

World TRIBUNE

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EXPERIENCES:

Community Builders help to improve society.

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2nd Human Rights Day Held at SUA, Calabasas



Dr. John Montgomery speaks on 'Aging Rights As Human Rights' at SUA, Calabasas, Dec. 2.

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

With the theme "Toward a Society for All Ages," Soka University of America, Calabasas, and its Pacific Basin Research Center held their second Human Rights Day on Dec. 2. Cosponsored by Amnesty International, the Southern California division of the UNA-USA, the World Federalist Association and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, the event was focused on issues related to the rapidly growing elderly population worldwide.

Marvin Schacter, president of the Advisory Council of the Los Angeles County Area Agency on Aging, shared that there are 409 million people over 65 in the

world today, but that by 2050 this population will jump to a billion and a half. He emphasized that the problems facing the elderly will increasingly impact all aspects of world society and become problems that everyone must face.

Dr. John Montgomery, PBRC director, added in his keynote address that "the old can appreciate youth better than youth can appreciate age." He suggested that this is something we can work to change in the coming years, as we strive for a society that is inclusive of people of all ages.

The symposium featured a Resource Fair with 16 national and regional organizations offering guidance and information on what each person can do to create this kind of society. **WT**



SGI leaders had the opportunity to attend the World Peace Prayer Meeting at the Cape Town home of Jane and Terry Volbrecht on Dec. 5.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S DEC. 7 ENCOURAGEMENT

The Age of Youth Is Here

SGI President Ikeda attended a conference on Dec. 7 in Tokyo with officials of Soka University and Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, both institutions that he founded, and representative leaders. After citing second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's teachings "Youth attract youth" and "Good teachers attract good students," President Ikeda explained: "The age of youth is here. I hope that the youth will take full responsibility, that they will agonize and deliberate over how to deal with the challenges

that confront them. I hope that they will think and take action, that they will rally together other fine youth and make the coming century one of great progress."

The SGI president continued: "The quality of any school is determined by its teachers. I hope our teaching staff will love and respect their students from the bottom of their hearts. Based on warm, humanistic relationships of mutual trust, I ask the teachers to strive with their students for mutual growth and development, both academic and personal.

"Also, the existence of good relations and unity among the members of the teaching staff in and of itself educates the students."

Addressing leaders of Tokyo No. 2 Joint Territory, President Ikeda stressed that victory in life and in the struggle for kosen-rufu depends on tenacity and determination. Referring to Leo Tolstoy's keen observations of human nature, President Ikeda expressed his wish that the members would remember the ironclad rule that "the person who fights to the last five minutes triumphs." **WT**

SGI Attends 3rd Parliament of the World's Religions

By AL ALBERGATE
SGI-USA DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A buffet of beliefs, a smorgasbord of spirituality—call it what you will—the third Parliament of the World's Religions, held Dec. 1-8 in Cape Town, South Africa, served up a dizzying display of this planet's religious and spiritual diversity. The SGI for the first time had a significant presence at this interfaith gathering of about 7,000 registrants from 90 countries.

Dr. Tadashige Takamura, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Soka University in Japan, gave an address titled "Applying Buddhist Values in Conflict Resolution." He was among the religious leaders invited to be on stage for the Parliament's closing session, at which the Dalai Lama spoke.

Soka Gakkai Vice President Toshinori Iwazumi gave a presentation on "Applying Buddhist Values in Building a Culture of Peace." During a separate presentation, he read excerpts from a poem by SGI President Ikeda.

SGI-USA, meanwhile, displayed its "Children's Rights and Realities" exhibit at the



South African performers from a local tribe visit the SGI information booth.

Cape Town Civic Centre. SGI-USA member Malina Moore spoke about both the exhibit and the Youth Peace Committee's Victory Over Violence campaign during one of many dialogue sessions.

In a session on the Earth Charter, I reported on SGI-USA's having held 36 meetings over the past two years to initiate dialogue about this important international initiative.

Throughout the event, Cape

Town members assisted in manning an SGI information booth located in the city's largest arena, the Good Hope Centre.

With these efforts the SGI participants fulfilled goals of both the SGI Charter and the Parliament of the World's Religions: working with other religions in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, seeking to discover new ways to rise to the challenges and opportunities of the new century. **WT**

Building Our Communities

DONNA LEVY WRAY,
BOSTON

In the summer of 1998, I was recruited by the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, (KSG) to direct of a new program in executive education—the Community Builders Program. Sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the two-week program offered a variety of courses including leadership, negotiation, team building and real estate finance. Because of my previous work experience, I was familiar with community building and had played a role in strategic plans for addressing urban issues—KSG thought I was a good fit for this new position.

Even though I had never held a position that was so administrative, I felt the challenge would be good. Besides, I had been chanting for a job change and felt pretty sure this was it.

The directors' responsibility is primarily to make sure the trains run on time. We are in charge of all administrative details from curriculum to outside events, as well as managing a three-person operations staff. When you hear the expression, "the devil is in the details," I can tell you it's the truth. My first day on the job was five weeks away from the start of my first program and I had a lot to learn, real fast. What I didn't know was that the HUD programs scheduled through the end of that year included some of the largest class sizes ever to participate in executive education programs. Class size directly impacts the amount of work that has to be done. These numbers indicated we would have to use two classrooms, develop two curricula, possibly two meal locations, and so on. The challenges began on day one.

If I have learned anything from my eight years of Buddhist practice, it is patience and tolerance. I have experienced many, many times the outcome of changing someone's behavior toward me by first changing my own. Additionally, I knew that my Buddha nature was able to provide me all I needed to be successful.

The challenges were not mine alone. The staff was challenged, as were my colleagues, the food services and facilities personnel and the housing organizers. When people become stressed, they start to complain and blame. The problem was seen to be with the Community Builders and their demands, not with the individuals that worked at the school.

In *The Human Revolution*, SGI President Ikeda says, "The change in the destiny of a single human being can change the destiny of the world." But what happens when four Buddhists with strong practices all change their destiny at the same time and find themselves all given the same mission "to change the destiny" of America? The answer is human revolution. Here is their mission and their story.

In 1998, Secretary Andrew Cuomo of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) decided to humanize the face of HUD by hiring and training the "best and the brightest" from related professions such as local government, real estate and community organizing.

These new HUD employees, combined with others recruited from inside the organization, would form a new Urban

Peace Corps called Community Builders. They would work with mayors, businesses and nonprofits to help solve problems in America's cities and towns.

Not surprisingly, this big effort to change a big organization and build America's communities from within, attracted SGI members to its front lines. From very different backgrounds, SGI members Mike Levine (Philadelphia), Martha Edmonds (Albany, N.Y.), Donna Levy Wray (Boston), and Irma Gorham (Manhattan, N.Y.) have each made their unique contributions over this past year—SGI's Year of Victory in the Community for the New Century—toward making the vision into reality. Each has overcome obstacles, internal and institutional, to demonstrate the power of their Buddhist practice and further their own human revolution. **WT**

As I observed what was going on, I began to rally for the truth. How could we change our organization to meet the expectations placed upon us, and at the same time make daily life more palatable for everyone? I had to work one day at a time, one program at a time.

The first thing I did was to stop complaining myself. When I began to act more graciously toward requests and demands, the staff took notice. I then began a public relations campaign on behalf of the participants, spreading the word about how talented and well-educated they were. (A good educational background goes a long way in this institution.) This was a profound truth because I had never seen so many lists of law degrees, Ph.Ds and master's degrees in all areas of science and liberal arts, as I saw on the biographical forms of the Community Builders. The participants were coming from positions of leadership and authority; most had served as executives in nonprofits, government or in their own businesses. The real issue was not with them, but with our lack of understanding of where they were coming from. These were not ordinary students.

I also began to respect more fully the participants' commitment to urban issues. When we read the daily newspapers or watch coverage on television, it's hard to imagine that anything concrete is being done by anyone to improve our inner cities. *Inner city* might be another term for *wasteland*, if your only information source is the daily news. This is just not true with Community Builders on the job. All of these talented, educated people could probably earn a lot more money doing other things or working for private industry rather than government. Their education highlights their qualifications to do other work. But, for whatever reason—and there are many varied reasons—they choose to work for the disen-



SGI members Donna Levy Wray (left), Director of the Community Builders Professional Education Program at the Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, and Martha Edmonds, Community Builder Fellow in Albany, N.Y., attend a graduation celebration for the first class of Community Builders at the Harvard Club in Boston.

franchised in cities. I believe that we, at KSG, should be honored to have these participants among us.

The composition of the Community Builder classes featured more racial diversity than is typical for a program at the school. As I spread the good news about Community Builders to whomever would listen, I began to feel a slight thaw in the climate. I began to host "end of program" parties so everyone could get together in a relaxed environment with music and dancing. I served as DJ, featuring my husband's "Big Box of Soul and Shout." Some people learned to salsa, while others learned the electric slide! Right now, I believe the staff is coming along remarkably well and developing a sense of humor as well. I think they look forward to the end of program bashes as much as the participants.

In one year, I believe the Community Builders have had a very positive effect on attitudes at KSG, although it didn't start out that way. I think cultures have mixed well and honesty is encouraged in and out of class settings. For KSG, this is the first of many steps we have to take in adjusting our expectations to our changing communities. **WT**

MARTHA EDMONDS,
ALBANY, N.Y.

