



EXPERIENCE:
Linda Colton
becomes an
outstanding high
school teacher.

page 3

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

No. 3285

\$2.00

MARCH 17, 2000

Julian Bond Discusses 'Race and Rights in the New Millennium' at SUA, Calabasas

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Soka University of America's Human Rights Lecture Series on Feb. 23 welcomed Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who spoke on "Race and Rights in the New Millennium." Based on his three decades of involvement in the civil rights movement, Mr. Bond emphasized that the progress made thus far has not been enough.

Acknowledging that there are many signs of hope—black income is at an all-time high, more blacks are in college than ever before, and black home ownership is up—Mr. Bond, on the other hand, revealed these disparities: Black unemployment is still twice as high as white unemployment; the median income for blacks is 40 percent lower than whites'; the average black family has 8 cents in net worth for every dollar a white family has. Mr. Bond also believes that roll-backs on affirmative action are evidence that our government is putting civil rights on the backburner.

Still, Mr. Bond was positive about the movement's future: "As we find ourselves refighting old battles we thought already won...., let us take heart," he said. "If there is more to be done, we have more to do it with, much more than those who came before us and who brought us this far." Citing a "century's worth of aggressive self-help and volunteerism" and a "long and honorable tra-

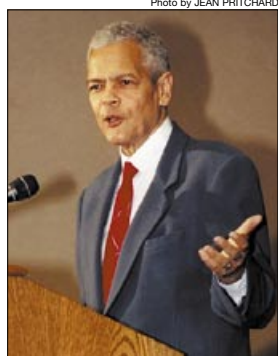


Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

NAACP Chairman Julian Bond speaks at SUA, Calabasas, Feb. 23.

dition of social justice" in America, Mr. Bond encouraged the audience that the civil rights victories of the 20th century can be built upon.

He admitted that this will be no easy task, but reminded everyone that "we Americans have never wished our way to freedom. Instead, we have always *worked* our way." (See Mr. Bond's three ways we can each make a difference for civil rights, p. 2).

Since 1992, SUA's Human Rights Lecture Series has been introducing nationally and internationally prominent speakers to address various issues related to the worldwide struggle for peace, social justice and reform. The series continues on May 3 with a debate on "Human Cloning: Medical Ethics and Biotechnology Into the 21st Century." For more information, please contact either Deborah diCesare or Valeria Leiva at the Program Development Office of SUA at (818) 878-3780. **WT**

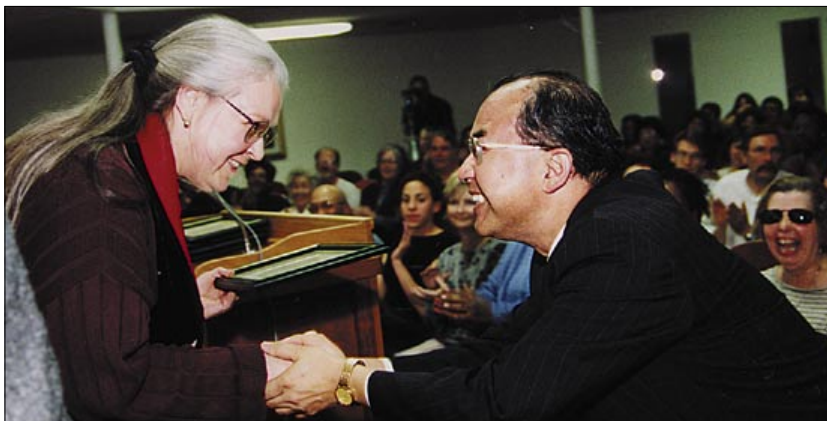
Southwest Blossoms

Please see page 7.

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



El Paso, Texas, members enjoy a meeting on Feb. 22 attended by SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima.



Jane Dodson Allen is one of several Albuquerque, N.M., members who received a certificate of appreciation from General Director Nagashima for their dedicated efforts to peace based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.



Some 300 members gather Feb. 23 at the Albuquerque Community Center for a general meeting.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S FEB. 29 ENCOURAGEMENT

Sufferings Lead to Enlightenment

SGI President Ikeda tells survivors of the Great Hanshin Earthquake that 'happiness is not simply an absence of hardships. Buddhism teaches that the sufferings we experience as human beings lead us to enlightenment.'

The afternoon of Feb. 29, SGI President Ikeda visited the Soka Gakkai's Nagata Culture Center in Nagata Ward, Kobe, Japan, where he led a

memorial gongyo service for those who died in the Great Hanshin Earthquake of January 1995. Nagata was one of the hardest hit areas.

The Nagata Culture Center, which remained essentially unscathed, opened its doors to the community as an evacuation center, giving shelter to as many as 800 people a day at the height of the crisis. During his visit, President Ikeda played the piano for the Nagata members.

President Ikeda sincerely thanked the center's caretaker, the Community Center Cleaning and Maintenance Group members and all who were involved in the relief efforts. He praised their hard work and selfless dedication at the time of the earthquake and in the long, painstaking task of reconstruction.

"I am amazed by how much Nagata has been rebuilt!" declared President Ikeda. "I'm sure there are still many trying challenges ahead of you. I will continue to support you in every way I can. I will send you daimoku for as long as I live. Please be absolutely confident that all your friends and loved ones who died in the disaster will without fail rejoin the movement for kosen-rufu."

The SGI leader also said: "Life is a struggle—it is a struggle to become happy. But happiness is not simply an absence of hardships. Buddhism teaches that the sufferings we experience as human beings lead us to enlightenment. The Daishonin writes, 'There is no true happiness for human beings other than

chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 681).

"Everyone has problems and sufferings. Everyone meets with misfortune. The greatest of these is death, which is the inescapable fate—the destiny, if you will—of humankind. However, because we chant daimoku and strive for kosen-rufu, our lives become entities of the Mystic Law.

"Faith enables us to forge a solid, invincible self and gives us the strength to serenely overcome any difficulty or misfortune. When we die, our lives merge back into the life of the universe and, in rhythm with the Mystic Law, continue to advance on the path of happiness.

"The Mystic Law gives us

the energy to live our lives to the fullest. The Daishonin assures us that those who embrace strong faith in the Mystic Law 'will grow younger' (WND, 464). May the final chapter of your lives, therefore, be bright and vibrant—just like a ripe, deep-orange persimmon, just like a glorious sunset.

"The Daishonin states, '[Chanting] Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the greatest of all joys' (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 788). Please be cheerful! None are stronger than those who are cheerful. And please live with a spirit of fortitude to make it through all things. Let's live out our lives together!

"I wish you all the very best! Nagata Ward is No. 1 in Japan! I am always sending you my daimoku. See you again!" **WT**

Three Things We Each Can Do To Further Civil Rights

During a Q-and-A session following his Feb. 23 lecture at Soka University of America, Calabasas, Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, answered the question "What are three things each of us can do to further civil rights?"

"This is the most difficult question and one that I am often asked," Mr. Bond began. "Whatever your interest, there are many organizations and activities that you can get involved in. The key is to participate! Get involved in some way with civil rights or human rights or environmental rights or equal rights. There is an organization for everyone."

Mr. Bond then mentioned these three suggestions:

1) Help stop offensive humor about ethnic groups.

When someone starts to tell a joke about Jews or blacks or any ethnic group, stop them before they tell the joke. Let them know, whatever the joke is, you find it offensive and would rather they did not repeat the joke.

2) Seek equal representation

in your community.

The next time that you pass a construction site for a publicly funded project in your community, take a look at the construction workers and the

builders and architects. If they do not represent the ethnic balance of your community, then you should lodge a complaint with your city. That building is being funded by your tax dollars; equal oppor-

tunity should be provided.

3) Get to know someone unlike yourself.

It is easy to talk with or know people who are like you. But as

you challenge yourself to meet and engage with others who do not look like you or think like you, then you challenge barriers. You will make new relationships that will create change. **WT**

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 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 months \$15 (13 issues) Save \$11 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months \$28 (26 issues) Save \$24 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year \$50 (52 issues) Save \$54 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years \$85 (104 issues) Save \$123		LIVING BUDDHISM <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 (12 issues) Save \$22 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years \$90 (24 issues) Save \$54		If you wish, please select one free optional language supplement of your choice. <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese
Are you a new subscriber? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		U.S. rates only. International rates vary.		
Charge my VISA <input type="checkbox"/> or Master Card <input type="checkbox"/> Card # _____ Expiration date _____ Signature _____ <small>All credit card orders are subject to bank approval</small>				
Name _____ Address _____ Apt. # _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____		(For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver) _____ District Source Code (if known) _____		
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 SGIUSUBS@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.

