

Happy Birthday, SGI!

The SGI's 25th anniversary is celebrated at the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference, held on Guam, Jan. 21-23.

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

What better way to commemorate the SGI's 25th anniversary than a peace conference! What better way for our organization to start the new century! And what better place to hold this conference than Guam, the site of the SGI's founding in 1975.

The 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference, cosponsored by the University of Guam, Soka University of America and the SGI-USA, echoed the World Peace Conference that gave birth to our organization 25 years ago; it brought people of diverse backgrounds together to discuss new initiatives for peace. Government leaders, high chiefs and SGI-USA representatives from many Pacific Islands nations attended the conference, held Jan. 21-23 at various locations on Guam.

At the University of Guam on Jan. 21, delegates discussed "What Unique Role Can the Pacific Islands Play in Creating Global Peace?" These islands had the unfortunate history during World War II of becoming the stage on which superpowers attacked one another. "Who would have thought that a place so untouched and distant would be the very fields that foreign warring nations in World War II would fight so long and hard to capture?" asked John Gonzalez, executive assistant to the governor of the Commonwealth for the Northern Marianas Islands.

Many voices at the New Millennium Peace Conference called for the islands to be so united for peace that war can never again touch their shores. Many also mentioned that the islands should set an example for the rest of the world to follow in maintaining a peaceful society.

"It has been observed that societies providing the broadest civil liberties are the most stable and least likely to engage in or serve as sites for organized, violent conflict," Kuniwo Nakamura, president of the Republic of Palau, pointed out in his message to the proceedings. "Let us stand proudly as exam-



Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Boys and Girls Group members of Guam celebrate the SGI's 25th birthday at Affleje Park on the shores of the Philippine Sea. The children sang the Guam Hymn at the dedication of the park's Friendship Pavilion and groundbreaking for an SGI peace memorial, Jan. 23.

ples of peaceful members of the world community. Let us show by example the life that can be enjoyed when basic human rights and participation in one's own fate are guaranteed. And let us always demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the greatest respect for freedom at home and encouraging freedom throughout the world."

This is, after all, what the islanders call the Pacific Way, a way of harmonious social life that they see as their heritage, a way of life befitting the meaning of the word *pacific*—peace.

The Pacific Way was evident in the New Pacific Peace Resolution the delegates all signed, and it permeated the three days of events. There were book donations by the SGI, a commemorative luncheon with a mini-culture festival, and the dedication of a Friendship Pavilion and



Tonga's Deputy Prime Minister Langi Kavaliku is one of many government leaders and high chiefs who came from throughout the Pacific Islands to address the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference, Jan. 21, at the University of Guam. The delegates voiced their determination that the Pacific region will set an example for the rest of the world on how to maintain a peaceful society.

groundbreaking for an SGI peace memorial at a seaside park. (See pp. 4-7 for full cov-

erage, including the New Pacific Peace Resolution and participants' impressions.) **WT**



At the conference are: (l-r) Tonga's Secretary of the Department of Civil Aviation Vainga Palu, SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck, Tonga's Deputy Prime Minister Langi Kavaliku and SGI-USA Vice General Director Greg Martin.

FEB. 16: THE BIRTH OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN

Honoring Nichiren Daishonin and His Legacy

SIGNIFICANT DATES
ON MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND THE SGI

By **STEPHANIE CELANO**
STAFF WRITER



however, I have been ceaselessly praying for your sake" (Ibid., p. 839).

Living true to his convictions, exerting himself based on a deep sense of compassion, the causes the Daishonin made are eternal. The revelation of the truth of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon and the numerous extant letters written to the disciples of his day—these represent the essence of his life's purpose. These three aspects are his legacy to us, his modern-day disciples. They comprise the fundamental elements of our faith as believers today, and are the basis for the establishment of a lasting peace.

"If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity" (Ibid., p. 736).

The Daishonin's conviction

and greatest source of strength lay in his concern for people, which is unparalleled.

Examining my own life, if I consider all the profound joy that I've gained from this practice and add to that the joy of all the people whom I've influenced; in addition to the joy of the more than 12 million people who are currently benefiting from the Daishonin's Buddhism; plus that of all the people who've ever practiced throughout the centuries—the unbelievable magnitude of the number of people touched by the Daishonin's compassion is astounding.

Today we are transforming our lives daily based on his teachings, revealing our inherent Buddhahood just as he did. Certainly, there are recognizable moments that we each have faced or will face during the course of our Buddhist practice when things don't seem to be changing or working out in our favor. It is at these times that we can remember the Daishonin's example. If he was able to challenge himself, even as an exile on Sado, we can

have hope knowing that, among the 12 million fellow SGI members, we will find the support and encouragement we need to pull us through.

Our continuing to take action for the sake of others based on faith will insure that the Daishonin's efforts were not in vain, that he was not a failure. This, I believe, he understood from the profound standpoint of cause and effect, and is why he could devote his life selflessly to others' happiness, manifesting a state of absolute happiness, no matter the circumstances.

Since Nichiren Daishonin is the founder, and we each have chosen to follow his teachings, it is only natural that we would commemorate the date of his birth—Feb. 16, 1222. This Feb. 16, it is Nichiren Daishonin's spirit that we will celebrate—the spirit to live for others. We use this day to commemorate his compassion and courage to persevere in spite of adversity. The only way to eternalize this spirit is to use his life as an example of how to live our own. **WT**

"I, Nichiren, am the richest man in all of present-day Japan. I have dedicated my life to the Lotus Sutra, and my name will be handed down in ages to come" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 268).

This was the confidence that Nichiren Daishonin displayed while in exile on Sado Island.

From the expression of this vast state of life, it's hard to imagine that the Daishonin was an exile and viewed a heretic for the majority of his life as a priest, receiving no endorsement from the government—in fact he was persecuted by it. And in his final years, he was ill, and most likely died suffering from dysentery on the top of a mountain called Minobu.

He documented his frail condition in a letter to a believer: "For the past eight years I have become weaker and weaker year by year because of emaciating sickness and old age, and my mental powers have waned" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1583). Based on all these externals, some might even consider him a failure.

But looking at his life from a broader perspective, in the face of all these adverse circumstances, we know Nichiren Daishonin devoted his entire life to the cause of human happiness evidenced by the many letters that he sent to his treasured disciples of that time. It was through continually challenging these seemingly impossible situations that he was able to manifest the state of Buddhahood moment to moment.

He did not live his life superficially or for personal gain. Rather, his sole intent was to secure the happiness of every person: "Since childhood, I, Nichiren, have never prayed for the secular things of this life but have single-mindedly sought to become a Buddha. Of late,

Subscribe to the Justice Chronicle

The Justice Chronicle is a free, weekly e-mailer for *World Tribune* subscribers about the Soka Spirit movement. Its purpose is to support SGI-USA's ongoing education campaign about this subject in the timeliest fashion possible.

The Justice Chronicle will feature the latest Soka Spirit movement news, SGI President Ikeda's recent guidance about it and study articles explaining the difference between Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and what the temple is teaching.

