



EXPERIENCE:
Screenwriter
Amy Schor Ferris
conquers self-
doubt.
page 3

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

No. 3267

\$2.00

NOVEMBER 5, 1999

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 7 SPEECH—PART 2

Remaining Steadfast in Our Commitment

SGI President Ikeda says that "the main thing is that we ourselves remain steadfast in our commitment to follow our mentor throughout our lives."

The following is part two of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 38th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 7.



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda speaks at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, Oct. 7.

Three hundred and sixty-six years ago, in October 1633, a Japanese Christian died a martyr amid persecution by the ruling authorities. As they tortured him to renounce his faith, he cried out with unbowed pride, "I am Nakaura Julião, and I have seen Rome!"

Fifty-one years before that, in 1582, when he was 12 or 13, Nakaura Julião had set sail from the port of Nagasaki in Kyushu [the southernmost of Japan's four main islands; Christianity was first introduced to Japan there by Jesuit missionaries]. He traveled all the way to Europe as a youth envoy along with three other Japanese boys the same age.

The young envoys, all students of a Jesuit seminary in Kyushu, participated in what is known as the Mission to Europe of 1582, which was the brainchild of Jesuit missionary Father Alessandro Valignano, who accompanied the mission.

In those days, no one in Japan had been to Europe, so no one could tell their compatriots what it was like. The Japanese knew only Japan and its immediate environs. They were preoccupied with rivalries within the tiny country of Japan. Incessant internal warfare and conflict prevailed.

This was the background against which the Jesuit priests stationed in Kyushu decided to dispatch a mission of youthful envoys to Europe. The Jesuits had a completely different perspective from the Japanese.

Widespread support is won through cherishing each person.

One of the objectives of the mission was to make the Japanese aware that there was a bigger world outside their country. By having the young teenage envoys see the big, wide world with their own eyes and become acquainted with its ways and customs, the Jesuits hoped that on their return the youth would awaken and educate the Japanese for a long, long time. The Jesuits probably concluded that this was their only hope of changing Japan.

Other objectives behind the mission were the Jesuit's wish to boost their propagation activities in Japan and to acquaint Eu-

rope with the Japanese to gain greater papal subsidies for the Jesuit society in Japan.

Nakaura and the three other youth sailed first to Macau, India and then all the way to Spain, finally arriving in Italy—the brilliant birthplace of the Renaissance, home of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, and one of the most culturally advanced countries in the world at that time.

The journey to Italy took more than three years, hence the youth were around 16 when they visited Rome.

Speaking of da Vinci, a magnificent statue of this multitalented Renaissance genius, one of humankind's outstanding intellects, will soon adorn the main lobby of the new Central Tower at Soka University, Tokyo.

But I declare that there are none more outstanding than you, the SGI members, who embrace the unsurpassed philosophy of Buddhism and are carrying out activ-

Intermediate Exam Held



Approximately 4,000 members took the SGI-USA Study Department Intermediate-level Exam at 159 locations throughout the country and overseas. Pacific Northwest members (above and below) at the Seattle Culture Center. See page 2 for study impressions.

Photos by DIXON HAMBY



ities in all fields of society. You are da Vincis and Michelangelos of the Mystic Law. I hope that each of you will lead a life of such profound significance.

To return to the story of the four youth envoys, they were feted with great pomp and splendor wherever they went in Europe. Indeed, their trip had momentous import for the world. The young Japanese Christians were a symbol of unity between East and West, and the mission was highly acclaimed not only in Italy but in other parts of Europe.

In Rome, the youth met the aging Pope Gregory XIII, the highest authority in the Catholic Church. The pope is said to have warmly welcomed them and shown them sincere hospitality.

At the time, Nakaura was seriously ill with a high fever. Perhaps fatigue from the long

journey had weakened his constitution. Learning of Nakaura's illness, the pope encouraged him. He also had six of Rome's best physicians brought in to treat the sick Japanese youth. Nakaura was deeply moved by this kindness.

Some historians speculate that the 83-year-old pope already knew that he didn't have much longer to live. And in fact, he died some two weeks after meeting with the youth delegates from Japan. Despite his advanced age and frail health, however, the pope summoned forth his remaining strength and sent messengers each day to ask after Nakaura's condition and convey his prayers for the young man's speedy recovery.

Such love and compassion, I believe, constitute the hallmarks of a

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 4

Gaining Understanding From Study



Tennessee members take the Intermediate-level Exam at their community center in Memphis, Oct. 24.

Christine Allen, Burlingame, Calif.: "I just graduated from college, and I usually study Buddhism before I go to bed. But I almost didn't want to study for this test. I'm sick of having to do specific assignments. I like to read what I want to read. But I think the material was very important and I enjoyed it."

"I liked reading the "Life Span" chapter, especially about *kuon ganjo*, the original moment of life, and *hon' nin-myō*, and how we can always use this to move forward. When we do gongyo, we're in the original moment of life, with no beginning or end."

"Studying about the temple issue helped me by discussing how to talk with temple members, since I tend to get very emotional. I especially liked the part that says it's OK to speak with conviction and to have the courage to refute mistaken ideas, but also to have compassion, and to respect the other person's life."

Aaron Franklin, Everett, Wash.: "Studying for this exam, I gained an understanding of true action and what it means to be a true leader, not just someone who says whatever they want to say. In other words, the true aspect of a leader. Leading people means you have to care about them. I'm now viewing people and leadership differently. True leadership is caring for people's well-being and finding the best way to help them become happy. That also applies to my career as an elementary school teacher. I have more compassion and my actions come from a deeper level of compassion."

S'Omell Richards, Brooklyn, N.Y.: "Preparing for the Intermediate study exam gave me a new perspective on the temple issue. Instead of asking myself, 'What can I do?', I began asking myself 'What must I do?' With

a newly awakened sense of mission, I became motivated to deepen my understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, not only by studying for the exam, but by taking a step further and joining the study department. As I build 'muscles' from an increased understanding of the practice, I feel well 'armed' for meaningful and compassionate dialogue. In general, I am taking action to ensure that the temple issue is freely and openly discussed from the perspective of its deeper meaning for *kosen-rufu*. Thanks to study, I'm not afraid of it anymore."

Sandra Meinke, Honolulu: "By studying together with others, I was able to hear many experiences and it made me more passionate in my pursuit of true happiness. Since studying I have gained more confidence in my practice and have been able to speak to others about our faith and the temple issue."

Joseph Errante, Brooklyn, N.Y.: "What have I gained from recent study of the temple issue? Clarity. The unmasking of decadence and depravity, as cloaked in the robes of Nichiren Shoshu. As an individual, I can confront and muster the determination to overcome and change my own personal forms of weakness and to not cultivate these weaknesses into behaviors. On a societal level, I see more clearly the underlying foundation of evil as it pervades the workings of current social interactions. I, alone, am able to (by studying this issue) contribute to the overall progress and success of society. How? By using the example of Nichiren Shoshu as a model for what essentially must be overcome in our lives before progress can be attained."

Brynda Hintton, Philadelphia: "In studying for the intermediate test, I was given a great

benefit to increase my study and I enjoyed sharing dialogue regarding the now more informed views of the 'Twenty-six Admonitions' and their importance to my practice."

Glyde King, Seattle: "When I first heard that we were studying the temple issue for this exam, I rolled my eyes at having to study it yet again. But after going through the text, it resonated with my life in new ways — with a new light. I now appreciate the opportunity to deepen my understanding and look at it yet again. Studying has helped me be more sensitive."

Ahmed Shaheed, Napa Valley, Calif.: "We studied in different people's homes, and that interaction with other members was very enriching to me. It took discipline for me to study, and to be committed. We had study group meetings every Monday. Studying for the Intermediate Exam was much more intense than studying for the entrance exam."

"I have a car now because of the persistence I learned as a result of studying. It was a breakthrough. Before this I would make a plan, then in a couple of hours forget all about it. Being from Guam, I usually put things off as long as possible. Because of the persistence in my study, I was also persistent enough to save money toward a car."

"I also learned about communicating Buddhism to other people, and about the kind of shakubuku I want to do. Introducing Buddhism means not trying to force it on them. My friend does see the actual proof in my life, especially after being able to buy a car."