I have always wanted to help people. Injustice and poverty have always been a deep concern of mine. When I moved back to my hometown to complete my master's degree, I was devastated by the condition of the community I had grown up in. The South End of Albany was the city's first neighborhood and the point from where the whole city grew. At one time, it had a busy port and trucking industry, pharmacies and green grocers who kept neat friendly stores. Pizza parlors, restaurants and businesses used to line the streets.

When I moved to California in 1987, the community was once again on the road to being vibrant again after a slight dip. New homes were being built, buildings were being rehabbed and the town was booming.

But when I returned there, it looked like a war zone. Businesses were closed and buildings were vacant and boarded up. As I looked around, I kept asking my sister what happened. Many people were just like me. After they got an education, they moved to the suburbs, leaving behind the poorest residents. It really bothered me and I began to chant that

somehow I could help improve conditions.

I never would have guessed that just two years later I would be given the responsibility from the federal government to do just that. HUD had just instituted a new initiative called the Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships. My job was to organize local churches to create partnerships that would work on the numerous problems facing inner-city communities.

I knew immediately where I would start. I went right back to my old neighborhood, and to the church where I had been baptized as a young child. Although there was a new minister, I could see faith at work from the moment we began to talk. He was just as frustrated and disturbed about the community as I was and was ready to make a change. Over the next year, we worked hand in hand to build a partnership of all the neighborhood churches. I helped them to develop a survey and identify what residents felt was needed in the community. The list was long.

The community had a problem with drugs, unemployment, dilapidated housing and vio-

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**The SGI-USA's
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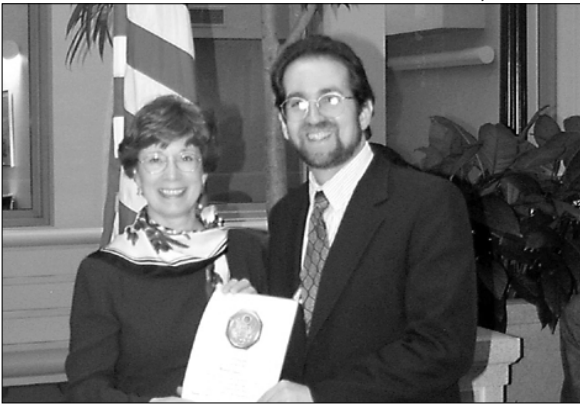
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Photo by JOHN CARPENTER



Mike Levine, receives an award for his 'welfare-to-work' efforts from Karen Miller, Mid-Atlantic Region Secretary's Representative of HUD.

MIKE LEVINE, PHILADELPHIA

Mike Levine, a 20-year HUD employee and a 21-year SGI-USA member, had directed HUD programs at a national level. His entire family, including wife Christine and 3-year-old son, Seth, relocated from Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia for Mike's dream job. "As a college undergraduate, I wrote an essay on what I wanted to do when I grew up," he explains. "What I wrote on that paper is now my job description as a Community Builder. When I was first hired by HUD, I chanted that I would stay in the capital a few years, learn the bureaucracy, then take my knowledge to the local level to help communities. Now, unexpectedly after 20 years, this forgotten dream became a reality! It is amazing that this happened without my sacrificing the salary and retirement benefits I need to help support my family."

Mike's focus as a Community Builder is to help people move from welfare to work. Philadelphia has 60,000 welfare families who must find jobs. One-quarter of them live in HUD housing. With Mike's leadership, the HUD Pennsylvania Office seizes any opportunity to help their clients succeed. He trained 1,000 housing managers and resident leaders on welfare reform laws, welfare-to-work resources, HUD grant programs and children's health insurance. He and his colleagues promote electronic education where welfare families live, starting computer learning centers in housing projects, sending 300 recycled computers to nonprofits, and bringing child-care training to 70 low-income residents. They enhance access to jobs and wealth by promoting housing mobility and home-ownership programs. Mike works with other federal agencies in a Mid-Atlantic Federal Welfare Reform task force. He wrote Pennsylvania's state policy for including HUD on local Workforce Invest-

ment Boards, and is cataloging HUD resources for the State Workforce development and Welfare systems.

Mike's work earned him two of very few 1999 HUD Best Practice Awards given to HUD employees, and one of 13 HUD year-end Outstanding Achievement awards. He was praised with two colleagues in a prominent feature on Community Builders in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Pennsylvania's largest daily newspaper. President Clinton's report on the campaign to promote free children's health insurance singled out his work.

Mike reports: "After 19 years in Washington, D.C., I felt like a paper pusher with no way to see how my policies affected people's lives. As a Community Builder, I enjoy building partnerships between community organizations, colleges, businesses, states and local agencies." These partnerships are key to assembling the needed resources to solve urban problems.

Using computer learning centers as an example, these resources include: the physical space for the center, space renovations, computers, computer repair work, software, staff, volunteer teachers and tutors. Mike says: "The results are clear and visible. People's lives change when they first turn on a computer, earn a GED, get a job, partake in after-school programs or correspond with older or younger generations.

"I see myself as a social entrepreneur whose big challenge lies in constantly pushing myself to develop, engage and bring together an ever-widening circle of contacts. At times I perceive a dead end when I get off-track, run out of energy or face rejection from a desired partner. At such times, I dig deep into my life and SGI experiences to win over that obstacle and move on to the next. I attribute my success to my daily chanting, SGI youth division training, and my relationship with my mentor, Daisaku Ikeda." **WT**

IRMA GORHAM, MANHATTAN, N.Y.

One of my many benefits upon receiving the Gohonzon in 1982 was to land a job with the New York Housing Authority—the largest and best-run housing authority in the country. I joined them in 1984 and for 15 years played a major role in the construction of public housing in New York City. I was responsible for a development team consisting of city planners, architects, engineers, housing developers and builders. Under my direction, more than 2,500 new units of housing construction were completed with federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

I know that my success on the job was the direct result of my Buddhist practice. My life had purpose and at the center was the need to be a capable person in society. SGI President Ikeda's guidance emphasizes that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism embraces the universe, the world, reality, daily life and human beings who work to save others from suffering one by one. It is the fundamental source for self-improvement encompassing society and eternity. Therefore, we should live out our lives basing ourselves upon this Buddhism and build a superb existence and a tremendous state of life. Whenever I encountered an obstacle or challenge in my workplace, I would return to this prime guidance, chant with the members and study Nichiren Daishonin's writings.

By 1997, I was at the top of my career both professionally and monetarily. However, my work



Irma Gorham of Clifton, N.J., Community Builder, Fellow Specialist in Real Estate Property Disposition.

environment started to change drastically. A rash of new executives appointed by elected city officials came on board to run the Housing Authority. Low morale, infighting and employee firing were at an all time high. Those in power possessed the tendency to control staff and used staff merely as means for their own benefits. These actions were indications to explore looking for a new job, although I had been at the Housing Authority for 15 years. I determined to find a new position by the end of 1998.

In November 1998, I was interviewed by HUD for a Community Builder position. After I participated in the temple issue seminar at FNNC, I was offered a position to start my fellowship at HUD New York office a few months later in March 1999.

Selection as a Community Builder Specialist was the answer to my prayers to find a new position that would allow me to use both my humanistic and technical talents to work for the betterment of society. I am one of 84 Specialists in the country. My

primary responsibility as a Property Disposition Specialist is to promote and formulate partnerships among leaders from a broad spectrum of the community to increase home ownership especially in under served areas in New York and New Jersey. As a result of my efforts, community groups and local government entities are offered the opportunity to form partnerships to purchase HUD owned single family properties to make the American dream of owning a home a reality.

In performing my duties I am always cognizant of the fact that I am here to serve the client by sharing my experiences. I am very happy that I am able to draw upon my ability as a team leader to listen to the client's concerns and assist them in figuring out how to best use HUD and other agencies' resources to reach their goals.

During the last nine months I have been very happy working on a diverse array of issues. These issues range from organizing and conducting workshops on home-ownership opportunities, to educating lenders of the benefits to participating in HUD housing programs, as well as conducting advance work for President Clinton's visits to New Jersey to promote his new Market Initiatives for cities left behind in the economy.

At times the job can be very frustrating because the property disposition program is driven by federal regulations. Compliance to the regulations is a must to obtain the necessary approval and funding. However, through my prayer and as partners working for change and making the dream a reality, we always find a way to resolve the issues and create a win-win situation for all. **WT**

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lence. Working with no budget, I began to partner with local organizations to help them solve these problems. Through the strength of my Buddhist practice and tremendous effort, I established a partnership with the three major universities in our area, the State University of New York at Albany (SUNYA), the Albany Law School and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

SUNYA agreed to work with the community to create a redevelopment plan. The Department of Planning identified funding sources, surveyed open spaces to determine the type of use that would most benefit the community and to identify a strategy that would lead to a new revitalized community. In the spring, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Architectural Department will take that vision and expand on it by providing architectural drawings of the community's vision for the 21st century.

All of the churches were ac-

tively doing social service work in the community including food kitchens, food pantries and clothing pantries. Many of them fed over 100 people on a single afternoon. But all of the funding was coming out of church donations.