EXPERIENCE — LINDA COLTON, INDIAN HEAD, MD.

Educating Linda

Linda Colton, a high school mathematics teacher, learns how to become an outstanding person at work.

At my first meeting of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism 15 years ago, Phil Rosenberg said that I was fortunate to be a teacher because my students would act like a barometer—letting me know where my life and practice were at. I have now been teaching mathematics in public high school for 20 years. When I began I was determined; teaching is what I want to do. Being over 30 when I started, I had already done some substitute work and had no illusions about what I was getting into. Many people, mostly teachers warned me against it or just kept silent.

Despite this, I jumped headlong into teaching and quickly started to sputter. Although I was doing my best, in my first year the principal was all over me. I wrote detailed lesson plans and was praised for my ideas, but implementing them was a different story. By my third year of teaching I was in hell. The students were harassing me daily. I had the lowest level classes, they made the "sweat hogs" look inviting.

In March 1983, I received the Gohonzon and the situation intensified. Geometry—my best class—petitioned to get rid of me. Every kid in the class signed. I told my principal I would redouble my efforts. I could not afford to be fired—monetarily or emotionally. It took me 10 years to decide to teach. I had studied too hard and come too far and I needed the job. There was no turning back.

I continued to chant and received lots of encouragement in faith. It was always the same: "Your students will behave when you are compassionate. Chant to know when to be strict and when to be compassionate." I awoke at 4:30 every morning and chanted one hour before work.

By the time the SGI-USA Culture Department was started in 1990, I was drowning. I asked for advice and it was to go to the Culture Department meetings. I hated going. I felt I did not belong—I was not a teacher. I was a phony. I hated the job. As the years went by, I

listened closely to other educators in the Culture Department who wanted to quit too; or given half a chance would get out or were getting out. I went to a meeting with the head of the educators group of the SGI, and listened closely as another teacher was getting encouragement. After 20 years of teaching, she desperately wanted to quit. We were both hoping the guidance would be "certainly, chant and work in the profession you think best." It wasn't. All he kept saying was how much education means to SGI President Ikeda and to civilization. He would not budge; he would not agree with her. I, of course, was listening closely—there must be a way out.

I received guidance from a senior in faith regarding the tremendous pressure I was under every day. She said to chant for a purpose. I said I didn't want to chant for a purpose, I just wanted to quit. She said, "Oh, but you must." I did.

At the next Culture Department meeting, I was assigned to a group that was asked to read President Ikeda's speech on the purpose of education every day until the next meeting. In his speech, President Ikeda says, "The fundamental task of education must be to ensure that knowledge serves to further the cause of human happiness and peace...and while education is perhaps the slowest means to social change, it is the only means" (August 1996 *Seikyo Times*, p.8).

I continued to read this speech daily for months. Although I understood its meaning in my head I still hated my job—and hated my students even more for ruining my career. I continued to chant.

A new principal came to the school who was very strict. He zeroed in on me right away and gave me a bad report in classroom management. For the next two years, I chanted about it with full confidence that the next report would be good. And it was. The principal was shocked and said he'd never had a teacher change their classroom management like that before. I knew I was changing my karma, but I was still aching inside.

By now I would have quit in a split second, if only I could have afforded it. I had had enough. I had changed a lot, but was still miserable—more so than ever as the pressure was starting to affect me physically.

But although I spoke about quitting, in my heart I knew I never could leave with anything less than a deep sense that I had won. I had watched others who had sidestepped their challenge and it brought nothing but more of the same or worse.

Pasted to my prayer book, I read the following passage from "Questions and Answers About Embracing the Lotus Sutra" every morning: "Now if you wish to attain Buddhahood, you have only to lower the banners of your arrogance, cast aside the staff of your anger, and devote yourself exclusively to the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra!" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 58–59).

The more I read this passage, the more I realized it was my own arrogance and anger in the classroom that caused my students—those little "barometers"—to respond negatively to me.

September 1997 came and we got a new principal who was even stricter than the previous one. Every time I went to the bathroom, I would start crying uncontrollably. He visited every teacher's class, every day. I've always had poor-to-terrible relationships with administrators, so fortunately when he came to the school, I sincerely chanted to support him and for him to be the best principal ever.

I went to the Florida Nature and Culture Center in the summer of 1997 and sought advice from a senior in faith. As soon as I mentioned I was a teacher, he asked me to please write to President Ikeda.

I wrote President Ikeda and told him the amazing benefits I had received in my practice in other aspects of my life. I purposely didn't mention my teaching career, keeping the letter upbeat and positive. President Ikeda sent me back a two-word message: "Cheer up." I knew he could see clearly through that deep ache. Now I knew I had to change.

Two months into the '97-'98 school year, a parent wrote a 20-page typed letter to the prin-



Linda Colton (center) with her ninth-grade algebra I students at McDonough High School in Charles County, Md.

incipal about me. The principal dragged me into his office and said: "In 25 years I have never received such a letter. Do your students even respect you?"

Of course, I immediately sought guidance; it was to read the letter with a fine-tooth comb. It took me two days just to open it and read beyond the first page.

I chanted more—especially to support my principal. I was really beginning to like him. Every time he saw me, he would remind me this is my evaluation year. The pressure increased and my mouth tightened.

In June during my evaluation, the principal said I was an experienced and dedicated teacher. He said classroom management was my Achilles' heel. As soon as I heard that, I knew I would win—I knew this was the beginning of the end. All I had to do was chant about my Achilles' heel and I was in. This ache inside to quit was going to go away. I gave my principal a big smile, and said, "You are absolutely right. Thank you very much."

When September rolled around again, I remembered the guidance I received that summer at a conference. I started chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo envisioning that I was in a treasure tower picking up wisdom, courage, compassion, etc. Every time I got to courage, I had an uneasy feeling inside. I zeroed in on courage—it worked.

From the first day of school I knew it—I was in control of my classroom. I was cool and calm, but very strict. The stu-

dents responded. The principal responded. When it came time for him to give me an evaluation because of my poor marks the previous year, he was practically apologizing to me. I reminded him again and again that it is not me, but he who has created such a great environment to teach in. And I meant it.

I now see myself as a valuable human being. Education has always been a huge part of my life, but at the time I began practicing Buddhism I had already lost a sense of value in my own education and in myself. I now have dignity and self-respect because I do something valuable every day. This is my human revolution. This is what the Soka Gakkai is about—creating value-creating human beings.

Although I may have lacked courage, I always had enough wisdom to seek out the advice of my seniors in faith before making a major life-decision. And I could never get one such senior to support my desire to quit. Thank you so much for never allowing me to give in to my weakness. I am so happy for the first time in 20 years. The ache is gone and I love seeing my students every day.

But this experience is still ongoing. Although I am not the best teacher in my school, for the first time I believe I can be a great teacher. President Ikeda says in *The Human Revolution*, "As a Soka Gakkai member, to make kosen-rufu your life's foundation, it is essential that you become an outstanding person at your place of work." I must do this. **W**

Photo by KATHRYN AIKEN

SGI'S GLOBAL ACTIVITIES — POLAND REPORT

The Rising Tide of Humanism in Poland

By MARIA MARKIEWICZ
WARSAW, POLAND

In the early 1990s, an SGI chapter was formed in Poland. Maria Markiewicz, the chapter women's division leader, describes her personal experience and her country's transformation.

It was in a small apartment in Warsaw that the Poland chapter of the SGI was established on Jan. 19, 1992. The inaugural meeting was attended by around 20 members and friends. We will always treasure in our hearts the message we received from SGI President Ikeda that day: "You are all pioneers, worthy of utmost respect, with the praiseworthy mission of opening a new path of peace and vibrant humanism and culture in Eastern Europe."