Rita Marcelli, Miami Beach, Fla.: "I probably would not have studied about the priesthood issue if it was not a requirement for the Intermediate Exam. I usually avoid dealing with the issue since it is unpleasant. However, to prepare I had to not only deal with it, but study it in-depth."

"What I gained from my study was an understanding about how to deal with authority. It also taught me about the SGI's courage to defy the appearance of power and authority in the form of the high priest. We now know that the priesthood is not the intermediary between us and our higher power. We have now been shown this equality even within the organization of the SGI. It has empowered us in our dealings with leaders and other members."

Where Buddhist Study Comes Into Play

The following is an excerpt from the "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" essay series by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda.

First, Buddhist study deepens faith. I will never forget Mr. Toda once saying, with deep regret, that the reason the majority of his fellow members abandoned their faith when pressured by the military authorities during World War II was that they hadn't gained a solid grounding in the Daishonin's teachings.

"Without study," he declared, "the members didn't really understand faith. They became frightened and were defeated by persecution. It was very unfortunate. I'm determined that mistake will not be repeated."

Study is a torch that illuminates the path of faith. Even the most subtle, complex onslaughts of negative forces become clear when illuminated in the bright light of Buddhism. Study builds a solid framework for our faith and spurs our human revolution.

Second, study gives impetus to the advance of *kosen-rufu*. The Daishonin's writings set forth the validity of the Daishonin's Buddhism and the method of refuting the erroneous and revealing the true in propagation. They teach us in comprehensive detail the commitment required by those who seek to widely spread the Mystic Law, the qualities necessary of Bud-

dhist leaders and the key to fostering capable successors. To study the Daishonin's writings is to come into contact with his spirit. It is to receive supreme encouragement and guidance directly from the original Buddha on faith and the propagation of Buddhism. Only when we take action in accord with the Daishonin's writings can we say that we have grasped the teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Study without practice is meaningless. A thorough knowledge of Buddhist principles provides us with a source of infinite courage and aids us in realizing our highest human potential.

Third, study is the key to establishing a new humanistic philosophy. Today, we face many extremely serious problems: the threat of nuclear war, ethnic conflict, environmental problems and the collapse of educational systems. People are searching for peace and happiness, but the situation grows ever darker and more confused with each passing day. This is coming from the lack of a philosophy that expounds the true nature of life and its functions.

And this is where Buddhism comes in. Only by returning to such principles as the ultimate dignity of life, compassion, the oneness of body and mind, and the indivisibility of life and its environment can we begin to open the way toward a new humanism. WT

"It also teaches us to promote justice and not just accept what others tell us because they might be in positions of authority. So we must have the courage and the wisdom to break this authoritarian culture in daily life."

Michael Pehmoeller, Denver: "Study of the temple issue for the Intermediate Exam allowed me to realize that the focus is really the happiness of all people. Especially the point that our attitude toward temple members is one of compassion struck me. According to the Gosho, this is one of the most important issues both in terms of understanding correct practice and developing as a human being. WT

The World Tribune
The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

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

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

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper

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

EXPERIENCE — AMY SCHOR FERRIS, DINGMANS FERRY, PA.

Choosing To Honor and Love Myself

Even though you chant and believe in Myoho-rence-kyo, if you think the Law is outside yourself, you are embracing not the Mystic Law but some inferior teaching. (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 3)

For most of my life, feelings of low self-worth and self-doubt have plagued me — not feeling good enough, caring too much what others think, wanting to be accepted. I think for many people, artists in particular, tend to suffer from these issues. Having dropped out of high school when I was 15, I never went to college, and never took any courses in writing. At 19, I learned of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism from a friend. As I began to chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, my desire to write emerged. That was 25 years ago, and I have fulfilled my dream. I have everything I ever wanted. All the externals—a great husband, a great career, great friends, tremendous financial fortune. What I never had was confidence in myself. I had mistaken my determination to win for feelings of self-worth, and about a year ago, I had to face that full force.

I was in Los Angeles where I had been fired from a project. I had been hired to write a film and after handing in the second draft, I was informed that the producers were going to hire someone else to do the remaining draft. I was devastated. I had been working nonstop as a screenwriter for years, and while I had seen projects fall to the wayside, I had never been fired. I was alone in my hotel room and the tears were pouring out of me, along with all the feelings of not being good enough, of not being wanted, and deep feelings of rejection. It took me hours to finally do gongyo.

My fortune is that I have always sought out guidance when I was suffering. I called a senior in faith, someone I respect and trust deeply. I was encouraged to chant to manifest my Buddhahood, that I needed to appreciate and love my own life. If I merely continued to suffer from self-doubt, that in and of itself was slander. This was a turning point in having faith in MYSELF. He asked me what kind of writer I wanted to be — someone who is

swayed by the environment or someone who would have an amazing impact on it.

I've been chanting for close to 25 years and just assumed that because I had been practicing for so long, I would be protected from my own internal demons. Even though doubts would arise, because I was working consistently, I managed to keep them pushed down. I had incredible faith in the Gohonzon — wasn't that enough?

I returned home from L.A., and for a few days I wallowed in the mud. I felt so defeated, and so powerless. Finally I decided to take this guidance to heart. I started chanting to manifest my Buddhahood. That's when the floodgates opened. The more I chanted to manifest my Buddhahood, the worse I felt. Every bit of negativity that I felt about myself poured out.

To my relief, I was offered to write a movie. I chanted to manifest my Buddhahood, and I got a benefit. Not a project I was overjoyed about, but it certainly eased the pain from having been fired. I felt wanted.

Living in the woods in Pennsylvania, I have come to depend on and deeply appreciate my friends in the SGI and on the publications, the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. The minute I receive them, I read them cover to cover. In *Living Buddhism*, I read "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra," which is all about changing our fundamental life-condition. This particular dialogue I read was about the world of Anger. SGI President Ikeda said the world of Anger is the state of trying to win over others rather than ourselves, that anger was filled with desperation. He went on to say "that nothing was more powerful than joy, and that joy was a manifestation of Buddhahood." Joy was not what I was feeling when I chanted to manifest my Buddhahood.

Within 15 minutes of reading this article, I received a phone call from Randy, the executive from Universal who had hired me to write this other project. He had a movie, *Funny Valentines*, in which the script had to be rewritten within two weeks. Normally, when you're hired to do a page-one rewrite, you usually get at least six weeks.

Although I loved the story, the problem was that it needed a tremendous amount of work in



Amy Schor Ferris at home in Dingmans Ferry, Pa.

order for it to become a full-length film. It seemed utterly impossible. I was going out of the country. My husband's film was in the Cannes Film Festival and I would not be able to write while I was gone.

I chanted to have the wisdom to know what to do. I decided to do this project, that it was tremendously important. I promised Randy that he would have a script within two weeks.

While in Paris, every morning and evening I chanted with tremendous appreciation and to write the best script possible. Toward the end of the trip, an overwhelming feeling of self-doubt emerged. I thought, "I can't write this, who am I kidding?" I was going to call Randy from Paris and tell him that he should hire someone else, that I couldn't do it.

Fortunately, I always carry with me copies of the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. After doing evening gongyo, I picked up *Living Buddhism*, the very same one I had read previously. I reread the piece on "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra." This time, I felt as if President Ikeda was speaking directly to me. I had this incredible realization that whenever I have a problem or a desire, I chant out of desperation, in a state of fear. Just as our environment reflects our life-condition, the life-condition with which we pray becomes manifest in the result. I realized how frightened I was of being happy, genuinely happy. To me, feeling happy, feeling joy meant I didn't need anyone to make me feel good about myself, which somehow I equated with being alone. I was afraid if I was happy, I wouldn't be needed. So, of course I didn't dare feel good about myself.

In the article, President Ikeda talks about fundamental dark-

ness. He says that human revolution is a constant battle between the lower worlds and Buddhahood, and that battle determines whether we win or lose. I decided that I needed to seriously chant to manifest my Buddhahood, right there in Paris. I sat down and with every bone in my body, I chanted.

