情及真心的供養。

大聖人也許是藉由這對夫婦差遣來的使者，在踏上歸程前的一些許時間，親自執筆書寫謝函，也就是本抄。

真心相報 誠實相應

接獲此篇書信的夫婦姓名不詳，可能是與南條家有關的人，或是住在鎌倉的人。又，由於與大聖人未曾謀面，所以應不是主要門下。但由本抄的內容可知，這對夫婦確實地貫徹了信心。

默默耕耘者纔可貴。在勵行信心即生活當中，佛法的精髓纔能輝耀。大聖人以「誠心」回應了這對夫婦的「真誠」。這份心意，從書信中可以深深感受到，希望大家要體會大聖人的心。

「你們的真心一定會傳達諸天！」、「一定會成佛！」大聖人鼓勵這對夫婦的慈愛，洋溢於書信中。這件單衣，對大聖人而言，不僅是一件衣服，更是象徵門下的內心及生命。像大聖人這般，對門下的供養如此細心書寫謝函的宗教人士，何處可尋？御消息形態的御書，幾乎都是針對門下供養的回禮書信。

以心報答心，以誠實回應誠實。迅雷疾風，這就是大聖人的行動。戶田先生的精神也是如此，創價學會正因為貫徹此精神迄今，才有今日的發展。

拜讀了書信的門下，必定感受到到大聖人的溫暖！在大聖人受大難的時代，仍願與大聖人一起前進的信徒為數不少。這是因為大聖人與門下每一個人之間，「一心相連」之故。

學會也一樣，不是組織主義，因為互結無形的「心的繫絆」，所以強韌。

《本文》

昔、棄老國捨老者，今，日本國捨法華經之行者。夫北國之興，已歷天神七代，地神五代，人王百代。神武天皇已後九代，欽明天皇時，佛法傳來，及今六十年，七百餘年矣。

其間，殺父母者、作朝敵者，山賊海賊，不知其數，然猶未聞，以法華經故，如日蓮之為人，所惡者。或為王惡，不為民惡。或為僧惡，不為俗惡。男惡之，女不惡。或為惡人所惡，不為智人惡。

日蓮之被惡，較之國王乃人民，較之男女乃僧侶，較之惡人乃智人為甚也。較之惡人是善人更為惡我，誠前代之所未聞，料亦後代所必無者乎？

《通解》

從前，有個捨棄老人的國家，稱為棄老國。現在，日本國則是捨棄法華經的行者。

此國興起後，歷經天神七代、地神五代、人王百代。現在則是自神武天皇以來經過九代，從(第二十九代)的欽明天皇的時代開始弘揚佛法後也有六十代，如今已過了七百多年。

在這期間，殺害父母的人、與朝廷為敵的人、山賊、海賊，多得不知其數，但是，像日蓮為法華經而遭致怨憎的人，至今還沒有聽過。(其他的人)或雖被國王憎惡，但不被人民怨恨。或是為僧侶所憎，但不被世俗之人所惡。或是為男人所厭惡，但不被女人唾棄。或是為惡人所憎恨，但不被智者憎惡。

而日蓮受到的憎惡，是人民甚於國王，僧尼甚於(在家的)男女，智者甚於惡人。善者甚於惡人，是前所未聞，料想後代不會再出現這樣的人。

《講義》

「棄老國」是指為了減少人口而捨棄老人的國家。經典上也記載著，以「捨棄年長者」為慣例之國。

經文裡也有敘述廢除這類惡習的小故事。

有位大臣不遵守捨棄老父之國法，私下偷偷奉養。

有一天，當國家面臨危機，束手無策時，卻靠這位被廢除的年邁老父智慧，解救了國難。於是國王修改固有國法，轉而重視老人。

捨棄救國智者而導致亡國

大聖人藉此說示，現今的日本國，就如棄老國捨棄擁有智慧的老人一樣，捨棄法華經的行者。捨棄救國之智者的國家，其惡無比。

牧口先生死在獄中，其因在於二次大戰前的日本政府「捨棄法華經的行者」。這種國家的下場，就是走上「亡國」之路。

如本抄所說，無人像大聖人那樣因法華經遭怨，為使民眾幸福而奮戰，卻反被民眾憎惡。這或許不合乎道理，但先驅者都是一樣的遭遇。

戶田先生曾針對「如果妙法正確，為何不能順利弘揚呢？」此問題回答如下：

「就因為是正確的，大家才往往做不到。孝順父母是正確的事吧！但是你做到了嗎？很難做到吧！用功讀書也是一樣，知易卻行難，有人說：『沒有錢就不該喝酒』但說歸說，仍照喝不誤。諸如此類，日蓮大聖人明示，法越正確，敵人就越多。」