Poland has had a tragic history, as seen in the extreme misery it suffered under Nazi occupation during World War II. At the start of the 1980s, however, the "Solidarity" movement led by Lech Walesa sparked a democratic process which eventually forced the government to convene the Round Table Conference in 1989, followed by the first free elections in July of that year and the creation of a democratic government. The fall of the Berlin Wall in November of the same year was the climax in a period of unimaginably rapid change. At the same time, people had unreasonable faith in the word *freedom*, be-

lieving it would produce immediate growth and happiness just like magic.

I first started practicing Nichiren Buddhism in 1987 during a two-year stay in New York. My husband, a professor at Warsaw University, had been asked to teach at Rockefeller University, and our two daughters and I went with him to embark on a new life in America, filled with hope and anticipation.

My daughters had been ill, one with heart disease and the other with an eye problem, but they both underwent successful operations before leaving for America. Almost as soon as we arrived in New York, however, I was involved in a traffic accident that left me unable to walk for six months. My husband expected me to be nothing but an obedient housewife, which plunged me into severe loneliness for days on end. I repeatedly asked myself what this "freedom" that America is so famous for was all about. I asked myself, "What is happiness? What is the purpose of my life?" It was about this time that a friend of mine advised me to start practicing Buddhism to strengthen my life-condition. I had no reason to reject it.

I knew of no other SGI members in Poland, and after we returned to our country in August of 1988, I practiced Buddhism alone and unsupported for three years. In reality, the present chapter leader, Yoshiaki Ishizuka, was living and working in Poland at the

time, and Polish SGI members living abroad and established a group to pray for peace in their home country. But I had no way of knowing this. The only things I could do were remember the guidance and encouragement I'd received in New York and talk about Buddhism with my friends. One by one people started to chant with me, and we began to conduct various activities together, always encouraging one another. I found my life force strengthening and my confidence in humanity growing stronger.

Around that time, I heard someone say: "Communism was a good system for communists. Capitalism is a good system for capitalists. It is a shame we still haven't found a system that is good for humanity." When I heard those words, I felt that the key to realizing such a system was could be found in the achievement of "the human revolution of just a single person" as described by SGI President Ikeda. To achieve that, what is most essential is the SGI, a movement dedicated to helping people realize the tremendous potential they inherently possess — what Buddhism calls the seed of Buddhahood.

In the fall of 1991, after searching for some time, I found SGI President Ikeda's address in *Who's Who* and I wrote him a letter. Some time later, Mr. Ishizuka brought me a reply. This was an opportunity to start regular meetings of members living in Poland. We also made contact with Polish citizens who were practicing Buddhism overseas. We now have a total of about 60 active members. Youth division members are currently taking the lead in our activities, which consist of discussion meetings, study meetings, dialogues with friends and various other events. During 1999 we were able to take part in two joint training courses with SGI members from Eastern Europe.

Many of our youth division members are demonstrating active proof of the power of Buddhism in society. Paolo Cozza an SGI member who moved to Poland from Italy in 1995, has set up his own automobile accessory company and now employs 12 people. He is now developing business with large-scale supermarkets,



Warsaw members at the house of Marie Curie (1867-1934).

building a fine reputation in the sector as well as within his local community. Paolo's home is now the meeting place for the local members. Meanwhile, Dorota Zdun, a young woman, has worked her way through college and is now a sales and marketing manager in a worldwide marketing company. Although she is very busy, she always finds time to visit other members and attend study meetings.

As for me, shortly after the SGI-Poland Chapter was formed, I found a job as a reporter for a women's magazine and have been able to interview numerous famous people. Although my husband and I eventually divorced, my job has given me many wonderful opportunities to meet and learn directly from people in various walks of life, and it has also given me a chance to introduce other people to Buddhism. In September of 1999, the Polish-language version of *Choose Life*, the dialogue between SGI President Ikeda and Dr. Arnold Toynbee, was published by Polish scientific

Publishers PWN. The publication has been featured in a major daily newspaper and academic periodicals and has attracted wide readership in educational circles.

Although SGI-Poland has only had a short history, the organization is discovering its potential in a variety of ways, and each member is deepening his or her determination to become a person who can make an active contribution to society. Since the collapse of socialism, we in Poland have had to change our value system. Regardless of differences in nationality, and political system, culture and race, all people need to find practical answers to questions such as "How should I live my life?" and "What sort of life should I lead in the future?" I am certain that the spirit of compassion as embodied in the SGI — the desire to find ways to help others — is the key to the transformation of the new century into a true Century of Humanity.

Courtesy of SGI Quarterly



Maria Markiewicz (left) at a meeting in the suburbs of Warsaw.

Women and a Culture of Peace

By JOAN ANDERSON

SGI OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Is it a cliché to suggest that women are “natural” peacemakers? Does this image stem from a perception of women limited to their roles as wives and mothers, or does it reflect some kind of truth common to all women?

Traditionally women have been acknowledged as peacemakers within the home, separating squabbling children, focused on the value of human life and the paramount need to protect and cherish it. Now that women are playing much wider roles in society, gender-based assessment seems to show that women have something special to contribute to the larger realization of peace.

In her paper, “Mainstreaming — Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations,” Angela King, U.N. special adviser to the secretary general on gender issues and the advancement of women, laments the shockingly low-level of participation by women in peacekeeping operations. At the same time, however, she cites examples, mostly drawn from the community level, of how women active in peacekeeping operations were able to cooperate with local women’s groups and, through them, local communities. She described how this enabled local populations to develop a sense of ownership of the process.

She continues: “Women members of the mission were perceived as more compassionate, less threatening and insistent on status, more willing to listen, learn and opt for reconciliation over force.”

She adds that the conclusions drawn by male military and political leaders “have often little to do with the feelings of the local population and the root of the problems.” She then calls for women to reconsider their own attitudes and become more actively involved. Women should, she says, demand and actively pursue full participation.

The same point was stressed by African women meeting in Zanzibar in May 1999 to develop a Women’s Agenda for a Culture of Peace in Africa. “While women and men share a common concern for the increase in violence and armed conflicts, our perspectives, ex-



Women at a seminar on violent conflict in Indonesia mapping a conflict tree.

periences and capacities remain grossly ignored and underutilized in conflict prevention outside the family context. Women have primarily been considered as the victims of conflict. There is a need to encourage and support African women to enter into decision-making roles in all areas of policy, including conflict prevention, management and resolution.”

The question, of course, remains as to why women have actually gained access to the inner circles of power have often failed to prioritize peacebuilding. Perhaps the all-out struggle involved in gaining that access has served to “select” less peace-oriented women.

Some would say that women naturally are happiest and strongest within the NGO sector where they can put forward alternative perspectives and press for change. Professor Johan Galtung, founding father of peace studies as an academic discipline, praised the efforts of women at the grass roots in his dialogue with SGI President Daisaku Ikeda (*Choose Peace*) saying, “Women made tremendous positive contributions to the peace movement of the 1980s. They were everywhere.... In dialogues, their

ability to transcend limited themes — for example, missile enumerations — and to think in human and holistic terms was an indispensable asset.

“Women go straight to the heart of human suffering and happiness. Without being trapped by mental abstractions and the social hierarchies.... Typically they establish people-to-people diplomacy and do the principal work themselves.”

To date, it is women’s grassroots solidarity, shown through protests, marches and other forms of noncooperation, which has undeniably provided the groundswell of opposition to military action and the arms race in many countries around the world. Examination of countless conflict situations reveals that there are grassroots efforts pioneered by “ordinary” women working across divisions to rebuild trust and shattered communities. Solidarity between women can clearly cut across all barriers of status, race and religion.

At the 1999 Seoul International Conference of NGOs, SGI hosted a workshop on “Women Leading the Way Toward a Culture of Peace.”

Judith Large, conflict resolution specialist with extensive

experience in the Balkans, central Africa and Indonesia, looked at bridge-building work which has been initiated by women in each of these areas.

She described the situation in the northern Uganda where the war in southern Sudan has resulted in over 10,000 children being kidnapped and used as either sex slaves or child soldiers. Women who were rural development workers in the towns of Gulu and Kitgum decided that they had had enough.