A feeling of greatness, a deep feeling of absolute confidence that had nothing to do with anyone or anything in my environment, emerged. I felt a sense of freedom that took my breath away. I promised myself I would never slander my life again, to believe in myself and to have faith in the power of my life. I was selling myself short, and the environment was reflecting that completely. I promised myself that I would bring into my life the fortune which matched a joyous life-condition.

Having returned from Paris, I started to write the screenplay. Every morning and evening, I chanted with absolute confidence in myself, in my Buddhahood. The joy I felt writing this script was indescribable. I had written it in four days. The director, Randy and another executive, called and told me that the script was exceptional; they couldn't believe what I had accomplished in such a short period of time. The movie was green lit that afternoon. I had won over myself, over the doubt and self-slander and lack of self-worth.

While *Funny Valentines* was being shot, I started a project that I had been hired to do previously. I wrote one draft and everyone loved it but me. I couldn't help thinking that I had taken the job out of fear, out of desperation. I realized that being a writer, being an artist, I had to be true to myself, to create from my heart. I had spent

12 years desperately trying to please the people who had hired me, and now I knew that I had to please myself first and foremost. Because I had transformed my fundamental life-condition, and was now chanting with appreciation and confidence, the most incredible thing happened. I was told that the studio didn't want to make this movie any longer, but they were going to pay me for the remaining drafts that were left on my contract. This was a manifestation of my life-condition. In "On Attaining Buddhahood," the Daishonin says, "If the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land" (MW-1, 4).

In the 25 years that I have practiced, my life has changed in ways that are extraordinary to me. I have experienced a profound change of fortune based on a fierce determination to see actual proof of the power of the Gohonzon. I can say that every single prayer has been answered.

What started off as an experience that showed me what little self-confidence I had was the very experience I needed to transform my life, to believe in my own Buddhahood. Now I am determined to create from that life-condition. My roots are in writing books, and I subsequently finished my second novel, *A Greater Goode*, another manifestation of my Buddhahood.

When doubts arise — and they do — I choose to trust the greatness I feel inside myself. I choose to trust the power inside my life. I choose to trust that I, with all my imperfections, will have an impact on this world as a bodhisattva. Now for me, when I say that I truly love and honor the Gohonzon, I am also saying that I love and honor myself. **WT**

Photo by KEN FERRIS



SGI President Ikeda welcomes Italian soccer superstar Roberto Baggio to Tokyo Soka Junior and Senior High Schools, Oct. 9.

FROM SPEECH, I

genuine cleric. What do you say?

Widespread support is won through cherishing each person. Those who value and treasure them win the support of youth. When leaders put this into action, development follows.

Treacherous individuals are clearly recorded in history to warn future generations.

Thanks to the pope's assistance, Nakaura recovered from his illness, and he and his three companions soon embarked on the long journey back to Japan.

They set sail for Japan in April 1586 and arrived in Nagasaki four years later, in July 1590.

By the time the young envoys set foot back in Japan, eight and a half years had passed, and they were around 21 years old. In their absence, Japan had changed dramatically. The previous ruling warlord, Oda Nobunaga, who had been supportive of Christian missionaries, had died, and his successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was less well disposed toward Christians, was now in power. Oppression of Christianity was on the rise.

The authorities of the day had no conception of freedom of religion.

Oda Nobunaga, who had protected Christianity, died four

months after the youth mission left Japan. For a time, his successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, maintained Nobunaga's policy toward Christians, but after conquering Kyushu in 1587, he issued a decree expelling all missionaries from Japan. This marked the start of the persecutions of Christians in Japan. The youth mission arrived back in Japan three years later. Hideyoshi, who initially thought he might make use of them and their knowledge for expeditions abroad received the youth. But when the youth refused to become his retainers, they were persecuted.

To make a long story short, when Nakaura and his companions returned from abroad, virtually no one lent an ear to the valuable knowledge they had gained or opinions they possessed. On the contrary, these youth, who had been applauded by the European people, were subjected to an endless succession of persecutions in their homeland.

Then, as now, the blinkered worldview of the Japanese made them quick to swagger and look down on others, and rendered them incapable of imagining that a wonderful world could exist outside their realm of knowledge. As ever, the Japanese were sensitive to the trends of the times, but they lacked the sense of self to listen to others' opinions impartially,

without fear of how the authorities might view their doing so. This kind of spiritual climate continues in Japan today.

Of Nakaura's three companions on that voyage, one died at an early age, one was forced to flee from Japan and later died in Macau, while another abandoned his faith and turned traitor.

Here I want to state that the names and evil doings of treacherous individuals are clearly recorded in history. And it is important that this be so, that this might serve as a warning and lesson to future generations.

How sad and angered Nakaura must have been by that comrade who abandoned his faith and betrayed his comrades!

As for Nakaura, he forged ahead with unwavering faith for more than 40 years amid a storm of persecution, staunchly protecting his fellow Christians throughout. He was absolutely determined to keep advancing on his chosen path and never betray his vows.

At age 64, like many Christians before him, he was finally arrested and subjected to hideous torture. He was suspended headfirst in a pit filled with excrement. Holes were bored in his earlobes, so the blood would drip from them a little at a time.

Compared to being burned at the stake or beheaded, death by this means was long drawn out and agonized. It was an un-

speakably cruel form of torture thought up by the authorities. So unbearable was the pain that even one of the highest-ranking Portuguese Jesuit priests in Japan at the time recanted his faith when subjected to this form of torture.

Even after Hideyoshi issued his anti-Christian edicts, many Christian missionaries went underground and carried on their activities clandestinely. Among them was the Portuguese Jesuit priest Cristóvão Ferreira, who later changed his name to Sawano Chuan. When Ferreira was captured and tortured by the authorities, he not only renounced his faith but became an agent of the Tokugawa government, assisting in the persecution of Christians. This treachery earned him the nickname Apostate Father.

Nakaura, however, bravely endured this torture. Perhaps the vivid impression of the aged pope's kindness and devotion to faith to the end still lived in his heart. One can only imagine how profoundly moved he must have been by the concern and consideration shown him, an insignificant youth from a foreign land. He wrote in a letter in his 50s that he never forgot that kindness—and that every time he thought of it, he was deeply moved afresh.

Encountering persecution for the sake of the Law is the highest honor.

Nakaura never betrayed the vows of his youth. He fought for close to a half-century and gave his life heroically for his beliefs.

Christianity achieved the great development it did because its believers possessed this spirit to fight to the end, to give their lives for their faith if need be.

In the Soka Gakkai, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda gave their lives ungrudgingly for the Law. And I inherited their spirit. Although I am reluctant to speak of myself, I wish to state the following for the benefit of the youth and for posterity: I do not think anyone can truly fathom just how much I have agonized, all alone, for the sake of kosen-rufu. I do not think anyone can fathom how much I have prayed, suffered and endured, while protecting my beloved fellow members from harm and striving to actualize the true will of presidents Makiguchi and Toda. But the Gohonzon is aware of it all.

What other people do or don't do is irrelevant. The main thing is that we ourselves remain steadfast in our commitment to

follow our mentor throughout our lives. This is the oneness of mentor and disciple. This is the SGI. May the youth division members firmly inherit this spirit of mentor and disciple!

When the militarist authorities during World War II persecuted the Soka Gakkai, 21 top leaders, including Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda, were arrested. Of these, only Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda did not abandon their faith.

In his essay "The History and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai," Mr. Toda writes: "While gaining the great honor of experiencing persecution for the sake of the Law—a sign of being recognized by the Buddha—those who failed to realize the honored position they had attained discarded their faith. Nineteen out of 21 [of the top Soka Gakkai leaders who were arrested] abandoned their faith...."

Encountering persecution for the sake of the Law is the highest honor. Yet, except for Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda, the top Soka Gakkai leaders were afraid of persecution. They didn't want to go through hardships; they only wanted to receive benefits. Their faith was a sham, superficial and perfunctory.

The essence of Buddhism is to give one's life should one meet persecution in spreading the Mystic Law.

In his "Precepts for Youth," President Toda writes, "For a person of wisdom, to be praised by fools is a disgrace, whereas to be praised by the great sage [Nichiren Daishonin] is the highest honor in life."