I began to educate the ministers on how to access federal and state funding to assist them in their efforts. The Albany Chapter of 100 Black Men, a group of black professors from the State University of New York, and the Albany Law School offered to develop a leadership training program to educate local ministers and residents about how to develop and manage a major program to seek outside funding. The group formed a task force that is developing curriculum on leadership development for ministers, local residents and youth.

HUD also provided \$100,000 for the City of Albany to create a task force to tackle the largest problems facing the city and through citizen input come up with a master revitalization plan.

HUD further provided technical assistance for an assessment of the needs for affordable housing in the community.

After much chanting and a year of hard work, I am finally seeing a glimmer at the end of the tunnel. The community has forward-moving activities and successful partnerships that will lead to a new future.

When I first came back to Albany, all I could see was abandoned houses and boarded-up stores. Now when I drive through the South End of Albany, I see how the power of faith and cooperation can make a difference. Although there are no new buildings, the fact that the plans are in the works and that people who have never worked together before are all working together, means that we are ending 1999 in the spirit of hope, cooperation and progress. That alone is a cause for this community to one day be a shining example of the power of faith in the 21st century. **WT**

Bonding With the World's Indigenous Peoples

Photo by JOANNE TACHIBANA



SGI-USA's hula group in Hilo, Hawaii, participates in the opening-day ceremonies of the 5th Triennial World Indigenous People's Conference for Education; they made up part of the group of 1,000 hula dancers who performed.

The 5th Triennial World Indigenous People's Conference for Education was held on the Big Island of Hawaii in Hilo with 2,500 delegates and 3,000 family and group members, drawing media attention to this locale. Its theme was *Aia Na Ha'ina I Loko O Ka Kou* (The Answers Lie Within Us).

In this The Year of Victory in the Community, Hilo's SGI-USA members participated in this historic event. The issue of the rights of indigenous peoples struck an important chord

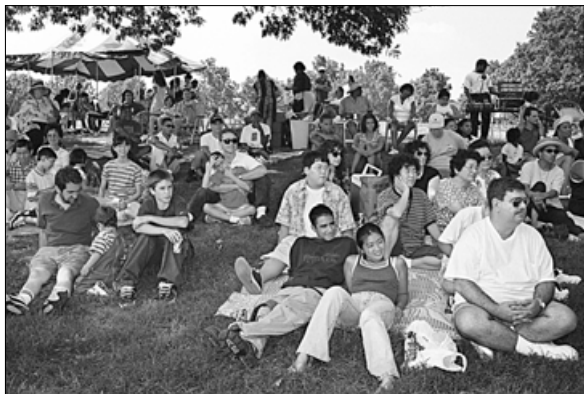
with native Hawaiian and SGI-USA district leader, Kimo Awai, who teaches Hawaiian studies and is also a *kumu* (teacher of) *hula*. Mr. Awai took the initiative to involve his SGI-USA hula group, which includes non-SGI members, to volunteer their talents for the WIPCE.

Months of preparation and rehearsals took place in Hilo. Numerous meetings with community leaders and volunteers were held to work out the strategic details. The culmination of

the opening day events was the parade of nations with delegates from 25 countries dressed in native costumes. Indigenous groups came from as far away as India, Peru, Israel, Norway, Slovenia, Japan, Australia, Africa, Spain, Japan, Canada, the Pacific Rim Islands and from the United States. SGI members from Australia and Japan were also part of the international contingent.

—JOANNE TACHIBANA and
TRIXIE PETROSKI

Philadelphia Holds Youth-Sponsored Festival



Members and guests enjoy the festivities for the 'Day of Victorious Philadelphia' celebration at Pachella Park in Roxborough, Pa., Aug. 28.

Members of the Philadelphia Region joined together Aug. 28 at Pachella Park in Roxborough, Pa., to celebrate the region's victories in propagation, publications and the issue of the temple through August.

Sponsored by the youth, the

summer festival, titled "Day of Victorious Philadelphia," gave hundreds of members and guests a chance to enjoy a beautiful afternoon full of food, games and entertainment.

On one level, the festival celebrated the region's progress through August on its way to

meeting all of its 1999 goals. But on another level, the gathering celebrated the personal victories achieved by everyone in the region.

Among the highlights were a performance of "Conquista" by the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra; a beautiful children's tale titled "Princess and the Moon," performed by the Boys and Girls Group; a youth talent show; and an original play titled "The Garden Party," which recounted one man's journey to victory through propagation.

Following the festival, David Goodman, who helped organize the event, said that for him, the day could be summarized by something he witnessed before the festivities even got under way. "I was watching eight or nine guys, all representing different races and backgrounds, carrying a picnic table and thought to myself, 'Wow, now this is what kosenrufu is all about.'"

—DAVID SHADOVITZ

Memphis Youth Peace Summit Held at Pink Palace Museum



SGI-USA youth join youth with various organizations and share their views on the many challenges they face in today's society.

The first community-wide Youth Peace Summit was held at the Pink Palace Museum in Memphis on Oct. 30. One participant was Harold Ford Jr., a 29-year-old U.S. Congressman from Tennessee, who talked about individual responsibility and individual choice in the context of junior high and high school. "When I was 4 years old and my father took his oath of office in Congress," he said, "I was with him and I said what he said and knew that I wanted to do what he did, even though I didn't understand it. So when I was your age, I knew I had to make tough choices to reach my goal."

Nothing could be more serious than the purpose of this event—to provide a forum for the community's youth to voice their concerns about violence and propose solutions. But it had a joyful side, too, embodied in the hopeful rainbow of young faces, and in the spirited, disciplined performance of Skittles, the Memphis youth division's own drill dance "dream team." In perfect unison, they accomplished each step of their dance routine to the irresistibly youthful beat of "Lollipop" by Aqua.

The event was jointly sponsored by the City of Memphis Center for Neighborhoods and

the SGI-USA. Participants included delegates representing seven community youth organizations: Goodwill Boys & Girls Clubs, Bridge Builders, Emmanuel Episcopal Center, Girls Center, Ridgeway High School, the SGI Youth Division, Memphis and YCAP (a YMCA-sponsored Community Action Program). Media presence included local Channel 13 (FOX), the *Commercial Appeal* (the largest local daily), *Time* magazine and *Vanity Fair*.

The summit kicked off with a reading of the Victory Over Violence proclamation by Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton, followed by the SGI-USA video, "Quest for Peace." Participants were invited to sign a personal pledge for nonviolence.

The young delegates were the focus and power of the program. One by one, each organization's chosen representatives mounted the stage, in groups or singly, to speak for hundreds of their peers. All of them made thoughtful, valid points about problems well known to them: robbery, rape, drugs, AIDS, gang violence, teen pregnancy, gun violence, safety and the cleanliness of their neighborhoods.

—GERTRUDE MOELLER

Creating a Culture of Peace

Working together and interacting with a large network of activists is a thought-provoking experience that enriches one's mind....," said Mikhail Gorbachev, describing The State of the World Forum. As part of this weeklong event in the beginning of October, San Francisco SGI-USA members joined together with members from 34 other peace organizations to cosponsor a panel discussion at the Herbst Theatre tonight near city hall.

The event, which was open to the public, was titled "Creating a Culture of Peace for the 21st Century," and was attended by more than 1,000 people.

The first panel was called "Eliminating the World's Nuclear Weapons," during which Dr. Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, focused on the Y2K problem after other panelists spoke. Dr. Caldicott explained that imbedded chips within computer systems may become the



Dr. Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, focuses on the Y2K problem at the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, Oct. 3.

cause of untold suffering and labeled the current situation an "acute clinical emergency." She stated that nuclear weapons systems may be affected, and proposed that first strike weapons worldwide be taken off their current alert status to prevent any accidental nuclear strikes and retaliations. She also proposed that nuclear reactors worldwide be equipped with diesel backup systems to prevent possible meltdowns in the event power is disrupted.

The second panel then presented "How the Internet and Global Communications Offer New Opportunities for Positive Social Change and Human Development." Presentations in-

cluded the NET AID Concert (held on Oct. 9) by Diane Merrick from Cisco Systems. The program incorporates 1,500 servers with a capacity for 60 million hits per hour, with a goal to impact extreme poverty on a global scale.

Another example of the positive use of the Internet is helping farmers to know the fair market value of their goods, and thus eliminating corruption from the middleman, and in turn allowing them to better support their families.

Touraj Rahimi, president of Schools on Line, explained his goal is to create an alliance for global learning, and to connect children through the Internet.

Ogden, Utah, Holds World Peace Prayer Meeting

Photo by KEITH ROBERTS



Ogden, Utah, members held their first World Peace Prayer Meeting, Oct. 2. There were lots of guests and even some members from Salt Lake City who attended to support us. We were invited to hold our meeting at a local Christian Resource Center, as there was a good amount of interest in our movement. The center is open to all faiths to use, and we were the first Buddhists to do so. During the meeting, our youth shared information about their Victory Over Violence campaign. Even the young children enjoyed themselves.

— JUDY and MARTIN HOLT

Barbara Marx Hubbard, president of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution, explained that the steps we take at this time will spell either death [for the planet] or birth into the next step of human evolution, which she calls uni-

versal humanity. By using communications technology, her current project is to help people with similar passions and resources to link up together, and thus help liberate the creative potential within each person.

