



**EXPERIENCE:**  
Pat Keating and  
Lynda Martinez  
share the joys of  
motherhood.

pages 2-3

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## Eight Youth Culture Festivals To Be Held in 2001

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The national youth division leaders recently announced plans to sponsor eight youth culture festivals — one in each of SGI-USA's zones — next year. The goal is to gather a total of 100,000 people at eight locations. Each event will feature a chorus of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

The youth division plans to hold various summer activities this year in preparation toward the 2001 festivals. This fall, the SGI-USA will celebrate the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first visit to the United States, which began on Oct. 2, 1960.

General Director Daniel Nagashima commented that "victory for the year 2001 — no, vic-

tory for the 21st century — will be decided by the SGI-USA this year. Sticking to our theme The Power of One, we will take the lead in raising youth division members, sharing this Buddhism, promoting our publications and strengthening our Soka Spirit movement."

President Ikeda recently told the SGI-USA national leaders that "the most noble life is one dedicated to a great purpose, for the sake of others and society. A life dedicated to pursuing immediate desires — in other words, a life with no responsibilities — is a base, animalistic life." He expressed his hope that, centering on General Director Nagashima and Women's Leader Matilda Buck, SGI-USA will advance in beautiful harmony as "the model of the world." **WT**

## SGI President Ikeda Receives Three Honorary Doctorates From U.S. Universities

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda meets with President Allen Lee Sessoms (center) and Vice President Hamid Shirvani (right) of Queens College of the University of New York. On Jan. 18 at Soka University's Central Tower in Hachioji, Tokyo, Queens College presented President Ikeda with an honorary doctorate of humane letters, one of three honorary doctorates he received from U.S. universities last month. On Jan. 15, he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Delaware, and one from the University of Guam on Jan. 28. These were the second, third and fourth honorary doctorates President Ikeda has received from the United States; the first was from the University of Denver in June 1996.

## Early Resolution of Conflict Stressed in 2000 Peace Proposal

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda on Jan. 26 released his annual peace proposal, "Peace Through Dialogue: A Time to Talk," celebrating the 25th anniversary of the SGI's founding. This time, he called for the immediate establishment of an international conflict resolution committee within the U.N. system that would help assure the application of international human rights and humanitarian law in conflict-plagued regions, the proposal offers many concrete proposals for action.

Since the end of the Cold

War, regional and internal conflicts have claimed more than 4 million lives; 90 percent of these people were unarmed civilians, women and children. The international community, says Ikeda, must act early to bring all parties to the table for negotiations before a given conflict escalates into large-scale, protracted violence.

The proposed committee would enhance the monitoring and early warning functions of the United Nations by holding public hearings seeking to bring the parties to a conflict face-to-face in an open, neutral setting.

The proposal explores the need to overcome the tendencies toward attachment and discrimination in the depths of individuals' lives. Many conflicts stem from the assumption that transient and superficial differences are permanent and definitive. The author asserts that humans are capable of challenging such assumptions and that such inner change can help create a truly robust global culture of peace.

Other suggestions from President Ikeda include:

PLEASE SEE PROPOSAL, 3



Youth take the stage in the 1st SGI-USA Youth Grand Culture Festival, held Sept. 25, 1999, in Pasadena, Calif.

### STUDY DEPARTMENT INFO

Please see page 3 for a list of study material for the upcoming April 30 Entrance-level Exam to be held nationwide; and Goshō scheduled for lectures during the months of February, April, June, August, October and December. Pages 6 and 7 carry the sample questions for the Entrance-level Exam.

EXPERIENCE — PAT KEATING AND LYNDA MARTINEZ, LOS ANGELES

# Mothers' Love Knows No Boundaries

Photos by MARTIN COHEN

**In the fall of 1997, two SGI-USA members in Los Angeles, Pat Keating and Lynda Martinez, discovered they shared a dream. Both wanted to adopt baby daughters from the People's Republic of China. The road that led to this decision was unique for each of them.**

**Pat Keating:** The journey to adopt a baby girl from China had started in the fall of 1993. I was working for a producer at Universal Studios and busily organizing her home files when I came across a *New York Times* Sunday magazine that she had kept for research. On the cover was a picture of a little Chinese baby girl in a red velvet dress. When I saw this picture, I burst into tears. Desire flamed in my heart. I wanted my own little Chinese baby girl, although I hadn't know it before that moment.

I had always wanted a family, but years after my divorce and a string of failed relationships, I was still unmarried and childless. Tears streaming down my face, I read the article and noted down the name of an agency in Northern California that was arranging for Americans to adopt abandoned Chinese girls. Age and marital status didn't matter. I had hope, but when I called the agency and started to pursue it, it quickly became clear that I didn't have the one essential ingredient — money! Nevertheless, I continued to make efforts and contacted the U.S. Asian Affairs office in Los Angeles and spoke to the director, Norman Nui, who showed me a whole scrapbook of happy families with their pretty Chinese daughters. But I had reached a dead end; without the money I could go no further.

I began instead a four-year career as a foster parent to four troubled children; an experience that proved to be fulfilling and rewarding in many ways, and heartbreaking in others. The heartbreaking aspect went with the territory; foster parents have to give the children

back. Although several times children were placed with me that appeared to be eligible for adoption, it never worked out. But I did learn an essential truth about myself: I loved being a mother. It certainly was the most challenging and difficult job I had ever had, something that demanded all my internal resources.

During this time, an obstacle appeared at work. Seagrams bought Universal and my division was dissolved. Everyone was laid off. Fortunately for me, I was given a large severance package of an entire year's salary doled out over the course of a year. At the same time, I was offered another job. Since common sense dictated banking the money and continuing to work, that's what I did.

Before long the new job became hellish. It came to a head toward the end of my first year there. I didn't get along with my new boss, whom I viewed as unethical and sadistic. I left one Wednesday night determined never to return. After receiving good advice from a friend ("Don't quit. Call in sick and chant daimoku!"), I stayed home for the next four days and chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — two hours, then four hours, then six hours. That Sunday I chanted nine hours.

I did not want to go back to



Pat Keating with daughter, Victoria, 2 (left), and Lynda Martinez with her daughter, Grace, 22 months old.

work, but I did. Although nothing had changed externally, something had changed inside me. The hours of chanting had filled me with confidence. The realization swept over me: Now I have the money to go to China! While I went through hell on my new job, I had been depositing the severance from Universal regularly and it had

just kept piling up. Once I realized I had the money, I made the decision to adopt a Chinese baby girl.

When I shared this decision with my friend, Lynda Martinez, she said, "You have awakened the dream that's in my heart!" She decided to do the same thing, to go to China to adopt a baby girl.

**Lynda Martinez:** I had become aware of China's dire situation of abandoned girl babies, met a few women who had recently adopted from Chinese orphanages and thought, "Oh, I'd like to do that." But it was only a passing thought until

PLEASE SEE MOTHERS, 3

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## Study Material for April 30 Entrance-level Exam

The study material for the Entrance-level Exam has been compiled into one booklet and will be available toward the end of February in the SGI-USA bookstores nationwide. (Page numbers listed below are from the original source material cited. Goshō quotes throughout all the study material are from the seven volumes of *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*.)

1. "On Attaining Buddhahood" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 6–12; 20–29)
2. "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 32–43; 47–52)  
Source: SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook.
3. "Happiness in This World"  
Source: *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 223–46.
4. Nichiren Daishonin's life  
Source: book *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 11–18; 56–78; 83–115.
5. The Introduction; Question No. 2; Question No. 4  
Source: pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, pp. 4–6; 9–10; 13–16; these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

# Goshō Study Material for 2000

**1. February Goshō Study Material (January Living Buddhism):** "The Meaning of Faith" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1036—entire text; Japanese: Myoichi Ama Gozen Gohenji (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1255; October 1999 *Daibyakurengē*) • What is faith? • The spirit of propagation.