The minute Mr. Makiguchi was thrown in prison, people who had sung his praises and called him Makiguchi Sensei with respect and deference suddenly did a complete about-face and denounced him. "Makiguchi the scoundrel," they cried. "Makiguchi's to blame," they accused. "He deceived us!" Some even went to his home and showered abuse on his family.

On his release from prison, when Mr. Toda heard this, he was furious. He was absolutely livid. "What a fine state of affairs! The curs! Those fake disciples!" he railed. "The Gakkai has no need for the likes of those who can't endure something as trifling as two or three years in prison. We don't need people who quiver with fear and indecision, worried only about what others will say about them."

Selfless propagation of the Law—the essence of Buddhism is to be willing to give one's life should one meet per-

secution in the course of spreading the Mystic Law.

If we did not encounter hardships or persecution, we would not be practicing the Daishonin's correct teachings. I am bearing the full brunt of such persecution. Therefore, those who fight alongside me will also be bathed in benefit.

On the other hand, there are those who shun hardships and avoid persecution at all costs. Such individuals try to look good at the expense of others and use their wits to get ahead. This is not true faith.

True commitment to kosen-rufu means casting away all self-interest and giving our lives without grudging.

"The Soka Gakkai is an organization of lions, a gathering of lions. We have no use for cowards!" This is the eternal cry of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda.

The judgment of history is harsh.

I imagine Nakaura in the midst of persecution crying out similar sentiments: "Compatriots! You persecute and try to bury me, a man who has seen the world with his own eyes. But mark my words, my friends—you who are like frogs in a well, ignorant of the vast ocean—no matter how you may strut around self-importantly in Japan, the rest of the world will pay you no heed.

"Open your eyes! Today you may delight in torturing me, but your insularity will one day bring suffering to rain down upon your heads!"

While weaker persons might have recanted their faith after only an hour of this cruel torture of being hung upside down in a filthy pit, Nakaura heroically endured that agony for four days. Then he died, a martyr to his beliefs.

Some historians believe that had the Japanese humbly listened and learned something from the knowledge and insights of Nakaura, a person who had visited some of the most culturally advanced countries of the day, Japanese history would have been very different. As it was, however, not long after Nakaura's death in 1633, Japan entered a period of national seclusion that lasted more than two centuries.

It is interesting to note that sometime earlier, in 1613—a decade or so after the return of the youth mission—Daté Masamune, a feudal lord of the Tohoku region, dispatched a diplomatic mission to Europe. It was led by one of his retainers, Hasekura Tsunenaga. As with the youth envoys before him,

however, when he returned to Japan, far from being given any opportunity to make use of the knowledge and experience he had gained, Hasekura was placed under house arrest. He remained there until his death a short time later.

Hasekura led a diplomatic mission of 180 Japanese to Mexico City, Madrid and Rome, 1613–20. He was the first official Japanese envoy to visit the Americas. He was baptized in Madrid and met with Pope Paul V in Rome in 1615. In his absence from Japan, Christianity was banned by the Tokugawa shogunate and the country began moving toward national seclusion.

This is what Japan is like. Its island-country mentality makes it ever preoccupied with short-term gain, always causing it to turn its back on the rest of the world. And each time it does, it is a tragedy for the Japanese people. The same thing is going on today. We Japanese have to get rid of this tendency; we have to bring about a revolution in our thinking.

Today, people throughout the world—and history, too—applaud Nakaura, who died a martyr to his beliefs, while they deplore and condemn the arrogant authorities who persecuted him. The judgment of history is harsh.

The SGI is a gathering of good friends.

The curtain will soon rise on the 21st century. Thanks to your efforts, we of the SGI have won in all our undertakings in the 20th century. Let us also win in the century ahead!

The Daishonin cites these words from the Lotus Sutra: "Part with bad friends and seek out good ones" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213). They are an injunction, a message, he left to us.

The SGI is a gathering of good friends. We must part with and drive out bad friends, or negative influences, that seek to undermine and destroy our faith.

The Daishonin says, "If practitioners of the Lotus Sutra practice according to the Buddha's teaching, they will surely, without a single exception, attain Buddhahood in the course of this lifetime" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 416). All who take action for kosen-rufu in accord with the Daishonin's teachings will attain Buddhahood. They will become great leaders, who will enjoy complete fulfillment throughout the three existences of past, present and future. This is what the Daishonin promises.

Let's do our best!



On Sept. 27, SGI delegates present to His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4 -21), published by the Soka Gakkai. (Above) His Majesty signs his name on the Facsimile Edition of the manuscript. A rare Lotus Sutra manuscript, No. 4-21 is a well-preserved 11th-century copy of the ancient text, indispensable for the scholarly study of the Lotus Sutra.

The important thing is that we center our lives on the Law.

If you are happy, I am happy. If you are sad, I am sad.

Please live with bright enthusiasm and energy. Those who maintain unwavering faith in the Gohonzon are never deadlocked.

The Mystic Law is the eternal law of the universe. To possess the conviction "I have faith in the Mystic Law, so no matter what happens I never have to worry! I will never be defeated!"—this is what faith is all about.

Despite the fact that they possess the Gohonzon, there are those who are quick to become pessimistic or discouraged. This is not faith. Such inner weakness is what causes people suffering.

"Because I embrace the great, eternal law of the universe, I am certain to win, to become happy, to have a wonderful, enjoyable life"—with this determination in your heart, please advance with confidence.

Through devoting one's life to the Mystic Law, we become part of the life of the Buddha of the universe. Our lives begin to shine as entities of the Mystic Law. The Daishonin teaches us this wonderful secret.

The important thing, therefore, is that we center our lives on the Law. If we make our-

selves the center, we will advance in the opposite direction from attaining Buddhahood.

May you lead joyous lives! If your life is joyless, make it joyous! If you have no hope, create some!

For the mind is free and untrammelled; it is filled with limitless possibilities. This is all the more true of you who embrace the Mystic Law, the Great Law

of Freedom.

I am sending daimoku to you with all my being. This, I believe, is my duty and responsibility.

I wish to reiterate my appreciation to the members from Tohoku and overseas who have traveled all the way to attend this meeting.

Thank you for your long attention.

WT

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Good Friends

From This Speech:

Nichiren Daishonin cites these words from the Lotus Sutra: "Part with bad friends and seek out good ones" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213). They are an injunction, a message, he left to us. The SGI is a gathering of good friends. We must part with and drive out bad friends, or negative influences, that seek to undermine and destroy our faith.

- 1) Why do you think the Daishonin places so much emphasis on "parting with bad friends" as an important part of Buddhist practice?
- 2) What happens if we don't part with bad friends?
- 3) What do you think the Daishonin means by "bad friends"? Who are our bad friends today?
- 4) SGI President Ikeda says that "the SGI is a gathering of good friends." What do you think he means by that?
- 5) Do you think that it's possible to have good friends in your Buddhist practice whom you don't always get along with? Do you think it's possible to have good friends whom you don't even like?
- 6) How do we "drive out bad friends, or negative influences, that seek to undermine and destroy our faith"?

There Is No Greater Pride Than Living for Kosen-rufu

A Record of My Life by Daisaku Ikeda

This is the first installment of SGI President Ikeda's new memoir series, 'A Record of My Life.' He explains that 'the record of my life resides only within the Soka Gakkai. There is no greater pride than living a life dedicated to kosen-rufu throughout the three existences of past, present and future.'

To wait for the right time. To make the right time.... The establishment of the SGI on Guam in January 1975 was a watershed in the full-fledged spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world. Almost a quarter-century has passed since that time.

Who could have predicted then the global scope and development our movement has achieved today?

I made that visit to Guam the starting point of an essay series titled "A Record of My Life," which was serialized in the Soka Gakkai-affiliated monthly magazine *The Third Civilization* from its April 1995 through June 1999 issues. I endeavored to set down faithfully, without embellishment, a record of my life and the significant events that happened along the way, in chronological sequence.

My life is kosen-rufu. Hence the essays quite naturally portray the dynamic progress of our movement to promote peace, culture and education.