— RON BAIRD

Toward a Brilliant Third Stage of Life

Photo by DOUG FRYDENLUND



Several performances at Virginia Area's first meeting of the Treasure Group included the Charlie Chaplin chorus.

Some 76 pioneer members attended their first meeting of the Treasure Group with the theme, "Create a Brilliant Third Stage of Life." There were also 18 guests in the audience. Herbie Mapes referenced SGI President Ikeda's July 17 guidance by saying: "A person with faith is always youthful.... There is no such thing as retiring in faith. He mentioned several people who had made great contributions to humanity in the latter days of their lives such as Dr. Weisenthal, Mother Theresa and Rosa Parks. Senior Services information was shared

also, alerting those who attended to know what is available for them in the cities where they reside. Senior Vice General Director David Kasahara told all: "I express my sincere congratulations on your untiring, many years of sincere contributions to support kosen-rufu activities in the United States.... No matter how old we become, no matter what kind of obstacles we may face, as long as we realize the preciousness of our lives, there is always a way to overcome them."

—PHYLLIS LOWERY

Washington, D.C., Members Support United Nations Community Day

Residents of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area celebrated the 54th anniversary of the United Nations Oct. 23 at the Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The SGI-USA cosponsored the United Nations Association-National Capital Area's U.N. Global Community Day that focused on "Kosovo and Its Aftermath: Implications for the International Community."

An award went to the SGI-USA Youth Division for its "Victory Over Violence" campaign. Washington journalist Gail Scott presented 16 organizations with the 1999 UNA-NCA Blue Ribbon Awards for program excellence in furthering the ideals of the United Nations, including Africare, the American Bar Association, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the League of Women Voters (D.C.), Youth for Understanding and others.

The SGI-USA Chorus led a rendition of "Happy Birthday" to the United Nations and sang several original songs, including "Peace Begins With Me."

—ROBIN MEADER



(L-r) H.E. Lubica Z. Acevska, Ambassador of Macedonia to the United States; Ambassador Princeton Lyman, former Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs; Lt. Col. Charles Shotwell, Senior Military Fellow, National Defense University; John Nylander, Washington, D.C., Youth Division member; Richard Rowson, Chair, U.N. Global Community Day, and Ambassador Jonathan Dean, President, UNA-NCA.

Notice from the Subscriptions Department

The Subscriptions Department has a new fulfillment house to handle the payment processing, renewal of subscriptions and generating mailing labels. For the past few years, these functions were handled by different companies. With the new fulfillment house, there should be less errors, more accountability, better customer service as well as the publications being delivered in a timely manner.

Although the changes are internal and do not affect the readers directly, the most visible difference will be the renewal and order forms. Each publication will have its own renewal and order form and payment needs to be made accordingly. However, at this time, the fulfillment house will accept the current order forms, excluding the three years' subscriptions, which the SGI-USA does not offer anymore. We hope having a new fulfillment house will enable us to extend improved customer services overall.

The Golden Stage Group for Members Over 60

The National Preparatory Committee has spent almost two years creating the following guidelines for members over 60. Recently, in response to a request for a name for these members, SGI President Ikeda gave the name the Golden Stage Group. In addition to providing mutual support and encouragement, it is hoped that this new group will give each and every member a place to contribute his or her unique capability and share the precious experience they accumulated over their many years of practice.

President Ikeda gave the following guidance after he met with Mrs. Rosa Parks several years ago. "What is important in life? It is to continue struggling to the end. Those who continue struggling are great. There is no such thing as 'retiring' in life. This is all the more true in the world of faith. Our faith should not be affected by our having reached retirement age or having grown advanced in years."

In creating this group, it is our sincerest desire that each individual will enjoy their life

fully while serving others and continuing to be cheerful in their activities for kosen-rufu. This will allow them to take an active role in supporting our successors in any way possible in order to develop our organization for the sake of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, humanity and the happiness of the people.

Motto:

1. Lifelong seeking spirit
2. Lifelong youthful spirit
3. Lifelong serving spirit.

Start date: January 2, 2000

Age 60 and above. This group will be part of the men's and women's divisions (similar to how the Student Division is included in the youth division.) At the age of 60 every member will be able to participate in this group's activity but should also continue to participate in other SGI-USA activities and even hold leadership positions within the men's or women's divisions.

For example, a 62-year-old may hold the position of vice women's chapter leader and be a member of this group at the same time.

For example, a 65-year-old Area Guidance Staff may also be a member of this group.

Primary Focus:

1. Every member will maintain good health and longevity.
2. Each member will attend discussion meetings.
3. Each member will create an environment that is filled with mutual support and encouragement among the membership.

Secondary Focus: Support the vertical line leaders in their efforts to care for the members through home visits, personal guidance, promoting publications, and if necessary, form specialized group(s) from among the group's membership. For example, a home visit group might be appropriate.

Activity: We suggest this group meet together once or twice a year at the most appropriate level of the organi-



Participants at the 'third stage of life' conference held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Dec. 9-12.

zation, such as area or region. We would like to strongly suggest inviting MD and WD leaders to the meeting. Their active participation such as sharing experiences, etc. in the discussion meeting is an extremely important source of inspiration for the other members and their valuable contribution to kosen-rufu.

Leadership: At the onset, please appoint individual(s) region-level coordinators. Their

sole purpose will be to communicate to the members. Zone-level leadership is not needed because this group will rarely meet as a zone. Other appointments may be proposed in the future accordingly.

At the recent 'third stage of life' conference held Dec. 9-12 at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, SGI General Director Eiichi Wada announced Kazue Elliot and David Kasahara as nationwide coordinators. **WT**

SGI-USA Study Department Guidelines for 2000

I. Goals

In his essay series titled "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*," SGI President Ikeda clarifies the purpose of Buddhist study:

- It deepens faith.
- It gives impetus to the advance of kosen-rufu.
- It is the key to establishing a new humanistic philosophy.

The SGI-USA Study Department adopts these three primary points as our mottoes and encourages all members to challenge them regardless of their study department level, as follows:

Buddhist study deepens faith.

- Study and promote *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* every day to deepen faith and advance our human revolution.
- Study President Ikeda's guidance every day to gain more understanding of Buddhism and take action in our daily lives as we learn from our mentor. (Promote the book *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, created from the series "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra," which appears in *Living Buddhism*.)

Buddhist study gives impetus to the advance of kosen-rufu.

- Make study a part of our daily kosen-rufu activities such as at discussion meetings, world peace prayer meetings, home visits, leaders meetings, etc.
- Take action in daily life that reflects that we have grasped the teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Buddhist study is the key to establishing a new humanistic philosophy.

- Take the initiative in spreading Buddhist teachings for the peace and prosperity of humankind based on a clear understanding of Buddhist principles.
- Take the lead in our battle as the Daishonin willed in his writings to refute erroneous teachings that deceive people and disrupt the kosen-rufu movement.

II. Study Activity Guidelines

Bimonthly study of the Daishonin's writings in even-numbered months. It is recommended that bimonthly study meetings of the Daishonin's writings be held by chap-

ter, led by chapter, area or region leaders. Each area, region or zone should hold a preparation meeting the month before the study meeting. Material will be selected from newly published *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* and a study guide will be published in odd-numbered months in *Living Buddhism*.

Other study meetings in odd-numbered months.

It is recommended that smaller study meetings be held at the chapter or district level in every odd-numbered month, so that there is a study meeting for members to attend every month. *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra* (to be published in five volumes in 2000 and 2001) should preferably be studied in dialogue format rather than in lecture format. Study material could also be selected from SGI President Ikeda's speeches or curriculum study material.

Curriculum study and examinations. The current study curriculum will not be revised until it is completed in 2001, even though many areas do not use the program except a few

months before a particular level examination. The schedule of exams is as follows:

- April 30, 2000 — Entrance-level Examination.
- Oct. 22, 2000 — Elementary-level Examination.
- Spring 2001 — Entrance-level Examination.
- Fall 2001 — Advanced-level Examination.

Supporting study material for activities in the *World Tribune*.

The Study Department will publish study articles, Buddhist terms and Q & A for new members regularly in the *World Tribune* designed to be used in discussion meetings, kosen-rufu gongyo meetings, home visits, etc.

Soka Spirit movement.

Occasionally, the Study Department in each area or region will sponsor Q & A meetings to clarify the importance of the temple issue, based on *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*.

Study Department events for the public.

At least twice in 2000, the Study Department in each area or region will sponsor public

seminars, lectures, panel discussions, etc., at universities, halls, libraries, etc., to introduce the humanism of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the philosophy of the SGI in society.

Study Department Conference at FNCC.

The 1st Nationwide Study Department Conference at FNCC will be held on April 20-23. *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* and various Buddhist concepts will be studied extensively and at the same time, the future direction of our study activities will be discussed.

Study Department organization.

After each region establishes a region, area and chapter Study Department leadership structure, we would like to ask the region personnel board to look into the possibility of the appointing of district study coordinators to promote study activities on the forefront of the organization.

