



### FEATURE:

Fathers and mothers share the joys of parenting.

pages 10-11

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 90406-9907

No. 3296

\$2.00

JUNE 2, 2000

PLEASE SEE PAGE 8

## SGI MEMBERS LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE

*'Be it in art, life or faith, everything comes down to unceasing challenge, change and creativity—the spirit to keep advancing from today to tomorrow, moving always toward the future,' SGI President Ikeda says April 25, at a meeting with SGI members from 50 countries.*

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Jazz superstars Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter perform at the April 25 meeting at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter present the Global Artist Award to SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda at the April 25 meeting with SGI members from 50 countries.

## The Sound of Victory Over Violence

By JIM DREISBACH  
FLORIDA BUREAU CHIEF

What does Victory Over Violence sound like?

It sounds like the roar of delight coming from an audience of 1,000 inside the Friendship Auditorium at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. On May 14, participants of the FNCC Arts Division Conference came together with SGI-USA members of South Florida, their friends and dignitaries of the neighboring communities for their first-ever VOV concert.

Many youth and numerous local guests were unaware of the range and power of the Arts Division, but they quickly found out. "Awesome! I mean not just the music, not just the performances, but the whole message was incredible," one young spectator said.

The program was divided into two distinct segments. Part one featured a variety of performances—break dancing, taiko drumming, opera singing and more. Part two starred Super Sounds, featuring Miami's own Nestor Torres on flute, Wayne Shorter on saxophone, Shunzo Ono on trumpet, Kenwood Dennard on drums, Buster Williams on bass and Onaje Alan Gumbs on piano.

"Having a concert for the purpose of mitigating violence is a wonderful idea," said Dr. Ijya Tulloss, a Barry University professor. "What made it especially moving was so many people of different backgrounds working closely together. It brought everything back to the diverse community in which we live."

Please see pages 6-7 for more on the first VOV concert.

Photo by FRANCISCO PALACIO



The Fushu Daiko taiko drummers perform (above). Pascual and Angela Olivera dance (right). An audience of 1,000 enjoys the Arts Division's first-ever VOV concert (below).

Photo by FRANCISCO PALACIO



Photo by JIM DREISBACH



# THE OBJECT OF DEVOTION

**World TRIBUNE** The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

## Back to the Basics

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

What does the object of devotion in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism represent? What is expressed by the Chinese characters on the Gohonzon?

These characters—and their arrangement on the Gohonzon, with “Nam-myoho-rence-kyo—Nichiren” down the center—depict the enlightened potential within each of our lives. The Gohonzon is meant to be a mirror of our true selves.

In the Daishonin's Buddhism, the focus is on manifesting the enlightenment already in our lives—on empowering ourselves from within. This is why the Daishonin warns: “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-rence-kyo” (*The Writings of*

*Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 832). The Daishonin never says that the meaning of the Gohonzon is found outside us, above us or somewhere far away.

He also never says that we need an intermediary, like a priest, to make the Gohonzon work for us. In the Daishonin's view, there is nothing and no one between us and our happiness. This is why he says, “There is no true happiness for human beings other than chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo” (WND, 681). Whatever we communicate through chanting to the Gohonzon, then, is a mes-

sage to the depths of our lives—to the Law of the universe in our hearts.

The Daishonin makes it clear that “your practice of the Buddhist teachings will not relieve you of the sufferings of birth and death in the least unless you perceive the true nature of your life. If you seek enlightenment outside yourself, then your performing even ten thousand practices and ten thousand good deeds will be in vain” (WND, 3). We practice to the Gohonzon to make this understanding the basis for everything that we do in life. **W**

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org SGIUSBS@aol.com

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Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$125 for Three Years

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## Sincere Offerings Become Prayers

### PERSPECTIVE

By AMY BROWNFIELD  
BURBANK, CALIF.

PHOTO BY SHEENA BROWNFIELD



you had the good fortune to meet Nichiren who advised you to chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

Most of the SGI members I'm privileged to know feel a profound and sincere desire to participate in the May Commemorative Contribution activity regardless of any promise of the good fortune they are creating by doing so. Their earnest desire is to promote kosen-rufu. However, many times discussion and encouragement about this campaign comes in the form of sharing past material benefits derived from participation. Though such good fortune is remarkable and welcome, I find myself more interested in what possible effect my contribution could have. I did a little research.

Contributions or offerings have a long history in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. The Daishonin was supported by the sincere contributions of food, clothing, writing materials, cash and other necessities made by those of his followers who were ready to do anything to help him. Did you ever notice how many of the letters addressed to the Daishonin's followers begin with an acknowledgement of an offering? I received the unlined robe, the string of coins, the rice, the sake (or whatever) you sent, a letter might read. What effect did those followers have on the spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism?

Think about it. Put yourself in the shoes of a 13th century man or woman in Japan. Without either plumbing or electricity, you scratched out a living. Somehow

You'd heard rumors that he was some kind of crack-pot, but there was something about the man himself that persuaded you to try his teaching. That did it. It wasn't long before you were convinced that every word he spoke was the absolute truth. You made up your mind to support him in his efforts. You spoke to your friends and family and you managed to set aside a bag of rice or a robe to send to him.

To your surprise and delight, you received a thank you letter from him acknowledging your gift. In addition he wrote two or three pages of a careful, easy to understand explanation of some point in faith you were having trouble with. You preserved this letter and treasured it throughout your life. Somehow this letter was kept intact and passed down through the centuries until over 700 years later millions of believers around the world are able to read it. Because of this letter, believers deepen their understanding of Buddhism and deepen their faith. They raise their life-conditions and accrue incredible benefits. They propagate the Mystic Law and participate in the May Commemorative Contribution Campaign, and the world becomes a better, happier place all because you sent the bag of rice or robe.

Little did you know, back then, how amazingly far reach-

ing the effect of your contribution would be, and it's not over yet. The ripples from that little pebble you dropped all those years ago are still going strong.

Could it be that my seemingly insignificant contribution this month might have such a far-reaching effect on the course of kosen-rufu? I'm counting on it. I'm praying for it.

The Daishonin was grateful and full of praise. He wrote, “In this life, your sincere offering becomes a prayer for the fulfillment of your every desire and a treasure” (Gift of an Unlined Robe, *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1515).

President Ikeda says, “For an offering of but a single unlined robe, the Daishonin promises eternal good fortune and benefit. This is because he perceives the sincerity with which the robe is imbued” (*Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 25).

Eternal good fortune!!! WOW!!!

*Perspectives printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SGI-USA or the World Tribune.*

**Correction:** Saturday hours have been revised for the “Dialogue With Nature” exhibit in Denver of SGI President Ikeda's photographs. They are: Saturday, June 3, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m., and Saturday, June 10, 1:00–5:00 p.m. The exhibit continues Monday–Friday, 7:45 a.m.–5:45 p.m., from June 4–16. The exhibit is free and open to the public on the second floor of the Denver City and County Building, located at 14th and Bannock. For more information, call (303) 893-0430.