That first series of "A Record of My Life" comprised 51 essays, concluding with an account of my visit to the Dominican Republic in February 1987. When I finished writing the essays for that series—which I thought of as part one of a longer, ongoing series—I set down my pen for a short interval. Now, at the request of many readers, I take up my pen once more to continue part two for serialization in the *Daibya-kurenge*, the Soka Gakkai's monthly study journal.

In any event, the record of my



SGI President Ikeda meets with Dr. Joseph Rotblat, president of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, Oct. 11, 1989, at the Kansai International House of Friendship in Osaka, Japan.

life resides only within the Soka Gakkai. There is no greater pride than living a life dedicated to kosen-rufu throughout the three existences of past, present and future. I challenge myself again today to record another page.

We must avoid being at the mercy of science and technology.

Recently, there has been a great deal of talk about the Y2K computer problem, a tremendous challenge to our computerized civilization. Older computers were originally programmed to record and read the years of the century by only their last two digits, which means that at the turn of the century, there is the possibility that they will mistake the year 2000 for 1900. If that happens, all sorts of computerized systems will cease functioning correctly. Unless something is done to avert this, our societies could be thrown into chaos.

Many fear that ATM cards will be rendered useless, that there will be power outages and downed telephone systems, and that even medical equipment will fail. The worst-case scenarios paint pictures of planes crashing and missiles being inadvertently fired.

Both government and private sectors are working hard to find a solution. The systems are, after all, made by human beings. We must avoid, at all costs, the perilous future scenario where we are at the mercy of science and technology run amok.

Josei Toda's Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons was the natural

consequence of his experiences.

This Y2K problem has the potential to take us all unexpectedly back to the year 1900—the year of the birth of my mentor and the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda. He was born at the dawn of a new century and grew up in a period of great change. The Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904 and intensified Japan's march toward militarism. Mr. Toda lived through the Tokyo Earthquake of 1923 and directly experienced the hardships of the Great Depression that was triggered by the stock market crash of 1929. He experienced two world wars and then Japan's defeat in 1945.

With the 21st century approaching, it has become popular to look back over the past 100 years. When we do so with Mr. Toda, we find that his life, thought and actions are inextricably linked to the tumultuous history of 20th century.

A museum dedicated to journalism—the Newseum in Arlington, Va.—has published a list of the 100 most important news stories of this century, based on selections made by prominent American journalists and scholars. In first place were the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan's surrender ending World War II in 1945. In second place was Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon in 1969, and in third place was Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into World War II in 1941.

During the war, Mr. Toda was imprisoned by the Japanese authorities for his opposition to

militarism and released just a few weeks before the war's end. I think his later Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in 1957, the first of his final instructions for his successors, was the natural consequence of the life he lived and the things he experienced.

Not long after delivering the declaration, heedless of his frail health, he sought to visit Hiroshima, a city that had been devastated by the atomic bomb, to give guidance and encouragement to the members there. To those who tried to dissuade him from this course of action, he declared, "I don't care if it kills me, I'm going!" His spirit blazed with such fierce determination.

Mr. Toda propounded the concept of a global family.

Although Mr. Toda did not live to see humankind take its first step on the moon, he propounded the concept of a global family, a prescient vision of the globalism humankind's exploration of space would herald. His call for the complete elimination of all misery from the planet was a demand that the interests of humanity and the individual be put before the interests of nation-states.

In this, he stood on the same philosophical ground as first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who foresaw the dawning of an age of humanitarian competition superseding that of military and economic competition. Both men, having lived in a century wracked by war and strife, were philosophers of the first rank, possessing a clear vision of humanity's future. The visionary nature of their thought will become more and more widely appreciated around the world as the years pass.

Recently, in a *Time* magazine poll, Albert Einstein was listed among the 20 most influential scientists, thinkers and inventors of this century. Mr. Toda and Mr. Makiguchi attended a lecture given by Einstein in Japan, and Mr. Toda described it as one of the happiest events of his entire life. The lecture took place on Nov. 19, 1922, at the Keio University auditorium in Tokyo; it lasted for some five hours. How like these two men of tremendous intellectual curiosity to attend such an ad-

dress!

Incidentally, the Soka Ky-oiku Gakkai, forerunner of the Soka Gakkai, was founded almost exactly eight years after that, on Nov. 18, 1930.

Many years later, I conducted a dialogue with Dr. Linus Pauling, recipient of two Nobel Prizes, one for chemistry and one for peace. In our discussion, we touched upon the Russell-Einstein Manifesto launched by Bertrand Russell and Einstein in 1955, calling on fellow scientists and researchers to recognize the grave threat that thermonuclear war poses to humanity's future. Dr. Pauling was one of the 11 scientists who signed the manifesto.

The Russell-Einstein Manifesto paved the way for the Pugwash Conferences, a series of gatherings attended by scientists from both Eastern and Western blocs, transcending ideological borders. Dr. Joseph Rotblat of the University of London, also a signatory of the manifesto, served as the Pugwash Conference's first secretary general. The conferences went on to play an important role in creating a tide of thought that put the brakes on the nuclear arms race among the United States, the Soviet Union, and other powerful nations.

Interestingly, the first Pugwash Conference was held in 1957, the year that Mr. Toda made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. And in 1989, I had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with Dr. Rotblat.

This turbulent century has been marked by a progression of significant developments surrounding war and peace. First came the construction of the atomic bomb, brought within reach by Einstein's theory of relativity. This development was quickly followed by concerned scientists warning of the dangers of nuclear weapons, which in turn led to the appearance of numerous peace movements around the globe.

I am certain that I am not the only person who, as we approach this century's end, feels that the world is converging toward a re-examination of the innermost depths of the human being.

One in a series

Ashby, the Wonder Dog

PERSPECTIVE

By MICHAEL LISAGOR
VIENNA, VA

I will never disparage you, for you are all certain to attain Buddhahood (The Lotus Sutra, p. 267).

For the several years, if you came to an SGI-USA discussion meeting at our house, you would park in a cul-de-sac surrounded by numerous tall leafy trees in suburban Virginia, outside of Washington, D.C. Trudging up our driveway in the humidity or the snow, you would approach a two-story colonial home. A note on the front door would tell you to enter, saying something like: "The most happy people in the world meet here. Come on in." You would immediately be greeted by a very small tri-color sheltie. No ordinary animal, this would be Ashby Never Disparaging, the District Wonder Dog! Like Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, she treated everyone with the utmost respect.

We had Ashby for almost 10 years. Early in the evening last week, I guess her little body just got too tired and she passed away like we all will someday. We're still feeling waves of sadness, wonder and appreciation for her presence in our lives.

In our busy society, it's easy to take important things for granted until we need them or, like Ashby, they are no longer physically with us. This reminds me of how interconnected my life is to my surroundings and to the lives of others—even animals. While scooting around on four stubby legs, Ashby taught me some extremely valuable lessons about how to cherish each and every moment.

Next year I'll turn 50. My wonderful wife, Trude, and I will also soon be celebrating 30 years of chanting and marriage. Losing Ashby reminded me not only how much she meant to me, but of the tremendous fortune I have gained in every area of my life by continuing this practice.

An act of kindness, no matter how small, is never wasted (Aesop).

Ashby was an equal opportunity pooch. She had a way of opening up her life to every single person she came in contact with. At our World Peace Prayer Meeting, several members reminisced how she would go from person to person during our meetings pushing up against them until they scratched her. I can't count the times she caused us all to laugh as she rolled over onto her back during a particularly intense discussion.

Ashby had one lifetime enemy—the evil vacuum cleaner. Her weekly mission was to defeat this device by barking non-stop for two hours and spinning in circles until the cleaning was done. I think she actually believed her vigorous behavior caused that particular instrument to be exiled to the hall closet. The writer Goethe wrote, "It is better to do the smallest thing in the world than to hold half an hour to be too small a thing." Ashby really put her whole life into whatever she was doing.

Life is filled with potholes. That's just the way it is. I think we humans, having more complex minds than canines, are compelled to create more obstacles for ourselves. Earlier this year, Trude and I were trying to decide whether to move back to the milder California climate for her health or stay in Virginia. A very challenging and emotional change to consider—something we both would have to be happy with for it to work. A friend from Los Angeles pointed out that any decision we made would present us with continued challenges to overcome. And, that it wasn't so much what we decided to do that mattered, as how we went about doing it.