We would like to establish a nationwide research staff within the Study Department to integrate resources for supporting the production of study materials. **WT**

Seattle Incident Trial Verdict Scheduled for March 21

By TED MORINO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Closing arguments in the Seattle Incident trial were heard at the Tokyo District Court on Dec. 7. At the next court session, scheduled for March 21, the presiding judge, Fumio Shimoda, is expected to announce a verdict. The trial, which began in 1995, involves a defamation lawsuit filed by High Priest Nikken and Nichiren Shoshu against the Soka Gakkai and its publications. To win the trial, Nikken must convince the court that Mrs. Hiroe Clow's account of his March 1963 dispute with prostitutes and subsequent encounter with the Seattle police is untrue. The account was carried in Soka Gakkai publications in 1992.

The Soka Gakkai defense attorneys emphasized in their closing argument that the verdict

should hinge on who is telling the truth: Is it Mrs. Clow? Or is it Nikken? The defense reviewed the many holes and inconsistencies in Nikken's testimony while reminding the court that Mrs. Clow's testimony has been corroborated by police officers at the scene of the incident.

The Soka Gakkai attorneys again focused on Nikken's questionable diary of his 1963 trip to America. The crucial March 19, 1963, diary entry suggests that Nikken went to sleep at 1:00 a.m. that evening, which would not be true if he were with the police at 2:00 a.m., as Mrs. Clow testified.

The defense wondered why, although Nikken allegedly discovered the diary on March 17, 1995, he did not immediately submit it to the court. On June 26, 1995, in fact, the plaintiff's attorney repeated to the court Nikken's previous statement that he had not left the hotel the

night of the incident. On Sept. 29, 1995, however, Nikken suddenly announced he had left his hotel after all — but still did not mention the diary. Only when the court rejected his attorneys' 1997 request to wind up the case and ordered Nikken to testify against their objections did he reveal the diary.

Defense attorneys also reminded the court that scientific tests conducted on the diary by the defense suggest that Nikken's bedtime for the March 19 entry was added at a later date.

The day before this session, on Dec. 6, the same court ruled in favor of Nichiren Shoshu in an entirely separate libel suit, which caused confusion when some tried to confuse SGI members that this ruling was on the Seattle Incident trial. The Dec. 6 ruling involved Nichiren Shoshu's suit against the Soka Gakkai over photographs published in 1992 of Nikken with

several geisha, or female escorts. The Soka Gakkai is appealing this decision, and Mr. Morio Miyahara, an attorney for the Soka Gakkai, states, "We have every expectation that we will win."

In 1992, based on the accounts of a number of people, the Soka Gakkai asserted that Nikken sometimes frequented geisha houses, a practice typically carried out by the very wealthy in Japan. Nichiren Shoshu denied that Nikken went to geisha houses, and the photographs of the high priest surrounded by geisha were subsequently published to document the Soka Gakkai's claim. At the request of the priest Hoshio Shiina, who was present at the November 1986 party from which the photographs came and provided the Soka Gakkai with them, the photographs were cropped and altered (the eyes of the geisha

were masked and in one of the photos a man present was removed) to protect the identity of the others present.

The court ruled that the changes to the photographs were unacceptable, "even in the case of a person who repeatedly violates ethical norms and practices" or who would "deserve the criticism of society as a religious leader." While Nichiren Shoshu demanded that the Soka Gakkai must publish an apology, the judge said no. Nichiren Shoshu also requested that the Soka Gakkai never print the geisha photos again; this was also rejected.

While Nichiren Shoshu demanded that the Soka Gakkai pay damages of \$10 million, the judge reduced the sum to \$40,000. And instead of paying more than \$31,000 for Nichiren Shoshu's filing fees for the suit, the judge asked the Soka Gakkai to pay only about \$200. **WT**

Congressman George E. Brown Remembered

By JEFF FARR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Riverside, Calif., members on Dec. 12 held a tribute to the late congressman George E. Brown, a great friend of the SGI organization. Known as Mr. Science in Congress, due to his strong interest in how science can contribute to a peaceful world society, Congressman Brown was very supportive of the SGI-cosponsored "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth

Century" exhibition, delivering a speech in Congress describing it last year.

A champion of civil rights and a fierce opponent of the Vietnam war, Congressman Brown, who died in July at age 79, was also the first elected official in the world to oppose High Priest Nikken's destruction of the Grand Main Temple. In his protest letter to Nikken, Congressman Brown deemed the razing of the Grand Main Temple a crime against humanity.

Near his life's end, the con-

gressman began a correspondence with SGI President Ikeda. The two hoped to hold a dialogue on science and religion.

To commemorate July 3, Day of Mentor and Disciple, Congressman Brown sent the SGI president a commemorative medal of President John F. Kennedy along with a picture of himself meeting Kennedy, whom he considered a mentor. He wrote to President Ikeda: "I find the Buddhist concept of mentor and disciple to be very profound. In life, having a men-

tor or someone you can deeply respect is always a springboard for growth."

President Ikeda responded, "I think it is quite remarkable that this day [the Day of Mentor and Disciple] should be the day prior to your Independence Day, a time when Americans remember and return to the original spirit of the Founders, seeking new lessons for the future from these great mentors of humankind."

The Brown family was presented the Soka University Award of Highest Honor and the SGI-USA Liberty Award at the Dec. 12 ceremony. The Brown family presented Soka University of America with a postcard discovered in the Library of Congress sent to first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi from the Nichiren Shoshu head temple. The postcard was inserted in five volumes of *The Essential Teachings of the Fuji School*. Mr. Makiguchi had requested from the head temple, which were later confiscated by the Japanese government and eventually wound up in the Library of Congress. **WT**

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Gloria Harrison, Congressman Brown's sister-in-law, admires a portrait of him at the Dec. 12 tribute.



Congressman Brown presented this commemorative medal of President Kennedy and a picture of himself meeting Kennedy to SGI President Ikeda.

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At the third Parliament of the World's Religions, Dec. 1-8, in Cape Town, South Africa: Mr. Bawa Jain (2nd from left), Executive Coordinator and Secretary General of the Millennium World Peace Summit (a meeting of some 1,000 religious and spiritual leaders to be held at the United Nations in August 2000) with SGI-USA member Nancy Simms (far left), Rabbi and Mrs. Awraham Soetendorp of Holland and Margaret Sczerny of Austria. Along with South African Congresswoman Ela Gandhi, Jain, founder of the World Movement for Nonviolence, presented the Gandhi-King Award for former South African President Nelson Mandela at a plenary session of the Parliament.

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South African SGI members (l-r) Janine Du Preez, Anthony George and Khosi Kubeka greet visitors to the information booth at the third Parliament of the World's Religions. (Top, right) SGI-USA's Children's Rights Exhibit on display at the Cape Town Civic Centre.

Photos by AL ALBERGATE

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THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

Okinawa's 'Monument to World Peace'



Okinawa is beautiful. A "land of light." Each time I gaze up at the brightness of the blue Okinawan sky, I think of the day when, instead of an early summer breeze, a brutal gale of steel and lead filled the air.

I think of the day when the blue waters seemed to groan under the immense weight of 1,500 battleships, and of the summer when the blue-green mountains were laden with destruction.

Japan had used Okinawa as a shield to protect its main islands from enemy attack, casting it off and assigning its inhabitants to death.

Okinawa's people were offered up alive for slaughter, and the island echoed with screams of hellish agony. In payment for its sacrifice in the Battle of Okinawa, the island was made into a nuclear airbase after the war. The "Monument to World Peace" is a huge concrete mass, 92 feet long and nine feet high.

It was once a launch-site for American Mace-B nuclear missiles. Twenty-four such missiles were deployed at this

site, a single one capable of delivering a warhead with the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb. Within their range was every major Chinese city. Any one of these missiles could have reached Beijing in an hour and a half.

It was a base capable of executing a horrific war—a crystallization of humanity's inner darkness.

What if the funds, the know-how, the human resources and energy employed to build this base of war had been used instead to build friendships? What if the effort required to prepare for the threat of war had instead been directed at creating bonds of trust that could do away with that threat?

From that day, the world would change completely. All depends on whether humanity has such courage.

From the vantage point of Okinawa, Japan's true nature is clearly visible. The kind of heavy pressure that disregards basic human rights continues today. Is it permissible for Japan to continue forever treading

upon the people of Okinawa, who have already shed so many tears of misery? Can it be called democracy when a selfish majority persists in sacrificing those in a weaker position than themselves? To enjoy security built upon the victimization of others is a shameful thing for a human being. It is criminal.

Japan can only be called just when it exerts itself body and soul to transform Okinawa—to turn it from a place that has witnessed some of the greatest misery of the 20th century, to a place of superlative happiness in the 21st century. Unless it does so, Japan cannot be called a democracy. Nor could we expect its prosperity to continue. I say this because those who discriminate against others will assuredly reap the ill rewards of their own injustice.

I first saw this missile site on the property of our training center in Okinawa in March, 1983. The site was by then an abandoned relic that local residents wanted to see demolished. And while I could well understand their feelings, I was

opposed. "No. Let's preserve these remnants forever. Let's leave them as evidence that humanity once engaged in something so foolish as war!"

"Here in Okinawa, because it is a focal point for those concerned with world peace, there already exists the 'Lily Monument' and the 'Monument to the Brave.' In a different sense, why don't we turn this missile site into a foundation for our thoughts and reflections on peace, not only for Japan, but for the whole world?"

In this way, the "Monument to World Peace" was born. These destructive caverns of death have been turned into a fortress for a paean to life, where even our friends from China can gather. Adorning the monument are statues of youth making a vow for peace.