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Darnell Pulphus  
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Don Perdue  
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Peter Hendrickson  
Vice Men's Leader

Laura Hendrickson  
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Patricia Hanson  
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Rosemary Perdue  
Vice Women's Leader

Craig Ellis  
Young Men's Leader

Sukyen Djuandi  
Young Women's Leader

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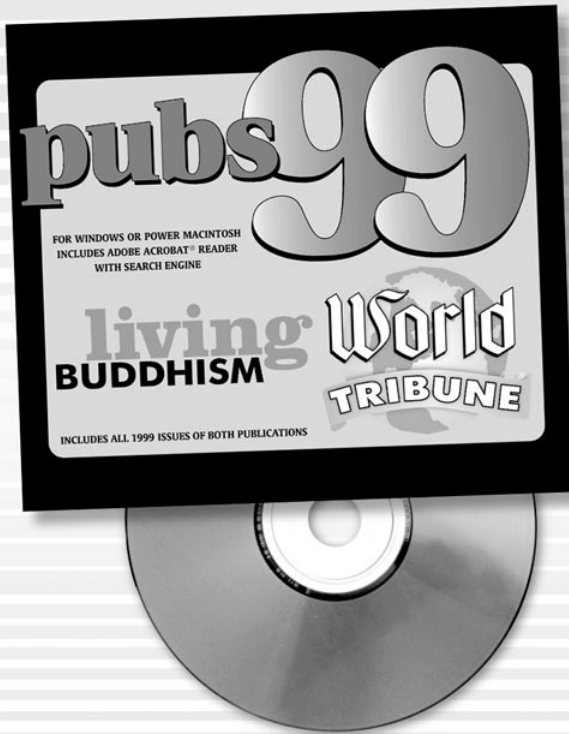
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Photo by RENE GEYSER



SGI-USA member John Page, from Libertyville, Ill., presents an overview of 'Buddhism in America' at the Waukegan Public Library in Waukegan, Ill., May 3.

## SUA, Aliso Viejo Trail Dedication and Campus Tour

Come celebrate with the faculty and staff of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo and Orange County Supervisor Thomas W. Wilson on Saturday, June 3, as the university's one-mile Millennium Trail is dedi-

cated. This is the community's first chance to tour SUA's new campus. SUA's faculty and staff members, as well as SUA's architects, will be stationed along the trail to tell you about each building as you pass it. A \$10

registration fee is required, which includes an SUA lion T-shirt. The dedication begins at 8:30 a.m. For more information, call (949) 472-3051, e-mail [wwharder@soka.edu](mailto:wwharder@soka.edu) or visit [www.soka.edu/calendar.html](http://www.soka.edu/calendar.html).

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## Members Donate Books in Waukegan

In continuing their efforts to bring the spirit of SGI President Ikeda and the SGI organization to Lake County, Ill., Lake Chapter members presented a collection of his publications to the Waukegan Public Library on May 3. For this event, members created four exhibits based on peace, culture, education and Soka Gakkai Day (May 3).

It was an extraordinarily beautiful day as members and guests arrived at the library, located in downtown Waukegan along the shores of Lake Michigan. Jean Kovac, Chicago No. 2 Culture Department leader, presented the

17 books to Andrew Stimson, library director. Lake Chapter Leader Al Hogan surprised the members with a proclamation from Mayor William Durkin naming May 3 SGI President's Day in Waukegan. Presentations on "Buddhism in America" were given in English and Spanish, and videos introducing President Ikeda and the SGI were shown.

Guests included a retired teacher from Highland Park High School, who said: "These exhibits truly encompass so many cultures. I didn't know what the SGI was, and I'm so glad I'm here to learn about it."

—DIANE FRIESE

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# SGI-USA Study Department Entrance-Level Examination

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

With the exception of question #1 (Q1), each question has one correct answer and is worth three points. Q1 has two correct answers, worth two points each (four points total). There are 100 points possible on the exam. You will pass the exam by scoring 70 or above. (The exam was held April 30 nationwide.)

## Part I: The Life of Nichiren Daishonin

**Q1.** 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 Gohonzon? (Pick two, 2 pts. each)

- (A) Maka Shikan (Great Concentration and Insight).
- (B) The Lotus Sutra.
- (C) "On Attaining Buddhahood."
- (D) "The True Object of Worship."
- (E) "The Opening of the Eyes."

**Q2.** Which practice did Nichiren Daishonin proclaim on April 28, 1253?

- (A) Meditation.
- (B) Almsgiving.
- (C) Abiding by the precepts.
- (D) Mastering occult powers.
- (E) Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

**Q3.** After the Tatsunokuchi Persecution and Sado Exile, many of Nichiren Daishonin's followers wavered in their faith. In what way was the behavior of the Daishonin's followers different during the Atsuhara Persecution?

- (A) They were willing to die for their beliefs.
- (B) They accepted Nembutsu teachings.
- (C) They abandoned their faith.
- (D) They denied any association with him.
- (E) They all returned the Gohonzon.

**Q4.** The inscription of "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" and "Nichiren" down the center of the Gohonzon indicates what Buddhist principle?

- (A) The oneness of mentor and disciple.
- (B) The oneness of body and mind.
- (C) The oneness of good and evil.
- (D) The oneness of Person and Law.
- (E) Earthly desires lead to enlightenment.

**Q5.** After the attempt to execute Nichiren Daishonin at Ta-

tsunokuchi proved unsuccessful, he was exiled to a cold and forbidding place from which he was not expected to return. What was this place?

- (A) Kamakura.
- (B) Tokyo.
- (C) Sado Island.
- (D) Mount Minobu.
- (E) Eagle Peak.

**Q6.** Why did five of the six senior priests abandon the Daishonin's teachings after he died?

- (A) Their desire to marry, have children and accumulate money was very strong, and they did not care for the strict guidelines the Daishonin set down.
- (B) They gave up their faith when accused of being spies for the Mongolian army.
- (C) The steward of the Minobu area, Hakiri Sanenaga, refused to allow them to visit the temple there and threatened to behead them.
- (D) They did not understand the essence of the Daishonin's teachings, believing he had only taught a form of Tendai Buddhism.
- (E) Upon examining various documents, writings and treatise, they determined that the Daishonin's philosophy contradicted Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings.

**Q7.** What was Nikko Shonin's purpose in writing "The Twenty-six Admonitions?"

- (A) To show that he was capable of developing his own teachings.
- (B) To protect the purity of Shakyamuni's Lotus Sutra.
- (C) To protect the purity of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.
- (D) To protect the authority of the priesthood.
- (E) To protect the secrets of Buddhism from the laity.

## Part 2: "On Attaining Buddhahood"

**Q8.** What does it mean to "perceive the nature of your own life"?

- (A) To realize our shallow understanding of life.
- (B) To realize that Buddhahood exists at the most fundamental level of life.
- (C) To realize that we share a common destiny with all people.
- (D) To understand the source of the world's problems.
- (E) To understand that we can always be forgiven for our bad karma.

**Q9.** What is the Daishonin trying to illustrate by using the analogy of a "poor man counting his neighbor's wealth night and day"?