不僅不行正事，還情緒化地嫉妒、排斥正義者，這就是凡夫。尤其是附有魔性的當權者，不容對己直訴「正義」的人。因為他這方程式，從古至今一成不變。

《本文》

是以，自三十二歲至今五十四歲，或被逐出住所，或違親類

受苦，或遭夜襲，或遭會戰，或受惡罵不知其數，或受毆打，或負傷，或弟子被殺，或臨斬首，或二度處流罪。此二十餘年之間，無一日片時之心安。源賴朝與平氏七年間之會戰，非有稍間息之時者耶？源賴朝十二年間之戰鬥，此則超過之。

《通解》

所以，自三十二歲(立宗)之時，至今年五十四歲的二十餘年間，或被趕出寺院，或被逐出住處，或使親人受苦，或遭夜間襲擊，或遭會戰，或被惡罵不知其數，或受毆打，或負傷，或弟子被殺，或面臨斬首，或二度被處以流罪。

這二十餘年之間，沒有一日片刻心安，源賴朝與平氏交戰七年來，況有休兵之時，源賴義十二年間，為平定陸奧的叛亂而奮戰，這些，怎能更甚於我呢？

《講義》

以大難自勵為精神革命搏鬥

「此二十餘年之間，無一日片時之心安」——這也是為了我們，何其可貴！

這是比任何的會戰還激烈的「精神革命戰鬥」。自三十二歲立宗以來，大難就如雨般紛紛至。儘管如此，大聖人一步也不退卻。

若將大聖人在本抄中，所述諸難的一部分具體記述，則內容如下：

——被趕出清澄寺，被逐出故鄉安房，牽連雙親，親戚受苦，草庵遭夜襲，在小松原被襲擊。謠言四起，遭受惡罵不知其數。在小松原法難中，左腕骨折，額頭被刀割傷，弟子也戰死了。被平左衛門尉逮捕時，遭少輔房以經卷毆打，龍口法難面臨斬首，也遭遇伊豆、佐渡兩次的流刑。

儘管如此，大聖人仍說示：「未以為惡」(曾公殿御返事)、

「聞此而悅曰：早在所料」(法華行者聖蹟記)、「日蓮早所料及」(佐渡御書)，勇敢地面對。

這全部是為了民眾、為了我們。大聖人從不為己而有所求，大聖人若想過安穩的生活，或許並非難事。他也非常明白，一旦奮起則大難隨之而來。

明知如此，大聖人仍挺身奮起。

大聖人在這封信內雖列舉所遭受的難，卻絲毫沒有任何怨恨或牢騷的字句。反而以大難為豪，表現出師子王毅然決然的精神。我們是大聖人的門下，能參與大聖人的大奮戰，是何等光榮的事。比起大聖人所遭遇的大難，些許的惡罵，實在算不了什麼。

不屈服於強權

親切對待真心的民眾

戶田先生在戰爭中，受軍國主義彈壓時，曾這樣寫道：「那時全體信徒驚恐的樣子，本山慌張不知所措的狀況，日後聽聞，深覺可笑、可恥。宗門禁止牧口、戶田一門登山，全國惡罵我們為國賊，雖有其時代背景，但實在是可笑。」