Nuclear weapons and war both arise from the human mind. But we must change the "target" of the human will. We must work to achieve a great turnaround in this realm!

The monument symbolizes our calling to that task. All the

tragedies of human history are crystallized on this island. Therefore, that tragic history must begin its transformation from Okinawa.

One day in the future, a young boy of Okinawa will ask, "Father, what is a nuclear bomb? Was there once such a thing?"

To which his father will reply, "Yes son. Long, long ago, human beings did some very strange things. They hated one another, and built many machines that could kill, aiming them at each other. And this they called 'security.'"

And some day a young girl of Okinawa will ask, "Mother, what is war? Was there such a thing in the past?"

To which her mother will answer, "Yes, my dear. Long, long ago, human beings did some very peculiar things. They killed and injured one another, and they caused much blood and many tears to flow. And this, they said, was 'for the sake of peace.'"

Today let us build a foundation of joy for the sake of this brilliant tomorrow.

Eight in a series

La SGI-USA Elige Nuevo Director General



Daniel Nagashima

LOS ANGELES, CA -El Consejo Administrativo de la Soka Gakkai Internacional (SGI)-USA anunció hoy el nombramiento de Daniel Nagashima como Director General, el tercero de la asociación Budista desde que se fundó en 1960.

Nagashima reemplaza a Fred Zaitzu, quien ejerció este cargo desde 1992 y a quien se le reconoce ampliamente por su liderazgo durante un importante período de transición. El supervisó numerosas reformas con el fin de hacer el grupo más democrático y humanista. El señor Zaitzu continuará a sirviendo a la organización como Consejero Ejecutivo y Presidente de la Junta de Directores. Al aceptar este cargo, el cual es por un período de tres años renovables, Nagashima afirmó que apoyaría todos los esfuerzos de otras personas y actuaría como un genuino "servidor" de los 300,000 miembros de la SGI-USA.

Daniel ("Danny") Nagashima, quien es ciudadano naturalizado de Estados Unidos, nació en Ciudad Kawasaki, Japón, en 1949 y se trasladó a los Estados Unidos en 1973. Es graduado de la Universidad Gakushin en el Japón y recibió una Maestría en Administración de Empresas (MBA) de la Universidad Estatal de California en Dominguez Hills. El ha desempeñado varios cargos con responsabilidad de líder en la organización norteamericana, incluyendo líder de la juventud a nivel nacional (1989), líder regional de San Francisco (1991-1995) y director de la organización en el Sur de California desde 1995. Está casado con Mieko Kudo de Ciudad Kitakyushu, Japón, y tiene tres hijos, Julie (19), Daniel, Jr. (18) y Ruby (15).

El nombramiento de director general se hace a través de la recomendación llevada a un voto por una mayoría de dos tercios del Consejo Administrativo de la SGI-USA y luego es ratificado por la organización principal, la Soka Gakkai Internacional.

La SGI-USA es una asociación Budista de diversidad cultural, la cual tiene 71 centros por toda la nación. Sus actividades se basan en la comunidad e invitan a compartir valores de paz, cultura y educación

PUERTO RICO CELEBRA FESTIVAL CULTURAL DE LA JUVENTUD

‘Creando Valores a Través de la Música’

Por Delvis Griselle Ortiz

Foto por Angel Domenech



¡Alegría, gracia y pasión! Los miembros en Puerto rico expresan su talento.

El Área de Puerto Rico de la Soka Gakkai-USA, marcó un nuevo comienzo en su ruta hacia el logro del Kosen-rufu con la celebración del Primer Festival Cultural de la Juventud. con el firme propósito de hacer una causa importante en pro del desarrollo de los miembros en Puerto Rico, la División Juvenil respaldada decididamente por los líderes de la organización se dio a la tarea

de organizar el Festival que se celebró en el Centro Comunal de la Organización en San Juan el pasado 21 de noviembre.

Fueron muchos los obstáculos, hasta se anunció la llegada del Huracán Lenny días antes del Festival. Sin embargo, no hubo reto que lograra derrotar la fuerte determinación de los miembros. Ante tal determinación hasta el Huracán pasó de largo y no tocó

la isla.

Los beneficios no se hicieron esperar. Además de haber pasado una tarde hermosa disfrutando del talento de los miembros y compartiendo con los invitados, como resultado de este esfuerzo el Centro Comunal fue pintado, los jardines renovados y acondicionados. No obstante el mayor de los beneficios fue el logro de mayor

unidad entre los miembros. Utilizando como estandarte el tema "Creando Valores a Través de la Música", el espíritu de la Soka Gakkai reinó en la tarde del domingo cuando niños, adolescentes y adultos se unieron para reafirmar valores y educar sobre la lucha por crear armonía y paz. Para hacer la paz hay que contar con la alegría, la amistad y la tolerancia, la perseverancia

y la excelencia, por eso en el Festival estos ingredientes cobraron prominencia y de forma jocosa entrelazaron mágicamente el acto artístico en el que talentosos miembros actuaron, cantaron, bailaron y ejecutaron magistralmente hermosos temas musicales.

Véase Festival pág. IV

‘SPANISH PAGES’ EN LA RED CIBERNETICA (INTERNET)

Es con gran alegría que conmemoramos el 18 de noviembre-Día de la Soka Gakkai, con la inauguración del *World Tribune* "Spanish Pages" (páginas en Español) en el Internet.

Por mucho tiempo, miembros Hispanos que residen en diferente lugares del mundo han expresado la necesidad de tal objetivo.

En este sitio en la Comunidad Cibernética, los

miembros o cualquier visitante pueden obtener información sobre el Budismo y la Nichiren Daishonin y la SGI, tener acceso a material de estudio, orientaciones, noticias, etc.

Aspiramos incrementar la suscripción a nuestro periódico y que éste se convierta en el foro de la voz del pueblo. Visite las Páginas en Español a la dirección Web: www.spanishpages-sgi.org

Buscamos voluntarios para traducciones, correctores de prueba, escritores, redactores y fotógrafos favor de enviar información a: ccaro@spanishpages-sgi.org

LOGRAR AVANCES SENSACIONALES EN LA VIDA

Durante su reciente visita a los Estados Unidos, la Sub-jefa de la División de Damas, Yumiko Hachiya, brindó estímulo a título individual en los hogares y en pequeñas reuniones de grupo. Sus intervenciones en las reuniones, estuvieron matizadas por las historias de sus 49 años de práctica del Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin.

Cuando concluí los estudios secundarios, comencé a buscar trabajo. Cada día concurría a la sede principal de la Soka Gakkai en Shinanomachi, Tokio, con el propósito de entonar daimoku. Mi oración iba dirigida a lograr un trabajo que me permitiera salir temprano días de semana, fines de semana libres, de manera de poder asistir a las actividades y practicar el budismo libremente; además de todo esto, deseaba ganar mucho dinero.

Un día que me encontraba en la sede conocí a Daisaku Ikeda, quien era el dirigente de la juventud en ese entonces. Me dijo que budismo es ganar o perder. Añadió que dependía enteramente de mi fe y práctica, el que pudiese lograr mis sueños. Después de un tiempo, fui contratada en un banco. Resultó ser que tenía que trabajar todas las noches, al igual que los sábados y domingos, y mi remuneración era inferior al promedio. Me preocupé verdaderamente, sin embargo, hice la determinación de enfrentar cada dificultad.

Se llevaba a cabo una gran campaña de propagación en 1957-1958. Todos los reportes que recibía como dirigente de la división juvenil femenina me llegaban telefónicamente al banco a la línea del gerente de la sucursal; ¡eran tantas las llamadas que él me preguntó si yo estaba dirigiendo un negocio en otro sitio!

A decir verdad, yo deseaba trabajar en cualquier otro lugar. Pero el señor Ikeda dijo, "Una persona que no puede dedicarse plenamente a su lugar de trabajo, no logrará progresar." Por lo tanto, trabajé duro durante cinco años en el banco, y estos años se convirtieron en la fundación de mi práctica.

El 1º de abril de 1960, poco antes de su inauguración, el señor Ikeda me dijo: "Usted ha trabajado duro en el banco du-

rante cinco años. Ahora, por favor venga a trabajar para la Soka Gakkai." Me sentí emocionada. Era un sueño hecho realidad.

El 2 de octubre de 1960, el Pres. Ikeda partió para Hawaii y San Francisco en su primer viaje a ultramar. Tuve la oportunidad de ayudarlo a preparar su equipaje. Empaqué ramen, miso, sal, arroz, "searamen" algas y azúcar—empaqué como si fuese a visitar un país donde no había alimentos. En fotografías que había visto en revistas, parecía que todo el mundo usaba sombreros, por lo tanto, le conseguí un sombrero. Cuando el Pres. Ikeda regresó al Japón después de su viaje, dijo, "Nadie usa sombrero allá." Pero fue así como ustedes verán fotografías del Pres. Ikeda en sus viajes alrededor del mundo, en aquellos primeros días, usando dicho sombrero.

En "Honrando las Deudas de Gratitud," el Daishonin declara: "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo se propagará por diez mil años y más, por toda la eternidad, debido a que posee el poder benéfico de abrir los ojos ciegos de todos los seres humanos." (Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 4, pág. 272). Cuando Nikken suspendió conferir Gohonzon a los miembros de la SGI en 1991, él puso un alto a esta profecía. El Gohonzon es para toda la humanidad.