- (A) Money is not the answer to a happy life.
- (B) By focusing on other people's wealth, we can learn how to create our own.
- (C) To study Buddhism or practice good deeds while believing that the truth is outside ourselves will not help us awaken to the true nature of our lives.
- (D) Good fortune includes material wealth.
- (E) By associating with those who have good fortune, we will gain our own.

**Q10.** According to this letter, what is the attitude of a non-Buddhist?

- (A) Seeking the Law outside oneself.
- (B) Perceiving the true nature of one's own life and the lives of others.
- (C) Striving to have confidence in one's Buddha nature.
- (D) Never being swayed by external circumstances or obstacles.
- (E) Strengthening one's conviction to change his or her destiny.

**Q11.** Where is the Buddha land?

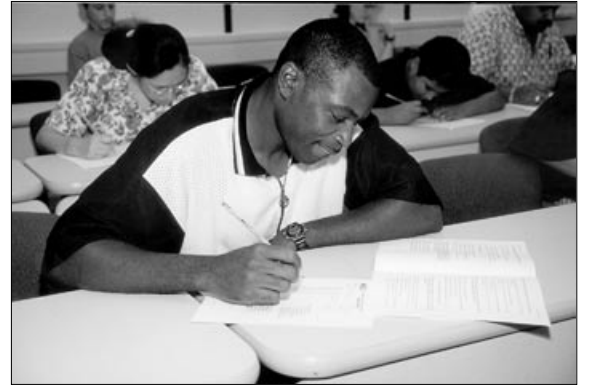
- (A) Head temple Taiseki-ji where the high priest resides.
- (B) Where the Buddha's ashes are kept.
- (C) At the Bodhi tree where Shakyamuni attained enlightenment.
- (D) The Buddha land is in the afterlife.
- (E) Wherever someone chants Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and strives for kosen-rufu.

**Q12.** What Buddhist principle is illustrated by the passage: "It 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."

- (A) The three obstacles and four devils.
- (B) The oneness of life and its environment.
- (C) The Three Great Secret Laws.
- (D) The oneness of body and mind.
- (E) The three powerful enemies.

**Q13.** What is the direct path to enlightenment explained in this letter?

- (A) Understanding the meaning of Shakyamuni's pre-Lotus Sutra teachings.
- (B) Worshipping the Buddha, lifetime after lifetime.



Taking the Entrance Exam at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

- (C) Obeying those with superior knowledge of Buddhist teachings.
- (D) Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with the realization that our lives are the Mystic Law.
- (E) Observing the workings of Buddhist principles in the environment.

**Q14.** Nichiren Daishonin teaches us that when chanting to the Gohonzon, you should "summon up deep conviction" that:

- (A) The Buddha is a deluded common mortal.
- (B) Life is impermanent; hence, there is nothing you can depend upon.
- (C) Myoho-enge-kyo is your life itself.
- (D) Your life is an endless, painful austerity.
- (E) The life of Shakyamuni Buddha is separate from your own.

## Part 3: "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon"

**Q15.** 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"?

- (A) By chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and attaining Buddhahood, we can fundamentally change our karma.
- (B) We have hidden supernatural powers that can only be revealed through self-mastery.
- (C) Our karma is the basis of life's functions.
- (D) The fundamental darkness within us indicates the ultimate consciousness, our Buddha nature.
- (E) The potential for Buddhahood exists only within Nichiren Daishonin.

**Q16.** 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?

- (A) By asking others to chant for us.
- (B) Through the power of skepticism.
- (C) By resolving to chant when we have more time.
- (D) By believing in the power of the Gohonzon to the point where we do not need to chant, replacing practice with faith.
- (E) Through our own powers of faith and practice.

**Q17.** Even though doubts are natural and unavoidable, it is important to strive to have doubt-free faith. Instead of worrying or tormenting ourselves, what should we do when we have feelings of doubt or insincerity in our practice?

- (A) Resolve doubts through earnest practice and study.
- (B) Realize that doubts indicate the practice is not for you and stop.
- (C) Practice less strongly until the storm clears.
- (D) Rely on common-sense strategies.
- (E) Just follow the advice of friends and family.

**Q18.** According to Nichiren Daishonin, what two actions arise from faith?

- (A) Chanting only for our personal wants and needs each morning and evening.
- (B) Practice and study.
- (C) Going to meetings at least once a week and reading books about Buddhism.
- (D) Chanting during the day and begging for alms in the evening.
- (E) Studying Buddhist theory and lecturing to others.

**Q19.** What point is the Daishonin trying to teach us in this writing by using the examples of the

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



At the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

Emperor of Han and Li Kuang?

- (A) Their clarification of the Buddhist teaching was incorrect.
- (B) The mentor-and-disciple relationship is important in Buddhism.
- (C) The power of faith can make the impossible a reality.
- (D) The Chinese had a good grasp of Buddhist doctrines.
- (E) Emperors are no better than common folk.

**Q20.** In this letter, what specifically is Nichiren Daishonin urging us to seek within our own lives?

- (A) The moral fiber to live correctly.
- (B) The intelligence to understand all of Shakyamuni's teachings.
- (C) Our identities in past lives.
- (D) The Gohonzon.
- (E) Our fundamental darkness.

**Part 4: "Happiness in This World"**

**Q21.** Why does Nichiren Daishonin state that "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo"?

- (A) When we chant, other people will assist us.
- (B) When we chant, our lives become one with the Law, enabling us to draw forth inexhaustible strength, wisdom, joy and hope.
- (C) When we chant, we realize that we don't need to concern ourselves with others, saving ourselves lots of time and energy.
- (D) When we chant, our problems automatically disappear like dew in the morning sunlight.
- (E) When we chant, others realize that we are right and they are wrong, which makes for a much more peaceful world.

**Q22.** How is "joy derived from the Law" different from the "joy derived from desires"?

- (A) "Joy derived from the Law" is legal pleasure; "joy derived from desires" is illegal pleasure.
- (B) "Joy derived from the Law" is described in theory in the Buddhist teachings; "joy derived from desires" is the real experience of joy.
- (C) "Joy derived from the Law" is the happiness and protection we receive from living according to society's norms; "joy derived from desires" is realized when we follow our intuition.
- (D) "Joy derived from the Law" is based on the eternally unchanging law of life; "joy derived from desires" is temporary and can give rise to unhappiness and dissatisfaction.
- (E) "Joy derived from the Law" is

ours; "joy derived from desires" can only come from others.

**Q23.** According to Nichiren Daishonin, what enables us to experience the "joy derived from the Law"?

- (A) Continuing to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo no matter what happens.
- (B) Exercising the will power to win over others.
- (C) Exercising both body and mind to fully develop all our potential.
- (D) Obeying the rules of society and learning self-discipline.
- (E) In the Latter Day of the Law, true joy is not attainable.

**Q24.** Why is attributing the cause of our happiness or unhappiness to someone else contradictory to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra?