They organized “People’s Voices for Peace” and used local radio to call out to the children, saying they would not be treated as enemies. They galvanized religious leaders, Christian and Muslim, to work together, and international opinion was rallied. Finally, in October 1999, a weeklong conference entitled “Peace Research and the Reconciliation Agenda” was held, involving local people, mothers, local government, international NGOs, religious leaders and the prime minister of Uganda.

Ms. Large highlighted common qualities that women involved in this kind of peace work possess in her experience: 1) a belief in the primary and sacred nature of life and in the futility of violence; 2) a sense of compassion for others; 3) a commitment to the power of healing and bridging divided communities; and 4) a commitment to tempering the misuse of power and working for social justice.

Mikiko Otani, lawyer and the representative of the Soka Gakkai Women’s Peace Committee, then spoke about how women can work to build a culture of peace in Japan and other societies which are, nominally, at peace.

In Japanese society, discrimination against women and ethnic minorities is widespread, and this kind of passive violence must be viewed as contrary to a culture of peace. Ms. Otani outlined how issues from violence in schools to environmental degradation and the risk of nuclear accidents, which threaten life and dignity are “peace issues.” She argued that all women should make efforts to educate themselves and “create a circle of peace around them through dialogue and open interaction with others.”

In the ensuing discussion, several participants returned to the point that the “healing and

harmonizing” work which women have been doing at a family and community level for centuries has not achieved peace and that nothing will change until women play full roles in decision-making bodies.

Another highlighted how there can be no contradiction between the roles women play at home and in wider society. If women still believe that by staying quiet and submitting to male domination in the home they are “keeping the peace,” they cannot hope to contribute to peacebuilding on a wider scale.

The role of the media and film industry was also highlighted — the challenge for peaceworkers is to produce images of peace and nonviolence which are as interesting and gripping as those of war.

UNESCO is coordinating an extensive program of activities aimed at promoting women’s participation in the building of a culture of peace. Details can be found at www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/projects/gender.htm

Courtesy of SGI Quarterly

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.

New Tools for VOV 2000

By YOUTH PEACE COMMITTEE

Since August 1999, SGI-USA youth division members have been engaged in the Victory Over Violence campaign, a nationwide grassroots action campaign to spread awareness of nonviolence and shed light on the widespread violence among youth from a Buddhist perspective. The campaign to date has resulted in more than 3,000 small VOV discussion meetings, more than 20 other VOV seminars, festivals and anti-violence summits spearheaded by youth across the country and 100,000 signed VOV nonviolence pledges.

The response to VOV has been exceptionally positive. Requests for VOV packets, videos, bookmarks, buttons and pledges have come from as far away as Turkey, Japan, France and other countries. In addition, many youth have voiced a strong interest in continuing the campaign as a means of furthering their ability to oppose the seemingly endless barrage of physical and passive violence perpetrated by youth and bring hope to their friends.

Due to this overwhelming response, the SGI-USA youth will continue to carry out Victory Over Violence activities throughout 2000. In support of VOV 2000 activities, the SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee has produced new tools to help facilitate the next wave of VOV activities. These include a VOV exhibit, VOV phi-

The campaign to date has resulted in more than 3,000 small VOV discussion meetings, more than 20 other VOV seminars, festivals and anti-violence summits spearheaded by youth across the country and 100,000 signed VOV nonviolence pledges.

losophy pamphlet and VOV Web site.

VOV Exhibit

The four-panel traveling VOV exhibit can be reserved by any SGI-USA region or area. In beautiful photomural graphic illustrations, the exhibit depicts the violence of the 20th century—a Century of War, in which an estimated 180 million people died from war and oppression. It also inspires hope that the 21st century will be a Century of Life through the examples and inspiring words of many great nonviolent activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and SGI President Ikeda.



The four-panel traveling Victory Over Violence exhibit depicts the violence of the 20th century and inspires hope toward the 21st century through the examples and inspiring words of many great nonviolent activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and SGI President Ikeda.

VOV Philosophy Pamphlet

The philosophy pamphlet was created to answer the question "If passive violence fuels the fire of physical violence, then what causes passive violence from a Buddhist perspective?" The pamphlet will help youth in acquiring a deeper understanding of the origin of racism and discrimination as well as how to overcome the state of anger that causes many youth today to seek their identity in their race, language or other cultural identifiers. As a quote in the philosophy from President Ikeda points out, "a philo-

sophical and ideological vacuum drives people to seek their identity in their race. They cannot bear the void in thought, so they look elsewhere."

The philosophy also encourages youth to carry out their own human revolution and "become the change they wish to see" in society. "Your future depends on the efforts you make and whether you are walking the correct path. It's not important how you compare to others but how you compare to who you were yesterday. If you see that you've advanced even one step, then you've achieved a victory,"

reads another quote from the SGI president.

VOV Web site

The Web site at vov.com contains information on the VOV campaign including the "Quest for Peace" workbook exercises, violence statistics and resources, a place to sign the peace pledge on-line, an event page and also a place to make suggestions for future VOV activities.

If you want to reserve the exhibit or utilize the VOV philosophy, please contact the YPC via the vov.com Web site. **WT**

YPC Opens New 'Closing the Gaps' Exhibition in New York

It is my belief that the essence of goodness is the aspiration toward unity, while evil directs itself toward division or sundering. —SGI President Ikeda, 1994 Peace Proposal

By FLEUR CLACKSON
NEW YORK CITY

Last September—inspired by SGI President Ikeda's words above—the Youth Peace Committee began discussions on creating an exhibition to continue the Victory Over Violence campaign that took place across America last summer. YPC members and volunteers sponsored the exhibition, "Closing the Gaps to Create Cultures of Peace," opened at the New York

Culture Center on Feb. 11, the centennial of the birth of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda.

The exhibition looks at some of the choices and challenges we have about "gaps"—the thoughts, words and actions that we use to separate ourselves from others and our environment. The exhibition shows some real-life examples of people who have bridged many gaps by taking action and sharing peace, culture and education with those around them.

The YPC wants to put into action the SGI's goal of supporting the United Nations and developing dynamic alliances with relevant U.N. agencies and nongovernmental organizations. The YPC was fortunate to have a distinguished keynote speaker at the Feb. 11 opening, the permanent ambassador for Bangladesh at the United Nations, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury. Ambassador Chowdhury, who took the lead among the member states in producing the Declaration and

Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, talked about the background and significance of the culture of peace and thanked the SGI for its continued efforts toward this. He reiterated how important it is that people all around the world make concerted efforts to create a culture of peace.

Almost 200 guests and members attended. The United Nation's radio station taped the evening's events and guests from Amnesty International also attended. **WT**



YPC members and volunteers sponsored the exhibition, 'Closing the Gaps to Create Cultures of Peace,' which opened at the New York Culture Center on Feb. 11.

General Director Travels to Southwest and FNCC

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



El Paso



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima arrived in El Paso, Texas, Feb. 21, where he conducted dialogues with as many members as possible. On the morning of Feb. 22, he joined SGI-USA representatives in the El Paso City Council Chambers to receive certificates of Honorary Citizenship for both President and Mrs. Ikeda from Mayor Carlos M. Ramirez. Mayor Ramirez expressed his hope that the SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda would be able to return to El Paso, where they had visited on their return from South America in June 1996. That evening, some 200 members joined Mr. Nagashima at the El Paso Community Center in celebration and determination as they looked forward to making further contributions to the prosperity and happiness of their city.

— Ian McClraith



Albuquerque

On Feb. 23, a meeting in Albuquerque, N.M., was held where some 300 members heard Danny Nagashima's invigorating analysis of SGI-USA's 40-year history. The next day began with a visit to Albuquerque City Hall where, on behalf of President and Mrs. Ikeda, General Director Nagashima received a certificate proclaiming them Honorary Citizens of the City of Albuquerque from Mayor Jim Baca. Thanking the mayor, Mr. Nagashima conveyed the SGI president's appreciation and determination to dedicate himself even more to the happiness of all people.



FNCC

(Above) General Director Nagashima and Hiro Sakurai (far right) of New York City with three of six recipients of certificates of recognition for longstanding contributions to public relations: (l-r) Patty Duggan of San Francisco, Joanne Tachibana of Honolulu and Anne Porowski of Washington, D.C. Not shown: Jim Wallerstein of Philadelphia, Sylvia Hueston of New York City and Stephen Bonnell of Miami.