To subscribe to the Justice Chronicle, 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 chronicle

Subscribe yourself or share it with a friend.

To subscribe, send in the order form below with your payment enclosed. No cash, please. Call 1-800-835-4558 if you have questions. Please check the appropriate boxes.

WORLD TRIBUNE		LIVING BUDDHISM	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 months \$15 (13 issues) Save \$11	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 months \$28 (26 issues) Save \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 months \$15 (3 issues) Save \$3	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 months \$28 (6 issues) Save \$8
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year \$50 (52 issues) Save \$54	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years \$85 (104 issues) Save \$123	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year \$50 (12 issues) Save \$22	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years \$90 (24 issues) Save \$54
Are you a new subscriber? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Charge my VISA <input type="checkbox"/> or MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/>			
Card # _____			
Expiration date _____			
Signature _____ <small>All credit card orders are subject to bank approval</small>			
Name _____			
Address _____ Apt. # _____			
City _____ State _____ Zip _____			
<small>(For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver)</small>			
<small>District Source Code (if known)</small>			
SEND TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 15276, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5276			



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: w t @ s g i - u s a . o r g 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

Printed on 100% recycled paper
Copyright © 2000 by SGI-USA.
All rights reserved.
Printed in the USA.

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

THE FOUNDING OF THE SGI

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

*The Ganges River starts from a single drop of water;
The journey to a lasting peace begins with a single step.
How important it is to bravely take that first step!
And then to continue on the journey, one step after another!*



To celebrate the SGI's 25th birthday, members of Guam's Boys and Girls Group sing the Guam Hymn at the dedication of Afleje Park's Friendship Pavilion and groundbreaking for an SGI peace memorial, Jan. 23.

It was a gathering on an island that is a jewel of the Pacific. There were no presidents, no ministers of state or political leaders, no tycoons, no scholars there that day. There were no reporters from the television stations or the newspapers covering it. Who was there? Ordinary citizens representing ordinary citizens. But these ordinary men and women were actually great pioneers who had pledged to dedicate their lives to the mission of propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and bringing peace to the world.

Jan. 26, 1975 — this was the day that the Soka Gakkai International was founded at a meeting on Guam, that beautiful island of lush tropical green and exotic blooms floating in the blue coral sea.

◆ ◆ ◆

I had arrived on Guam two days earlier from Hawaii, after a trip across the United States. On the evening of Jan. 25, we held a friendship festival on Rizal Beach — located on the island's southwest coast and named for the Philippine national hero José Rizal. I will never forget that the then governor of Guam, Ricardo J. Bordallo, presented me with a traditional Chamorro costume.

The area near the beach, so peaceful now, was once the scene of bloody struggles between Japanese and American forces. Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese military occupied Guam, but in a ferocious three-week battle in late July 1944, the U.S. forces took the island back. The U.S. lost some fourteen hundred men, while the Japanese lost twenty thousand in the fighting. Many of the residents of the island also endured terrible suffering and died. Remnants of the war, such as Japanese cannons, remain scattered across the island even today.

From war to peace! From hate to friendship! From conflict to harmony!

We chose Guam as an ideal place to make this new departure to change human history.

Guam's Governor Bordallo declared that day, Jan. 26, 1975, World Peace Day.

◆ ◆ ◆

It was a time of high tension between the United States and the Soviet Union who were in the midst of a cold war, and of strained relations between the Soviet Union and China, too. Against that backdrop, I dashed around the world, visiting China in June and December of 1974, the Soviet Union in September, and then the United States at the beginning of 1975. In China I met with Premier Zhou Enlai, in the Soviet Union with Premier Aleksey Kosygin, and in the United States with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, as well as many other officials. I also visited the headquarters of the United Nations.

I was attacked and criticized both at home and abroad for visiting nations that reject religion. My actions were misunderstood. I was prepared for this. Determined to go wherever there were people, I traveled through the world planting the seeds of peace and friendship, transcending barriers of ideology and national boundaries. With nothing more than dialogue, with a spirit of sincere goodwill, I wanted to

bring together a divided world.

Premier Zhou said to me, "These last 25 years of the 20th century are the most important for the world as a whole." I engraved those words deep in my heart so that I could build a strong movement for peace.

◆ ◆ ◆

Looking back over the 20th century, the Soka Gakkai has experienced an important turning point roughly every quarter-century. Our first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, published his great work *Geography of Human Life* in 1903. Already back then he had the awareness of a global citizen, and he urged that we treat all the other nations of the world as our neighbors. A quarter-century or so later, on Nov. 18, 1930, the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (forerunner of the Soka Gakkai) was born, founded by Mr. Makiguchi and Josei Toda, mentor and disciple. Then, in 1951, the very midpoint of the century, Mr. Toda became the second president of the Soka Gakkai and proclaimed an all-out struggle to achieve kosen-rufu. And, in 1975, another quarter-century on, the SGI was born. It was 15 years since I had become the third president of the Soka Gakkai in 1960 and embarked overseas for the first time to follow my mentor's injunction that I go out into the world.

◆ ◆ ◆

The First World Peace Conference, held on Jan. 26, 1975, as the inaugural meeting of the SGI, took place at the Guam International Trade Center, a gleaming white building located in the central business district of Tamuning, not far from the airport. At the entrance to the hall on the ninth floor, before the meeting began, I was asked to sign the large meeting registry. On the first page I wrote my name and, in the column for nationality, I wrote "World." I was thinking of Mr. Toda's vision of global citizenship as I did this. It was an expression of my honest feelings, having decided to give my life for our members around the world.

◆ ◆ ◆

Worldwide kosen-rufu is the goal that Nichiren Daishonin entrusted us, his followers, to fulfill. It is a struggle, a struggle for world peace, a struggle for the happiness of all humanity, a struggle for justice and human rights. The heroic members of lofty mission who gathered on that day 25 years ago represented 51 countries. Today, through the courageous and compassionate efforts of pioneer members exerting themselves with spirited tenacity and determination, we now have SGI members in 148 countries around the globe. Truly, the world is our stage. This is an unprecedented achievement that will shine forever in the history of Buddhism.

Our organization in South Korea, whose members could unfortunately not participate in that meeting, has since shown exemplary development. This brings me great joy.

I pray every day for the health, long life, and happiness of all of our noble members who are working tirelessly for kosen-rufu around the world.

◆ ◆ ◆

On that day 25 years ago, I said to the members present: "The sun of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism has begun to rise on the horizon. Rather than seek after your own praise or glory, I hope that you will dedicate your whole lives to sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law for the sake of peace throughout the entire world. I shall do the same."

Today the sun of the SGI is rising brightly in the sky of the new century. Voices calling out for the light of Buddhist humanism around the globe are growing ever louder.

The time has come, my beloved fellow members of the SGI! Let us continue our journey of courage and hope into the third millennium, joyfully and intrepidly!

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" in the Jan. 25, 2000, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE 1ST PACIFIC ISLANDS NEW MILLENNIUM PEACE CONFERENCE

The Path to Peace Begins Within

'The path and process toward the highest of human ends must begin within, in the hearts and minds of individuals,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'For it is in the innermost depths of our lives that we must build the citadel of peace and compassion, whose ramparts can never be breached.'