**2. April Goshō Study Material (March Living Buddhism):** "The Gods Same Birth and Same Name" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 315—fourth paragraph; Japanese: Doshō Domyō Goshō (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1115; December 1998 *Daibyakurengē*) • Faith to surmount obstacles. • The protection of Buddhist gods. • Selfless devotion for kosen-rufu. The spirit of offering.

**3. June Goshō Study Material (May Living Buddhism):**

"The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 216—seventh and eighth paragraphs; Japanese: Shōji Ichidaiji Kechimyaku Shō—*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1337; February 1998 *Daibyakurengē*) • What is the heritage of the ultimate Law of life? • What does it mean to embrace the Lotus Sutra? • The mentor and disciple relationship. • The unity of *itai doshin* (many in body, one in mind).

**4. August Goshō Study Material (July Living Buddhism):** "Letter to Misawa" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 899—third, fourth and fifth paragraphs; Japanese: Misawa Shō—*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1487; November 1999 *Daibyakurengē*) • The three obstacles and four devils. • The devil king of the sixth heaven. The innate darkness of life. • Faith to fight against devils.

**5. October Goshō Study Material (September Living Buddhism):** "On Prolonging One's Life Span" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 954—first, second and third paragraphs; Japanese: Kaenjō Shō—*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 985; December 1997 *Daibyakurengē*) • Overcoming sickness. • Karma. • Importance of life. Devoting one's life to kosen-rufu.

**6. December Goshō Study Material (November Living Buddhism):** "The Fourteen Slanders" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 756—first and second paragraphs; p. 760—fourth and fifth paragraphs; Japanese: Matsunodono Gohenji—*Goshō Zenshu*, pages 1381 and 1386; August 1998 *Daibyakurengē*) • Difference of daimoku. • The meaning of slander. • Spirit of propagation. **BT**

### FROM MOTHERS, 2

several months later, I went to an SGI-USA discussion meeting and met another member's teenage niece visiting from Hong Kong. I was impressed by this young girl's sincerity and real commitment to kosen-rufu. She gave me a little key chain with the SGI colors on it, which I still have attached to my rearview mirror.

As we left the meeting, I said to my friend, "Oh, I'd love to have a daughter like that." Suddenly I realized, "I can and I will! I'm going to China to adopt an orphaned child."

So exactly four years later, Pat was back at the U.S. Asian Affairs office with Norman Nui and Lynda. Together they started the massive, and sometimes nerve-racking, process of paperwork and checkwriting.

**Lynda:** There were many detractors. Many friends and family said: "You're crazy! You're too old, you have no husband and you went through so much hell with your son when he was a teenager. Do you really want to go through all that again? You should be enjoying your life now, going on cruises, etc."

It's true. My 24-year-old son, Jimmy, had caused me to chant literally millions of daimoku and to seek so much guidance from my seniors in faith during his horrendous teenage rebellion. But it was also during those difficult years that I really

grew as a person. Jimmy has now grown into an exceptionally fine young man. He's practicing Buddhism sincerely and working for a large real estate agency. The wonderful relationship I enjoy with him today is one of the most amazing and greatest benefits of my 24-year practice in the SGI.

**Pat:** There were plenty of naysayers: "You're too old, you're single, your job is in turmoil!", but I wasn't swayed. My practice of Buddhism made it possible for me to fulfill a lifelong dream, my heart's desire. I made a commitment based on faith. As my friend who also practices Buddhism told me, "What incredible determination that little girl has to propel herself to Los Angeles to do kosen-rufu!"

**Lynda:** I wrestled with doubt, agonizing over the question: "Could I really raise another child? Emotionally—physically—financially?" So once again I prayed as deeply and sincerely as I could. As I chanted, my determination to go to China was solidifying. Then I found a few words of encouragement from SGI President Ikeda in the *World Tribune* that became my sustaining motto, my silent battle cry—"No doubt, no hesitation."

In the following months as I challenged all the paperwork, interviews and my own insecurities, I could always move forward with confidence just



Victoria (left) and Grace.

remembering those four words—no doubt, no hesitation. I cut them out, pasted them in my daily calendar and referred to them constantly. In April when I lost my job, those four words, plus hours of chanting, pulled me through and prevented me from wavering in my determination.

In November 1998, Pat and Lynda went to Guangzhou China and then traveled by bus four-and-a-half hours to Yangdong City. On Nov. 17, the director of the Yangdong Child Welfare Institute placed Victoria Jane in Pat's arms. She was 10 months old. Lynda traveled two more hours to Yangchun City to receive Grace Lucille, 8 months old.

**Lynda:** The 11 days in China, during November 1998, were nothing but proof of the power of abundant daimoku. In spite

of my many great fears, everything went so smoothly; I could feel all the prayers from my fellow SGI-USA members every step of the way.

And what has life been like since then? More benefits! Both Lynda and Pat determined to be stay-at-home moms, nearly an impossibility for single mothers. But both have received such incredible financial benefit over the past year that they have been able to stay at home to raise their daughters.

**Lynda:** Every day with Grace has been so joyful. My prayer and determination is to raise her to be a happy and fortunate woman who will contribute mightily to the cause of true peace in our world. During the 13 months I waited for the Chinese government to complete my paperwork and select my child (how exactly they choose your child remains a mystery, but we know it's based on karma), I chanted that the child would be vigorous enough to see age 95 in great health; she'd be smart enough to always support herself if necessary; and have a heart to contribute to kosen-rufu. Grace Lucille is now 22 months old, extremely healthy and bright, and participates in the Boys and Girls Group.

**Pat:** How fortunate I am to have Victoria as my daughter. Her beauty and her spirit astounded me. My life has forever changed. **BT**

### FROM PROPOSAL, 1

• A concerted effort to eliminate poverty worldwide—a global Marshall Plan equivalent to that used to rebuild Europe's shattered economies after World War II. As poverty is both a result and a cause of conflict, such programs should be funded through reductions in global military expenditures, currently estimated at \$700 billion per annum.

• The placement of U.N. embassies in as many countries as possible to bring the functions of various U.N. agencies together in a single venue, with a consolidated point of liaison with governments. This would focus and enhance the work of the United Nations in human development.

• The creation of a Northeast Asia Peace University to promote exchange, interaction and confidence-building in the region. Mongolia is a possible site, the SGI president mentions, as the Mongolian government has official relations with all of the countries of Northeast Asia. (*The full text of the 2000 peace proposal will appear in an upcoming issue of Living Buddhism.*) **BT**

**Correction:** Regarding the article about Hiroe Clow in the Jan. 21 *World Tribune*, page 3, there should be no question mark after the word *Law* both times—in the third line of the last paragraph of the first column of the article; and in the last paragraph of the third column toward the end. We apologize for any misunderstanding this may have caused.

EXPERIENCE — NORIKO ADCOCK, SAN DIEGO

# A Renewed Sense of Purpose

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

*"When deluded, one is called an ordinary being, but when enlightened, one is called a Buddha. This is similar to a tarnished mirror that will shine like a jewel when polished. A mind now clouded by the illusions of the innate darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror; but when polished, it is sure to become like a clear mirror, reflecting the essential nature of phenomena and the true aspect of reality. Arouse deep faith, and diligently polish your mirror day and night. How should you polish it? Only by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo." (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 4)*

I practiced as a member of Nichiren Shoshu for the past eight years. What I would like to share is not a mere emotional account of my past struggle, but what I experienced first-hand as a temple member. I clearly understand how Nichiren Shoshu operates from by observing the operation of the local temple.

First let me backtrack. In 1956, I left my small town, Chichibushi, just outside of Tokyo, for the United States as a 19-year-old newlywed. My husband was an American serviceman.

Because of his job, we moved around a lot and, eventually, we found ourselves in San Diego. It is here that I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism by a Soka Gakkai member 37 years ago, in 1963.

I happened to live near an SGI member. She came to my home regularly to visit with her friends to tell me about Buddhism. They were very persistent.

I think I was looking for something to believe in, but I hadn't found anything. Shinto was my family religion, but I never believed in it. I even tried going to church, but that didn't fulfill me either.