The afternoon of Feb. 24, General Director Nagashima proceeded to FNCC to meet with the participants in the Public Relations Conference for one day before he continued his journey to the Caribbean Region.



AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

NO GREATER SOURCE OF PRIDE

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

On Feb. 11, the centennial of his mentor's birth, SGI President Ikeda writes that 'there is no greater source of pride than a life dedicated to serving a respected mentor. This has certainly been true for me. No youth can be as overflowing with vigor and vitality as one spent following the path of mentor and disciple.'

John F. Kennedy says, "A man does what he must—in spite of personal consequences, in spite of obstacles and dangers and pressures—and that is the basis of all human morality."

Today, Feb. 11, marks the centennial of the birth of our mentor in life, Josei Toda.

There is no greater source of pride than a life dedicated to serving a respected mentor. This has certainly been true for me. No youth can be as overflowing with vigor and vitality as one spent following the path of mentor and disciple.

It has been my unparalleled honor to have looked up to Mr. Toda as a father and to have walked the strict, demanding Buddhist path of mentor and disciple. I have lived my life with Mr. Toda, and I have fought to proclaim his truth to the entire world. This has been my life, my life's purpose.

From the time Mr. Toda set out to rebuild the Soka Gakkai after his release from prison, he was constantly engaged in a fierce battle. Every day was a relentless struggle, with no end in sight. Every time he fell down, he just picked himself back up and fought on. There was no escaping the harsh social and economic conditions of postwar Japan. There was no safe haven to retreat to.

Mr. Toda's sole, all-consuming wish at that time was to fight, undeterred by any obstacle, to open up the Soka Gakkai's future.

◆◆◆◆

As SGI members, we fervently desire to achieve kosen-rufu. To realize that goal, we must

create—patiently, without fear, without hesitation—the right time. The first step is to steadfastly take action to manifest our faith and the principles of Buddhism in our daily lives and in society. Without winning in the struggles of our daily lives, we can never advance the cause of kosen-rufu.

◆◆◆◆

On Tuesday, July 6, 1943, Josei Toda, a great disciple, was arrested along with Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, a great mentor, for resisting the demands of the Japanese military authorities and trying to protect freedom of religion.

It was a dark age. Japan, in the embrace of arrogant militarism, looked down upon its fellow, peace-loving Asian nations—for which it should have held the greatest friendship and respect—and attacked and invaded them, treating them as slaves.

Mr. Toda occasionally talked of his experience in prison. With his characteristic humor, he related how lice were his only cellmates, and how the food was so rotten that he had to gulp it down with his eyes closed. "Most people wouldn't last a week," he would tell us.

"I was in prison for two years," he said. "It was tough, but thinking about it now, I gained quite a lot from that experience. Without those two years of hard prison life, I would not have awakened to the great truth of Buddhism. I would not have been able to devote my life to the highest, most noble purpose of all."

Hell is itself "the place where the treasure is" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 136). There is no suffering in this world that is beyond endurance. Such is the power of Buddhism.

◆◆◆◆

Mr. Toda was imprisoned on charges of lese majesty and violating the Peace Preservation Law, because he had converted many people to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and instructed them to throw out the Shinto talisman that was distributed to all households under the directive of the militarist government.

There is a clear record, for example, showing that five months before he was arrested, Mr. Toda also came to Shinanomachi, the location of our present Soka Gakkai Headquarters, to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Even when he was in prison, Mr. Toda talked openly about Buddhism to the investigators

and prison guards, trying to convert them.

One of the guards on duty tells the story that whenever he passed Mr. Toda's cell on his rounds, he heard Mr. Toda vigorously chanting daimoku. When the guard looked into the cell, he saw Mr. Toda sitting erect and chanting with prayer beads made of milk-bottle caps in his hands. On the low desk in front of him was a book.

One day, the prison guard opened the door to Mr. Toda's cell and spoke to him.

"I have chanted daimoku, too," he said.

"What daimoku would that be?" asked Mr. Toda.

"I chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Mother of Demon Children (Jpn Kishimojin)," replied the guard.

"That's wrong," said Mr. Toda. "The daimoku I chant has tremendous power. My daimoku is the true daimoku. Your faith is very, very mistaken."

After Mr. Toda was released from prison, the guard never spoke to him again directly. But, perhaps due to the connection with Buddhism he had formed through his encounters with Mr. Toda, he joined the Soka Gakkai in 1956.

◆◆◆◆

While in prison, Mr. Toda read the Lotus Sutra over and over again, and chanted daimoku with all his being to grasp its essence. The book that the prison guard had seen on Mr. Toda's desk was a copy of the Lotus Sutra.

His in-depth readings of the Sutra—twice, thrice, then a fourth and fifth time—resulted in his awakening to the essence of Buddhism while in prison. It was triggered by this difficult passage from the Sutra of Immeasurable Meanings, which is regarded as the Lotus Sutra's prologue: "His body neither existing nor not existing, neither caused nor conditioned..."

Mr. Toda asked himself what this body, the body of the Buddha, which is described in the form of endless negations in this passage known as the 34 negations, really was. Though it is not this and not that, still it most assuredly exists—what could the substance of such a body be?

After long, deep contemplation, Mr. Toda suddenly realized that the Buddha is life itself. This took place in the early spring of 1944. In that moment, Buddhism was reborn in the present age.

Up until then, many people had regarded the Buddha as ex-



SGI President Ikeda took this photo with his wife, Kaneko, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, Feb. 11, at the Okinawa Training Center in Onnason, Japan.

isting in another world, separate from our everyday reality. But the Daishonin repeatedly insists in his writings that we are all Buddhas, and that all living beings are entities of the Mystic Law. With the word *life* as the key, the essence of the Lotus Sutra was suddenly rendered comprehensible and easily accessible to all.

At that moment, the heavy, difficult door to Buddhism was thrown wide open to people everywhere.

◆◆◆◆

In the middle of November 1944, Mr. Toda experienced another profound realization. He recognized that we are a part of the assembly of Bodhisattvas of the Earth, numerous as the grains of sand of 60,000 Ganges rivers, who emerge from the earth at the Ceremony in the Air with the vow to carry out the propagation of the Lotus Sutra. With this realization, he vowed to make kosen-rufu his life's mission.

At just that time, the noble life of Mr. Makiguchi, who was still in prison, was drawing to its close. He died on Nov. 18, the date on which the Soka Gakkai was founded in

1930. Mr. Toda only learned of his death on Jan. 8, 1945. "Who murdered my mentor!" he screamed in grief and fury. As a true disciple, he resolved to devote his entire life to vindicating his mentor's integrity.

On July 3, 1945, just a few short weeks before Japan, which had killed Mr. Makiguchi, was to be defeated in war, a gaunt, exhausted Mr. Toda was released from prison. But, indomitable champion of justice that he was, once freed of the fetters that had bound him, Mr. Toda stood up resolutely, raising high the blazing torch of the Soka Gakkai spirit.

Today, his great faith and commitment resound powerfully throughout the world, and the praises of all are being showered upon him.

Feb. 11, In commemoration of the centennial of Mr. Toda's birth, Okinawa

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the Jan. 11 *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 47-48

'Times change,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells the Taiwan members, who are facing many difficulties. 'And you can change things through your prayers. Until spring arrives in all its glory, please be patient, and send the roots of your faith deep into the earth of life.'

Smiling, Shin'ichi Yamamoto told Zhu Qianxun: "I got off the plane, and there was this group of people calling: 'Sensei! Sensei!' They turned out to be Soka Gakkai members. But how did everyone know I would be here?"

"We have all been chanting for weeks," Zhu replied, "in the hope that you would come. We were so sure our prayers would be answered that we decided to gather at the airport to wait for you."

"I see," said Shin'ichi. "We weren't originally scheduled to stop in Taiwan, but our flight was delayed, and we had to switch flights. Even we didn't know that the plane would be landing here. Isn't that amazing? We must have been drawn here by your daimoku."

"Sensei," said Zhu, "can you wait here just a moment?" He headed for the airport terminal.

Zhu asked the airport officials if he and the other members might be allowed in the transit area. Responding to Zhu's earnest plea, they agreed to let three people in, making it possible for them to converse with Shin'ichi with no barrier between them.