又被牽連入獄的人也很慘。陸續出現事業破產的人、被債主追逼的人、沒有收入而無法生活的人等，留下的家人也是整日悲歎。

因此，首先家人開始退轉、生疑，這是因為缺乏確信，不了解教學所致。被牽連入獄的人也相繼退轉，真沒志氣。無勇、心弱，且不知大聖人是本佛，實在是可悲。

處在這樣的狀況下，戶田先生謝道：「您(牧口先生)的慈悲廣大，讓我跟隨入牢。」此師徒之情令人肅然！

如這篇御書中短短的一節所顯示，對傲慢的權力者，毫不退縮，對真心的百姓則親切以待。而且，這兩者皆是「慈悲」的表現。此處正表現了日蓮大聖人崇高的人性主義。

FNCC 華語彩虹研修會報導

八月五日下午一場驟雨過後，兩道絢麗的彩虹（其實是兩個同心圓，我們看到的只是地平線上的部份，內環叫虹，外環叫霓）出現在西天，好像在特殊慶典中刻意搭起的七彩拱門。一部巴士載著三十多位會友穿過這彩虹拱門，緩緩駛入研修道場，停在體育館的側門外。會友們一下車就有置身畫中之感。許



▲在景色怡人的湖邊留下金色的回憶。

多人說沒見過這麼大的彩虹。財津婦人部秘書長說，彩虹代表諸天善神在歡迎會友到佛羅里達自然文化中心。她建議將這次的研修命名為彩虹研修會。

第三屆華語研修會在晚餐後正式開始。首先由美華友誼會主席李春禧 (David Li) 致詞歡迎海外幹部及所有與會者。接著由台灣幹部和香港幹部代表致詞，最後由中林副理事長總結。

雖然參加人數遠不及前兩次，但大家的求道精神卻一樣高昂，其中六十歲以上的會友共有十幾位，他們的毅力真是可敬可佩！這也是第一次在夏天舉行研修會，人人都說佛羅里達的夏天又濕又熱，加以地處沼澤區，蚊蟲猖狂。實際上佛羅里達今夏的氣候出奇地溫和。每天下午都有驟雨，但星期六下午大夥兒出遊的時候，卻無滴雨，真是不可思議！

這次的研修會照例有幾位不辭辛苦，千里迢迢遠道前來助陣的台灣及香港的幹部。來自台灣的是北二圈婦人部企劃長李英瑛、中南區副區長廖學昌、中南區副

美國創價學會入會準則

美國創價學會入會準則於日前完成修訂。中央決策委員會於本年六月會議中重新審核會員入會準則，修訂後的準則反映出全美各地組織對入會程序所提供的建議。任何有意成為會員及領取御本尊的人都必須滿足準則所列舉的要件。這些要件涵容日蓮大聖人佛法的基礎「信、行、學」。

1. 表現信奉及實踐大聖人佛法的意向。
2. 已開始學習動行並經常唱題。
3. 已在家中設置戒壇，以便安置御本尊。
4. 已歸屬地區組織，並已參加至少三個月的學會活動。

5. 訂閱「世界聖報」。
6. 已參加「基本佛法講座」。

此外，即將成為會員者還必須作到下列事項，以完成入會審核程序：

- 由會員擔任介紹人。
 - 填寫入會申請表。
 - 由能夠答覆疑問的地區或支部幹部到家中訪問。
 - 將申請表呈交支部會員資格委員會審核。
 - 依時到會館領取御本尊，並安置於自宅的戒壇內。
- 國際創價學會的宗旨是珍惜每一個人。日蓮大聖人的佛法是能讓每一個人都發揮最高潛能佛性的宗教。本著人道主義的原則，尊重每個人的生命尊嚴，創價學會的運動的目的是追求全人類的幸福，實現安樂和平的社會。

婦人部長廖高淑芬，及教宜部長蔡仁舜；香港方面則由副理事長申寶來代表，他們為了會友的成長而不遺餘力的投入是研修會成功的主要因素之一。

第一天（星期五）的課程包括御書講習、宗門問題，和活動與體操交流。三堂課都採小班制由海外的幹部主持。上午學習的御書是「妙法比丘尼御返事」（又名「亡夫追悼御書」），由於內容論及大聖人的法難，主講御書的海外幹部都能適時引入宗門問題，為下午的課程鋪路。因為是小班制，會友們心情比較輕鬆，所以在討論嚴肅的宗門問題時都還時聞笑聲。