Then, an unexpected thing happened. While we prayed to be able to move at the right time and in the right way, and while we talked and changed our mind every five minutes, we began to realize how connected we were to our many friends in Virginia. We also took an objective look at the many stresses involved in re-establishing ourselves somewhere new and the negative effect that might have on Trude's health.

It's hard to de-

scribe the deep appreciation we felt when we decided to remain in Virginia. As a result of staying here, I left an executive marketing position that I no longer had any passion for and was able to successfully start my own consulting company. I've now replaced the perception of security at my old job with a deeper security—a confidence in my Buddhist practice and in my own capabilities. Dogs don't seem to worry about this stuff. They pretty much take each day as it comes. I suspect they have an easier mind to master.

"Unless we live fully right now, not sometime in the future, true fulfillment in life will forever elude us. Rather than putting things off till the future, we should find meaning in life, thinking and doing what is most important right now, right where we are—setting our hearts aflame and igniting our lives. Otherwise, we cannot lead an inspired existence" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 42).

I don't think Ashby would mind me revealing that she wasn't the smartest creature in the animal kingdom. Even after 10 years, she still wasn't quite sure the dog door in our family room would let her outside. And when we called her name, she would often run in the wrong direction. But, I once read about two of Shakyamuni Buddha's disci-



Photo by MIKE LISAGOR

ples, Suri and Hendoku, who gained their enlightenment although (or maybe because) they were not very bright. However, they had incredibly sincere seeking minds. I think they had to remember a one-sentence phrase. It took them many years. So, maybe that explains why Ashby had such an enlightened effect on everyone.

I've learned through my Buddhist practice that I've been a Buddha all along and so I can choose my own reality. It is this realization that is enabling me more than ever to experience joy no matter what is happening around me. Even now when I'm experiencing a profound loss.

SGI President Ikeda once said, "To lead a life in which we are inspired and can inspire others, our hearts have to be alive; they have to be filled with passion and enthusiasm" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 397). Ashby stopped breathing at exactly the same moment I sat down to chant for her suffering to end. When the doctor took X-rays, he called to say he had never seen such a large heart in an animal her size. I could have told him that. **WT**

The
World
TRIBUNE
SGI-USA's
Weekly
Newspaper

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

Managing Editor
Margie Hall
mhall@sgi-usa.org
Associate Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

Staff Writer
Stephanie Celano
scelano@sgi-usa.org

Contributing Writer
Terry Ellis

Contributing Artist
Stephanie Sydney

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers
Gregory Nakasuji
Kirk Condyles
Jonathan Wilson
Dixon Hamby

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
lisahollis@earthlink.net

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

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

READERS COMMENTS

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

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

FRIENDS FOR PEACE
ffp@sgi-usa.org

SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

FINE PRINT
fine print@sgi-usa.org

The *World Tribune* welcomes reader submissions. If you are interested in contributing an article or photograph, please contact us for guidelines. Together we can make a great newspaper.

Read the WT E-mail Express

*It's the Quickest Way To Get
SGI President Ikeda's Guidance*

The WT E-mail Express is a free, weekly e-mailer for World Tribune subscribers. It features excerpts from President Ikeda's new speeches, essays and dialogues, as well as previews of other upcoming World Tribune articles.

To subscribe to the WT E-mail Express, just follow these three easy steps:

- 1) Open a new e-mail message
- 2) Enter to: **ListManager@sgi-usa.org**
- 3) Enter message text: SUBSCRIBE wtexpress

You'll receive a confirmation message and then a new issue every week!

Symposia on Psychology and Buddhism Held

On Aug. 22 and 23, the American Psychological Association Convention in Boston featured two symposia on Buddhism and psychology. Despite the 8 a.m. start, both were filled to capacity, with 250 attendees combined, reflecting the growing interest of Western psychologists in the psychological aspects of Buddhism. Both symposia were offered by psychologists and physicians from the SGI in collaboration with their colleagues.



Dr. Yoichi Kawada

The first symposium, "Where Buddhism and Psychology Meet: Perspectives on Empowerment," explored how Buddhism enables people to gain control over their

lives. The panel of psychology professors included Anthony J. Marsella (chair), Kathleen H. Dockett and the director of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy Yoichi Kawada, who discussed Buddhist empowerment from such diverse perspectives as the philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism; the psychotherapeutic perspective of Daseinsanalysis (a form of existential psychology); and the health promotion and community building perspective of community psychology.

The second symposium was "Buddhism and Psychology: Reflections in Personal Transformation and Global Responsiveness." It explored the contributions of Jungian Depth Psychology and Mahayana Buddhism to the search for peaceful alternatives to the challenges of ethnic and national conflict that threaten all of humanity. The panelists were SGI members including physicians Yoichi Kawada (translator An-

drew Gebert) and Alwin Harding, and psychologists Douglas K. Pryor (chair), Kathleen Dockett, Daniel Cantor Yalowitz and Carmen Ada Gonzalez. They concluded that both Jungian psychology and Buddhism offer ways to understand how the inner collective connections that human beings share may be used to create societal bridges.

The importance of our interconnectedness to one another and to the environment emerged as a central theme across the papers of both sessions. Whether talking about empowering people or fostering tolerance of cultural difference, the Buddhist principle of dependent origination and the altruistic life of the bodhisattva are key. As Dr. Kawada stated: "When the wisdom to perceive the reality of interdependence (the technical term is dependent origination) is awakened, humans are naturally enabled to act with compassion, knowing that what ben-



Dr. Kathleen H. Dockett discusses with symposia participants how Buddhism fosters a stress-resistant personality.

efits others benefits ourselves. Blinded to this reality, on the other hand, we divide being into disjunctive realms of "self" and "other," and will seek to profit ourselves at the expense of others."

In his message to the Bud-

dism and Psychology symposium, President Ikeda points to a rising tide of profound hope that is signaled by exploring empowerment in its relation with the cosmic power that propels the creative evolution of the universe.

—KATHLEEN H. DOCKETT

SGI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the Depths of Life—Wisdom, Compassion, Courage

My heartfelt congratulations on the opening of the 107th Annual American Psychological Association.

Of keen interest will be the rich and fruitful outcome of the continuing symposium on Buddhism and Psychology, under the theme of "Where Buddhism and Psychology Meet: Perspectives on Empowerment." By all indication, the initial round last year on this topic of discussion has generated great interest and enthusiasm.

The idea of empowerment has centrality in the teachings of Buddhism, and with this occasion in mind I would like to share some Buddhist insights for your consideration. As Shakyamuni himself depicts in the Lotus Sutra, he lived his life in accord with the tenet "awaken in all beings the Buddha wisdom, to reveal it, to let all beings know it, and enter into it." Indeed, from the Buddhist view, empowerment is a fundamental activity: to enable an individual first to be awakened to the existence of the dormant reservoir of wisdom at the depth of life itself; then to invoke this wisdom as

one meets the challenges of life and death; and in the process, to bring forth the microcosm of one's own Buddhahood. In other words, empowerment is equated with establishing a solid foundation for happiness in life.

In the teachings of the 13th-century Buddhist teacher Nichiren are to be found expansion and clarity on gaining access to the cosmic energy of the Buddha wisdom that is inherent to life. He expressed the essence of this cosmic energy in the mantra, Nam-myohorenge-kyo, and his exegesis on the three meanings of the character *myo* indicates three aspects of what we describe as the state of Buddhahood that resides in the microcosm of one's own life and the macrocosm of all life.

One meaning is to open, which in modern terms may be rendered as the ability to take initiative. It entails the ability, or vital energy, necessary to transcend the disconnection or even isolation of the individual from the rest of society and social life. To be involved and engage in the concerns of another is to draw from this reservoir of wisdom and participate in a dynamically expanding flow

that reaches beyond one's family, friends, culture and country, extending beyond humanity and permeating the universe.