One woman from the SGI left a book by the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, about Buddhist practice and daily life. I read it and it really impressed me. So I decided to join in October 1963.

One year later, in 1964, my husband was transferred to Seattle. Incidentally, this is where I first met Hiroe Clow; she was the women's leader in Seattle at the time. She was a warm, honest and sincere woman.

Shortly after moving, I experienced difficulties in my marriage. I came back to San Diego with my three children. Eventually, my

husband and I divorced. Having never worked before, I had to go on welfare for six months because my husband never paid child support. There were days when I didn't have food; this was how I struggled to raise my family.

I was encouraged by the San Diego members to use my Buddhist practice to overcome my problems. Being a fairly new member, I listened to what they said. I chanted and did my best to introduce as many people as I could to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism using the *Seikyo Shimbum* or *World Tribune*.

I had no skills, so I chanted to find a job. After submitting many applications, eventually I got one as a waitress at the CPO Officer's Club. That's where I met my second husband, whom I stayed with for 23 years, until his death in 1991. We had nothing but good memories.

I believe all these changes happened in my life because of my Buddhist practice and because of the support of the SGI members. I was able to overcome each obstacle that arose in the course of my life.

I lived a comfortable life.

So, if my life was so good, why did I leave the SGI? Things grew very hectic in the organization over the years, and I could not handle what I believed to be an increasingly intolerable and authoritarian environment. In 1982, I left the organization, although I practiced on my own for the next nine years. For the most part, I lost touch with the daily goings-on of the SGI. I had no idea of what was happening between the top leaders of Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI.

Then, in 1991, my friend who was still practicing within the organization told me of the schism between the SGI and the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood. Because the Gohonzon I received was from Nichiren Shoshu, I decided to go to the temple in Etiwanda, Calif., to find out what this was all about. I spoke with the chief priest for two hours one day. He told me the Soka Gakkai was trying to take over the priesthood. I innocently decided to trust the priesthood of Nichiren Shoshu, and I believed I was doing the right thing.

At the time of this schism, the Etiwanda temple was virtually deserted. With the few members that were left and the priest, we resolved to unite to protect our temple and Nichiren Shoshu. I was happy to be practicing with other people once again, and at first

practicing with the temple seemed to go well.

However, around 1993 things began to change—the head temple replaced the chief priest with a new one from Chicago. Instead of having open discussion meetings, the meetings became very cold; the priests became very controlling. The priests now had to obey the High Priest Nikken Abe. Based on directives that I believe came from the head temple, everything was handled in a secret manner; believers were kept in the dark. We were no longer able to voice our opinions, talk about problems or make suggestions.

The temple also stopped study meetings on the Daishonin's Buddhism. Study was reduced to a priest lifelessly reading a one-page passage without any explanation or discussion. Yet we'd go to the meeting and still have to make a financial contribution. Many American members realized there was nothing to learn at the temple, that they could study the Goshu on their own at home. Many people stopped attending meetings because of all these changes.

Doubt regarding the integrity of Nichiren Shoshu gradually grew in me—a doubt stemming from the priests' insistence that Hiroe Clow lied about the Seattle Incident and the news of the destruction of the Grand Main Temple and the Grand Reception Hall by Nichiren Shoshu. What deeply disturbed me was the fact that High Priest Nikken was using a huge amount of financial contributions from the members to rebuild these structures.

I contributed to the construction of the Grand Main Temple in 1965. I honestly cannot understand why it was destroyed. The local priest never gave us a convincing explanation, but the rumor was that it was torn down because its foundation had deteriorated. This argument did not convince me at all. I couldn't believe that the Grand Main Temple, which was built by top architects, would deteriorate in a mere 25 years.

For the last three years as a temple member, I stopped attending most activities. They were void of all spirituality. Most temple members became consumed with their own trivial interests, and they were always gossiping about each other or complaining about the chief priest. I could no longer see any joy in their faith.

There was no encouragement



Noriko Adcock shares her experience during the Soka Spirit Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Jan. 29.

from the priests either. The most the new chief priest ever said to address the problems was that we should be friendly and be unified. Of course, he also taught absolute obedience to the high priest.

My eyes opened slowly to the reality of the corruption of the priesthood. But after five years with the temple, having noticed no significant growth in my life, I began to reminisce about my days in the SGI, though I told no one. I remembered the early years of my practice, when I experienced so much joy and so many breakthroughs. I also remembered that it was the SGI that introduced me to the practice, not the priests.

I decided to return to the SGI last October because of the sincere encouragement of the SGI members. Danny Nagashima, the new SGI-USA general director, visited me and explained many things about the schism between the temple and the SGI. I was also impressed by his polite attitude, his humility and his passion. He listened with all his heart to everything I had to say. This encounter opened my heart and prompted me to resolve to leave Nichiren Shoshu. I said to myself: "I will begin my Buddhist practice afresh, trusting what he says. I will return to the spirit that I first had when I encountered this Buddhism. I will make a new start."

Also, thanks to a letter to High Priest Nikken written by Chief Priest Yumu Yamane of Renshu-ji temple, who recently seceded from Nichiren Shoshu, I was able to confirm the doubts that I had about the temple. Chief Priest Yamane clarified that the priesthood was not interested in "explaining

Buddhism to lay believers"; that Nichiren Shoshu is very rigid and cold and does not make any effort to respect the culture and nature of people of other countries; and that Nichiren Shoshu believes "priests must follow the high priest absolutely, and believers must follow their chief priest absolutely." He also pointed out the lack of democracy and free-thinking in the temple, producing people who do not think or act of their own accord.

Now that I've returned to the SGI, I am surrounded by many warmhearted people. I can see many of my old fellow members; I recently ran into two members who also left the temple. When they saw me, they commented on how happy I look now.

Sometimes I think I stayed too long with the temple. Maybe I had too much pride to come back, and I was holding on to too many bad memories of the way the organization used to be. But I think I knew I would eventually come back because I didn't want to be a spiritually blind, egotistical person. In some ways, I surprised myself by coming back. I believe the SGI has changed for the better.

I feel a renewed sense of purpose. I believe experience is power, and I will continue to share this experience.

I am in the process of continuing my human revolution. I may make more mistakes in the future, but I will be humble enough to self-reflect all the time, aiming to become a polished individual. For this cause, I will always return to the prime point of faith. I will continue to advance and try my best. **W**

## Soka Spirit Conference Looks to Future

Photos by JONATHAN WILSON

By MARK KAPLAN  
SAN FRANCISCO CORRESPONDENT

The 1st Soka Spirit Conference, Jan. 27–30, was attended by 182 people who discussed the best ways to clear up the confusion being caused by Nichiren Shoshu. The conference agenda began with a lecture from Greg Martin, in which he pointed out that we should be grateful for this challenge. Buddhism teaches that when we are on the right track, we must face this kind of obstacle, he said. If it hadn't come up, we would have to worry about whether we were practicing correctly or not.

The next section started with a presentation of the nationwide Soka Spirit action plan for 2000 by Robert Uruma, the SGI-USA Soka Spirit coordinator, and then participants broke up into eight discussion groups. Topics included "The Power of Dialogue," "Involving Youth," "Studying the Issue Creatively," "Mobilizing Daimoku," and "How Do We Approach This Issue in America."

The general consensus was that we need to continue to talk with whomever we can, wherever we can, so that everyone deepens his or her understanding of this issue. It was also pointed out by many people that actual proof is the most powerful tool we have in convincing people of the truth.

Other sessions included



(L-r) Jason Yamamoto of Redondo Beach, Calif., Joel Ferguson of Las Vegas and Barbara Howe of North Carolina applaud former temple member Noriko Andcock after she gave her experience (see p. 4) at the Soka Spirit Conference.