傍晚時分，大家在餐廳進餐時，天上又出現一道彩虹。晚餐後，有些人騎著腳踏車，觀賞庭園中各種植物和花卉。有些人在湖邊傍水而坐，或閒聊，或看看不見象徵繁華的霓虹燈，這片優雅安寧的道場，有如「桃花源記」中的一人間仙境。在這樣的環境中研討佛法，可說是法華經「眾生所遊樂」的寫照。



▲中林副理事長高歌他的招牌歌「夜來香」，架勢不錯，欲知他的歌聲如何？請參加明年三月的華語研修會。

驗交流，這或許是最受歡迎的一堂課。每個會友都有發言的機會，分享自己的體驗和心得，來自海外的幹部也轉述他們在國內聽到的震撼人心的體驗。十點下課時，許多人都戀戀不捨地聚集在走廊上講個沒完。

那天晚上發生了一個小意外，大約十一點左右，突然間停電了。研修道場一片漆黑，只見平時不太顯眼的螢火蟲，到處飛來飛去，閃閃爍爍。除了蟲鳴蛙叫之外，整個宇宙彷彿進入聖潔靜謐的境地。

宿舍裡可熱鬧了，大家把門窗都開了，一方面借走廊的燈光照明，一方面透氣，三三兩兩唧唧喳喳，不耐煩地等著重見光明。大約一小時後才恢復供電，大家才關門安寢。

星期六上午研討會的內容是「美國創價學會活動方針」，為了讓會友們徹底了解宗門問題，中林副理事長特別請台灣教宜部長蔡仁舜以一小小時的時間為會友說明宗門問題，並解答任何相關的問題。最後由中林副理事宣佈今年下半年及明年的主要活動：◎今年十月底的中級教學考試；◎十一月的地區總會；◎明年二月由華區自行在各區舉行春節聯歡會；◎明年三月將舉行第四屆FNCC華語研修會；◎明年夏天由各區的華人自行舉行夏季研修會；◎希望藉此機會統計散佈美國各地華語會友的人數。他還表示，明年的研修會將由本地的會友

負責講解御書。

下午是大家出遊的時候，有些人到大沼澤探訪鱷魚，有些人到海邊，大地高高興興地出去，安安全全地回來，沒有任何意外。同樂會也許是大家最期待的。主持人是兩位女子部員，紐約講粵語的黃婉韶 (Helen Wong) 以及洛杉磯講國語的林芝仔 (Cherry Lin)。林芝仔自從到了FNCC後，一直不言不語的，像隻沒嘴的葫蘆。俗語說人不可貌相，這句話用在她身上，最恰當不過了。當晚，她大展才華，令人刮目相看。由於她口齒伶俐，反應靈敏，從開始到結束沒有冷場。參加人數其實只有八十多人，但熱鬧的氣氛讓人會誤以為有一百多人在場。有人笑彎了腰，有人笑岔了氣，也有人笑得兩頰發酸。財津夫人說，前兩次的同樂會她跳一個晚上的舞，這次她整整笑了一個晚上。因為她節目主持得太成功了，李春禧已經預約她當下一次研修會同樂會的主持人。別忘了，明年三月。

中林副理事長在晚會結束時引述池田田先生說，友情的回憶是金色的回憶，人生不會永遠快樂，難免有悲傷的時候。他說：「將來你們寂寞孤獨或遭遇困難的時候，你們會記起在FNCC的日子，那時候友情的回憶就會變成精神的支柱。」

八月八日早晨在領取結業證書後（很巧妙的是FNCC職員為我們準備的紙也是彩虹圖案的），所有的會友都帶著金色的回憶陸續離開FNCC，回到自己的地區，繼續為廣布聖門。

在此要特別一提的是，這次掌廚的是本地的會友，來自舊金山的林貞君 (Jean Smith)，她的助手是喜瑞都的王倩好 (Sally Wang)，她們的菜顯露的不仅仅是她們的廚藝，更重要的是她們的愛心和誠意。衷心感謝她們在那四天中的奉獻。