A second meaning is fully or perfectly endowed. Here, Nichiren's metaphor, that "one drop of the great ocean contains within it the waters of all the various rivers that flow into the ocean," is instructive. It suggests the unifying nature of this cosmic energy that permeates equally each constituent part as well as the integral whole of life. It therefore suggests the internal resources with which to control or direct oneself undeterred by external influences. One thereby is able to integrate any circumstance or experience within a framework of one's own self-development.

A third meaning is to revive, as in life's intrinsic function of creativity. This highlights the vital energy that gives rise to courage and joy in meeting and winning over each challenge and obstacle, and in greeting life anew at every step of the way.

Of these three aspects, this third, the reinvigoration of life's creative energy, nurtures the vital energies toward open-

ness and inclusiveness. Indeed, at the depth of life are the restorative resources of wisdom, compassion and courage to sustain reform and development.

The more than 2,500-year history of Buddhism may be described as the continuing quest to uncover and draw from the unfathomable power of the universe, what is termed here as *myo*. Thus, the mission of a Buddhist, I believe, lies in pursuing a method of practice that makes manifest this power of *myo* and makes dormant that which deprives us of life's creativity, that is, the destructive or negating nature that also resides in human life.

I understand that in recent years there is an emergent focus among Western psychologists on the means by which individuals muster the courage and capability that is linked with the creative evolution and development of humanity. Apparently, there is also new research focused on humanity's capacity for self-control. These are interests that resonate with my own—in the microcosmic power that can open the closed off self to the

dynamic flows of and integration with society and the environment.

From the growing interest in the notion of empowerment within Western psychology and other fields of inquiry, I sense a rising tide of profound hope that will contribute to the deep layers of human history. Indeed, it is a source of light to explore empowerment in its relation with the cosmic power that propels the creative evolution of the universe. As a Buddhist, I feel deeply the responsibility to tap the source of life's creativity, aspire to fulfill my mission as a human being, and reflect the compassionate nature of cosmic life.

Lastly, I would like to close by expressing my expectations that this encounter between Buddhism from the East and scientific wisdom from the West will provide a mutually enriching exchange of insight into the notion of empowerment and generate new insights into the theory and practice of establishing happiness in one's life.

Daisaku Ikeda
President
Soka Gakkai International

SPECIAL
PULLOUT
SECTION

FRIENDS for Peace

NOV. 5, 1999

PRETEEN FRIENDSHIP GROUP FORMED IN ORANGE COUNTY



By Gail Thomas Amos
Laguna Hills, Calif.

Late this spring a group of SGI parents from Aliso Viejo and Laguna Hills united to assist their 9- to 12-year-old youth in forming a friendship and activity group. Choosing the name "Preteen" for their group, they decided to form a friendship group that would meet and do activities in their own homes and local neighborhoods.

The major goals of the Preteen Friendship Group are to:

- 1) become good friends;
- 2) have fun;
- 3) understand more about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and about President Ikeda; and
- 4) to apply what they

learn toward improving themselves and winning in their daily lives.

In the process of assisting the preteens in planning and organizing their activities, the parents of these youth are becoming better friends and are supporting one another in encouraging and raising their youth.

When chanting together, the parents direct their prayers toward the health and happiness of their youth; their ability to encourage them in faith and show them clear proof of the Gohonzon's power; their youth becoming capable leaders for world peace; and for the enjoyment and success of all preteen activities.

Topics that the preteen group expressed a desire to discuss include:

- 1) how to deal with bullies;
- 2) how to create safer schools;
- 3) resolving questions and

fears about death and dying; 4) the meaning and importance of doing gongyo and chanting; 5) identifying good and bad friends; 6) learning and understanding more about President Ikeda and the SGI; and 7) understanding the youth division's "Victory Over Violence" campaign.

In addition to holding monthly discussions on these topics, parents of the preteen group host a monthly fun activity recommended by these youth.

In July this activity entailed a cookout and a pool party, and in August, a picnic and beach party.

The topic for the preteen's August discussion meeting was "Why Must We Oppose and Win Over Violence?" Parents of the preteens expressed that keeping the group meetings small, joyful, family oriented and "in the hands" of the preteens themselves seems to contribute to the success of these meetings.



Los Angeles Kids

Perform at Music Recital

By Stephanie Cohen, 8
Irvine, Calif.



When I went to the Boys and Girls Group Music Recital on Oct. 9 at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, all the hard work I saw made my heart sing. The rap singers were great. And Stevie Ann's voice was beautiful. The percussion group played great music. The group of girls who danced to Inspector Gadget had great moves. Rhythm Nation also had great moves and all the people who performed in Rhythm Nation that night had been in Boys and Girls Group when they were younger. The trumpet, piano and the violin and cello performers were so brave to play music by themselves in front of a big crowd. The chorus group was especially great. Their costumes were beautiful. They had made them themselves. They sang and moved really well, also. Seeing all of them do so well made my heart feel so happy to see them work hard for something really great!

When asked: "Why are you here?" the Boys and Girls Group members responded:

- "To have a festival."
- "To sing."
- "My mom brought me."
- "President Ikeda will hear how healthy we are."
- "People's hearts will be happy when they hear us sing."
- "We're showing the other divisions that we're not just cute little kids. We are SGI members just like them."

Youth division members who also performed responded as well:

- "An activity like this gives everyone a chance to feel President Ikeda's heart. These children watch their parents do activities; this gives them their own activity."
- "There wasn't a dry eye in the house. I was so touched by the spirit these kids showed. It's so cool to see the future of our organization. I mean, one day someone up there will be my leader."



BOYS AND GIRLS **ROCK** IN LOS ANGELES! AT THE RECENT GRAND YOUTH CULTURE FESTIVAL IN LOS ANGELES.

EXPERIENCE

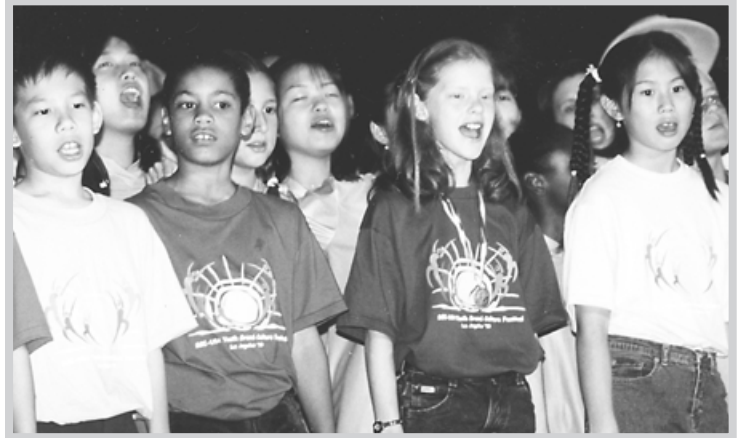
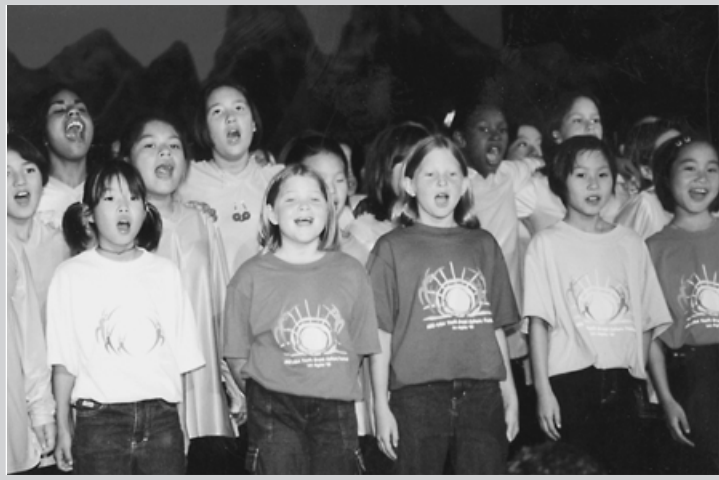
ALICIA WONG

San Diego

Hi I'm in the 5th grade and I'm from San Diego. I would like to tell you an experience I had. As you might know, there was a big cultural festival in Los Angeles.