Shin'ichi asked about Soka

Gakkai activities in Taiwan.

The Taiwanese Constitution guaranteed freedom of religion, assembly and association, but Taiwan was under martial law; these freedoms had been severely restricted. In order to carry out any group activities, an organization had to register with the government.

Zhu had contacted the Soka Gakkai Headquarters' Overseas Department and, with their assistance, applied to the Taiwan Ministry of the Interior for registration, but it had not been granted. There was still strong anti-Japanese sentiment in Taiwan, and the government authorities were probably suspicious of the Soka Gakkai's Japanese origins. In fact, police officers had raided a number of the Taiwan members' discussion meetings.

Shin'ichi said, "So what you're saying is that unless the government officially recognizes the Soka Gakkai in Taiwan, it will be difficult to carry out our activities as an organization."

"It is of course very important to adhere to the laws of the nation. But here in Taiwan, the right of individuals to practice their religion of choice is guar-



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

anteed. It's therefore vital that you don't grow cowardly or backslide in your faith just because the circumstances are difficult. Please have courage.

"No matter what happens, no matter how hard things become, for the well-being of the Taiwanese people, I hope that you will not allow the flame of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to be extinguished. True victory will be apparent 30 or 40 years down the line. You will definitely triumph in the end."

Nodding with quiet resolve, Zhu replied: "I understand what you are saying. I will not give up."

Members continued to arrive at the airport one after another until about 50 had gathered.

Zhu wanted all the members who had come to the airport to receive encouragement from President Yamamoto. He went to speak with the airport officials again and implored them to allow Shin'ichi to come into the airport lobby, where they could all meet with him. One of the men he spoke to was kind and sympathetic, and though he seemed a little hesitant, he gave his permission when he learned that a large crowd of people had come to the airport to see Shin'ichi.

When Shin'ichi entered the lobby, the crowd greeted him with cheers.

"Thank you all for coming!" he said.

Looking intently at each member, he addressed them with a powerful voice: "I know that you are currently facing many difficulties as you pursue your Buddhist practice here in Taiwan. But winter never fails to turn to spring. The fact that there are so many members in Taiwan who have the Gohonzon is itself a sign that spring has already arrived.

"Yet it is only the first glimmerings of early spring. The wind is cold. If it were Japan, there might still be frost or even snow. But spring will definitely come in full force, with its fragrant blossoms, singing birds and gentle breezes of peace.

"Times change. And you can change things through your prayers. Until spring arrives in all its glory, please be patient, and send the roots of your faith deep into the earth of life. I pray for the success of your valiant efforts, for your health, and for the happiness of you and your families."

After he finished speaking, Shin'ichi posed for photographs with the Taiwan members. Even while the shutters were clicking, he continued talking with each member, saying: "Throughout

your life, never forsake the Gohonzon!" "You must never be defeated!" He encouraged them with his whole life, wanting to do everything possible to prevent even one of them from abandoning faith.

The time to depart came. "Let's meet next time in Japan," called Shin'ichi. "Take care of yourselves!" As he headed for the plane, again and again he turned around to wave back at his beloved members.

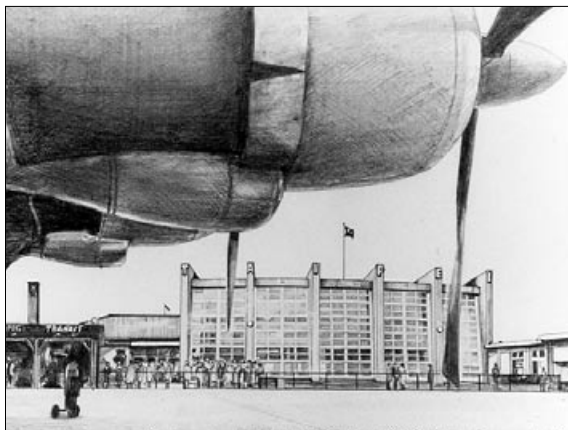
Sent off by the Taiwan members, Shin'ichi's plane took off with a great roar and soon disappeared into the clouds.

Shin'ichi felt that the kosen-rufu movement in Asia was still in its early spring, and that dark clouds hung low. But he knew that if they could break through that layer of cloud, the spring sun would be shining brightly.

"My friends, bravely take flight—high into the sky of your mission!" Shin'ichi prayed fervently in his heart, as he and the other leaders made their way back to Tokyo.

(This concludes "Early Spring," chapter 3 of Volume 7 of *The New Human Revolution*.)

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



Advocating the Universality of Buddhism

PERSPECTIVE

By **DAVE BALDSCUN**
LA TUNA CANYON, CALIF.

I believe we have been given a specific mandate by our mentor, SGI President Ikeda, to create an organization unlike any in the world—including the Soka Gakkai in Japan. Just a few weeks ago, in his message to the women's conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, he said, "Please have an enjoyable, bright and cheerful time, in a manner befitting America" (Feb. 25 *World Tribune*, p. 3). During his visit here in 1990, he said, "I would like the SGI-USA to be a model for the rest of the world" (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 7).

During that visit he also said: "From the outset America has been a country to which people from around the world have flocked, leaving their homelands for one reason or another. They came to this country searching for a new home. It is the task of the kosen-rufu movement to breathe life into America's purpose of building a new home for these people" (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 72). The next year he returned to this country and said: "The United States above all serves as an all-important stage for the whole world. It is an exciting and dynamic stage of vast dimensions" (November 1991 *Seikyo Times*, p. 21).

In 1993 he talked about a "new American Renaissance" and asked that we "march forward, carrying high the Stars and Stripes and the tri-colored SGI flag" (March 1993 *Seikyo Times*, p. 50).

Building an organization that is particularly American in character is an ongoing process. One of the ways our progress has become evident is in the language we use. We define who we are by the way we speak. Twenty or thirty years ago, we were strongly influenced in our speech and behavior by the immigrant Japanese who pioneered the organization. Our debt to them is immeasurable and a large part of that debt lies in our responsibility to further develop the SGI-USA. They didn't intend for the organization to be an isolated Japanese



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUI

colony. And so we have continued to change as our diversity and numbers grew.

The use of organizational jargon has been one of the most obvious changes. We realized that to prove the universality of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, we must be able to convey it in plain English. I believe that this is a key component of our mentor's desire that "the United States become the central stage for the SGI's worldwide activities" (November 1991 *Seikyo Times*, p. 51).

Therefore, we should continue our "language revolution." The longer we continue to use foreign words to talk about Buddhism, the more difficult it is to propagate it to a wider audience. Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and reciting passages of the Lotus Sutra to our object of devotion are difficult enough for new members to get used to. Why make it even more confusing by peppering our speech with foreign words? Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism may have originated in Japan, but I don't believe it is a Japanese religion. The teachings of the Daishonin transcend national and ethnic boundaries.

There are still a few words that we have not gotten out of the habit of using such as *shakubuku*, *goshō* and *sensei*. And there are some words that are formal titles of groups that we should translate such as *byakuren* and *gajokai*.

The word *shakubuku* is a specific method of propagation that the Daishonin talks about in his writings. Although the term is not translated in the most recent compilation of his works, we misuse it to refer to any type of propagation or even people as in "He is my *shakubuku*." There is no book in

English called the *goshō*. It was translated to *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, which contain his letters and theses.

A curious thing happened during SGI President Ikeda's visit in the early '90's. The women's chorus had finished singing a Japanese song and after thanking them and praising their singing, he said that in the future it would be more appropriate for them to sing American songs. In an unusually direct manner, I believe he was imploring us not to mimic Japanese culture. That is why I don't believe we should refer to him as *sensei*.

In this country, the most likely place one would encounter the word *sensei* would be at a karate or kung fu school. The connotation in that setting is one of unquestioning obedience to the master of the school, a connotation that in no way applies to our mentor. Besides demonstrating the universality of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I believe we must prove the universality of our mentor as well. When signing in at the 1975 gathering in Guam for the founding of the SGI, President Ikeda put "the world" as his country of origin. He is truly a global citizen, and we do him a disservice when we treat him otherwise.