明年將只有一次的FNCC華語研修會，希望還未參加的會友早作準備。我們明年三月見！

青年要勇於開拓人生大道

SGI池田會長致謝辭

四月十七日，秘魯國立費德里科·比利亞雷亞爾大學教授與池田會長「名譽博士學位」。頒贈典禮在第六屆學生幹部會席上舉行。池田會長的致辭全文如下：

「沒有道路的地方，就自己去開路！」這是輝耀於貴校校名的秘魯有名的比利亞雷亞爾博士永遠的金玉良言。

在這樣開出的道路上，不費力氣地、安逸地、輕浮地跟從。這樣的話就稱不上是青年，這是愚蠢的！燃起希望、正視苦難，以自己的哲學、自己的熱情加上自己的奮戰，開拓前所未有的大道，這才是青年。

自己描繪自己人生的藍圖，同時朝自己既定的目標，一步一步地確實前進，這樣才是真正的青春奮鬥。

可說是貴校原點的比利亞雷亞爾博士，是在十九世紀到廿世紀這段轉換時期，一位在「科學」及「教育」上大放異彩的偉大數學家。

博士出生在非常貧困的家庭，十四歲開始半工半讀，辛苦求學。

原點在他十幾歲的時候。正因在貧窮之中辛勤努力，才能成就偉人。

在最深處的谷底，在看起來最醜的大地開出最美的花朵，栽培出最茁壯的樹木。

文學家吉川英治說過：「年輕時嘗遍美味，生活過得太富裕的

人是不幸的。」

在這種安逸環境下無法成就人，也失去一步步贏得勝利的喜悅。

博士在頭腦、心理、身體飽受折磨的苦鬥中，發現數學上的「比利亞雷亞爾多項式」，有人評價說此成就超過牛頓。

這是博士幾歲的時候呢？在他年僅廿三時，和在場各位幾乎是同年紀。

希望各位也能「發現」什麼，「留」給後世些什麼。

不須被大肆報導，踏實即可，自己知道就可以。

期待各位能向世界宣告「我發現了這個！」「我是這樣走過來的！」「留給後世一些東西。」

不是虛榮、矯飾，報導是「發表的大本營」，很多都是虛構，只有自己的心無法偽裝。

不斷努力所鍛鍊出的年輕生命，能發揮無限的創造力。

而信仰正是創造力的泉源。人類從何處來？又往何處去？現在尚未有人踏向「廿一世紀之道」、「第三個千年之道」。

以嶄新如旭日般般生命及睿智，加上偉大哲學的連帶，將「和平」、「文化」、「教育」此人道主義之道向世界展開的開拓者、建設者，究竟有誰？

移民秘魯一百年

我所尊敬的特爾孔經濟學系主任、貝納維德斯教授、阿爾薩莫拉工業資訊工學系主任。

今天承蒙領導新世紀的貴校授與我榮譽的「名譽博士」學位，深感莫大光榮，萬分感謝！

今年四月，是日本人開始移民貴國屆滿百年。

欣逢此佳節，能迎接在百忙之中遠道而來，代表貴國良知的各位佳賓是我無上的喜悅。

期許與貴國的友誼向下一個百年再出發，我們再次以熱烈的喝采歡迎各位佳賓。

下個月貴國將盛大舉辦移民一百周年紀念典禮。

典禮上，秘魯學生部等約有八百位SGI的青年參與祝賀的特別演出，恭喜各位！

貴大學創設於一九六〇年，是一所「在民眾中誕生」的大學。

那年，我年僅卅二歲就任第三任會長，也是開始向世界活動的一年。

貴大學高舉「創造新人類」的理念，以「學生為根本」的尊貴校風，不斷地培養貫徹人道主義的人才，這也是眾所周知的。

特別作為廿一世紀的大學的使命，貴大學明確的強調，主張「維護民主主義」、「思想的自由與多元性」、「與世界交流」、「與政治、經濟的互動」、「文化的創造及普及」等，這些都是非常了不起的理念。