I really wanted to perform in the festival and help create Victory Over Violence. At first my mom said I couldn't perform but I really wanted to so my mom said I should chant. I chanted about 5 minutes a day. Then one day my mom said there

was an opening and that I could be in the finale! I was really happy and excited. Then I got another benefit. My best friend Michelle Creek, who lives in Laguna Beach, was going to perform too. I was really lucky because I don't get to see her very often. We practiced a lot. Finally it was time for the show. We did two shows and each time we did better. After the two shows I was really proud of myself. I had made history! **BYE!**



ARTHUR ORR

Santa Barbara, Calif.

One day when I came home from school, my mom told me I was in the "Victory Over Violence" performance to be held at the Pasadena Auditorium on Sept. 25, where 7,000 members were going to attend! I was so happy I couldn't see straight, because the Boys and Girls Group was practicing songs, dances, and we even had an orchestra.

There were only 22 boys and girls who got picked to represent all the boys and girls in the world of SGI. I felt really excited to be one of them.

The day before the big performance, my sister Idonarose, who is in Junior High School Division and just graduated from the Boys and Girls Group, got picked up by Holly, a YWD leader, and went to Hollywood

to stay the night before the big performance. Idonarose was dancing in the Rhythm Nation.

The day of the performance I had to get up at 4:00 a.m. to get there by 7:00 a.m. to rehearse. There were a lot of people in this really big place below the stage. President Ikeda even had chocolate medals for us boys and girls to wear but we ate them because they would have melted as it was a really hot day.

We had to wait a long time in the sun while others went on stage. Everyone kept telling us that we were great. I was right in the front and Mahatma Gandhi's grandson (Arun Gandhi) was right beside me! He seemed old to be a grandson.

I will always remember what it felt like to sit on the stage and see all those people in the audience — it was incredible. I could see my parents and everyone from Santa Barbara.



They all seemed to be yelling at me. Everyone in the audience was screaming and clapping. It was amazing.

The Boys and Girls Group is now rehearsing for our first big recital at the Los Angeles Friendship Center (see

article on page A) where I am playing violin with a girl named Sarah who is playing cello, and we are performing President Ikeda's favorite Beethoven symphony "Ode To Joy."

Chicago kids talk about the Festival: ‘Reach For the Sky!’

Photo by VITO VEE

On Aug. 14, The Chicago Boys and Girls Group joined with the youth division members for the Chicago Summer Youth Festival. (See the Oct. 8 issue of “Friends for Peace” for more information.)

**Alex Chien, 8,
Southern Ohio**

“I chanted a lot of daimoku and tried to do gongyo daily so that I could participate in this event. During the trip, I had a lot of fun and met a lot of new friends!”

**Kiana Klein, 6,
Northern Indiana**

“I loved my costume so much, I wanted to take it home with me!”



The following is an interview with 11-year-old Amina Jackson after rehearsals held at South Loop Elementary School (a school within the neighborhood of the Chicago Culture Center) on Aug. 1 for the “Reach For The Sky!” music festival.

“Friends for Peace”: Thank you, Amina, for participating with me in this interview after your rehearsals! I’m glad that you are so willing and happy to share your impressions of these activities!

Amina: You’re welcome. I appreciate being asked!

“Friends for Peace”: My first question is very obvious.... Why did you want to participate in this festival to begin with?

Amina: I participated in the festival for a chance to do my human revolution.

“Friends for Peace”: I see.... What are you doing for the festival?

Amina: I’m in the Boys

and Girls Group chorus and challenging myself to chant and do gongyo every day.

“Friends for Peace”: Wow! That’s really great! What benefits have you seen since making your determination to perform for the festival?

Amina: Everything in my life has become more positive. It used to be difficult for me to chant and do gongyo every day without my mom encouraging me to do it. Now I am very proud that I can stand up and chant and do gongyo every day on my own! I’ve found that I improved my social skills, too.

“Friends for Peace”: That’s excellent! I am very encouraged by what you shared. The theme of our festival is

“Reach for the Sky!” What does this mean to you?

Amina: To me, “Reach For the Sky!” means to have hope and never give up. Parents

may be pushing kids even though they might not like it. Don’t give up and never lose hope that as long as you try hard and do your best, you will soon win!

Photo by VITO VEE

Photo by MIKE KRYSSTYN



Amina Jackson



APPRECIATE YOUR FRIENDS

GOSHU GOODIES

Friendship

"You have transformed yourself through your association with me, and like the bramble growing in the hemp field, you have learned to stand up straight." ("Rissho Ankoku Ron," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [rev.], p. 41)

It's important to make good friends, to have the courage to be true to yourself and not give in to negative influences. Associating with people who have self-destructive and negative natures will only drag you down as well. When you hang out with friends who are positive and helpful and use good judgment, that will influence you in a constructive way.

In his *Discussions on Youth* (vol. 1), SGI President Ikeda encourages us about making good friends:

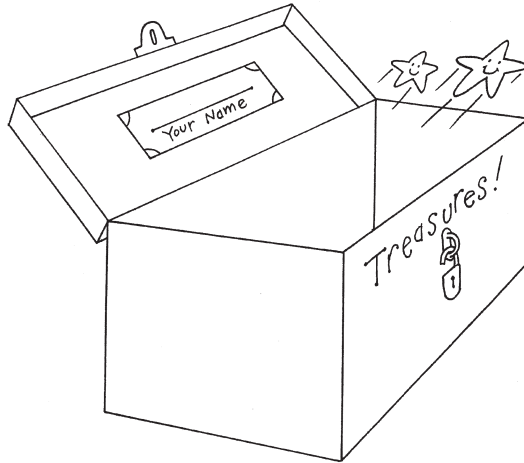
"So if you make good friends—friends who are interested in improving and developing themselves—you will move in a positive direction as well. Ultimately, the only way to make good friends is for you to become good friends yourselves. Good people gather around good people."



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

"Friendship is our life's treasure."

— Daisaku Ikeda



Write your friends' names or draw them on the treasure chest!

Artist: Amy Sadanaga



COURTNI BROOKS, 7 FRESNO, CALIF.

Hi. I'm the one on the right, standing next to my cousin, Kalila Blades, 8, who visited for the summer. I live in Fresno, in Central Valley Area, and Kalila is from Berkeley, Calif. We have had fun doing crafts at the Boys and Girls Group activity. We also sang with the group for the area meetings. I chanted for friends on my

new block (we moved here in June). We made a Friendship Club with seven boys and girls on the block. I am very happy here and chant every day to have a good day at school. It is working because I have two stars on my journal, 100 percent on my "five a day" (weekly project), and I also got to help my teacher as a special helper.



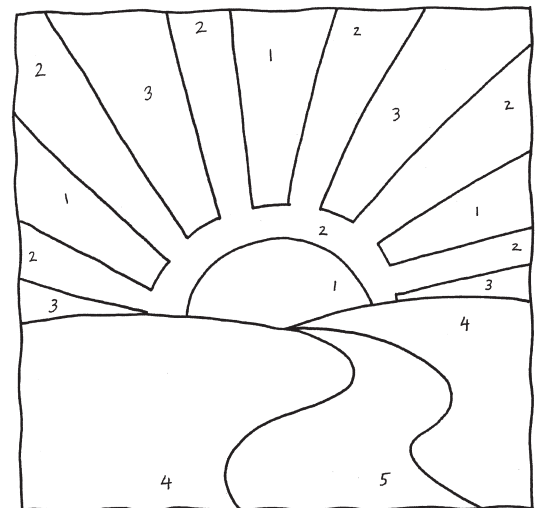
POEM SGI

By Yumi Gook, 10
Albany, Calif.



SGI is not a little piece
you pick up from the ground
SGI is a BIG thing you
can see from all around
People from here and there
who really really care!
You get together
to help each other
And chant all the time
to get lots and lots of benefit
And then you feel fine
\$20 bucks in your wallet
Won't let you stay alive
although chanting day and night
Might actually let you survive.

(The artwork on this page is taken from one of two new coloring books soon to be available in SGI-USA bookstores!) Artist: Amy Sadanaga



1 = yellow 2 = light blue 3 = orange 4 = green 5 = blue



"Life without friendship is like the world without its SUN."

— Daisaku Ikeda