Speech habits are hard to change but I believe we must continue to be responsible for the way we portray our organization and mentor to prospective members, the media and general public. President Ikeda is planning to attend the opening of Soka University in Aliso Viejo, Calif., next year. It is an event that will be covered by national and possibly world press. The image of him entering to shouts of "*sensei!*" from hundreds of American members does not strike me as responding to his vision for our organization.

Another quote during President Ikeda's 1990 visit concerns change: "Change, unceasing change, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of America. Change occurs more rapidly here than it does elsewhere. This could be said to be an indication of the vitality that this country possesses. Similarly, Buddhism holds that everything is in a constant state of flux. Thus, the question is whether we are to accept

change passively and be swept away by it, or whether we are to take the lead and create positive changes on our own initiative. While conservatism and self-protection might be likened to winter, night and death, the spirit of pioneering and attempting to realize ideals evokes images of spring, morning and birth" (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 52).

These suggestions may seem radical to some, but I believe they are inevitable. The more we are perceived as an American organization, the wider the entrance we provide to new membership.

Our mentor made an even more radical suggestion in 1996 when he said: "I propose that we come up with an alternate name for the SGI to make it more accessible and familiar to a large number of people both inside and outside the organization. For example, we might use the organization's initials to create a catch phrase like 'Social Good Institution'" (July 12, 1996 *World Tribune*, p. 12). As his disciple, I am compelled to ponder what he is saying to us by such statements and take action accordingly. **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 (first line): SUBSCRIBE wtexpress

Also visit the new WT E-mail Express page on the SGI-USA Web Site, www.sgi-usa.org

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

General Director
Daniel Nagashima

Publisher
Fred M. Zaitzu
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 Nakasui
Kirk Condyles
Jonathan Wilson
Dixon Hamby

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
lisahollis@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: SGISUBS@aol.com

FRIENDS FOR PEACE
ffp@sgi-usa.org

SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

FINE PRINT
fineprint@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.

Remembering Amelia Moran

I just finished reading the perspective from Amy Taliaferro in the Feb. 25 *World Tribune* about Amelia Moran. I couldn't help but cry (out of joy) reading about Amelia. She, too, touched me in a very special way. Her radiant smile and warm encouragement, especially to the youth — nationwide — touched my life. Amelia was an inspiration to me, an example of what kind of woman I want to be and could be. I was very happy that you wrote about her in the *World Tribune*. She will always be remembered.

—REIKO GROSHALL,
Culver City, Calif.
rgroshell@sgi-usa.org

About the Environment

If the Paul Ehrlich Mr. Kawaguchi refers to is the same one who made his infamous "overpopulation predictions" in 1969 or 1970, he should not be throwing stones. Dr. Ehrlich's predictions were completely wrong. He is thoroughly discredited as a scientist. And my guess is that if it weren't for tenure, Ehrlich would probably be out of a job.

Mr. Kawaguchi should also read works by Dixie Lee Ray, a scientist who documents many of Mr. Hotchkiss' assertions.

P.S. Please tell President Ikeda there is no overpopulation problem, only a freedom problem in some countries. President Ikeda

World Tribune MAILBOX

mentioned overpopulation again in one of the recent articles in the *World Tribune*. Sorry, I don't remember which one.

—JAMES RYAN,
Indianapolis, Ind.
JamesTRyan@aol.com

The Silent Prayers

Michael Lisagor's Feb. 4 *World Tribune* "Perspective," which explains the silent prayers of gongyo, is so thought-provoking and useful. The article is insightful to me personally and I've used it to help explain the practice to people I'm introducing to Buddhism. I hope that soon these explanations are incorporated into SGI-USA study material we can use from now on. Thanks a lot for sharing a great article with us.

—M. LAVORA PERRY
E. Cleveland, Ohio
perryrich@juno.com

On Depression

I want to express appreciation for the discussions on depression subsequent to the publishing of my perspective in the Feb. 4 *World Tribune*. I did not truly understand the importance of the issue until receiving other members' over-

whelming feedback both in person and in writing. It is my hope that this discussion has illustrated the reality of depression as an illness that affects both one's chemical brain structure as well as one's mental thought processes and emotional well being. It was my goal to help my fellow members understand when they have it and what to do about it, as well as share my own victory over the illness utilizing the effective and well-rounded combination of my practice, psychotherapy and psychiatry. When we feel good, we are better able to serve as Votaries of the Lotus Sutra and Bodhisattvas of the Earth. Thank you so much.

—LORI A. McDANIEL,
Chicago
www.frymulti.com

I appreciated Lori McDaniel's "Using Common Sense in Facing Depression" (Jan. 28 *World Tribune*). I also appreciated Stu Clarke's response. Lori's perspective was, for me, a final encouragement to try using antidepressants (that I have for years been avoiding using every argument in the book to maintain my stance). I don't know what it is going to do. I don't know if it will help or hinder me, but for me now, I know

I've got to try it and see. I've been practicing for 12 years. I have many benefits and believe in the power of the Gohonzon and I know I am taking the best action I can at this time. I want to be happy, and if some of my misery is caused by a chemical imbalance, then I want to know and if there is something I can do about it, I am going to do it.

—T. GREGORY,
New York City

I would like to respond to Stu Clarke's letter in the March 3 *World Tribune*, responding to Lori McDaniel's article, "Using Common Sense in Facing Depression" (Jan. 28 *World Tribune*).

I am not a doctor or medical practitioner. I am a common person, seeking to be the healthiest and happiest me that I can be. I have in the past, been diagnosed with "chronic depression." I used to believe that I could completely overcome my "mental" problems by chanting, and I believe that the jury is still out, regarding whether it is possible to do so.

However, I can refer to my own life, and to what I have read, in responding to Stu Clarke's letter.

In my understanding, mental problems are caused — at the deepest level by our karma — and in actuality by brain dysfunctions that are sometimes referred to as "temporal lobe epilepsies." These brain epilepsies can be observed through pet scans, although doctors rely mostly on observations and interviews of patients.

In my own case, I have chanted consistently for more than 27 years, never missing a gongyo, not while in labor, or while traveling across time zones, or while lying in bed with a high fever. I have also consistently chanted 2 million daimoku per year, and have never strayed from the NSA or SGI organization. My consistent practice has undoubtedly enabled me to overcome enormous obstacles, to become much, much happier than I would be without the practice.

However, I was still plagued by ongoing depression which was unrelated to my environment. One of the symptoms or side-effects of depression is a fairly high degree of negativity and nihilism. No matter how hard I chanted or practiced Buddhism, when I got depressed (for no apparent reason, other than what was going on in my head), I tended to blame my environment, or to look to my environment to cure my depression.

When I was blaming my environment, I would also tend to, at times, harbor ill feelings toward fellow members, attempt to control the people in my environment, have great difficulty forgiving people for "doing me wrong," take criticisms to heart, and sometimes even have difficulty chanting.

I tried taking Paxil, but didn't like the side effects. Then, I read in

an issue of NARSAD Research Newsletter, published by the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders: "Another herbal compound for depression receiving a great deal of attention has been SAM-e — a metabolic intermediate compound called 'S-adenosylmethionine,' SAM-e is found in all living cells...SAM-e reportedly enhances brain dopamine and serotonin neurotransmitter metabolism."

I began taking SAM-e two months ago, and my deep-seated depression is completely gone, while I have experienced NO side effects from the supplement. I now seldom harbor ill feelings toward members and get over, fairly quickly, resentment against people who treat me badly. I have finally forgiven my parents for, what I used to consider to be, bad-parenting. I mostly think about the wonderful times in my childhood.

I have very little need to control people. I get over criticisms of me fairly quickly, and I find it easier to chant for long periods of time. Did all of this wonderful growth come about as the result of taking a pill? The answer is that the anti-depressant is the influence or expedient means. Last fall, I spent several months observing my mind while chanting, really looking at my depression, while realizing that my one fundamental fault was the tendency to become depressed and negative.

I also came to understand, from studying about mental problems that I very likely had a problem in my brain, and that chanting alone had not yet cured it.

Because I was using the strategy of the Lotus Sutra to cure my depression, chanting abundant daimoku, seeking guidance, studying, etc., I believe that I found the best solution to my problem. SAM-e is working synergistically, you might say, to support my life, my practice of Buddhism to help me become the best possible person that I can be. In addition to feeling happier, I also feel more naturally intelligent, as my depression would frequently mask or interfere with my natural abilities.