- (A) Happiness is found in good circumstances and good people; without them we cannot be happy.
- (B) Other people are the foundation of our happiness.
- (C) Heredity determines the people around us; happiness is inherited.
- (D) The state of life of others can create or destroy our happiness; hence the importance of praying to find good friends.
- (E) Our happiness fundamentally does not depend on others, because only through our own faith and practice can we establish the foundation of absolute happiness.

**Q25.** How does the expression "happy and at ease" relate to our lives?

- (A) Chanting enables us to better enjoy the pleasures of life.
- (B) Chanting prevents us from falling victim to the enticements of a happy and easy life.
- (C) Chanting enables us to view things from the world of Buddhahood, the condition of supreme happiness.
- (D) Chanting enables us to resist the easygoing tendencies of today's world.
- (E) Chanting enables us to avoid the problems and sufferings that threaten our happiness and easy living.

**Q26.** What does achieving "peace and security" mean?

- (A) It means that we get used to misery and become more passive; Buddhists are pacifists.
- (B) It means that we have achieved a life free from difficulties.
- (C) It means that whatever difficulties may arise, we can summon up the courage, strength and confidence to overcome them.
- (D) It means that our present life-

time is filled with misery, and real happiness can be found after death, in the Buddha land.

(E) It means that we should protect our homes and altars with good security if we want to have peace of mind.

**Q27.** What is a Buddha of absolute freedom?

- (A) A Buddha of absolute freedom is nothing like an ordinary human being.
- (B) A Buddha of absolute freedom possesses supernatural powers.
- (C) A Buddha of absolute freedom is a Buddha from provisional sutras.
- (D) A Buddha of absolute freedom is beyond the grasp of common mortals.
- (E) A Buddha of absolute freedom is an ordinary person who freely receives and uses limitless joy from the Law.

**Part 5: Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue**

**Q28.** Which statement is a passage from the Lotus Sutra regarding persecutions that applies directly to the SGI?

- (A) "The Tathagata's secret and mystic power will protect those persecuted for their faith."
- (B) "And since hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One is in the world, how much more will this be so after his passing?"
- (C) "And since the true votaries of this sutra are persecuted, they are certain to become discouraged in their faith."
- (D) "Only one courageous in faith can withstand the persecutions that surely will come."
- (E) "Persecutions are a natural part of this saha world; you should not feel sorry that you're not leading a peaceful life."

**Q29.** How does Buddhism characterize opposition by those in authority?

- (A) It is a sign of their wisdom.
- (B) It is a sign that we should stop spreading this Buddhism until the time is ripe so that we won't meet any persecutions.
- (C) It is a sign that we are practicing correctly.
- (D) It is a sign of their limitless concern for our happiness.
- (E) It is a sign that our understanding of Buddhism is shallow.

**Q30.** What is meant by "correct faith"?

- (A) To practice as Nichiren Daishonin taught, share his convictions and develop our lives in accord with that understanding.
- (B) To practice in accord with the 700-year traditions established

- by the priesthood.
- (C) To practice in our own way, with complete freedom.
- (D) To practice as individuals without influence from other believers.
- (E) To practice in accord with what those in positions of authority say is right.

**Q31.** In terms of the future, why is it important to understand the temple issue?

- (A) So we can transmit its significance and meaning to future generations, allowing them to benefit from the example and understanding we have gained.
- (B) So we can inform future generations that this was not the time for kosen-rufu.
- (C) So we can inform our children that the end of the temple issue will signal the time that they can now widely spread this Buddhism exactly as the Daishonin taught.
- (D) So we can transmit a correct understanding of what it means to be a Bodhisattva of the Earth, something we SGI members cannot be because of the temple issue.
- (E) So we can ask future generations to fix the mistakes we've made and reconcile with the temple.

**Q32.** How does Nichiren Shoshu's view of the Gohonzon contradict the Daishonin's view? Four of the following statements are incorrect views of the Gohonzon based on stated positions of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood. One represents Nichiren Daishonin's correct teaching. Select the correct view.

- (A) The Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is not inherent in the lives of all people, only in the physical object of the Gohonzon and in the life of the high priest.
- (B) Believing that the Law or the Gohonzon exists within one's own life is the essence of arrogance and will send one to hell.
- (C) The high priest has sole possession of the Law and control over the power of the Gohonzon; therefore, a believer's individual faith is insufficient to activate the Gohonzon's power.
- (D) Only the high priest can empower a Gohonzon by personally conducting an "eye-opening" ceremony, thus awakening the life of Nichiren Daishonin inscribed within.
- (E) The Gohonzon is the manifestation of Nichiren Daishonin's enlightened life, which is no different from the enlightened po-

tential within all ordinary people, tapped through the power of each person's faith and practice.

**Q33.** Which of the following statements correctly sums up both Nichiren Shoshu's and Nichiren Daishonin's view of what it means to receive the heritage or lifeblood of faith?

- (A) Nichiren Shoshu and the Daishonin both taught that only priests can receive the heritage because the heritage lies in being strictly obedient to the high priest.
- (B) Nichiren Shoshu and the Daishonin both taught that our individual practice of chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo without the intervention of the priests' prayers has nothing to do with attaining enlightenment.
- (C) Nichiren Shoshu says only the high priest can possess and bestow the heritage of the Law, while the Daishonin repeatedly explains that it is one's faith alone that enables him or her to inherit the heritage of the Law.
- (D) Nichiren Shoshu says the laity is as respectable as the priesthood, while the Daishonin proclaims that only the priesthood is capable of expounding the Law and receiving the heritage.
- (E) Nichiren Shoshu claims the Law is absolute, while the Daishonin teaches that the high priest determines everything about the heritage. **WR**

**Exam Answers**

1. D, E	12. B	23. A
2. E	13. D	24. E
3. A	14. C	25. C
4. D	15. A	26. C
5. C	16. E	27. E
6. D	17. A	28. B
7. C	18. B	29. C
8. B	19. C	30. A
9. C	20. D	31. A
10. A	21. B	32. E
11. E	22. D	33. C

# Artists Convene at FNCC

By LEIGH KENNICOTT  
BOULDER, CO., CORRESPONDENT

Unexpected—the word kept cropping up in conversations, experiences and events at the first Arts Division Conference at the Florida Nature Culture Center, May 11–14. At the opening session, SGI-USA Arts Division Leader Pasqual Olivera asked the 179 conferees to aim for 12 acts of kindness each day of the conference through introducing themselves to other people, making efforts to communicate and, most important, opening doors.

At the final session on May 14, one young man revealed: “I really wanted to get to the heart of faith this weekend. And somehow, we all did.” A woman whose mother, a pio-

neer of faith, died recently shared with the group her struggle to not resent activities: “On this Mother’s Day 2000, I know my mother fulfilled her mission, because she taught me how to be an SGI member.”