Miriam Pinilla (left) of Deerfield, Fla., and Sybil Forsberg of Los Angeles converse in the courtyard of the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

group discussions on The Power of One, SGI-USA's theme for 2000, and study presentations on the history of Nichiren Shoshu, the Soka Gakkai in the

1970s and the Gohonzon. But of course, the highlights of the conference were found in the many Q-and-A and individual guidance sessions. **WT**

### SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE 1ST SOKA SPIRIT CONFERENCE AT THE FNCC

## Your Victory Is America's Victory

**'The victory of each one of you is a victory for America,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Your courage will contribute greatly to the development of kosen-rufu in the United States.'**

*The 1st Soka Spirit Conference was held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Jan. 27–30.*

To my dearest, most respected SGI-USA Soka Spirit participants: My sincerest thanks for all the efforts you have been making day in and day out. Even if no one notices or praises your admirable, courageous struggles, Nichiren Daishonin, the founder of this Buddhism, is most assuredly observing you, watching over you and praising you.

The victory of each one of you is a victory for America. Your courage will contribute greatly to the development of kosen-rufu in the United States. So please score a complete victory in everything you do this year, with a sense of triumph, brightness, enjoyment and good cheer.

I am constantly praying for the good health and great happiness of each of you, whom I treasure, and for the happiness of your families and friends.

*The conference participants responded to President Ikeda's message by agreeing on the following Soka Spirit Pledge: "We, the participants of the 1st FNCC Soka Spirit Conference, pledge to lay down our lives to courageously protect the Soka Gakkai spirit, to be victorious against the enemies of human justice and to be a beacon of hope for all humanity."*

## Soka Gakkai Members Sue High Priest and Head Temple

By TED MORINO  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Some Soka Gakkai members in Japan have recently sued High Priest Nikken Abe and Taiseki-ji, the head temple of Nichiren Shoshu, over their destruction of Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo). Three class action suits have been initiated:

- Fifteen Soka Gakkai members from Fujinomiya City, where Taiseki-ji is located, sued High Priest Nikken and Taiseki-ji at the Shizuoka District Court on Jan. 17. They seek around \$219,000 in compensation for the psychological duress they say they have suffered from the temple's destruction. According to the document they submitted to the court, they all made monetary offerings in 1965 for the construction of the Grand Main Temple, cutting down exhaustively on their daily expenses to do so. The

plaintiffs contend that their offerings were made with the understanding they were given from Nichiren Shoshu that the Grand Main Temple would be maintained far into the future. The original conditions governing the donations have been breached, they claim.

- Twelve Soka Gakkai members in Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, filed a similar suit against High Priest Nikken and Taiseki-ji on Jan. 25. They seek around \$79,000 in compensation for the donations they offered to Nichiren Shoshu for the upkeep of the Grand Main Temple. They argue that the reasons given by the priesthood for the temple's demolition were invalid, this constituting a breach of good faith.

- Tadao Nomoto, a Soka Gakkai member in Hachioji City, Tokyo, filed a suit against High Priest Nikken on Jan. 26 for the return of about \$49,000 that his mother donated to Nichiren Shoshu in 1990. The plaintiff,

executor of his deceased mother's estate, charges that the donation was specifically for the maintenance of the Grand Main Temple. His mother received a citation signed by High Priest Nikken that reads "we gratefully accept this contribution, made and kept for the maintenance of the Grand Main Temple so that it may be bequeathed to posterity in perpetuity."

High Priest Nikken's remark earlier this year that "the Grand Main Temple was nothing but the epitome of slander, because its foundation was offerings from Soka Gakkai members" was the last straw for these Soka Gakkai members.

Tomomi Hara, one of the Fujinomiya plaintiffs, explains: "As we reside near Taiseki-ji, we saw the Grand Main Temple being dismantled every day. It was indeed a painful sight. I could not hold back tears of regret. We have been bearing with this situation, but in January



Soka Gakkai members in Fujinomiya, Japan, who are suing High Priest Nikken and the head temple over the destruction of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), hold a press conference at the Fuji City Hall, Jan. 17.

this year, High Priest Nikken went on to call the Grand Main Temple the epitome of the Soka Gakkai's slander. We could not hold back our anger at his distortion of the truth. Since the priesthood's mentality is so off—so far from understanding the sentiments of ordinary people—they don't under-

stand how much we went through to save money for the Grand Main Temple's construction. Because of their strange mentality, they went ahead to destroy the Grand Main Temple without a second thought, never giving us any notice of their decision and ensuing action." **WT**

## 'The Life of Nichiren Daishonin'

From the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*, pp. 14–35

**Q1:** What was the practice that Nichiren Daishonin proclaimed on April 28, 1253? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 15)

**Q2:** Describe the significance of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution in terms of Nichiren Daishonin's identity. (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 17–18)

**Q3:** After the attempt to execute Nichiren Daishonin at Tatsunokuchi proved unsuccessful, he was exiled to a cold and forbidding place that he was not expected to return from. What was this place? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19)

**Q4:** What did the Daishonin teach his disciples in response to their discouragement over his exile? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19)

**Q5:** During the Sado Exile, the Daishonin completed the theoretical foundation of his teachings. What two works written during this period established the theoretical framework for his inscription of the object of devotion? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 21)

**Q6:** Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly stated in his writings that a Buddha is what? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 18)

**Q7:** After what event did Nichiren Daishonin start inscribing the Gohonzon? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23)

**Q8:** The inscription of "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" and "Nichiren" on the Gohonzon indicates what principle? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23)

**Q9:** Following a Chinese proverb that says if one's warnings go unheeded three times by the sovereign, one should leave the country, the Daishonin retired to Mount Minobu and prepared for the great task of eternalizing his Buddhism. Retirement did not mean a life of leisure for the Daishonin. What three things did he do at this time?

(*Living Buddhism*, p. 25)

**Q10:** To foster the faith of the disciples he was training at Mount Minobu, the Daishonin gave an important series of lectures. What were these lectures on, and under what name were they set down in writing by Nikko Shonin? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 24–27)

**Q11:** In what way did the behavior of the Daishonin's followers after the persecutions surrounding Tatsunokuchi and the Sado Exile differ from their behavior following the Atsuhara Persecution? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 29)

**Q12:** What activity by Nichiren Daishonin's followers caused the authorities to persecute them? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 27)

**Q13:** Who did Nichiren Daishonin name as his legitimate successor? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 32)

**Q14:** Why did five of the six senior priests abandon the Daishonin's teachings after he died? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

**Q15:** What slanderous acts did the five senior priests commit? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

**Q16:** Why did Nikko Shonin leave Mount Minobu and establish Taiseki-ji temple near the foot of Mount Fuji? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

**Q17:** What was Nikko Shonin's purpose in writing "The Twenty-six Admonitions"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 35)

## 'On Attaining Buddhahood'

From the *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-level Textbook*, pp. 6–31

**Q18:** How do the Daishonin's teachings about the Mystic Law differ from the views of most other religions? (p. 10)

**Q19:** What does it mean to "perceive the nature of your own

# Sample Questions for the Entrance-level Exam To Be Held April 30

*This year's Entrance-level Exam will be held Sunday, April 30, throughout the country. Actual questions for the exam will be based on the sample questions that follow. The page numbers that appear in parentheses at the end of each question will direct you to where the answer can be found. The actual exam questions will be in multiple-choice format, so this sample test is more difficult than the actual test will be. Also, of the following questions, only 40 to 50 percent will appear on the exam, which is expected to consist of 25 to 35 questions. We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam. Good luck! (The study material for the Entrance-level Exam has been compiled into one booklet for those who don't have the original source materials cited. The booklet will be available toward the end of February in the SGI-USA bookstores nationwide. Please see page 3 for a list of study material for the upcoming exam.)*

— The SGI-USA Study Department

life"? (p. 21)

**Q20:** What is the Daishonin trying to illustrate by using the analogy of a poor man counting his neighbor's wealth day and night? (p. 21)

**Q21:** What attitude will lead us to feel that our practice is an "endless, painful austerity"? (p. 23)

**Q22:** What constitutes the attitudes of non-Buddhists according to this letter? (pp. 22–23)

**Q23:** What does this letter emphasize as a key element in our Buddhist practice? (p. 23)

**Q24:** What attitude prevents us from experiencing "great joy" in our practice? (p. 22)

**Questions 25–26 are based on the following passage:**

It [the Jomyo Sutra] further states that if the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. (MW-1, 4)

**Q25:** What Buddhist principle is illustrated by this passage? (pp. 26–27)

**Q26:** What does "the good and evil of our minds" mean? (p. 25)



Nancy Miller (left) of Burbank, Calif., and Hal Randolph of Hollywood, Calif.