My deepest congratulations on the holding of this remarkable event, organized under the auspices of the University of Guam, Soka University of America and the SGI-USA!

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation and respect to

those whose invaluable support was so generously rendered in making this conference a reality, including Dr. David Shimizu, chairman of the Board of Regents at the University of Guam, Dr. Jose Nededog, president of the university, and the Honorable Carl Gutierrez, governor of Guam, along with many government officials and professors of the university.

It is with profound gratitude that I welcome the participants who have traveled such long distances to join this momentous occasion. Today, we have the great honor in welcoming guests from Kosrae, Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau and the Kingdom of Tonga.

The Pacific Islands are blessed with eternal summers, with coral reefs sparkling in emerald waters. Yet these blissful islands became the scene of savage battles where hundreds of thousands of precious lives were to tragically perish, as the world was engulfed in war.



SGI-USA Guam youth division members take a commemorative photograph with SGI General Director Eiichi Wada after performing 'Oh Dear Guam' at the Friendship Pavilion dedication at Afleje Park, Jan. 23.



Paraisu, a youth performance group, entertains with traditional Chamorro singing and dancing at the Friendship Pavilion dedication at Afleje Park.



The SGI on Jan. 21 donates 350 books to a public library on Guam and another 350 to the University of Guam library. After the presentation at the Nieves M. Flores Memorial Public Library, SGI General Director Eiichi Wada met with (l-r) Benigno Palomo, a member of the library's Board of Directors, Rick Castro, chairman of the Board of Directors, and Christine Scott-Smith, library director.

Guam suffered some of the worst bloodshed. As such, it is particularly meaningful that this conference should take place here, at the dawn of a new millennium.

For the same reason, we were compelled to choose Guam 25 years ago as the venue for our World Peace Conference that inaugurated the SGI on Jan. 26, 1975. Nowhere would it be more appropriate to renew our quest for peace, nowhere more befitting to herald its import to the world, than the Pacific Islands.

Would it be an exaggeration, then, to call the islands our starting point for global peace? I think not.

In a speech I gave at the 1975 conference, I made the following entreaty to my fellow SGI members: Do not fritter your cherished lives away solely to see your own happiness flower, but dedicate yourself to sow the seeds of peace throughout the world.

And I expressed my determination to do the same.

At that gathering, the 158 members representing the SGI organizations of 51 countries pledged their commitment to this cause, to promote peace in their families, workplaces, communities and countries. The ideals they sowed have since begun to sprout and blossom, their roots reaching out and linking up with one another to form a global network of peace that now embraces 148 countries.

Nothing exemplifies our

movement more than the spirit and life of Soka Gakkai founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and his successor and Soka Gakkai co-founder, Josei Toda. During World War II, these two were arrested and imprisoned by Japan's militarist regime for their rejection of State Shinto and their adamant opposition to war. Makiguchi, who would not compromise his convictions, died in prison.

Toda, who also refused to abandon his beliefs, was released just prior to the war's end and devoted his life to rebuilding a movement shattered by government oppression. In September 1957, he issued a declaration before 50,000 young men and women calling for the total abolishment of nuclear weapons — a call that not

only ignited the young people's passion and imagination but remains central to the SGI's quest for peace and commitment to world peace today.

Makiguchi's and Toda's stand against war was inspired by the fundamental spirit of Buddhism, which places boundless respect on the sanctity and equality of all human beings. This is the core message of Shakyamuni, who founded Buddhism in India 2,800 years ago. He taught that the people need only to "kill the will to kill," a timeless message against acts of violence, an ageless admonition that people — and all living things — must depend on one another for sustenance. This serves as an overarching principle to guide the SGI in its manifold activities for peace.



At the University of Guam's Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, University President Jose T. Nededog expresses his appreciation for the SGI's donation of books, Jan. 21.

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Young men from the island Chuuk perform the boisterous Chuuk Remataw Slap Dance at the 25th anniversary luncheon, Jan. 22. The young men keep time by slapping their own bodies.

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Hollo Association President Lino Escalona (l) and SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima (r) participate in the groundbreaking for the SGI Peace Memorial at Afleje Park, Jan. 23.

Any effort seeking non-violent means to achieve peace obviously faces a daunting task. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Non-violence requires more than the courage of the soldier of war." As difficult as it may be, the path and process toward the highest of human ends must begin within, in the hearts and minds of individuals.

For it is in the innermost depths of our lives that we must build the citadel of peace and compassion, whose ramparts can never be breached. Unless it is built, unless we turn inward for the resolution to conflict and division, peace will never be genuine or lasting.

For more than 30 years, this is what I have declared to be the foremost challenge — and imperative — of our times: to make the 21st century into a

Century of Life, to make it one that upholds the sanctity of all living things.

It is an august, arduous task, which I entrust most of all to the young people, who shoulder the responsibility for the future. We have little choice but to urge them on, for only they can lead us into a Century of Life, a Century of Peace.

My fervent wish is that this conference will prove to be the first among many remarkable steps to bring about a world free from war. I conclude my message with heartfelt prayers for peace, prosperity and continued good health among all the peoples of the Pacific Islands.

Jan. 21, 2000
Daisaku Ikeda
 President
 Soka Gakkai International



With the approval of Guam Governor Carl T.C. Gutierrez, the Friendship Pavilion is dedicated at Afleje Park, Jan. 23, in honor of the SGI's 25th birthday.



SGI General Director Eiichi Wada and SGI-USA leaders offer prayers for the repose of all who died in the Pacific War at the Asan Bay Overlook in the War in the Pacific National Historic Park, Jan. 23. An SGI wreath was placed in this memorial that overlooks the hills where many people died as the United States retook Guam in July 1944. A similar ceremony was held with General Director Wada on Saipan, Jan. 24.



SGI-USA Executive Advisor Fred Zaitsu plants a friendship tree at Afleje Park for Lieutenant Governor Madeleine Z. Bardallo, Jan. 23. Three other trees were planted: for Guam Governor Carl T.C. Gutierrez, for his wife, Geraldine, and for Kaneko Ikeda, the SGI president's wife. Trees that were planted in the same park on May 2, 1998, for the late governor of Guam Ricardo J. Bardallo (who was governor at the time the SGI was formed), President Ikeda, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda are all flourishing.



SGI General Director Wada receives the key to the city of Agana, Guam, on behalf of SGI President Ikeda, Jan. 21. Governor Carl T.C. Gutierrez welcomed Mr. Wada and peace conference participants to the Government House for the occasion.

A New Pacific Peace Resolution

Delegates to the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conferences signed the following peace resolution on Jan. 21.

Preamble

"Oceania is vast. Oceania is hospitable and generous. Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still; Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean."

These are the words of a man of the Pacific; Tongan novelist Epli Hau'ofa describes here the universalism of the Pacific Way, first popularized by the president of Fiji, Ratu Sir Kamisese T. Mara: More than a political way, the Pacific Way is a spiritual path—the spirit to embrace and harmonize diversity, to value cooperation and consensus building among peoples, and to recognize the profound interdependence between humanity and the environment from which we emerge. This is the spirit in which we, spanning the vast geographical reaches of the Pacific, gather today.