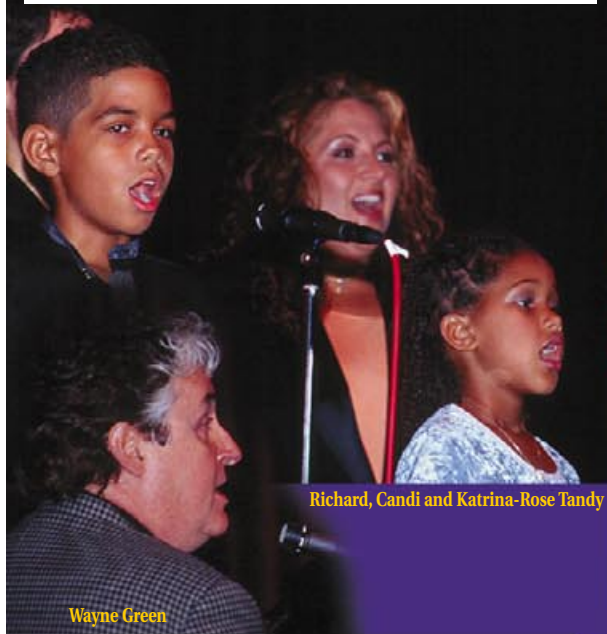
SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima made the unexpected announcement that award-winning musicians Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter had been named SGI Arts Division leaders. Mr. Shorter expressed his appreciation of the honor and his determination to help all the Arts Division members win: “I hope you will all be huge!” Since everyone there had tackled his or her lack of confidence during the weekend, everyone was more than ready to oblige. **WT**



Shunzo Ono



Fushu Daiko taiko drummers



Richard, Candi and Katrina-Rose Tandy

Wayne Green



Nestor Torres

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA’S MESSAGE TO THE

# To Instill Hope in the Hearts of Countless People

**‘Your mission is to instill hope in the hearts of countless people,’ SGI President Ikeda tells the Arts Division members, ‘to encourage them toward the correct path of life—one imbued with strength and optimism.’**

*The Arts Division Conference was held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, May 11–14.*

To my esteemed Arts Division members,

**M**y heartfelt congratulations on your first Arts Division Conference! The amount of

joy, hope and courage you are bringing to countless people through your dynamic, steadfast actions is immeasurable. My appreciation to all of your daily efforts.

Nichiren Daishonin said, “One can know the fall of a nation through the sounds of its joyous rows” (*Gosho Zensho*). In a broad sense, here signifies art and culture. The mission of the Arts Division is thus unimagined. Your mission is to instill hope in the hearts of countless people, to encourage them toward the path of life—one imbued with strength and optimism.

All of you, the SGI hisattvas of World Sound, are wondrous and respectable. We base your lives on earnestly dedicating yourselves to accomplish your missions, develop-



Super Sounds



WELCOME TO THE ARTS DIVISION CONFERENCE

# All Hope in Diverse People

...e and courage that  
...ringing to countless  
...through your dy-  
...steadfast activities is  
...arable. My deepest  
...tion to all of you for  
...y efforts.

...en Daishonin states,  
...n know the rise and  
...nation through the  
...of its joys and sor-  
...oshio Zenshu, p. 88).  
...ad sense, "sounds"  
...ifies art and culture.  
...ion of the Arts Divi-  
...us unimaginably pro-  
...our mission is to in-  
...ve in the hearts of  
...people, to encour-  
... toward the correct  
...life — one imbued  
...ngth and optimism.

...you, the Soka Bod-  
...as of Wonderful  
...re wondrous, noble  
...ectworthy. When you  
...ur lives on faith —  
...y dedicating your-  
...accomplishing your  
...s, developing good

...fortune and fulfilling your re-  
...sponsibilities — you will un-  
...doubtedly bring forth  
...tremendous strength and wis-  
...dom from within. The Bud-  
...dhist deities cannot fail to  
...protect you.

...Those of you who live out  
...your lives for the sake of  
...kosen-rufu together with the  
...SGI and the eternal, bound-  
...less Mystic Law will ultim-  
...ately triumph, without fail.  
...You will develop vast life-con-  
...ditions infused with fulfill-  
...ment and satisfaction.

...My greatest joy is to see all  
...of you advance serenely, res-  
...olutely, fearlessly — as Soka  
...Champions of the Arts.

...I continue to send my sin-  
...cere prayers to each and every  
...one of you, my beloved Arts  
...Division members, so that  
...your future will unfold  
...boundlessly.

...Please stay healthy.

...May 2000  
...Daisaku Ikeda



Nestor Torres and William Artupe Jr.



Wayne Shorter

Erica Gimble



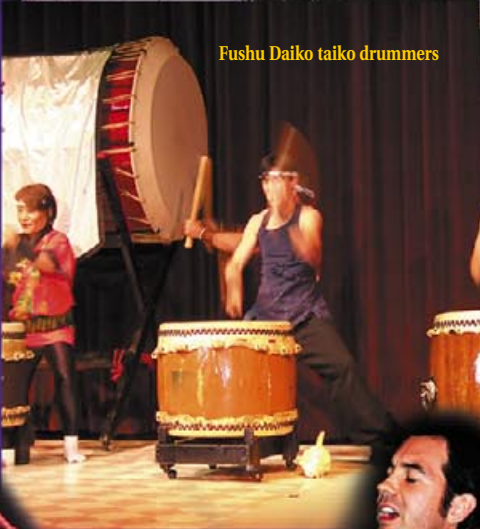
Tamara Jenkins

John Astin



Rosanna

Buster Williams



Fushu Daiko taiko drummers



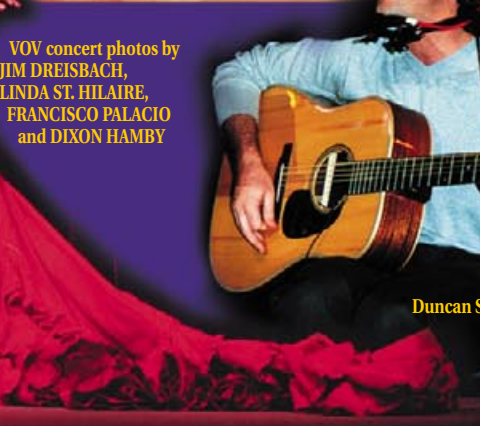
Eduward Ruivenkamp

Francine Roussel



Kenwood Dennard

Pascual and Angela Olivera



Duncan Sheik



Onaje Alan Gumbs

VOV concert photos by  
JIM DREISBACH,  
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FRANCISCO PALACIO  
and DIXON HAMBY

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S APRIL 25 SPEECH—PART 1

# Moving Always Toward the Future

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 45th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting commemorating May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, April 25.

**O**n behalf of the SGI, I wish to wholeheartedly praise the members from 50 countries and territories who have traveled all the way to Japan to participate in an SGI training course and deepen their understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Thank you so much. I deeply appreciate your dedication.

## The causes we make are clearly manifested in this lifetime.

First Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was always unstinting in his praise for people who had traveled from afar to attend training courses so that they could contribute to the cause of Buddhism and the realization of kosen-rufu. He assured them that the benefit they would accrue from such efforts would be boundless and immeasurable.