Aún me hace falta encontrar una persona que haya sido introducida a esta práctica por un sacerdote. Al escuchar la noticia de que los miembros de la SGI habían sido excomulgados, el Pres. Ikeda entristeció. El dijo, compartamos y atesoremos cualquier Gohonzon que tengamos.

En 1992, el señor Sendo Narita, uno de los sacerdotes que abandonó la Nichiren Shoshu, dijo: "Nosotros tenemos un Gohonzon que ha sido pasado de una generación a otra y que fue inscrito por Nichikan Shonin, el 26avo Sumo Prelado y restaurador del Budismo del Daishonin. Deseo que la Soka Gakkai lo utilice para conferirlo a la gente." A propósito de este Gohonzon, inmediatamente después de la guerra, fue el Gohonzon transcrito por Nichikan el que se dió a los nuevos miembros.

Yo recibí uno de estos Go-



Yumiko Hachiya
Sub-jefa responsable de la División de Damas de la SGI
honzon cuando me hice miembro. Pero en 1993, Nikken, torcidamente, ha dicho que la SGI está otorgando Gohonzon falsos.

De enero a marzo, hice un viaje a Estados Unidos, y entre los lugares que visité fui a Seattle y Chicago. Durante el mismo, me reuní con el señor Shoga Nishimura, un sacerdote de la Nichiren Shoshu en Chicago. Pienso que él trataba de persuadirme. Continuamente me repetía que la Soka Gakkai está confiriendo Gohonzon falsos. Le pregunté que quien la había hablado a él por primera vez de la práctica del Budismo del Daishonin; "miembros de la Soka Gakkai," dijo él. Yo le repliqué, "De no haber sido una realidad la Soka Gakkai, usted no estaría aquí como sacerdote." Entonces le dije, "Estudíemos el Goshō". El contestó, "Lo siento, pero no traje mi Goshō hoy". Era increíble que él no hubiese traído su Goshō a una reunión tan importante. Entonces le ofrecí el mío. El dijo, "Ese es un Goshō falso, no puedo usarlo."

Antes de la publicación del Goshō por la Soka Gakkai bajo la guía del segundo presidente, Josei Toda, el 28 de abril de 1952, los sacerdotes utilizaban el Goshō compilado por la Secta Minobu. El año pasado, ellos publicaron su propio Goshō, pero el mismo está basado en el trabajo de la Soka Gakkai. Fue un trabajo apresurado, y según entiendo tiene muchos errores.

Le dije al señor Nishimura que, en las "26 Amonestaciones," Nikko Shonin declara, "No sigan ni siquiera al sumo prelado, si el mismo va en contra de la Ley del Buda y propone sus propias interpretaciones"

(Goshō Zenshu, pág. 1618). Su respuesta fue que los escritos de Nikko Shonin no eran para los miembros, sino que su intención era dirigida a los sacerdotes. Le pedí que me indicara donde en el Goshō se encontraba esto y que por favor no dijera mentiras.

Cuando la reunión concluyó, el señor Nishimura se rehusó a entonar daimoku al Gohonzon que se encontraba entronizado en el lugar donde nos reunimos. El dijo que no podía entonar daimoku con alguien que se encuentra en el camino errado y quien no respeta al sumo sacerdote. Yo sentí que era sumamente desafortunado que se rehusara a sentarse frente al Gohonzon transcrito por Nittatsu Shonin, el predecesor de Nikken. Entonces, uno de los miembros americanos habló, "Usted está discriminando. Usted piensa que los sacerdotes están por encima de los laicos." Ante estas palabras, el señor Nishimura palideció.

Pude ver en este encuentro con el señor Nishimura, que en realidad los sacerdotes están tratando de engañar a los miembros americanos, quienes poseen corazones bondadosos y no están conscientes de su verdadera naturaleza. Por favor regresen a sus distritos y alienten aunque sea una persona a que comprenda la naturaleza del conflicto. Cuando realice tal esfuerzo, usted estará fortaleciendo su propia vida. Y las fuerzas protectoras en el universo que llamamos dioses budistas vendrán a su ayuda.

En "Sostener la Fe en el Gohonzon," el Daishonin afirma: "Cuando alguien abraza este mandala, todos los Budas y dioses budistas lo rodearán acompañándolo como su sombra, y le protegerán día y noche, tal como los guerreros guardan a su rey; como los padres aman a sus hijos, como el pez depende del agua, como los árboles y las plantas anhelan la lluvia, o como los pájaros dependen de los árboles. Usted debe confiar en él con todo su corazón." (MW-5, pág. 177). Hagan esta determinación y luego órenle al Gohonzon.

En "Carta a Sairenbo," el Daishonin afirma que cuando el bambú crece desarrolla anillos. Pero que para continuar creciendo él debe perforar a través de sus propios anillos. Es igual

con nosotros. Tenemos muchos problemas y enfrentamos diversos retos en la medida que intentamos hacer avances significativos en nuestras vidas. ¿Qué ocurre cuando continuamos haciendo importantes avances? Desarrollamos una condición de vida que es verdaderamente indestructible. El Pres. Ikeda dijo en una ocasión, que los obstáculos no tocan la puerta diciéndome estoy aquí; ellos se cuelan a través de nuestros puntos débiles.

En "Carta a Misawa," el Daishonin dice, "Aún cuando los que estudian budismo fuesen más numerosos que las partículas de polvo de la tierra, aquellos que realmente se convierten en budas, son menos que el número de partículas de polvo que uno podría colocar en una uña." (MW-3, pág. 251). ¿Por qué? El continúa explicando que los obstáculos y los beneficios existen uno al lado del otro. Los tres obstáculos y cuatro demonios surgen, dice él, "Aún si usted se las arregla para vencer los primeros seis, si usted es derrotado por el séptimo, no logrará la Budeidad." (MW-3, pág. 252). El séptimo es el más difícil de detectar; se le llama el demonio del sexto cielo, y entra en las vidas de personas con autoridad con el fin de hostigarle.

Usted podrá preguntarse a sí mismo: "¿Qué anda mal? Estoy entonando y dedicándome al Gohonzon. ¿Por qué me ocurre esto?" Usted podría encontrar estos obstáculos dentro de la organización creando conflicto entre usted y otras personas, de manera que ustedes dos no puedan llevarse bien. Esta función negativa hace que usted alimente sentimientos negativos y dudas. Es por ello que el Pres. Ikeda siempre dice, seamos amigos, seamos bondadosos los unos con los otros, trabajemos en unidad.

El demonio del sexto cielo se alojará en la vida de la persona más respetable para impedirle lograr la Budeidad. Sin embargo, cuando usted realmente entona daimoku, su fuerza vital se hace lo suficientemente fuerte que le permite contrarrestar los enemigos del Buda.

Ustedes conocen la historia de Devadatta, el primo del Buda

Véase Avances pág. III

Nuevo Amanecer para la Familia Caprille con la Alegría de la Fe

Experiencia

de Sara Caprille
redactada por Yolanda White
Houston, Texas

Foto por Hector Soto



De izquierda a derecha, Sara, su esposo Aldo, sus niños Johnathan y Pierro.

Mi nombre es Sara Caprille. Nací en Perú. Conozco el Budismo de Nichiren Daishonin hace 22 años cuando aún estaba soltera. Pero no fue hasta después de un año de casada, que mi esposo fue introducido a la práctica que empecé a practicar. En 1984 empezamos juntos a practicar seriamente y el 24 de noviembre de 1985 recibimos el Gohonzon. Recibimos muchos beneficios y naturalmente nuestra fe fortaleció. Uno de nuestros beneficios más grandes fue la llegada a los Estados Unidos de América. Al principio fue difícil vivir en los Estados Unidos pero después me acostumbré a la vida aquí. Tengo dos hijos cuyas edades son 16 y 9 años.

Aunque mi esposo y yo practicábamos con diligencia, tuvimos que enfrentar muchos problemas. Muchas veces hicimos decisiones equivocadas y erróneas. Yo tenía un carácter impulsivo y por las cosas más simples me enfurecía. También tenía celos de mi esposo. Estos comportamientos invariablemente resultaban en discordia entre la familia, desengaños, frustración y en mal entendimientos, mis hijos y mi matrimonio sufría. Después de 14 años de casada mi hogar estaba revuelto; durante ese período fue que mi esposo decidió irse. En el tiempo de la separación, mi esposo conoció otra mujer. El la traía a mi casa cuando visitaba a sus hijos.

Antes de nuestra separación tuvimos un pequeño ne-

gocio de limpieza, continuamos trabajando juntos, lado a lado. Traté de hablarle a mi esposo en la esperanza de mejorar la situación pero, su respuesta fue puros signos de disgusto. No quería nada conmigo ni tampoco con el Gohonzon. Después de este incidente pensé que mi vida se había acabado. Estuve angustiada y pensé que nada en mi vida tenía importancia. Me sentí inútil. En esos días lloré mucho en frente del Gohonzon y canté varias horas de daimoku. Rogué para ser una persona más fuerte y capaz para resolver todas mis dificultades. Sin poder ver cambios fui a mi líder en práctica. Ella me aconsejó de seguir haciendo mucho daimoku y actividades para kosen-rufu. Todavía todo siguió igual. Después de varios meses, empecé a sentirme más fuerte y con más confianza. Más importante, fue que comencé a sentirme en control de mi vida. Supe entonces que tenía tendencia de poner a mi esposo antes del Gohonzon. A través del daimoku decidí que venga lo que venga seguiré con el negocio y mi vida sola.