History

The 20th century has been the bloodiest period in human history. The century that saw the end of colonialism, the spread of democracy and human rights throughout the world, and unprecedented scientific and technological advancement has also seen human devastation, mass genocide, and horrors of war of a scale and kind unimaginable in any prior age.

The Pacific Islands is where European colonization of Asia was inaugurated. The Marianas

were the site of the most intense and bloody battles of the Pacific War. The Pacific Islands have been the crossroads of the Pacific Rim, the place for centuries where East and West have paused on their voyages of trade or conquest.

On these islands, at the beginning of the last quarter of this century, representatives of 51 countries gathered to affirm their commitment to change the course of human history.

"Nothing is more precious than peace. Nothing brings more happiness. Peace is the basic starting point for the advancement of humankind."

The words of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, founder of Soka University of America, express the fundamental ideal for which those people gathered. Those individuals of little fame or recognition joined together in common resolve to sow the seeds of peace in the hearts of the people, to transform society not through seeking political or economic power, but through building bonds of trust among the people of the world.

Rationale

Whereas, despite means of communication and travel which have produced an unprecedented movement of people, ideas, and information across the globe, human society is threatened by a "new isolationism," a spirit of intolerance evidenced by increasing insularity and a dangerous outbreak of conflict in the name of ethnic, religious or national identity;

Whereas, humanity is at a crossroads, and must choose between a path of material progress at the expense of spiritual renewal, or a path which leads toward an age of spiritual



Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

The beauty of the Rock Islands of Palau draws tourists from around the world. Palau suffered one of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific War when the United States attacked it. SGI-USA members on Palau know from their own families' experiences how long it can take to heal the wounds of war.



Micronesia Chapter Leader Noriko Lopez plays the accordion as Boys and Girls Group members sing at an SGI-USA introductory meeting on the island of Phonpei, Jan. 17. More than 100 guests attended this meeting.

Harnessing this great spiritual power in the direction of peace, in the direction of harmony, and in the direction of always seeking ever greater spiritual depths is our endeavor.

- We must remember that the next generation of world leaders is entrusted to our care. We must develop our own capacity for compassion, and for spiritual renewal, and foster in them this same spirit. We must inspire in them a deep and lasting com-

PLEASE SEE RESOLUTION, 7

and cultural renaissance, and a quality of life befitting the integrity of each and every human being; and

Whereas, education is the key to cultivating the hearts, minds and spirits of the youth, those who will in fact create the new century. Only through education can they learn and understand their history and heritage; only in this way can we foster in them the determination to pursue the difficult path of peace and humanism. Only through education do we have the means to free people from the prejudices in their minds, and the violence in their hearts.

Resolution

Dr. Ikeda suggests in the preface to *The New Human Revolution* that the "power of the spirit" is stronger than any weapon of war. "To transform this century of war into a century of peace, we must cultivate the limitless inherent power of

human life. This is the human revolution...."

Gathered again in the Pacific Islands, as we contemplate the dawn of the 21st century, we, the representatives of a new Pacific, hereby stand resolved to dedicate ourselves to the task of creating a century of life and peace.

- In response to the barbarity of war, we must declare the true value of peace. In response to the savagery of exploitation and oppression, we must assert the principle of fundamental human equality, and the inherent dignity of all life.

- We must never forget that as great as the methods of human destruction become, the power of the human spirit is always greater.



A cannon from one of the U.S. ships that attacked Saipan in the Pacific War now stands at the foot of Saipan's Suicide Cliff. Thousands of Japanese and Chamorro civilians leapt to their deaths from this cliff as the U.S. forces invaded the island.



Photo by MIKA IKEDA

Aerial view of the island of Fiji.

We Signed It!

By **ANDRI BAYNUM**
GUAM CORRESPONDENT

University of Guam students and faculty, SGI-USA members from Guam and neighboring islands, and leaders and high chiefs from throughout the Pacific Islands signed a New Pacific Peace Resolution at the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference. Many mentioned how happy they were that such a diverse body of common people had come together to make this resolution and that a Pacific island, although small and distant from the rest of the world, had been chosen as the site for this historical resolution signing.

Peteriko Pelep, a new member from the island of Pohnpei, remarked, "This is the first time I ever attended a gathering like this, and I now believe that peace is possible." Ioanida Apel, another new member from Pohnpei, said, "Everything they said at the conference was true, and it's starting to work."

University of Guam students, many of whom were learning of the SGI's peace movement for the first time, were also enthusiastic. Tafny Fritz, a student majoring in tourism, commented: "I really feel welcome, and it's good to have this kind of conference. I believe that there is a chance that we can all be as one and live together." Richard Villanueva, a nursing major, noted that "there has been great interest worldwide in the Pacific—this conference will help ensure peace in our region."

FROM RESOLUTION, 6

mitment to their highest ideals.

• Representing people and cultures throughout the Pacific, we must become the seeds of a new Pacific Islands Community of Peace. We must become leaders who seek to establish the Pacific Way, a new kind of international statecraft that seeks unity in diversity, and that practices consensus building through mutual understanding and respect.

This is our common mission. This is our mutual pledge.

On this 21st day of January, in the 2000th year of the Common Era



The Honorable Gerson Jackson, lieutenant governor of Kosrae, signs the New Pacific Peace Resolution as fellow delegates from Kosrae look on, Jan. 22.

Leaders and high chiefs from Saipan, Tonga, Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk, Palau and Pohnpei all signed the resolution and reiterated their commitment to peace in this region and the world. The lieutenant governor of Yap, Andrew Yatilman, liked what the resolution had to say about the spiritual path of seeking human harmony that the islanders call the Pacific Way. "Using the Pacific Way to promote peace through the extended family and the community is the first step in creating world peace," he said.

Likewise, Langi Kavaliku, deputy prime minister of Tonga, said that what the resolution meant to him was that "you can only promote peace if you have peace within yourself. And once you have peace within yourself, you can start working with others, who are also doing it themselves." WT



Before they sign the New Pacific Peace Resolution, Carl T.C. Gutierrez, governor of Guam, on Jan. 21 encourages the conference participants that 'as a region, Asia and the Pacific really have an amazing opportunity to make a mark in history that will be acknowledged for all time. Let it be forever written that it began here today.'



Marlyn Mobel, a University of Guam student from Kiribati, majoring in anthropology

and politics, commented on the conference: "The speakers emphasized a lot about culture and to respect. Speakers that came up respectfully acknowledged each of their colleagues. I really liked Mr. Eiichi Wada's speech and several of the other speakers' speeches. The conference was very interesting."

Marcelino Umwech, former governor of Chuuk:



"Our islands are small. Culturally, we are used to having followers and leaders—given a strong leader, if that organization's leader prioritizes peace, in whatever organization he runs, peace will be advanced. There are other aspects of our great island life that we can make the most use of:

"We are used to the custom of reciprocity. We can use the same situation for peace. If I offer from my heart, you will offer it back. We can explore our lifestyle and see that there are things that are unique to our situation.