The workings of the Buddhist Law are wondrous. In a Buddhist scripture, there is a story of a small boy, who, having nothing else to give, sincerely offers Shakyamuni a mud pie that he has lovingly made. As a result of this offering, the scripture says, the boy is later reborn as King Ashoka, a towering ruler in world history. At work here is the law of cause and effect. What matters is our heart or spirit. What is important is our faith. The causes we make are clearly manifested in this lifetime, not only in the next.

To the visiting SGI members, I say: Please continue to take good care of your health for the sake of kosen-rufu. Only the SGI can accomplish kosen-rufu—the realization of genuine, lasting peace. I am always praying that each of you, without exception, will lead a life of ever-greater happiness. On your return home, please give my best regards to your fellow members.

I ask the Japanese members to join me in a warm round of applause for our noble friends from abroad.

## Nichiren Daishonin's spirit resides in the Soka Gakkai.

With boundless praise and appreciation for your efforts, it is my humble honor to report

today, on the eve of our milestone anniversary, May 3, that the number of countries and territories where SGI members are active has grown from 148 to 156. This has been achieved through your passionate commitment to realize kosen-rufu, and because the intent of the original Buddha, the Daishonin, pervades our organization.

The trust you have gained in your respective countries and the fine contributions you are making in your local communities are clear and unmistakable. How happy Soka Gakkai presidents Makiguchi and Toda must be!

Incidentally, representatives of both the Makiguchi and Toda families have kindly joined us for this meeting.

Today, four decades after becoming third Soka Gakkai president, I report to both my predecessors with deep joy, on behalf of all of you, the magnificent growth we have achieved in our worldwide kosen-rufu movement.

The Daishonin states: "[Despite the personal interference of the Devil King of the Sixth Heaven,] it is because the heavenly deities came to my aid that I survived even the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, and that I also safely emerged from other great persecutions. By now the Devil King must be thoroughly discouraged" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 843).

The Daishonin's spirit resides in the Soka Gakkai. We have endured all manner of persecution and attack in the course of propagating Buddhism, and we have emerged triumphant each time—just as the Daishonin's teachings assure us.

Persecutions encountered for the sake of Buddhism signal the advance of kosen-rufu. They signal glory. The Soka Gakkai is a true champion of justice. This has been proven more clearly than ever before. The SGI has won on all fronts. Today, I proclaim a grand victory for the Soka Gakkai and the SGI! I want this declaration to shine in the annals of our movement.

## Those who chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo are never deadlocked.

What is the landmark 156th country where SGI members are active? It is the Republic of Cyprus in the Mediterranean.

May 27–29, incidentally, a peace conference—the Human



Five hundred SGI members from 50 countries and regions attend the meeting commemorating May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, April 25.

Security and Global Governance West Asia Conference II—sponsored by the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research will be held there. The theme of the conference will be "International Security and Cooperation in West Asia."

Also, I am happy to report that SGI organizations in two Central American republics have become chapters: El Salvador and Honduras. A member from El Salvador is in the audience. My sincerest congratulations to you!

As if in accord with the principle of transforming and purifying the land (*The Lotus Sutra*, chapter 11), the 156 countries and territories where SGI members today dwell have been reborn as great realms where the teaching of the Mystic Law is spreading far and wide.

I pray with all my heart for each country to be blessed with the light of hope, with happiness, with peace, and with victory and glory.

Today, I am delighted that two world-renowned musicians, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, have joined us. I'm so glad to see such dear friends again. I warmly welcome them and thank them most sincerely for taking time out of their busy, international schedules to be with us today.

Through their thoroughly forged lives and their sublime artistic spirit, both men continue to convey the joy of life and the strength to go on living to people around the world.

It is with profound gratitude that my wife and I today accepted the heartfelt honor of the Global Artist Award from these two outstanding heroes of art, whom we respect from the bot-

tom of our hearts. Thank you so very, very much.

What made these two creative geniuses pursue the path of art? Someone once said these famous words: "If anyone wants to keep creating they have to be about change. Living is an adventure and a chal-

lenge" (*Miles: The Autobiography*, p. 394). That someone is the late Miles Davis, the great 20th-century jazz virtuoso, with whom our two guests were closely associated. Be it in art, life or faith, everything comes down to unceasing challenge, change and creativity—the spirit to keep advancing from today to tomorrow, moving always toward the future.

Just staying home and watching television all the time gives rise to no change or challenge. It is an existence little different from that of an animal. To keep improving and changing in a positive way, as we move from the present into the future—this is human revolution. Those who do so triumph. They succeed.

This supreme rhythm of victory is the Mystic Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. In the end, nothing can match those who embrace faith in this Law. For those who chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo are never deadlocked.

(To be continued in the June 9 issue)

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

# Cause and Effect

From This Speech:

The workings of the Buddhist Law are wondrous. In a Buddhist scripture, there is a story of a small boy, who, having nothing else to give, sincerely offers Shakyamuni a mud pie that he has lovingly made. As a result of this offering, the scripture says, the boy is later reborn as King Ashoka, a towering ruler in world history. At work here is the law of cause and effect. What matters is our heart or spirit. What is important is our faith. The causes we make are clearly manifested in this lifetime, not only in the next.

- 1) How have you experienced the "workings of the Buddhist Law" in your life? How has your life changed due to your Buddhist practice?
- 2) "What matters is our heart or spirit"—what does this statement mean to you?
- 3) What do you do when you feel like your spirit's weak? How do you make it strong again?
- 4) Have you had the experience of the effects for the causes you have made vastly exceeding your expectations? How have you been surprised?
- 5) What kind of causes are you making now for the future? What do you think your future will be like, based on what you're doing in the present?
- 6) What kind of causes can we make for the future of the SGI-USA? What do you think our organization will be like in the future?

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'AT THE HELM'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 4, PARTS 17-18

*Shin'ichi Yamamoto cancels his meeting with John F. Kennedy, explaining that 'I have never for a moment cherished the base idea of boosting my prestige by meeting with the U.S. president.... I wanted to meet with President Kennedy out of a desire to generate a tide toward peace for all humanity....'*

When the politician finished, Shin'ichi Yamamoto smiled, but said firmly: "I understand what you are saying, and I respect the views of you and your colleagues. Let's just forget about my meeting with President Kennedy. I will cancel it entirely. I'll wait until another opportunity presents itself."

The politician was taken aback. He had obviously never expected such a reply.

"Cancel the meeting?" he exclaimed. "But...if you do that, you'll lose such a wonderful opportunity...."

Shin'ichi broke in: "I haven't the slightest intention of calling on the help of you and your colleagues to meet President Kennedy. It would change the whole meaning of why I was going to see him in the first place.

"Furthermore, I have never for a moment cherished the base idea of boosting my prestige by meeting with the U.S. president. That may be the way politicians think, but you are grossly mistaken in assuming the same about me.

"I wanted to meet with President Kennedy out of a desire to generate a tide toward peace for all humanity and to open a path of dialogue between the Eastern and Western blocs. I believe this is also in the interests of Japan.