同時，強調要積極投入自己所居住「地區」的課題，呼籲要重視

與自己切身相關的周邊地區。貴大學更高喊「參與社會、向社會提議以及抗議惡行，是大學不可侵犯的權利」，認為大學不可成為和社會脫節的「象牙塔」。

與惡奮戰是大學的「權利」——貴校此崇高指針，我們深表贊同。

如果大學或學生們失去了一對地區的關心和貢獻，「對邪惡的怒吼」，那麼，國家會失去變革、進步的力量，步入衰亡。日本現今正是如此。

貴校的驕傲在於「扎根於民眾的民眾大學」，充滿著「投入社會最困苦的地方，為民眾而努力」此引以為傲的傳統精神。

完全是為了民眾——創價大學、創價學會也秉持著同樣的精神。

學校的畢業生活躍於政壇、財經界、教育界、醫學界等社會第一陣線。

特別值得稱讚的是，連在偏僻的地方都有貴校出身的醫師、護士、教員、技師等，在各種不同的崗位上貢獻。

聽說有人在秘魯偏僻地方活躍的人們：「你畢業於那所大學？」時，一定會有人驕傲地說：「我是比利亞雷亞爾大學畢業的。」

大學也要貢獻地區

遺憾的是，日本現今正走向衰亡之路。

被稱為傑出人士的人當中，以自我為中心，他人如何都無所謂——這類的壞人也不少。不禁想問道，教育的目的是什麼？一旦利己主義抬頭，社會會變成什麼樣子？

許多有志之士為此而憂心忡忡。

著名的國際政治學權威中西輝教授（京都大學）有由宏大的文明論之視點，敏銳地洞察日本的衰亡與再生。

在其近著《國家何以衰亡？》中，中西教授引用湯因比博士的

歷史哲學說：「例如，即使發生某文明將從地球消失的事態，只要有「種子」留下，此文化必定會復活。即使受到外來勢力的蹂躪，只要有「文明的根」不被消滅，僅管只由一個人的力量，也能讓文明再次蓬勃復興」，我深表贊同。

重要的是「一個人」、「一個人的人間革命」，只要在一個人、真正的革命兒的心中燃起不屈的「火爐」，勝利之火將如「燎原之火」，擴散開來。

對於我在哈佛大學第一次的演講「軟能時代與哲學」，中西教授也是很快給予高度評價的其中一

位。

八年前我所談論的「軟能」，被選為今年的時代要語！

必須走在時代先端！

我曾與卡雷爾伯爵談到「歐洲統合」，現在世界也朝此方向

發展。巴桑喬提出「非洲共和國」及「第二聯合國」等想法，總統深感興趣地點頭。世界分秒不斷地變化著，敏銳地洞察時代、領導時代的青年們，其嶄新的構想、行動力將愈形重要，因此，各位是重要的存在，是「寶中之寶」。

談到湯因比博士，真懷念那近十天對談的時光。

博士說：「我一定要和池田會長見面」，但因博士身體狀況的關係無法前來，由我到英國探訪。

對談從每天早上十點左右開始到傍晚五點結束，下午茶時間，夫人總會為我們準備茶點。博士夫人及內人安靜地在一旁聆聽。

總之，希望各位能閱讀像博士的著作這種「好書」，閱讀不良刊物，只會於己有損。

湯因比博士在一九六五年訪問秘魯時，對其美景讚不絕口：「簡直是世外桃源」。

我也曾訪問秘魯，真是個充滿魅力的國家，無論是自然、人

心，都令人安適恬靜。博士透徹的目光凝視在「古安蒂斯世界的中心地是於何處形成？」也就是說，安蒂斯世界的中核並非位於太平洋沿岸地方的綠洲之間，反而是在承受周圍恐怖外敵威脅之邊境。困難的地區，成就了更偉大的建設。

創造來自挑戰

湯因比博士論其原因，認為與嚴苛的壓迫不斷挑戰、「應戰」的地區，才能喚起成就一大偉業的「活力」。

也就是說，面對考驗、與敵人競爭勝利的過程中，充滿成長、發展、勝利與創造，這是「文明」的定理，「人生」的方程式。

得獨厚的優越環境，有如幻影，如游絲般消失後不留痕跡。沒有任何挑戰的人，無法留下人性見證。

佛法認為，「強敵比夥伴更能完美地鍛鍊人生」，受考驗奮戰的團體會長成、會勝利。若沒有挑戰，將失去緊張感而墮落。

創價學會也是因為與佛敵奮戰，所以堅強。沒有敵人的話就會衰亡。

因此，我期待我所敬愛的學生部各位，在現實社會裡，能本著「儘管過來吧！」，度過「充滿勇氣的青春」。

在湯因比史觀中，其焦點放在「受到逆境嚴重打擊時，能不認輸地奮起的人」因敗北而奮起，比以往更重大的決意，再次開始活動的團體」。

因為這才是真正的。

漫長人生的戰鬥中，當然有時也會遭遇無法想像的艱難。

可是，佛法關鍵是分勝負，日

（文藝下頁）

(文接上頁)