"What do I foresee as far as the islands continuing this type of dialogue in the future? I am sure that everyone here is sincere, and I am sure it will continue. I am confident that good will prevail, especially since it is peace that we are seeking."



John Gonzales, executive assistant to the governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern

Marianas Islands: "The holding of this conference on Guam is very fitting and timely given that this is the location of the most tragic war that was waged in this part of the world. The initiative that has been taken by the visionaries and dreamers for world peace—the SGI, the Pacific Islands leaders and the peoples of the Pacific, in this global village—is to be commended. It is through understanding cultures, creating a culture of peace and respecting the individualities and dignities of people that we can work toward that lasting legacy of creating a new world order for our generation and for other generations to follow.

"The uniqueness and the strength of us Pacific Islanders are the tight-knit families and bonds that we so commonly share. That basic strength we hold is called *inafa' maolek*, which means togetherness, harmony, cooperation. When one family or clan has an event that is coming up, all the families, not only the immediate members but the extended family members as well, come together through word of mouth to share in planning and organizing and in celebrating the uniqueness and the bonds we all have. I think that is a primary moving force here in the Pacific that we should nurture—strength of family and togetherness—so that we can hold hands and create a chain across the Pacific and amplify our voices for world peace."



At the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference on Jan. 21: (l-r) Deputy Prime Minister Langi Kavaliku of Tonga, Lieutenant Governor Andrew Yatilman of Yap, High Chief Ibadul of Palau, High Chief Reklai of Palau, Lieutenant Governor Gerson Jackson of Kosrae, Former Governor Marcelino Umwech of Chuuk and John Gonzalez, executive assistant to the governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

Rivka Millhoff, a student at the University of Guam:



"I hope this conference is the start in bringing the cultures and islands together—not necessarily mixing them but just uniting the people."

Helene Anderson and Andri Baynum interviewed the conference participants and contributed to overall coverage of the Guam events.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 6 SPEECH—PART 2

The Most Beautiful Bond

'In the realm of human beings,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'there is nothing as beautiful or strong as the bond between mentor and disciple.'

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 41st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 6.

In the bitterly cold winter of 1941, as air and artillery shelling rained down relentlessly on Leningrad [now St. Petersburg], a grand celebration was held to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of the great Uzbekistan poet Alisher Navoi. The organizer of the event was Iosif Orbeli, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the director of the Hermitage Museum. He fought bravely to protect the museum's priceless treasures from the ravages of war.

His eyes with an animated brightness that not even the sub-zero temperature could dampen, Orbeli spoke proudly of "Leningrad's brave spirit, its unquenchable will, the humanism of Soviet science." As he was speaking, a huge explosion rang out nearby. But Orbeli remained unruffled.

Without any change of tone, he called for calm and continued the deeply significant gathering with the unshakable serenity and composure of an emperor of the spirit. This great champion of culture is none other than the venerable mentor of Dr. Yuri Petrosyan [vice president of the St. Petersburg Scientific Center at the Russian Academy of Sciences], who is with us today.

When we met four years ago, Dr. Petrosyan declared with pride, "My greatest happiness in life is that I had a great mentor." I will never forget the solemn expression with which he said this. In the realm of human beings, there is nothing as beautiful or strong as the bond between mentor and disciple. I hope you will always remember this.

Fifty-five years ago, in January 1945, Josei Toda, the Soka Gakkai's second president, ushered in his second New Year's



SGI President Ikeda enjoys St. Petersburg State University Rector Ludmila Verbitskaya's speech, Jan. 6.

Day in prison, where the authorities had placed him for his opposition to Japanese militarism. In his unheated, freezing prison cell, Mr. Toda prayed fervently with just one wish: "I am young. Please let me bear the brunt of all persecutions, so that my elderly mentor, Mr. Makiguchi, can be released from prison and return home safely to his family as quickly as possible."

On Jan. 8, 1945, however, Mr. Toda was brusquely informed by one of the preliminary court judges, who had come to the prison to question him, that his mentor had died in prison [on Nov. 18, 1944]. When he heard this, Mr. Toda cried out: "Who was it that abused, tormented and murdered Mr. Makiguchi?! I'll never forget what you've done to him! I will avenge my mentor's death!"

Mr. Toda constantly admonished, "Do not leave a single enemy of the Buddha undefeated!" In other words, we must resolutely vanquish the enemies of the Buddha. This is the spirit of Mr. Makiguchi and the spirit of Mr. Toda. It is also my spirit. Those who fail to understand

this are not truly following the path of mentor and disciple.

From that day, from that time on, Mr. Toda launched his struggle as an invincible warrior for truth and justice.

Mr. Toda was also passionately determined to widely communicate the greatness of Mr. Makiguchi's philosophy of value-creation to universities and academic institutions around the globe. I dedicate to my mentor the prestigious academic honor I have received today in this Makiguchi Memorial Hall from St. Petersburg State University, one of the top educational institutions in the world. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mr. Toda's birth, which will be Feb. 11.

We must speak out for justice tirelessly.

Incidentally, St. Petersburg State University Rector Ludmila Verbitskaya is a leading authority in the fields of linguistics, phonetics, phonology and the teaching of the Russian language. My wife confides to being particularly charmed by

the lovely cadences of the Russian language.

The power of our voice is incalculable. Our voice reveals a

lot about us. The beauty of Rector Verbitskaya's voice today is like the gentle ripples of St. Petersburg's Neva River.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

President Toda's Constant Admonition

From This Speech:

Josei Toda constantly admonished, "Do not leave a single enemy of the Buddha undefeated!" In other words, we must resolutely vanquish the enemies of the Buddha. This is the spirit of Mr. Makiguchi and the spirit of Mr. Toda. It is also my spirit. Those who fail to understand this are not truly following the path of mentor and disciple.

- 1) Why do you think President Toda constantly admonished his disciples to defeat the enemies of the Buddha? What was he thinking about?
- 2) Who are the enemies of the Buddha?
- 3) Why do you think that the Soka Gakkai had this spirit to defeat the enemies of the Buddha from its very beginning?
- 4) If defeating the enemies of the Buddha is the path of mentor and disciple, how can each of us follow that path? What can each of us do to become true disciples?

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

In the struggle against the Nazi invasion of Leningrad, poetry readings and expressions of encouragement broadcast over the radio offered comfort and hope to the people, inspiring them to keep on going. The famous poet Anna Akhmatova declared on the radio during the siege: "All my life is connected with Leningrad.... I, like all of you now, live with one unconquerable belief—that Leningrad never will be Fascist."

It was voices such as this woman's, filled with a powerful resolve not to bow to the aggressors, that saved the citizens of Leningrad. No matter how many bombs or threatening leaflets the enemy planes dropped on the city, ordinary Russian citizens, working together at the grass roots, rose up in resistance, addressing their fellow citizens with voices ringing with optimism, courage and conviction. That is why they weren't defeated, why they won.