"We founded the Komei-kai parliamentary group because we want to help realize a government that serves the people. The present administration ignores the interests of the people so blatantly that we decided to throw down a challenge. It has never been my ambition to use the Komei-kai to personally gain political power or control over the nation.

"The Soka Gakkai has always acted wholeheartedly, with the purest motives for the happiness of the people, the prosperity of

society and the peace of the world. It does not tolerate self-serving political bartering.

"To sincerity, I respond with even greater sincerity. To arrogance, I respond with strength. Against evil and injustice, I fight armed with truth. This is my creed and my conviction."

Sweat trickled down the Diet member's face. As he mopped it up with a handkerchief, he tried to mask his confusion with feigned generosity: "You have made an admirable decision. I always thought that you were a promising young man, Mr. Yamamoto, and now I'm even more convinced. I expect great things of you. I hope that you can meet again and talk further." The meeting was over.

Shin'ichi's plan to meet with President Kennedy was now wiped from the slate.

Shin'ichi felt the shadow of the political authorities looming ominously over the Soka Gakkai. He was forced, after his meeting with the Diet member, to contemplate what might be behind this attempt to interfere with his activities.

He could see that many politicians in Japan, while on the one hand feeling threatened by the Soka Gakkai, which boasted a membership of more than 3 million households, on the other hand wished to pull it into their camps and manipulate it to their advantage. It must have rankled them no end, Shin'ichi thought, that he, as Soka Gakkai president, had been offered a meeting with President Kennedy without the Japanese government being consulted. It was clear that they were motivated by nothing other than jealousy.

Shin'ichi couldn't help but feel deeply disappointed at the small-mindedness of these political leaders running Japan. At



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

the same time, he also had to prepare himself for the possibility that the Soka Gakkai would continue to be a target of the Japanese political establishment.

The Soka Gakkai had organized ordinary people into a unified force and aimed, through the power of these ordinary people, to achieve world peace and happiness for all. It was therefore only to be expected that the authorities, who sought to keep the people under their thumb, would bring various kinds of pressure to bear on the organization.

The evening of Feb. 1, Shin'ichi attended the February young men's division leaders meeting at the Memorial Auditorium of Waseda University in Tokyo.

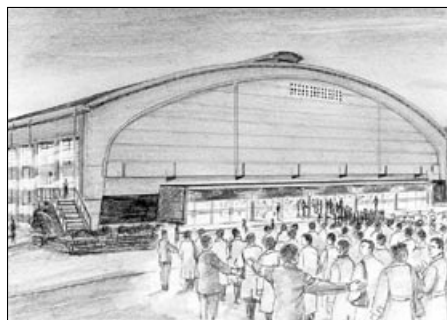
In his speech, he talked about the current world situation: "On my most recent trip overseas, my fifth thus far, I became profoundly aware of how small the world is becoming. It is important, therefore, that leaders not be tied to past views of the world—they will have to embrace new guiding principles based on a fresh worldview.

"We have entered the age of space exploration and, despite various hurdles to be overcome, the world is inevitably moving

toward a global federation. However, looking at the present state of the world, we see that in Europe, Great Britain's attempt to join the Common Market ended in failure. And in the United States, racial discrimination has become an ever-increasing social problem.

"Further, when we look at the socialist nations, there is a deepening rift between the Soviet Union and China that is casting a dark shadow over the world. Meanwhile, the blueprint of the East-West standoff has been brought to the nations of Africa and Asia. As a result, not a few of them are on the brink of new conflict. And what will happen if nuclear war breaks out? These truly strife-ridden times in which we live are just as the Lotus Sutra describes in the 'Simile and Parable' chapter: 'There is no safety in the threefold world; it is like a burning house, / replete with a multitude of sufferings...'  
(*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 69).

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



**World TRIBUNE** The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

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# The Joys of Parenting

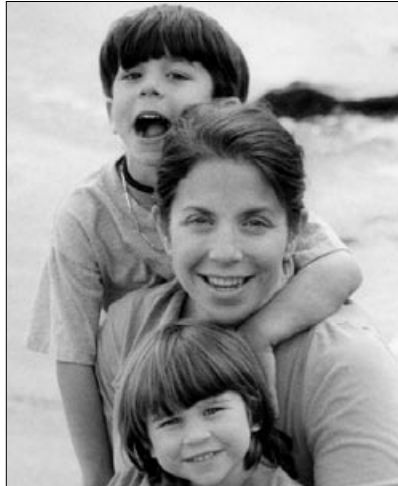
## *SGI President's Poem to Mothers*

*The following was excerpted from SGI President Ikeda's essay on The New Human Revolution, which was published in the May 15 Seikyo Shimbun.*

Mothers of Soka throughout the land.  
Congratulations on this Mother's Day!  
Take care and excel in health!

*May you worthy, noble  
Mothers of Soka enjoy  
This world, This lifetime,  
While dwelling in your  
splendid  
Edifice of happiness.*

*On May 14, Mother's Day  
Daisaku Ikeda*



Nancy Cassaro Fracchiolla with John, 5, and Alice, 3.

**M**otherhood is the most difficult thing I've ever done in my life. You need only witness how quickly I beeline to the three lower worlds on those "low daimoku" days. But those moments are completely eclipsed by the love and appreciation I feel, which grows exponentially, each day I have the fortune to spend with my baby Buddhas — John and Alice.

—NANCY CASSARO FRACCHIOLLA,  
PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIF.



Glen Smith, with Glen Osama Smith Jr., 9.

**M**any job offers have come my way that would have quickly solve my financial situation. However, I refused any job that meant long periods away from my son. I wanted to be there when he got out of school. I wanted to be able to do things with him on the weekends, and more. My son means the world to me. The big dollars can wait. This is Father's Day to me — being there for your kid or kids when they need you. When they are grown up, they do not remember the long hours you put in at the office. They remember the hours they wished you were there. Father's Day to me is being a father 24/7. I would not have it any other way.

—GLEN A. SMITH, LAS VEGAS



Vahan and Julie Tafraian, with Evan, 6.

**M**y son, Evan, is my hero, my joy, my guide, my trainer. He helps me be good, keep commitments, come home early, smoke and eat less and play more. I chant for his health, happiness and safety every time I pray. Yet I always worry about him. I wonder if I'm doing the right things as his dad. I remember chanting with my wife before his birth that some life out there in the universe would want to have us as its parents. We promised we'd be the best parents. Evan picked us, and we've been striving to fulfill that promise ever since. In my 26 years of chanting, it's the biggest challenge yet.

—VAHAN TAFRALIAN, LAS VEGAS

When he's cranky or sick with a cough or the flu  
the good and the bad  
we've been through it all  
but being a mother  
is the best job of all.

—JULIE TAFRALIAN, LAS VEGAS



Tomoko and Ty Carter, with their 2-year-old son, Akinty.

**I**t's so different before and after I had my son — he has taught me to really think about and care for someone else besides myself. It's a wonderful challenge to be a mother, the greatest responsibility that I've ever had. It teaches me to be a good human being. Because of my Buddhist practice, I can change negative situations to positive ones. I believe I'm growing stronger and have learned about the spirit to never be defeated in the face of any obstacle in my life.