蓮佛法就是一定要戰勝，無論遭遇任何打擊，都不認輸、不放棄的人，最後會贏得勝利。
軟弱的人會失敗，失敗者是悲慘的，無論有任何藉口都是悲慘的。

堅強的人，遇到什麼都是愉快的，不會被打敗，不會崩潰。
不需要苦惱，應該要沈穩地靜待時機，創造時機。切記忍耐、勇敢和智慧。
希望一人也不漏地都能得到「最後勝利」、擔負起「永遠不

滅的創價學會」。

還有，今天不在場的貴校羅德里格斯(Manuel Rodriguez)教授，我聽說這十五年來，他將湯因比博士與我的對談集作為教材授課。
在此藉這個機會表達我的感謝與敬意。

驅逐暴君

一八二一年，達成解放秘魯的大英雄聖馬丁(Jose de San Martin)立刻設立「國民圖書館」，捐贈出自己珍貴的藏書，這是一段有名的史實。

教育才是力量。

「支撐獨立的力量，精神的啟蒙遠比軍隊的力量還要強大」，這是他不動搖的確信。
「精神」的力量、我們的團結，比任何的權力、財力都要強大。
民眾的無知招致恐怖的獨裁、專制支配，身為人道主義領袖的他相當擔心此事。
有心人士警告說，日本已步入國家主義之道。一定要敏銳地看清惡就是惡。
因此，無論如何要全力投注在

使民眾賢明的「教育」。

「宗教」也是一樣的，無法開放「教育」此普遍性層次的宗教，總是會陷入自以為是。因此，切記！學生部各位的活躍是不可或缺的。
在秘魯，留下一段二百年間極盡殘酷的宗教裁判歷史。我參觀過在首都利馬保存著宗教裁判遺跡的博物館。
那悽慘的景象令我戰慄，戴上聖職者面具的邪惡人們，假借宗教之名的裁判，犧牲了估計多達五十多萬人。聖職者瘋狂的嫉妒

心是多麼的可怕。

對創價學會的迫害也全都是由於嫉妒學會的發展。
我們深切地知道，也一定要瞭解這點。
早在十五世紀，印加文明有一段箴言：「嫉妒，會從內部一點一點地腐蝕嫉妒者本身」、「嫉妒心重的人，最後會毀滅自己」，因嫉妒而想要破壞創價學會美好的「民眾連帶」的那夥人，也將會有如此的下場。
秘魯雄壯的國歌中，有一節內容是：「首都利馬守護莊嚴的晉

約，長久以來想彈壓我們的暴君如今已倍感無力。讓我們以嚴正的怒吼將暴君驅逐出去！」
不可放鬆追擊，不可大意，不可忘記要徹底斬斷惡根，堅持正義。

投入言論戰

貴校的校徽上刻有一句名言，「我的話語會培育人類」(My Palabra cultivara a raza)。
以教育的力量，以由本校發起的「言論力量」、「文化力量」，使人類更堅強，更具智慧地向上發展！
進而更寬廣、更深地團結人類吧！——這是多麼崇高、偉大的座右銘啊！
佛法說「聲為佛事」，希望各位的人生能以滿懷確信的「聲音」來散發更多的友人、鄰人。這才是青春、才是信心、才是美好的人生。
趁現在年輕，要徹底進行言論戰，徹底弘教，這將會成為一生之寶。
要擴大「善的團結」來打破社會裡「惡的團結」。
要「擴大正義」、「擴大幸福」來淨化社會「自私的擴大」。
嚴正引領社會前往此正確方向的正是各位，期待在廿一世紀的舞台上，讓「我們得勝了」此勝利的凱歌響徹晴空。
廿五年前的三月，我訪問了美麗的綠色都市利馬。
當時，很榮幸地以民間百姓的身份首次獲頒「特別名譽市民」之稱號。
我在芳名錄上寫下：「從今天起，我要為利馬貢獻心力，從今天起我有這個責任。我的人生，要比任何人更深切地祈望秘魯及利馬能蓬勃發展，永續興隆。」這份決意和行動，至今未曾有絲毫改變。
謹在此承諾，從今日起，我將更加一生持續不斷地祈願拳愛的「我的母校」——貴校無限的繁榮。