It is the voice—the voice is important. As someone pointed out, while the youth of recent times may talk a lot, the large majority lack the moral strength to speak out for what is right. It is crucial that, with dignified, pleasant-sounding voices, we create in people's hearts an awareness of justice and truth.

Nichiren Daishonin states, "The voice does the Buddha's work" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). He also says, "Words manifest through sound to convey the sentiments in our heart" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 563). Our lives are sublime musical instruments that produce wondrous sounds reverberating with great power and resonance. Our lives are weapons with which to triumph over all enemies. A voice that is sincere and earnest can profoundly touch people's lives, shaking them to their very depths. So it is important that we speak pleasantly, in a way clear and to the point. Please do not be the kind of leader whose words are so incoherent that no one has any idea what you're talking about.

We must also remember that this age of great confusion and social disorder—the Latter Day of the Law—is described in Buddhist scriptures as "an age of conflict and dispute." Hence, those who speak out for justice and champion truth vigorously and fearlessly will prevail. To remain quiet and meek in the face of injustice will lead only to defeat.

It is crucial that we continue to speak out for justice tirelessly, that we win over evil and injustice. It is also important that we condemn writings that violate

human rights. Ours is a struggle to establish in society a firm commitment to peace and a refusal to tolerate militarism. Let us speak out with all our might for the sake of justice!

One strong woman can transform history.

I understand that both of Rector Verbitskaya's beloved parents were tragic victims of the dictator Stalin's purges. People of outstanding talent, people who had made great contributions to their homeland, who had risked their lives defending it, were arrested on false charges.

There is nothing more frightening than the jealousy of those in power. The only defense is to empower the people, so that they can keep the authorities in check.

Undaunted by this cruel persecution of her parents, the young Ms. Verbitskaya continued to pursue her worthy studies. Her experience of studying amid great hardship and deprivation is the source of the deep love and compassion she has for the students of her university today. Embracing the next generation of brilliant leaders in the noble light of humanistic education, she is fostering many talented individuals for the new century.

On Jan. 4, I met Mayor Le Lam of Auburn, Australia, the site of the main stadium for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. A woman of great integrity and character, Ms. Lam is working to serve the people in her community. Her own experience as a refugee in her youth has motivated her to help others suffering similar hardships.

You will not be defeated in life, no matter what happens, if you develop strength and cultivate wisdom. Strength and wisdom are prerequisites for happiness.

And the strength of one strong, wise woman can change society and transform history. Everything is determined by the human revolution—the inner transformation—of a single individual.

The 19th-century poet Nikolaj Njekrasov, who studied at St. Petersburg State University and had a profound love for the people, writes:

*Only the names of those
Who work for the grand
cause of our age,
Who give all of their
being
To the struggle to defend
their compatriots,
Their fellow human
beings,
Will be remembered.*



On Jan. 4 at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, SGI President Ikeda meets Mayor Le Lam of Auburn, Australia, the site of the main stadium for the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

I pledge today that we of the SGI, while working together even more closely with St. Petersburg State University, will strive to increase the scope and momentum of the great humanistic struggle moving the world from a century of war and repression to one of peace and humanity. I also offer sincere prayers for the ongoing development and prosperity of St. Petersburg State University, as it marches toward the historic milestone of the 300th anniversary of its founding, in 2024.

I am also praying with all my heart for the continued good

health and success in the coming year of our distinguished guests, Rector Verbitskaya, Vice President Petrosyan, Dean Ivan Steblin-Kamensky and all those present today.

To all of our leaders here from different parts of Japan and the world: Please convey my very best regards to your fellow members when you get home. Let's launch a determined struggle and win! I will fight in the vanguard. I will fight single-handedly. And I hope my true disciples will follow my lead.

Spasiba! (Thank you in Russian.) **WT**

Read the WT E-mail Express

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

Praying for a Good Explanation

PERSPECTIVE

By MICHAEL LISAGOR
VIENNA, VA



survive Dunkin' Donuts on a Sunday morning, then maybe I could pull this off as well. Here's what I said:

Selecting just the right 24 doughnuts at the local Dunkin' Donuts on an early wintry Sunday morning with a line of hungry parents and impatient children behind you can be a harrowing experience. Still, I had already chanted 30 minutes and was up to the challenge.

"No sprinkles (kids spill them on the carpet)."

"Yes, extra napkins, please!"

I pulled into our garage at 10 a.m., dropped the treats on the kitchen table and bolted up the stairs to our second-floor chanting room. This was a McLean/Tyson's Group meeting. About 15 members were vigorously chanting, including Julia's mother who was an SGI pioneer in Peru and had come to live with her daughter's family in America.

I was especially pleased to see a guest. I knew this must be Phil. He had called me the day before to invite himself to our meeting. He had recently returned with his family from India after a year-and-a-half assignment as an environmental consultant and had decided he wanted to embrace a daily Buddhist practice. He had read about the Soka Gakkai in a magazine article and looked for the SGI on the Internet. He thought the SGI-USA web site was very informative and liked what it said about the philosophy. He then called our community center and was referred to a local leader, who gave him my number. Congratulations, Phil, on sponsoring yourself! That's what I call a seeking mind.

As I watched a women's division member, Lil, point out gongyo to Phil, I worried about what a guest would think of the five silent prayers. Unfamiliar Buddhist concepts like *shoten zenjin* (Buddhist gods), Three Great Secret Laws, *kosen-rufu* and the True Buddha could be misleading or even disturbing if taken out of context. I also chanted very sincerely for some innovative way to explain the practice. I happened to look down at the sutra book in my lap and decided to see if I could use the five prayers of gongyo as a framework to share the fundamentals of our practice, philosophy and organization. I figured if I could

As practitioners of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism, we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and also recite two chapters of the Lotus Sutra five times in the morning and three times each evening. The entire 28 chapters of this sutra represent the final and most important teachings of the first Buddha, or enlightened person, in recorded history. This man, who is sometimes called Shakya-muni or Gautama Siddhartha, lived in India about 2,500 years ago. Over the next two millennia, Mahayana Buddhism spread through Central Asia to China and then to Japan. As you just saw, we express our sense of gratitude and resolve as believers by performing one of five silent prayers each time we recite a section. I'd like to use each of these prayers to provide an explanation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai.

First Prayer — Appreciation for and empowerment of the *shoten zenjin*

The first prayer expresses our appreciation for the *shoten zenjin*, the functions in our lives and environment that protect us when we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Through exhaustive studies and internal realizations in turbulent 13th-century Japan, Nichiren Daishonin came to realize that the title of each chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Myoho-enge-kyo, is the essence of the Buddha's teachings. It is this natural Law that allows each human being to discover his or her fundamental identity as an enlightened being. By adding *nam*, or devotion to, he gave us a tangible means to express our own enlightenment in our daily lives through chanting these five characters.

This Buddhism is based on the reality that our surroundings are a reflection of our life. Through chanting, we can manifest our enlightenment. This causes both conspicuous and inconspicuous improvements in our environment in the same way our shadow straightens when we stand up. So it is our internal practice and faith that protects us, as opposed to an exter-

nal god or supernatural force. Some philosophers have likened this process to returning to our spiritual center. We refer to this process of inner transformation as individual human revolution.