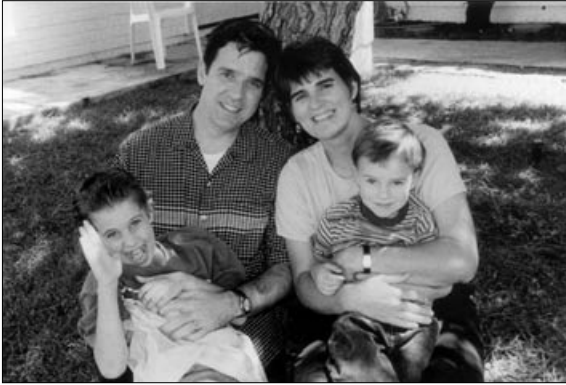
—TOMOKO CARTER, WESTCHESTER, CALIF.



Mark and Melissa Epp, with Ryan, now 9, and Ashley, now 5.

—MARK EPP, LINCOLN, NEB.

Photo by LILLIAN LEE



Wendi and Eric Ebel, with Ren, 8, and Riley, 3.

I remember after having my first son, a friend of mind asked me what it was like to become a mother. I told her it felt like all my life I was like a tree working hard to be the very best tree I could be — unaware of anything more. Having a baby was like waking up to see this beautiful fruit hanging from my branches, and life had a whole new dimension and joy. The journey it started has never ceased to astound me. I know in my heart I would not have experienced being a mother if it weren't for practicing this Buddhism, and I am ever grateful.

— WENDI HREHOVCSIK-EBEL, OCEANSIDE, CALIF.



Nancy Osaki, Egan, 4, and McKenna, 21 months.

Being a mother has taught me to appreciate my own mother. I was born into this practice and I grew up watching my parents and grandmother make efforts in the SGI; especially my mother who did activities every day to help people and chanted many hours. I feel that because of her efforts, I am able to enjoy the life I lead today. I am married to a wonderful person, Julian, who is also an SGI member, and we have two incredible children. I, too, have an opportunity to show my children the greatness of this practice. Thank you, Mom, for being the best example, showing me the power of this practice, the greatness of the Gohonzon and to support President Ikeda.

— NANCY OSAKI, LOS ANGELES



José and Margarita Zelada, with daughter, Jamie, 15. Not shown are sons Edwin, 24, and José, 25.

I feel it's not an easy thing to be a father, but it's very fulfilling; it's very hard to explain in words — it's a feeling deep inside of me. It's so wonderful to be one — to create another generation into the future, especially so when I look at my 7-year-old grandson; one of my sons, Edwin, already has his own family. My oldest son, José, will be receiving the Gohonzon on June 4. When I started chanting 14 years ago, I saw the proof of Buddhist practice in my family because I know my kids were protected from going into a wrong direction in their lives; they didn't join any gang, even if there was a potential to do so.

— JOSÉ ZELADA, INGLEWOOD, CALIF.



Craig Berg with Lauren, 15, and Michael, 10.

My daughter, Lauren, was born almost exactly seven years after I received the Gohonzon. My son, Michael, was born almost five years later. I love being their dad! To be able to share my life and help shape the future for these two unique and wonderful persons is my greatest joy and a very large challenge. As a parent, I cannot possess too much wisdom and compassion. My challenge is to expand my life, my wisdom and my compassion and become the best person and father I can be. I still feel like a novice at this fatherhood thing, but my children work hard at helping me to improve. I love them so much!

— CRAIG BERG, OCEANSIDE, CALIF.

Photos by  
Jean Pritchard



Wayne and Lisa Green, with Benjamin, 4.

I cannot express what being Benjamin's dad means to me. He's the child Lisa and I would never have had (to which he'd say, "That's what you think!"), who had his first birthday in our 20th year of marriage. Who challenges every fiber of my being, providing nonstop motivation for my practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Whose sensitivity to my every shifting mood leaves me no choice but to finally get over myself. I won't have his world clouded by my darkness, and as I stand aside to keep from blocking the sun, it shines on me as well.

— WAYNE GREEN, LAS VEGAS

The interesting theme of mothers in my mind is the act of pushing. We push those babes out at birth with a grand fury. We spend the next years pushing these beings to eat, crawl, walk, learn, be safe, be fair, be excellent. As a Buddhist, I have finally realized I can only push my children toward their enlightenment, toward giving their most significant, precious, individual gift to humankind — and then, I am enriched, too.

— SUSAN SHAW,  
TOPANGA CANYON, CALIF.



(L-R) Larry Shaw, Vinessa, 23, Susan and Natalie, 19.

# San Francisco Youth Standing Up and Standing Out

Photos by SARA CURLEY AND LLOYD CARLSON

**By JOSHUA WOLPER**  
SAN FRANCISCO CORRESPONDENT

On April 15, the performing groups of the San Francisco youth division made a brilliant display of joy and hope at the Cherry Blossom Festival. The groups that performed were the Taiko drummers, the Mystic Flavor Hip-Hop dance group, the New Century Brass Band and the Fife and Drum Corps.

We started off the day with a vigorous gongyo, chanting for the success of the event, the realization of our mission as SGI-USA members and what can we do for kosen-rufu. Everyone headed off, despite cloudy skies, toward the Japan Town Peace Plaza, the sun shining in their hearts.

As the different groups gathered, the performers shared a slight feeling of stage fright, mingled with excitement and joy. As the different performing groups stepped onto the stage, even though there was a drizzle before we arrived, the audience grew larger and larger. It was as if the stage were a large magnet, drawing in bodhisattvas.

Each performance conveyed the meaning of the SGI and the significance of youth in America—how we can trigger a positive wave of events in society and, further, the entire world. The event was a total success, with the thanks going to all the parents, members, performers, leaders, and volunteers who worked with the conviction that we would triumph. **WT**



The New Century Brass Band.



The Mystic Flavor Hip-Hop dance group.



The Taiko drummers.



San Francisco members turn out to support the youth performers.



The crowd enjoys performances by San Francisco youth division members.

Photo by FRANK PATHAN



Thai members present a colorful drum show at their New Year's meeting, April 16.

## Thai New Year's Day Celebrated

**By TED MORINO**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Some 200 Thai SGI-USA members and a number of guests from the community celebrated Thai New Year's on April 16 at the San Fernando Community Center in Panorama City, Calif. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima joined this auspicious occasion to encourage the Thai members in faith and share SGI President Ikeda's vision for the future of the kosen-rufu movement in America and the world.

The celebration included the singing of a traditional New

Year's song, an explanation of the basics of the practice, a performance of Thai classical music, a traditional ceremony to pay respect to elderly people and a colorful drum show.

Charlie Janlekha, a chief coordinator of the Thai group, said of the gathering: "It is my great joy that we could make a fresh start today toward May 3, 2001. It is our dream to someday invite President Ikeda to a Thai event in the United States. We will continue to show proof of our growth through our sincere efforts in propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in our community." **WT**