折伏

開展生命 累積福德 加州 顧張麗

體驗談

國和兒子住在一起。美國的一切對我都很陌生，尤其是語言和交通。我的脾氣十分暴躁，和兒子、媳婦都處不好，我很痛苦，每次唱題時，眼淚都不由自主地流下來。儘管有這許多問題，我從來不曾懷疑過御本尊的力量。我所克服的每一個問題都變成功德。
一九九四年我取得加州的駕照，對我而言，這是一件了不起的事，因為我生在日據時代，沒受過多少教育，而且一輩子都沒開過車，更何況我那時已年過六十。我兒子認為開車太危險，



▲六十多歲的顧張麗和身旁的鮮花相比，一點都不遜色。

因此千方百計想阻上我。現在，我愛到那兒就到那兒，上學、逛街、參加活動都不必依賴別人。二十年的胃病也好了。
今年五月我接到移民局公民面試的通知，這

可真是大挑戰，因為我連國語都說不來，英文更是一竅不通。連續兩個多月，我每天到成人學校學英文，每天唱題五至六小時。
面試那天，移民局女考官的態度惡劣，我到今天都不知道她到底說了什麼，只記得一句「下次再來。」我非常傷心，也很生氣。我盡了最大的努力，而且唱了一百萬遍題目，竟然落榜！我很懊惱地告訴妹妹，「如果考不過，我就回台灣去。」
妹妹說：「不要懷疑御本尊。如果你唱了強盛的題目後還是沒有通過，御本尊一定為你安排了別的使命，所以妳不要放棄。御本尊會讓妳知道什麼對妳是最好的。」
她還給我兩個挑戰的目標，她說：
第一，妳自己英文不好，不要怪考官。
第二，十二年來妳只為自己唱題，從來沒有折伏過一個人，妳太自私了！這個佛法教導，妳一定要化他才會得到真正的功德。
既然想不出更好的點子，我只好照他的話作。我更用功學英文，也開始找折伏的對象。我祈求御本尊讓我折伏，因為我在美國沒有朋友，我就到健身房(Fitness Spa)折伏那裡的人，結果只有一個人來參加座談會，我好高興。
我妹妹說，折伏是很好的，但不能存著和御本尊「作生意」的心理，那是行不通的！她說，妳必須打從心底以慈悲的心折伏，才會得到真正的功德，我開始打從心底為我折伏的人唱題，因為她摔跤受傷了。
八月四日我又到移民局面試。這一次的考官非常的好，非常慈祥，他問的問題、他要我寫的句子都正好是我會的。我就這樣通過了面試。
面試前兩天，好多會友到家中陪我唱題，我深深感受到他們的熱誠。一三〇〇華語廣播電台說去年有六萬人沒有通過公民面試，我這次能夠通過，真該感謝所有鼓勵我、支持我的會友。
第二天八月五日，我到佛羅里達參加華語研修會。車子到達門口時，大門上兩道拱形的彩虹，好像是為了歡迎我們而特地設立的。
看到來自各地的會友認真地學習佛法，分享他們的體驗，我很感動，尤其是星期六的晚上，大家那麼賣力地表演。
我也很感激台灣幹部專程趕來鼓勵大家，以及池田先生為我們提供了這麼優美的研修道場。
最後，我決意從今後繼續我個人的人間革命，並努力折伏別人，折伏是我們感謝並分享自己得到的功德的最好的方法。想想看，我們多麼幸運！有御本尊守護著我們，任何問題都可以轉化為功德，多少人沒有御本尊，因此不能克服他們的問題，真可憐！
希望大家都能折伏很多人，相信這會幫助我們每一個人開展自己的生命，同時也為別人開拓一條大道，這才是真正的功德！

以上是我的謝辭，謝謝。