One of the interpretations of the word *kyo* is harmony. When we chant, we are more in rhythm with our environment—things seem to go our way more often. The Daishonin explained that a true philosophy should not only be historically and theoretically sound but must also provide actual proof in the lives of its believers.

Second Prayer — Appreciation for the Dai-Gohonzon

The scroll we chant to is called the Gohonzon. Each member of the SGI can receive a Gohonzon once they have established a solid daily practice. The original Gohonzon was inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin over 700 years ago so that his followers would have a specific object in their environment on which to focus. This Gohonzon was a physical manifestation of the Daishonin's enlightenment—his realizations about karma, gain and loss, and the eternity of life. The words *Nam-myoho-enge-kyo* are written down the middle of the scroll. You'll have to take my word for that!

We offer praise to the Gohonzon in the second prayer. Obviously, in one sense this scroll is merely a piece of paper with Chinese characters on it. However, its significance lies in its profound representation of the enlightened potential that exists within each of us. So, as we use a mirror to enhance our physical presence, we use the Gohonzon to polish our spiritual selves and project the most attractive life-condition.

The Three Great Secret Laws aren't really a secret anymore. They refer to the invocation of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the inscription of the original Gohonzon and the sanctuary where it is enshrined. More important to us, it refers to the fact that every human being has the potential for happiness in this lifetime and that we can sincerely pray to our own Gohonzon in our own homes and reveal the same enlightenment as Nichiren Daishonin. In other words, no priest or leader stands between enlightenment and us.

Third Prayer—Appreciation for the three teachers

In the third prayer, we express our appreciation for

Nichiren Daishonin as well as his two main disciples, the second and third high priests without whose dedication we would not be able to chant today. The Daishonin underwent incredible persecutions and hardships to establish the foundation of this Buddhism. The many theses and letters he wrote to encourage and guide his followers provide a practical basis and foundation for his life philosophy and are still a relevant source of inspiration and guidance in the 21st century.

The second high priest, Nikko Shonin, set a shining example of a disciple's behavior. He kept the true spirit of Buddhism alive by supporting his mentor, Nichiren Daishonin, and by sharing this practice with others. In turn, Nichimoku, the third high priest, bravely remonstrated with corrupt government officials who felt threatened by the Daishonin's teachings of equality for even ordinary people.

Fourth Prayer — For the attainment of *kosen-rufu* and fulfillment of personal desires

The fourth prayer expresses our desire for *kosen-rufu*, or world peace, and our commitment to the continued development of the SGI in this endeavor. As a lay religious organization, we are dedicated to working with all people, including those of other faiths, to bring about a more peaceful world.

Because Nam-myoho-enge-kyo affects the deepest spiritual level of our lives, it affords us the power to lessen any negative effects that we might otherwise receive from causes we have made in the past. Slander of the Law, as used in this prayer, refers to actions we have taken that are incompatible with a life based on Buddhist compassion and wisdom. Over the years, our consistent practice enables us to overcome all adversity and establish a joyful life-condition.

Fifth Prayer — Appreciation for the first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai and prayer for the deceased

A few years before the outbreak of World War II, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, a Japanese educator, encountered Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and founded an organization of lay believers called the Soka Kyokai or value-creation education society. While the Nichiren Shoshu priests acqui-

esced to the demands of the militaristic Shinto government, Makiguchi and his disciple, Josei Toda, were imprisoned for their opposition to the war and for refusing to accept the state religion of Shinto.

Makiguchi died in jail. But at the end of the war, Josei Toda was released and became the second president of the Soka Gakkai. He dedicated his life to sharing this Buddhism so others could relieve their own suffering. The organization experienced tremendous growth in Japan before his death in 1958. Under the direction of the third SGI president, Daisaku Ikeda, this Buddhism spread further in Japan, even around the world. Today there are more than 12 million SGI Buddhists practicing in 148 countries.

Eventually, it became apparent that the priesthood had become very corrupt. They believed that they were more worthy of respect than the lay believers and insisted that the SGI members blindly follow them even when they were so obviously not practicing the Daishonin's teachings themselves. Their greed and egotism were actually leading people to unhappiness. About 10 years ago, we became the largest lay religious organization ever to be excommunicated. Since then, we have continued to practice and study the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin under the leadership and guidance of Daisaku Ikeda and to share the remarkable results of our practice with others.

It is difficult to grasp the true reality of our daily lives without facing the inevitability and meaning of death. In this prayer we also pray for the enlightenment of deceased relatives and other individuals. And, because Nichiren Daishonin taught us the interconnectedness of all human beings—that we can not truly be happy as long as there is a single person suffering in the world—we pray for the happiness of all humanity.

Phil thanked me for the explanation and some of the members suggested I share it with others through the *World Tribune*. We had a very warm and encouraging meeting and then managed to polish off almost all the doughnuts without dropping a single crumb. I probably could have bought some with sprinkles after all. **WTF**

(Michael Lisagor can be reached at: lisagor@celerityworks.com)

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

World TRIBUNE
The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

General Director
Daniel Nagashima

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
ssydney@sgi-usa.org

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers
Gregory Nakasuji
Kirk Condyles
Jonathan Wilson
Dixon Hamby

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
liahollis@earthlink.net

Bureau Chiefs
Phil Simpson, Atlanta
Fletcher Dalton, Boston
Veronica Evans, Chicago
Jim Dreisbach, Florida
Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii
Margie Hall, Los Angeles
Cheryl Utley, Midwest
Robert Taliaferro, New York
Dave Shadovitz, Philadelphia
Irene Owada, Rocky Mountain
Liz Anderson, 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: SGIUSBS@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.

'EARLY SPRING'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 35-36

In Lebanon, Shin'ichi Yamamoto says: 'Everything is a drama, with all sorts of twists and turns. But isn't that what makes it all interesting? If everything always went exactly as planned, life would be pretty dull!'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto chose his words carefully: "Here in the Middle East, and in Europe as well, religion has a much greater significance and social influence than it does in Japan. When conflicting political and social interests compound religious differences, the problem only gets more complicated. I think dialogue is essential, but I am talking about dialogue among human beings, dialogue that transcends religious distinctions.

"In other words, I think the most important thing is, as fellow citizens, as fellow human beings, to first of all frankly discuss issues of common interest. And from there to build a base of shared empathy.

"This requires eliminating the idea that people can be divided according to their beliefs or religious affiliations. I think it is a mistake to regard people as abstract groups, to identify them in terms of ethnicity, religion, nationality or class, rather than seeing them as individuals. Such thinking only divides people and will never bring about real dialogue or true friendship.

"In the case of Lebanon, dialogue must begin first and foremost with the assumption, the principle, that all cit-

izens have equal rights, are worthy of respect and have a right to life. More than dialogue among religious groups, there is a need for dialogue among people.

"This dialogue should focus not on religious beliefs but on human life. This is of course not easy, but if people do not communicate on this level, things will only get more difficult. I have decided to devote the rest of my life to promoting such life-to-life dialogue around the world.