**Q27:** Where is the Buddha land? (p. 25)

**Q28:** In the principle of "the mutually inclusive relationship between life and all phenomena" what does *life* represent? (pp. 18–20)

**Q29:** In the principle of "the mutually inclusive relationship between life and all phenomena" what does *phenomena* represent? (pp. 18–20)

**Q30:** According to Nichiren Daishonin, what beliefs constitute inferior teachings? (p. 21)

**Q31:** When would chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo still be considered practicing provisional teachings? (p. 20)

**Q32:** The Daishonin teaches us that when chanting to the Gohonzon we should "summon up deep conviction that \_\_\_\_\_." (p. 23)

\_\_\_\_\_." (p. 23)

**Q33:** What action of Buddhist practice does the Daishonin compare to polishing a mirror? (p. 29)

**Q34:** According to this letter, what is "the direct path to enlightenment"? (p. 9)

## 'The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon'

From the *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-level Textbook*, pp. 32–53

**Questions 35–44 are based on the following passage:**

Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions.... The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, "Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood." (MW-1, 213)

**Q35:** What is Nichiren Daishonin urging us to seek within our own lives? (p. 39)

**Q36:** What is the meaning of the passage "The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions"? (p. 42)

**Q37:** In this letter, Nichiren Daishonin refers to the Gohonzon as "perfectly endowed." Why are the other Buddhist objects of worship incomplete compared to the Gohonzon? (pp. 43-44)

**Q38:** No one has unwavering faith from the outset. How can we define faith at the beginning of our practice? (p. 49)

**Q39:** When we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon we experience the interaction of the four powers. Two of the four powers are 1) the power of the Buddha and 2) the power of the Law. How can we activate the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law in our own lives? (p. 41)

**Q40:** Shakyamuni's disciple Shariputra was considered to be the "foremost in wisdom," yet even he could not attain enlightenment through his wisdom. How did he attain enlightenment? (p. 46)

**Q41:** Even though doubts are natural and unavoidable, it is important to strive for doubt-free faith. Instead of worrying or tormenting ourselves, what should we do when we have feelings of doubt or insincerity in our practice? (p. 51)

**Q42:** What two actions express faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? (pp. 51-52)

**Q43:** What point is the Daishonin trying to teach us in this writing through the examples of the Emperor of Han and Li Kuang? (pp. 51-52)

**Q44:** Down the center of the Gohonzon, inscribed in Chinese characters, are the words "Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, Nichiren." What Buddhist principle does this indicate (include the component parts of that principle)? (p. 38)

**'Happiness in This World'**

From the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*, pp. 7-13

**Q45:** How can we elevate our inner life-condition? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7)

**Q46:** Why is it important to elevate our inner life-condition? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 7-8)

**Q47:** Why does Nichiren Daishonin state that "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 7-8)

**Q48:** What enables us to experience the "joy derived from the Law"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8-9)

**Q49:** How is "joy derived from the Law" different from the "joy derived from desires"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8-9)

**Q50:** Why is attributing the cause of our happiness or unhappiness to someone else contradictory to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9)

**Q51:** Practicing with what determination in our Buddhist practice contributes to the development of our state of life? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8-9)

**Q52:** How does the phrase "Happy and at ease" relate to our lives? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9)

**Q53:** What does it mean to be a Buddha of absolute freedom? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 10)

**Q54:** What does achieving "peace and security" mean? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 11)

**Q55:**

What is the Buddhist understanding of "life's hardships"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 12-13)

**Q56:** Why does Nichiren Daishonin tell Shijo Kingo to "strengthen your faith more than ever"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 13)

**Q57:** What is the meaning of Nichiren Daishonin's advice to Shijo Kingo to "just chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, and when you drink sake, stay at home with your wife"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 12)

**Q58:** What is the purpose of our practice of faith? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7)

**'Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue'**

**Questions 59-63 are based on the "Introduction":**

From the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*, pp. 36-41

**Q59:** What is it about the nature of Buddhism that challenges those interested in passivity and unquestioning obedience from believers? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36)

**Q60:** What passage from the Lotus Sutra regarding persecutions applies directly to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36)

**Q61:** How does Buddhism characterize opposition by authority? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 37)

**Q62:** What is the meaning of obstacles to our Buddhist movement? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 36-37)

**Q63:** What does opposition from the priesthood mean to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 37-38)

**Questions 64-66 are based on question 2:** "Why is it important to know about the temple issue?"

**Q64:** How can we benefit by understanding the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

**Q65:**



Anne Ford (left) of Decatur, Ga., and Gail Thomas of Aliso Viejo, Calif.

What is meant by "correct faith"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

**Q66:** In terms of the future, why is it important to understand the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

**Questions 67-70 are based on question 4:** "What is the real difference between the temple and the SGI?"

**Q67:** What is Nichiren Shoshu's position on the equality between lay members and priests? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 39)

**Q68:** How does Nichiren Shoshu's view of the Gohonzon contradict Nichiren Daishonin's view? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 40)

**Q69:** Nichiren Daishonin clearly states what it means to receive the heritage or lifeblood of faith. How is Nichiren Shoshu's view different from the view of the Daishonin? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 40-41)

**Q70:** How does Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI differ in action and commitment to kosen-rufu? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 41)

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AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# Astronomy Makes Us Aware

**Remembering his studies of astronomy at 'Toda University,' SGI President Ikeda says that 'astronomy makes us aware that we are all living together on one tiny, tiny planet. Astronomy stirs in us the cry for peace and the spirit of love.'**

"Ninety-eight percent of what I am today I learned from my mentor." This was the forthright declaration I made in my speech "Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship," which I delivered at Columbia University's Teachers College in New York, in June 1996. I wanted to convey the profound significance of what I refer to as "Toda University," which was grounded on the principle that people foster people, and that the very heart of humanistic education is the relationship between teacher and student.

It is no exaggeration to say that the teachings impressed upon my youthful mind at Toda University were precious drops of the wonderful medicine of wisdom. I decided, as I studied by my mentor's side, that my challenge and my mission as a disciple would be to see how far I could expand these precious drops I received from Mr. Toda into a vast sea of infinite value.

At Toda University, we used leading texts by famous scholars, the same texts generally in use at Japanese universities. For example, Mr. Toda had me read

*Introduction to Economics* by Kanae Hatano, published in 1950 by Nihon Hyoronsha; *Basic Studies in Law* by Kojiro Wada, published by Keibundo Shoten in 1948; *Chemistry, The Earth and the Planets and Life*, all by F. Sherwood Taylor and part of his comprehensive book *The World of Science*, translated by Toshiaki Shirai and Raikichi Kuwaki and published by Kawade Shobo in 1953; *Sources in Japanese History* by Eiichi Ozawa, Hiroshi Takai and Yasumasa Oda, published in 1952 by Shimizu Shoin; *World History* by Toshitaka Yada, published by Yuseido in 1954; and *Political Science* by Yasuzo Suzuki, published by Seirin Shoin in 1955. All of these books, of which I have fond memories, are now in the Ikeda Collection of the Soka University Main Library in Tokyo.

When I opened one of those texts, *The Earth and the Planets*, these words seemed to jump off the page at me: "The number of stars exceeds  $10^{15}$ , so if these figures are correct we might expect there to be ten million stars with planets within the range of our telescopes. Only a small proportion of planets have air, water and a temperature at which complicated molecules can both exist and execute the elaborate changes characteristic of living matter. But if only one in a hundred planets fulfilled these conditions there may be a hundred thousand earths capable of supporting life."