Empecé a sentir un verdadero aprecio para mi práctica. Sinceramente rogué para la sabiduría y la fuerza necesaria para mantener a mis hijos independientemente. Hice de 2 a 4 horas diarias de daimoku para mantener mi fe. Finalmente me di cuenta de que esta situación era mi karma y con cambiar mi actitud mis alrededores cambiarían también.

De repente empecé a pensar más positivamente. Mis

hijos ya no me veían llorando y desesperada. Me sentía más cómoda y me vieron practicar y haciendo muchas actividades. También tuve mucho apoyo de los amigos en budismo. Gracias a este obstáculo, tuve la oportunidad de cambiar mi karma. Soy capaz de confrontar muchas situaciones difíciles con más confianza y estoy aprendiendo a sentir profunda apreciación para mí misma.

Practicando este Budismo correctamente me ha ayudado a cambiar mi karma hasta el punto de abrir mi corazón y perdonar. Empecé a rogar para la felicidad de mi esposo. Esto era algo que no habría hecho en el pasado.

Llegó el momento en que pensé que no necesitaba ya de mi esposo, sin embargo, seguí rezando para su protección y

que también volviera a la práctica, fe y estudio correcto.

Después de 8 meses, mi esposo volvió a la casa pidiendo perdón. Preguntó si podía hacer gongyo y daimoku en frente del Gohonzon. Sin hacerle preguntas dejé todo lo ocurrido en el pasado. Juntos empezamos una renovada práctica. Mis oraciones han sido contestadas.

Cuando mi esposo se fue de la casa, perdimos la clientela y la casa iba a ser repositada. Por nuestra fe profunda y por ser tan trabajadores, nuestra clientela se ha vuelto y nuestras finanzas se han mejorado. Hemos pagado las deudas de la casa.

Lo único que puedo decir es de con total confianza, el poder del Gohonzon es absoluto, y ninguna pregunta queda sin respuesta. Mi esposo no

puede creer el cambio positivo que se ha reconocido en mí. Nos respetamos mutuamente y juntos dedicaremos nuestras vidas para el propósito de kosen-rufu.

¡Estoy tan feliz!

El presidente Ikeda, en diálogo sobre el Sutra del Loto escribió: "Fundamentalmente para las personas de fe en el Gohonzon todo lo que ocurre es un beneficio."

Continuaré mi práctica venga lo que venga.

Avances de la pág. II

Shakyamuni, quien intentó en numerosas ocasiones matarlo. El representa la condición de los celos. La gente como él no pueden admitir que exista nadie que ellos consideren que es más digno de respeto que ellos mismos. Y así, vemos el Sumo Prelado Nikken destruyendo todo lo que fue construido por su antecesor, Nittatsu. Su vida se ha convertido en la entidad del demonio del sexto cielo.

En Japón estoy a cargo de dos cabildos el Cabildo Adachi tiene 500 distritos, y el Cabildo

Shibaya tiene 110 distritos. Nuestros dirigentes de cabildo y de área van a los distritos, a fin de servir mejor a los miembros. Yo procuro que las reuniones sean alegres, ya que de esa manera nuestros miembros querrán volver. También las reuniones deben reflejar un propósito y determinación. En las reuniones es importante actuar con misericordia, a fin de alentar las vidas de las personas que están sufriendo. El Pres. Ikeda siempre me dice que si no me activo en bien de los miembros, envejeceré.

El próximo año es el 70avo Aniversario de la Soka Gakkai,

el 40avo Aniversario de ascensión a la dirigencia del Pres. Ikeda, y 100 aniversario del nacimiento del Pres. Toda. Por tanto, celebrémoslos de la mejor manera, retándonos a nosotros mismos y trabajemos para solucionar, al menos, una o dos situaciones en nuestras vidas antes del Año Nuevo.

Traducción del World Tribune del 19 de noviembre de 1999, págs. A-C Activity Focal Points Winter 2000 (Puntos importantes de las actividades para el año 2000) por: Miriam Pinilla. West Palm Beach, Florida

Foto por Angel Domenech



Nestor Torres

¡Alé!

¡Alé!

¡Alé!

Foto por Angel Domenech



Los Tesoros del Futuro compartiendo el Sabor y la Alegría de la Música Latina

Festival de la pág. I

La División Juvenil a cargo de José Luis Vargas y Abed Hernández tuvo a su cargo la creación del tema y la canción del Festival, "Lazos de Amistad". Participaron además en la creación del mismo los jóvenes Alexandra Rosa, José Daniel de Jesús, Edgar Abraham e Ivette Pietri.

Bajo la dirección general de Luis Gonzalez y la dirección artística de Alina Marrero, los miembros hicieron de las suyas y ofrecieron lo mejor de su talento en un hermoso espectáculo, inteligente y motivador que invitó a los espectadores a reconocer la importancia del arte y la cultura en el desarrollo de los seres humanos y el triunfo de la paz sobre la violencia.

Edgar Abraham un joven adolescente virtuoso del saxofón deleitó con su música mientras los niños hicieron galas de sus dotes histrionicos junto al grupo de

jóvenes y adultos que les acompañaron. También se destacó la participación de dos cantantes profesionales miembros de la SGI Ana Bayana y Brenda Reyes.

Miembros de la orquesta sinfónica de Puerto Rico se unieron a los miembros para ofrecer un hermoso tema clásico y un grupo de jóvenes de la ciudad de Ponce presentó un acto de Artes Marciales. La participación de estos mostró la integración de la Soka Gakkai con el resto de la comunidad.

Mientras todo esto ocurría en el escenario otro grupo de miembros se encargaba de la exposición "Victoria sobre la Violencia" y otros colaboraban en la venta de libros, distribución de recordatorios y preparación de alimentos para los invitados. Todos disfrutando intensamente el logro de un sueño, el primer Festival Cultural de la Juventud.

El Festival tuvo un gran fin de fiesta con la importante participación del reconocido virtuoso de la flauta Nestor Torres. Torres nacido en Puerto Rico y

miembro de la SGI hace 20 años dijo estar muy orgulloso de formar parte del esfuerzo del Festival. "Este es el esfuerzo de la gente común para el logro de la paz y el entendimiento entre los seres humanos, respetando la identidad de cada pueblo", sostuvo Torres visiblemente emocionado y conmovido por la vibrante energía de los presentes. Los líderes Fred Zaitzu, Cliff Sawyer, Shiela Edwards e Ingmar Soto estuvieron presentes en el Festival. Había que verlos. Disfrutaron como niños de la calidez del espectáculo.

Finalmente el Festival terminó exitosamente y en medio de la algarabía llegó la emoción final, el señor Zaitzu dijo a los presentes que tal esfuerzo representaba "un nuevo punto de partida para Puerto Rico, un avance para el Kosen rufu, para crear paz y prosperidad hacia el siglo XXI", aseguró que el presidente Ikeda se mantenía orando por la felicidad y salud de los miembros de Puerto Rico y anunció que el presidente Ikeda enviaba un re-

galo, "mantecado para todos". ¡Ni en los cuentos de hadas se ha visto un final más feliz!

IMPRESIONES

Abed Marie.-Para mí el festival fue una experiencia hermosa, donde me sentí más cerca de nuestro mentor el Presidente Ikeda. Estuve a cargo de la coreografía de dos números de baile y también bailé. Después de meses de trabajo, de lidiar con nuestro karma, logramos nuestra meta: la unidad y la felicidad de cada uno de nosotros. Como beneficio personal, se fortaleció mi fe. Ahora siento que no hay nada que no pueda lograr.

Laura Mía Ocasio.-Canté mucho daimoku para que todo saliera bien. Ayudé a mis compañeras del grupo de baile en que participé para que nos lleváramos bien. Hice muchas amigas en la organización y eso me pone contenta. Lo mejor fue que mi daimoku funcionó, porque todo salió bien. (Laura Mía es un bebé fortuna de once años)

Astrid Lugo.-Participé en todos los pasos de comedia que presentaron los valores del festival. Tuve que aprenderme muchas cosas de memoria y ensayar. Aprendí a defender mi tiempo de Gongyo y daimoku. Recibí el beneficio de que me llamaron a trabajar en una obra de teatro profesional, y como quiero ser actriz me siento muy contenta.

Miguel Ramos. Recientemente fui nombrado Asistente al Líder de Area de la División Juvenil Masculina, por lo cual tomé una profunda responsabilidad ante el festival. Soy decorador de interiores y a pesar de que el trabajo me tenía bien atareado, puse mucho de mi parte para poder participar. Fui el 'Stage Manager', algo que nunca había hecho, y entoné mucho daimoku para que todo saliera bien. Me ayudó mucho la ayuda de Luis González, miembro de la División de Hombres, quien estuvo encargado del comité de actividades en el Festival y es 'Stage Manager' y productor profesional. El beneficio más importante de este festival es que hemos creado unidad.