"Buddhism originally had no different denominations or schools. Nor was it intended for any specific ethnic group or social class. It was a teaching expounded for human beings, for all humanity.

"Nichiren Daishonin's only concern, as well, was how to bring happiness to all human beings. President Toda once said that the Soka Gakkai should distinguish itself as a 'human religion.' Everything should always be based on concern for the human being. Let us also always act with that big-hearted spirit.

"There are many different religions, peoples and cultures in today's world. The only way for humankind to join together in harmony amid such diversity is to return to the starting point: our shared humanity.



This is the teaching of Buddhism. A Buddhist is someone dedicated to achieving peace and happiness for all people."

Shin'ichi's words stirred a new awareness in his listeners.

The afternoon of Jan. 23, Shin'ichi and his party visited the ruins of the ancient city Baalbek, once known as Heliopolis, or City of the Sun, located in the Al Biga Valley northeast of Beirut.

Late that night, Shin'ichi and his group were to catch a 1:10 a.m. flight to New Delhi, India, by way of Teheran, Iran. But when they arrived at the airport, they learned that strong winds had forced their plane to land on Cyprus, delaying its Beirut arrival. An airline representative said that while no new departure time had yet been scheduled, their flight would probably be delayed at least 10 hours.

Shin'ichi and the others returned to their hotel and tried calling the airport again the next morning, but there was still no definite departure time.

As they ate breakfast at the hotel, Kiyoshi Jujo said with some irritation: "There's always trouble when you try to get around overseas. You just never know what's going to happen."

Shin'ichi laughed and replied: "We can say the same about life in general and about the path of kosen-rufu. Everything is a drama, with all sorts of twists and turns. But isn't that what makes it all interesting? If everything always went exactly as planned, life would be pretty dull!"

"Whenever I encounter a trial or obstacle, I just regard it as another of life's dramas, and I face it head-on. We are all the protagonists in the drama of our own lives, so we may as well play our role as hero to the fullest.

"It's especially important for young people to have this attitude. If we react to everything that happens with surprise, panic, complaint and sadness, we can't be heroes. We'll just end up ruining the whole drama."

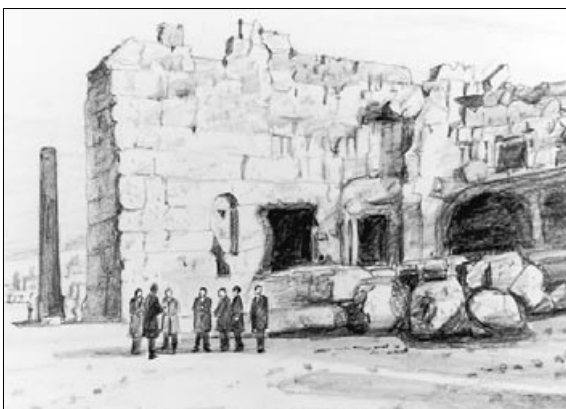
Shin'ichi's words expressed his philosophy on life.

The group finally flew out of Beirut at 5:00 p.m. on the 24th. They were 16 hours behind schedule. Originally, they had planned to spend one night in New Delhi, but because of the delay they decided to cancel their stay there and proceed to Hong Kong, their next destination. When they arrived in New Delhi by way of Teheran, it was the middle of the night. They reached their next stopover, Bangkok, the following morning.

Shin'ichi had planned to meet with some of the Thai members at the airport during their Bangkok layover. Entering the airport lobby, he saw some 50 people waiting to greet him.

On his visit to Bangkok in February 1962, the year before, when the first chapter in Thailand had been formed, there had been a membership of only 20-some households. Now there were nearly 200.

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



Ruins of the ancient city of Baalbek.

THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAYS BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA



‘A Hawaiian White Horse’

Opening the window, the scent of the sea breezes in. As always, the beach at Waikiki is lively and bustling. The happy shouts of children. Voices calling to friends. People in brightly colored swimsuits running on the hot sand. Others lounging in the shadows of palm fronds. Looking toward this paradise of the Pacific, people come here from west and east, gathering and becoming friends.

“Enjoy!”—this is the Aloha spirit! Then, my eyes are drawn to one spot on the beach. There, from the sand, emerges the figure of a white horse. Who had sculpted it? It seems as if it is ready to gallop gracefully away. I bow with respect and appreciation to the nameless beach artist who created it.

Had someone unearthed a horse buried in sand? Or was it unearthed from deep in the artist’s heart?

Once sand was touched by creative hands, it was no longer just sand. It ceased to be simply a thing. The sand became the beautiful body of a horse, a fusion of matter and spirit.

That moment when something un-

seen becomes something visible—there we find the mystery of creativity!

Human beings are works of art created by the universe from the same material as the stars.

This galloping horse, too, was created from the universal elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Void! Everything created by nature, including the human being, is a masterpiece.

The magnificent banyan tree. The crimson hibiscus. Rainbow-colored tropical fish. Nature itself aims at beauty. Life strives for beauty. Nothing is ugly that is vitally alive.

The intense sunlight of endless summer beats upon my arm as I hold my camera. A strong fragrance floats in the dry air. Is it ginger-grass? Plumeria?

If one just has the heart to perceive it, this world is filled with beauty. The waves, the clouds, are great artists.

The Earth calls out to us: “People! Be beautiful, be strong, like me! Give birth! Give rise! To things of value! Be generous! Don’t hold back! Create! Create! Something wonderful!”

To give birth is a joy! To create is a joy! To encourage people is to create. To

make friends—this, too, is creation, as is to foster capable people! The joy of creation! This is the triumphant cry of life itself!

Dutch historian Johan Huizinga refers to the human being as “*Homo Ludens*”—one who plays—and suggests that culture is born out of play.

To break away from a state of being bound by a quest for material things and freely create something—this is culture. This is what it means to be human.

Words suggesting play or enjoyment appear in many places throughout the Lotus Sutra.

It reads, for example, “To stroll [frolic] about without fear like the lion king.”

And, “Mounting the jeweled carriages, driving off in all directions, delighting and amusing themselves.”

Also, “day and night for unnumbered kalpas to find constant enjoyment.”

There is a figure in the sutra named Bodhisattva Lion Frolic World.

And the sutra speaks of the “sport carried out by the Thus Come One’s transcendental powers,” as well as the world being a place “where living beings enjoy themselves at ease.”

Here the Lotus Sutra tells us that people appear in this world to enjoy themselves.

The sutra also refers to a bodhisattva who “enjoys himself going out among the lands, liberating people from suffering.”

From among all the worlds that fill this vast universe, we have chosen and come to this Earth to create happiness. So even when suffering approaches, let us ride it like a surfer on a wave and enjoy overcoming it!

When our life force is strong, this world becomes a place to “enjoy ourselves at ease.” We can pull this power from the “emerald sea” that exists inside our hearts. The name *Waikiki* means “surging spring.”

When we cause our life force to well forth, to surge up like a spring, that time and that place become a paradise—a garden of enjoyment!

Pay no mind to trifling matters!
Don’t become a tragic hero!
Overcome the sorrow in your heart!
Enjoy!

It is for this purpose that we were born!

Nine in a series