This passage played an important part in Mr. Toda's astronomy class. Pleased that the view expressed in it perfectly coincided with his own ideas, Mr. Toda said: "There are many, many planets similar to the



Earth in the universe. This is what the Buddhist scriptures are referring to when they talk of 'lands in other directions.'" My youthful heart danced at the dynamic, unfettered way in which Mr. Toda linked Buddhism and modern astronomy.

Nichiren Daishonin declares, "The Buddhas of the ten directions will all assemble in throngs and fill in the lands to the east, west, north and south, in the eight directions, the major world system, and all the four hundred ten thousand million nayutas of lands" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1074). One ancient text defines a *nayuta* as  $10^{60}$ —in other words, a 1 followed by sixty 0's. Isn't this a clear assertion that an infinite number of Buddha lands exist beyond our solar system and galaxy?

Buddhism teaches that the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, and the infinite number of stars are all subject to the two phases of birth and death. The birth and death of stars, and the formation, continuance, decline and disintegration of galaxies unfold on a grand scale.

This, too, was a major topic of study at Toda University. Mr. Toda often spoke of the interrelationship of the universe and life. "Human activity," he said, "can never escape the rhythmic law of the universe. The Daishonin's Buddhism teaches that law at the most fundamental level, as an actual reality from the perspective of life. If you understand that human activity is

governed by the law of the universe, you will realize that you are one with the universe. And the universe is one with you."

Sixteen years ago, on Nov. 26, 1983, I met Dr. Gerald Carr, the commander of Skylab 4. He said that his experience in space taught him that there is a strict order to the universe. Many things happen in the universe, but there is order to their activity; that order is the universality that all humanity shares, he said. I will never forget his penetrating, confident observation.

When I asked whether he thought intelligent life existed elsewhere in the universe, he responded that there was a strong possibility it does. Then, with a touch of humor, he added that if life forms more advanced than us did exist, they were no doubt already watching us, because the Earth "makes so much noise."

The adventure of space exploration opens our minds and imaginations to possibilities as limitless as the vast sky above. It also brings us a sense of unity, leading to cooperation and coexistence.

On Nov. 29, 1999, the discovery of six new planets outside the solar system attracted a great deal of attention. We are living in an age when the possibility of civilizations beyond Earth will be a source of ever wider excitement and inspiration. We are finally entering the time when we will attain harmony and unity as global citizens with a shared destiny, just as Mr. Toda said.

Mr. Toda strongly urged that greater energy be put into the teaching of astronomy. Why? Astronomy makes us aware that we are all living together on one tiny, tiny planet. Astronomy stirs in us the cry for peace and the spirit of love.

In 1993, I met with Dr. Robert Jastrow, director of the Mount Wilson Institute and Observatory in California. As a result of our discussion, the Soka junior and senior high schools in both Tokyo and Kansai are now linked to the observatory by computer, allowing our students to observe the planets through the observatory's telescope.

In addition, the Kansai Soka Junior and Senior High School has been chosen as one of the first two Japanese schools to participate in an educational program developed by NASA, using photographs taken of the Earth during space shuttle missions.

When Japanese astronaut Mamoru Mori goes back into outer space next month on the space shuttle Endeavor, the Soka students will begin their observations and experiments. The Endeavor, scheduled to lift off on Jan. 13, will be the first space flight of the new millennium, carrying aloft with it the hopes and dreams of our bright young leaders of the 21st century.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the Dec. 18, 1999, *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.



# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'EARLY SPRING'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 37-38

*'There is nothing to fear,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells a women's leader who has been questioned by Thai police who don't know anything about the Soka Gakkai. 'Please keep encouraging the members in Thailand, confidently and wholeheartedly. You must not retreat a single step.'*

Smiling warmly, Shin'ichi Yamamoto thanked the Thai members for coming to greet him. They had only 15 minutes to talk in the airport lobby while the plane refueled. During that short time, Shin'ichi poured all his energy into encouraging each member.

Addressing all the members, he said: "Bangkok Chapter has made remarkable growth! You are the hope of Asia. Here in Thailand, though, more important than increasing the size of the organization is all of you uniting in purpose and practicing faith brightly and joyfully, joined together in friendship—even if the organization remains small. Like flowers blooming, the organization will develop when the time is ripe. There is no need to be impatient.

"Rather, what matters is that each of you receives benefit in faith and becomes happy. That is my wish. Let's meet again! Please take care!"

Anne Miyako Raiz, Bangkok Chapter women's division leader, was to travel to Hong Kong with Shin'ichi and his group in order to take the Study Department examination that would be held there and to attend a special Hong Kong Chapter meeting. Shin'ichi noticed that while the other members were all smiling happily, some-

thing was troubling Mrs. Raiz.

Shin'ichi and his party, along with Mrs. Raiz, boarded the plane and headed for Hong Kong. As soon as they had settled into their hotel after arriving in the British territory, Shin'ichi invited Mrs. Raiz to have a chat with him.

"Is something wrong?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "Actually, the other day I was summoned by the Thai police and asked about the Soka Gakkai."

"What sort of things did they ask you?"

"They wanted to know what kind of organization we are, whether we have links to the Communist Party and many other things. I told them that the Soka Gakkai is an organization of people who believe in the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, and that at our discussion meetings we do gongyo together and study the Daishonin's writings. But I'm not really sure whether they fully understood my explanation.

"It seems to me that the police regard the Soka Gakkai as a dangerous organization. They told me that we should stop canvassing new members and holding meetings. Only a few people know that this happened yet. I didn't tell all the members for fear of upsetting them. I'm not sure how we should go about



practicing faith in Thailand from now on, so I wanted to talk to you and ask your advice."

Shin'ichi smiled warmly as he spoke to Mrs. Raiz: "The police must have gotten some wrong idea about the Gakkai. But please don't worry, I will protect you and all the members. Let's observe the situation for a while, and, if necessary, I'll send some of our executive leaders to Thailand to meet with the police and government authorities to help them understand the real nature of our organization.

"The Gakkai's aim is always the prosperity of each country and the happiness of the people who live there. Our goal is for each member to become a good citizen who contributes to the well-being of society. Thinking leaders of any nation will surely have nothing but praise for the Gakkai once they understand its true purpose and nature.

"There is nothing to fear. Please keep encouraging the members in Thailand, confidently and wholeheartedly. You must not retreat a single step.

"However, as far as Gakkai activities are concerned, it is of course important that you abide by the laws of Thailand. It's also vital that you strictly refrain from irresponsible conduct or behavior, or anything that might invite misunderstanding.

"The central figures of our organization need to have not only energy and passion but such discretion and good judgment. Please advance carefully, keeping in close contact with the Soka Gakkai Headquarters."

Shin'ichi knew that for historical and other reasons, many nations were wary of the activities of religious groups. And he

was determined to avoid, at all costs, the unnecessary friction that could arise from simple misunderstandings. If problems did arise, it was the members who would ultimately suffer. For that reason, he was very aware that extreme care in introducing the Daishonin's Buddhism outside Japan was necessary.

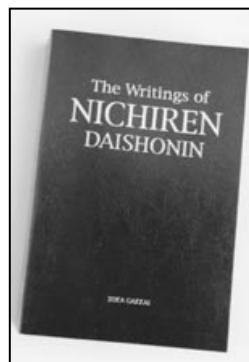
Now that the kosen-rufu movement was beginning to gain momentum around the globe, the principles of Buddhism made it clear that the Soka Gakkai would have to be prepared, quite naturally, for various trials and obstacles to beset the organizations in each country. In fact, Shin'ichi had heard that some rival religious groups and political parties in Japan, alarmed by the great strides the Gakkai was making, were scheming to prevent the Gakkai from pursuing its activities abroad. They were leaking misleading information to the governments and others in the nations where members were practicing.

For example, at a meeting two years earlier, Shin'ichi had suggested that it was time for the United Nations to recognize the People's Republic of China. Opponents of the Gakkai had made much of this, claiming it showed that the Soka Gakkai supported Communism.