SAM-e works best for me. For others, it might be Prozac or Paxil. However, no anti-depressant can give a person true happiness, the kind that comes from getting in touch with your Buddha nature. Yet, now when I chant, I feel focused, joyous, and no longer encumbered by a brain that often caused me to have difficulty focusing on the Gohonzon. The Lotus Sutra is the best medicine for depression. However, in my opinion, the various anti-depressants now available are the expedient means.

This June I plan to attend a convention of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) in San Diego.

—LIZ GOLDNER,
Costa Mesa, Calif.
Lgoldner@earthlink.net



fineprint@sgi-usa.org

Greetings

(Karen Fitzpatrick and Pauline Strobos met on the Internet. Pauline has decided to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism during this ongoing dialogue on icq.com ["I seek you"]. She greets the readers of the *World Tribune*.)

Hi, Friends. This is Pauline Strobos from South Africa. There are no members in East London to communicate with, so Karen and Richard Fitzpatrick (of Richmond, Va.) are sponsoring me. We communicate each day via icq.com and have chanted via Phone-Free. It was so amazing for me. I have been chanting for two months now and last evening set up my altar. Today, March 2, is my first day of making offerings and how wonderful it is. Always lit candles when I chanted in my "special place and space" not knowing that is "part of the offerings" but was unaware of the other elements one had to use as well. Have tried unsuccessfully to communicate with other Buddhists in this country (except for Andrew in Johannesburg) and Karen has been there to answer ALL my questions and has spent hours and hours with me on icq. Chanting, for me, has changed my life, considerably, in making me more aware of myself, deep inside and of things around me. Buddhism is already part of my life (I have always been a Buddhist at heart) and it is like wanting to shout from the rooftops, "I am a Buddhist." Typing this e-mail would have been very difficult

two months ago, but now I have no need for self-pity about being shy and reserved. It has opened me up like a lotus flower and allowed me to experience the world around me and by so doing has allowed me to experience my inner-self and the greatest thing of all IS TO BE ABLE TO FACE MYSELF AND SEE WHO I TRULY AM. The BIG one faces me now — to accept myself as I am — and learn to channel those energies where they were meant to be — HAPPINESS TO ALL. I am not very good with words but have always spoken from the heart, so thank you for "listening to me." — Friends, kindly subscribe me to your daily e-mail list. To Karen and Richard Fitzpatrick — MY ETERNAL GRATITUDE. Lots of love and good fortune to you all. — Pauline Strobos, South Africa (tai@mweb.co.za)

I would appreciate it if you would consider the following message for fellow SGI-USA raver kids. I am not a kid, but I am a raver. Thanks! (Note: "liquid" is a fluid dance move) — Mary Morris, Laurel, Md. Hey Wassup, Ravers of SGI-USA! Love and respect from the DC/Baltimore massive! Got a wish for the upcoming youth culture festivals. Share your joy with a futuristic dance routine to our music featuring "liquid," glowsticks and breakers, and make us all proud! Thank you! Peace Love Unity Respect, Mary Morris, proud junglist, trancehead and SGI-USA member (plur-mom@aol.com)

Congratulations

At the 42nd Annual Grammy Awards Ceremony, held in Los Angeles on Feb. 23, SGI-USA member Wayne Shorter received a Grammy award in the Jazz Instrumental Solo category, Best Instrumental: "In Walked Wayne." As the title indicates, renowned composer J.J. Johnson, inspired by Wayne's life, wrote this instrumental especially for Wayne.

President Ikeda was very pleased about the news and immediately sent Wayne a congratulatory message. He asked the *Seikyo Shimbun* to carry this wonderful news in the Feb. 26 issue.

Mr. Shorter said he was very grateful for President Ikeda's constant encouragement, which gave him the strength and courage to continue challenging himself. He also said he is grateful that he can appreciate celebrating life through music.

Lost and Found

I am looking for Debra Shipman. I and a couple others (Connie and Candice) introduced her to Buddhism around 1985 or 1986. I have lost track of her and I want the opportunity to tell her what a positive influence she was on my life, as well. If anyone knows where I might contact her, please email me — Lori — at lorimcdani@frymulti.com <mailto:lorimcdani@frymulti.com> or call me at 708-488-8860. Thank you. — Lori A. McDaniel, Producer, Fry Multimedia, www.frymulti.com



THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

PARIS TRICOLORS

It was a busy day. Many a time I came and went along the rain-washed Paris streets. It was my first visit in a long while, and Paris was as beautiful as ever.

No other city has so many art houses. But in no other city is there less need to visit a gallery; for Paris itself is a museum.

Yet the city is so human; chic and fashionable, she is also a little shy and a bit of a cynic. People of elegance, wit and rich intellect fill the streets.

The day was June 20, 1991. I had arrived in the early evening the day before from sun-drenched Trets in the South of France.

I left my hotel in a Paris suburb a bit early and headed downtown. In the morning I was scheduled to meet with the Minister of Culture M. Jack Lang. And that evening, too, I was invited by President of the Senate M. Alain Poher to his official residence. Scheduled for the next day was the opening of the Vic-

tor Hugo House of Literature. Between the two engagements I just mentioned, I had to attend a discussion to go over final plans for the opening.

A downtown hotel room was my base for the day's activities. I left and entered the room many times, and whenever I returned, I went to the window and looked out.

On the balcony were planted delicate red geraniums. Across the street lay the Tuileries Gardens. Marronnier, acacia, and linden trees looked fresh, cloaked in their motley shades of green. In Paris, nature too was stylish. With her proud smile, Nature seemed to say: "Ça c'est Paris!" [This is Paris!].

Once the area surrounding the Garden was a tumultuous stage upon which was played the drama of the French Revolution. Just before my eyes stood the National Assembly, where the Parliament declared the overthrow of a monarchy and the birth of a republic.

Into this space, so rich with a sense of history, a row of French

flags—blue, white and red—thrust themselves forward as if silently to assert their will. The tricolor flag symbolizes the Republic's founding spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity.

But there was a time when glorious Tricolor had to shrink in the shadows of another flag. During the Nazi occupation of 1940 to 1944, the swastika-emblazoned banner of Nazi Germany was hoisted everywhere in Paris—flying from hundreds of hotels, apartments and estates, and even from the Eiffel Tower. It was four years of humiliation. Nazi flags also lined this street, Rue de Rivoli. In fact, the occupying Nazi armies had been headquartered at this very hotel on whose balcony geraniums now bloomed.

What kind of flag do we raise? Under what flag do we live? A flag is one's "spiritual coat of arms."

General Charles de Gaulle once said as he handed a regimental flag to the students of a military academy: "This flag demands that you give up your free-

dom and money. But instead you shall gain what is unparalleled; that is, glory" (translated from the Japanese).

During the Nazi occupation, General de Gaulle, from his exile in England, called out to French citizens to resist the invading forces. One fisherman, in response to the call, sailed to England alone. Crossing the Channel, he hoisted on his small boat the French Tricolor, the pride of his mother country.

At last came the day of the liberation of Paris. One radio announcer, declaring that he was "mad with elation," broadcast the news and then recited a poem by Victor Hugo:

Wake up! We have had enough humiliation.

Rebuild great France! Rebuild great Paris! (translated from the Japanese)

To this, Parisians opened their curtains and windows. Neighbors embraced one another. People ran through the streets, shouting with joy. A great chorus of

"La Marseillaise" resounded through Paris.

"We have our own song. We have our own flag," was the message.

Happy are those who hold high such flags and advance until they score the final victory in life—until the very last moment when the flame of their life force is extinguished.

"This is the flag of my life!" "This is the flag of my conviction!" is their declaration.

People are born to realize their ideals. We are born not to drag ourselves along in shackles, but to spread wide our wings. This was Hugo's passionate message.

I toast to Paris, the city of Hugo! I toast to Paris, city of liberty!

When I returned to my room after meeting with Mr. Poher looking out at the sky from the window, I saw a double rainbow; standing in splendor, its columns were like parapets of a celestial causeway.

Tenth in a series