But Shin'ichi was certain that no matter how the Gakkai was slandered, as long as members exercised common sense in their activities and won the trust of society, the truth about the Gakkai would become apparent in the end.

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

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# Civility: Concern for Others

## PERSPECTIVE

By PATRICIA WOOLMAN  
ALHAMBRA, CALIF.



In November 1998, I attended a conference at the Huntington Library in San Marino California on George Washington. One of the speakers, Dr. David S. Shields of the Citadel University, Charleston, South Carolina, presented a very interesting lecture titled, "George Washington: Probity, Publicity and Power," which had a very powerful effect on me.

He stressed how Washington had placed a great emphasis on civility and how to conduct oneself in daily life. He saw it as much more than just good manners; it was also as a basic respect for the dignity of every human being. He supported a concept known as the "Stage Theory," which says that society goes from nature, to civil culture, and then to decadence. This made a great impression on me, as I fear that we are very much in the latter stage, where a lack of common decency and respect is very prevalent.

Washington denied over-familiarity, and he cherished civility—respect for others—as a way of enriching society. He wrote a pamphlet, "*Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior*," when he was only 16, based upon an earlier book by French Jesuits.

Some rules in the pamphlet seem funny and archaic now, such as "Spit not into the fire,

nor stoop low before it," or "When in company put not your hands to any part of the body not usually discovered." But the

great majority are very relevant today. For example: "Every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect to those that are present"; "Use no reproachful language against any one, neither curse nor revile"; "Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any." (Do not slander.) "When another speaks, be attentive yourself, and disturb not the audience. If any hesitate in his words...interrupt him not, nor answer him until his speech be ended"—I think we have all been guilty of that one time or another, myself included!

As SGI President Ikeda has said: "Since we are all friends from the remotest past, let's treat each other with dignity, courtesy and respect." George Washington, with his 110 precepts, seems very much in keeping with this.

Many articles and books have been written on this topic of civility recently, and whole conferences have been devoted to the subject and its influence on society. Stephen L. Carter has written a book called *Civility: Manners, Morals and the Etiquette of Democracy*. He sees civility as the moral obligation to make sacrifices for the common

good, live in a spirit of generosity and risk, and treat our fellow citizens with respect even when we disagree, all of which underscore the fact that we do not go through this life alone. He feels we must return to religion and the values that come with it to accomplish this, including prayer, courage and unselfish devotion to others (the way of the bodhisattva in Buddhism).

In addition to these many writings, a conference was held at the very prestigious Johns Hopkins University in 1998 to measure the influence of civility on society. An outgrowth of this was the Johns Hopkins Civility Project. Some of the project's findings attribute the serious decrease in civility, which pervades society, to an increase in violent crime, divisions within the community, and a lack of communication. All of these seriously affect young people.

The importance of communication is stressed toward improving this area, and discussions and workshops on the improvement of politeness, and manners and respect for the rights of others are recommended for high school and university students.

In accordance with the concept of "Stage Theory," I believe most people have slipped away from civility—which includes respect for oneself and others—and need to relearn and implement these principles.

Although we may not formally discuss or promote the

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE GOLDEN STAGE OF LIFE CONFERENCE

# How To Stay Young Forever

**'Those who keep challenging themselves won't grow old,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Youth is not a matter of age.'**

*The Golden Stage of Life Conference was held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, Jan. 20-23.*

To the important members of the Golden Stage of Life Group, the treasures of American kosen-rufu: My sincere congratulations on holding this conference. The Gohonzon is aware of all the precious efforts you, whom I revere, have been making in your daily activities. There is no doubt that the benefit you will receive will be immeasurable.

Nichiren Daishonin states, "You will grow younger, and your good fortune will accumulate" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 464). As indicated by this passage, Buddhist practitioners, who strive in faith and devote themselves to kosen-rufu, can enjoy continued youth and good fortune as they age.

Those who keep challenging themselves won't grow old. Youth is not a matter of age. A youthful, robust spirit is found in your state of mind and in your faith.

I hope that all of you, who are wise and brilliant, will continue to shine encouragement as lighthouses of hope in your communities and raise future generations into leaders who will shoulder the future of our kosen-rufu movement. Together, let's open a new age of American kosen-rufu with a youthful, cheerful and progressive spirit.

Again, each of you is so important to me. I am earnestly praying every day for your continued good health and successful endeavors. Please always stay in good health and high spirits! **WT**

## Use of the Passive Voice

Please be more sensitive to the use of the passive voice in SGI-USA publications. In the Dec. 17, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 2, Mr. Ted Morino's article is titled "The Key To Having Our Wishes Fulfilled." I totally agree that through faith, I can fulfill all of my wishes. I also believe that there are many mystical things that happen in the process. But I don't believe that some other entity or force fulfills them. That idea would include the mistaken notion that this practice is magic. It is not.

The phrase *I have my wishes fulfilled* makes the inference that someone else fulfills my wishes, not me. Compare it to the phrase *I fulfill my wishes*. The power is mine, the results are my responsibility. The fact that I rely on my faith, practice and study to help me make my wishes come true does not detract from effective-

ness or responsibility. And it does not mean that I call down heavenly powers to do my bidding.

Mr. Morino's use of the phrase *I will leave it up to the Gohonzon* does not mean that one whit of the action I must take should be neglected, I believe. Rather, I can leave my worrying and unanswerable (mystical) questions to the Gohonzon with complete confidence.

— DAVID H. MCGIRR,  
Buffalo, N.Y.

MYOHO@worldnet.att.net

## Regarding 'Soka'

I am writing in response to Eileen McGruder's letter (Jan. 21 *World Tribune*) about the SGI-USA's use of the name *Soka Spirit movement* to refer to the subject of the temple rather than an English name. *Soka* is Japanese for value-creation. But in the history and tradition

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of the Soka Gakkai, the word has a deeper meaning. *Soka* is the spirit of President Makaguchi, who at the cost of his own life, stood up to Japan's military fascism and declared the need to protect the sanctity of life. *Soka* is the spirit of President Toda, who despite failing health and financial ruin, dedicated the rest of his life to rebuilding the Soka Gakkai and propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout Japan. *Soka* is the spirit of President Ikeda, who despite personal sacrifice, attacks and threats, has dedicated his entire life to fulfilling his mentor's vision that the Daishonin's Buddhism would be spread

concept of civility, the SGI's emphasis on dialogue, care and concern for others, and respect for the basic dignity of every human being—manifested by

how we respect the Buddha nature in everyone via our activities for kosen-rufu—is a significant step in promoting the culture of civility in society. **WT**

throughout the world. It is because of that *Soka* Spirit that we in America are able to practice.

There currently is no English word nor phrase profound enough to adequately convey the level of conviction and determination personified by the lives of these three men or the lives of thousands of pioneer SGI members. As American Buddhists, to deny our Japanese roots would be tantamount to denying our parentage, or denying the seeds from which we sprang.

In her letter, Ms. McGruder notes that the SGI-USA has "kept some Japanese terminology for the sake of tradition and/or convenience, but neither is at stake here." However, I disagree. What's at stake is tradition—the tradition of the Daishonin's Buddhism to struggle against authority; to continue to expand what President Ikeda

has referred to as "a people's movement" of peace, education and culture in accordance with the vision of Nichiren.

It is the *Soka* Spirit that best exemplifies that struggle. The red in the American Stars and Stripes is stained with Native-American, European, African, Chinese, Mexican, Puerto Rican and Japanese blood. Those stars and stripes are woven together through an intermingling of ethnic and cultural traditions, which have created the rich heritage that is known as "American tradition" today.

With a spirit of tolerance, as Buddhists, it is imperative that we be at the forefront of any movement that recognizes the immense contributions that all people have made to our nation. That is also the *Soka* Spirit.

— JERI LOVE,  
Pasadena, Calif.  
lovefire@earthlink.net

Photo by NOELLE PRINCE SHEAR



## Introducing Roanoke—Blacksburg District

The Roanoke—Blacksburg District held its year-end general meeting at the home of Fumiko Eastep in Bluefield, West Va., on a clear sunny, November day. Beautiful hues and shades of light danced on valleys and mountains for those driving in from the east. Several students from the Bluefield neighborhood attended. Brad Martin, from Radford, Va., brought his fiancée, Kristen.

Following bestowal and exchange of Gohonzon, participants introduced themselves, then quickly related highlights of their Buddhist practice; busy schedules and long distances meant that many attending had not met before this wonderful day.

Using the panel discussion from the Culture Department video on the subject of the mentor—disciple relationship, participants explored various shades of meaning of the mentor—disciple relationship. They emerged with the understanding that a mentor by definition is an influence for good, as opposed to someone who leads people astray, even though that person might also be termed a leader. All agreed with Herbie Hancock, one of the panel participants on the video, that President Ikeda is a mentor in the “art of living.”

—DILYS SCOTT, ROANOKE, VA.



fineprint@sgi-usa.org

### Greetings

Dear President Ikeda, thank you for guiding and teaching me the Kansai Spirit! To all of our friends in the Rainbow Lotus group in San Diego and Orange County, Calif. And all of our SGI leaders and friends, as well as our wonderful family, Hilda and I extend our deepest appreciation to all of you for your support, encouragement and acceptance of our standing up side by side for kosen-rufu. It is indeed a true blessing and great joy to have been able to receive Gohonzon together on Dec. 11, 1999. We send our wishes for all of your great good fortune this New Year. With love and friendship always, Pat C. Main and Hilda Richards, San Diego, Calif.

### Lost and Found

I am an SGI member in Michigan and would like to help the Cuban members that were discussed in the Jan. 1st article. Could I get Jorge Silverio's e-mail address, phone number, or address from you? *World Tribune* so as I can connect with him to make assistance possible? —Annette Dematteis, phone: 248-614-2990. E-mail: adematte@kmart.com  
—Jorge Silverio responds with the fol-

lowing information: Home phone is 818-846-8693. Office: 818-953-2895. E-mail: firstchiro@aol.com

Camp Zama, Yokohama and Yokosuka — We need your help! Back in 1971, President Ikeda invited 19 American Junior High/High School members living at these American military bases to attend the 1971 Summer Course. We spent many days in Tokyo rehearsing for the presentation and finally we attended the Summer Course (three nights and four days) with the Japanese members from Tokyo. We were all very young at the time, but President Ikeda had given us such an opportunity. Next year will mark the 30th year since this event took place and we are currently trying to locate the 19 members. If you were one of the 19 members or you know of someone who attended, please contact: Robert “Butch” Llewellyn at 913-780-5509 (reng@mail.com) or Gloria Richardson at 404-633-2187 (gloriarichardson@prodigy.net).

### Milestones

Congratulations to my sister, Stephanie Deserano, her husband, Robert, their first son, Robbie, and our mom, Linda Senecal,

on the newest arrival of our family!!! Benjamin Walter Deserano was born on Jan. 7, 2000, at Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix, Ariz. May this new millennium bring us all back together again for good!!! —Cheryl Hogancamp, Lakewood, WA (253) 582-0442

Sima Robinson, introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism by her son, Bob Merritt in the early '70s, and an active member and leader over the years in Chicago, San Diego, Missouri and most recently Appleton, Wis., passed away on Nov. 29. She was a good friend and wonderful mother-in-law to me, and she loved to do shakubuku, support activities and visit FNCC!

Bob and I want to thank the dedicated leaders and members in Wisconsin and Michigan, especially Yumi, Gene and Ann, who spared no effort to support Sima with daimoku and visits during her illness, and who showed great consideration and support to her family, most of whom are non-members. The sincerity, warmth and selfless commitment we saw there exactly fulfill President Ikeda's dream of a humanistic organization, and continue to inspire us in our practice. — Nancy Merritt, San Francisco Region, Burlingame District, nmerritt@mail.smrn.com

## Read the WT E-mail Express

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## Join the Class of 2001 at SUA, Calabasas

Now in its sixth year, Soka University of America's graduate school in Calabasas, Calif., is accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education. Individuals seeking admission to the master's program must hold a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree with a minimum grade-point average of 2.7 (B-) on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600. Applications for the 2000-01 academic year are due by April 30, 2000. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 West Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, CA 91302. Telephone: (818) 878-3717, e-mail: [grad\\_admissions@soka.edu](mailto:grad_admissions@soka.edu)

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE FOR FEB. 27, SGI-USA WOMEN'S DAY

# THE CENTURY OF WOMEN IS HERE

To all SGI-USA women, for whom I hold the utmost respect:

**T**hank you very much for your devotion to your day-to-day activities for kosen-rufu. My sincere congratulations on your commemorative meetings to celebrate the 10th anniversary of SGI-USA Women's Day.

Once again I would like to express my desire that each of you become the happiest you can be based upon your profound and strong prayer. Prayer functions like the sun. It serves as the light that illuminates the darkness of suffering. Nichiren Daishonin states in "The One Essential Phrase" that one lantern can light up a place that has been dark for a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 923). As indicated here by the Daishonin, the moment we sit in front of the Gohonzon and offer prayers, the sun of Buddhahood, the originally enlightened state inherent in our lives, arises, sending out brilliant light, and all our past negative causes disappear like dew drops in the sunshine. You may not immediately see this fundamental change in your



President Daisaku Ikeda with his wife, Kaneko.

destiny, but please believe that all your prayers have been answered in the deepest level of your lives.

Buddhism expounds the principle of earthly desires are enlightenment. The great principle of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo enables us to transform earthly desires into enlightenment, prayer into fulfillment.

continue to pray for your happiness, victory, good health and longevity throughout my life. Please convey my best regards to all your families and friends.

February 2000  
Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President

MESSAGE FROM MATILDA BUCK, SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER

# A Time of Reunion and Renewal

**M**y warmest greetings to all of you who have gathered today to celebrate our 10th Women's Day meeting. For most of us, this is our favorite meeting of the year. For me, it is a time of reunion and renewal. I am with friends that I have not seen for a while and during our time together, I feel a revitalization of my own spirit. I am reminded of the humanity that links all of us and I feel grateful for the SGI-USA organization because of the opportunities it has given me to develop my life and share deep friendships.

This is a landmark meeting — our first women's meeting of the new century — a century that our Soka Gakkai International president, Daisaku Ikeda, has named the Century of Women.

In the opening pages of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda states, "A great revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a society and further, will enable a change in the destiny of humankind." He's talking about the power of one person to make a difference. But does this mean we have to become an extraordinary woman in order to effect change? The answer is a resounding "No."

During a trip to Japan last month, I asked President Ikeda for further clarification about the concept of human revolution. This is what he told me:



"Every small step forward in our lives is a breakthrough," says Matilda Buck.

"Human revolution isn't a great, momentous life-changing moment. It is something quite simple. It is as simple as a change of direction in your life. For example, if you don't like to read and you make an effort to read just a little bit every day, for the sake of developing yourself or to be able to communicate better with

other people, that effort in and of itself is human revolution. It's the small efforts that you make every day to change that positively alters the direction of your life."

Please be confident that it is these small steps that we take every day that lead to the accomplishment of our dreams. We advance one step at a time amid the realities of our lives, with faith as our foundation. Everything we need to face our challenges already exists within us. We possess an inexhaustible supply of wisdom, courage and power, and these strengths can always be tapped through our prayer. Every small step forward is a breakthrough. It is through these successes that we demonstrate with our very being the validity of this Buddhism and serve as an inspiration to others.

We also possess the power to make a difference in another way. When we make an effort to really listen to someone or encourage that person with our whole heart, we are touching him or her in that moment. Like the ripples created when a rock is tossed into a pond, our expressions of kindness and compassion reverberate. The person's life that we touched will, in turn, touch another.

Imagine the collective waves of change that we will create during this Century of Women as each of us embraces and activates our own power to make a difference. Together, with you, I look forward to celebrating our accomplishments. **WT**