



FEATURE:
17th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's visit to Alaska celebrated
pages 6-7

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 13 SPEECH—PART 2

A FERVENT WISH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

'What is the fervent wish of humankind that history now entrusts to the youth of the 21st century?' SGI President Ikeda asks. 'It is to make it possible for those who have endured the greatest oppression, degradation and suffering to lead lives of supreme happiness.'

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's speech at a Soka Gakkai Youth Division General Meeting, held at the Soka University Auditorium in Hachioji, Tokyo, May 13.

I first met and shook hands with former Nigerian Ambassador to Japan Mai-Bukar Garba Dogon-Yaromi in April 1988 at the Seikyo Shimbun Building in Tokyo. I remember that dramatic meeting as if it were yesterday. On that occasion, Mr. Dogon-Yaro told me that his first creed was to realize equality among all human beings. He said that he was prepared to do whatever was necessary for the people of Africa to live with dignity and hold their heads high.

People and leaders who fight for their beliefs are charged with a powerful spiritual electricity and shine with a divine light. They are like a magnet—they draw others to them and keep them there. Mr. Dogon-Yaro is such a person. I want all

of you, my youth division friends, to become such fighting leaders, too.

Nine years ago, the Association of the African Heads of Mission in Tokyo—a diplomatic association representing 26 African nations—honored me with a Certificate of Appreciation for my contributions to education, culture and humanism. I will never forget that tremendous honor. Thank you very much.

The ceremony took place on Nov. 29, 1991, the same day that we received the abrupt notification from the Nikken sect—part of its ongoing persecution of the Soka Gakkai—that it had "excommunicated" us. On this day, Mr. Dogon-Yaro and many other African ambassadors and diplomatic representatives visited us and commended our efforts. At a time of great trial, when the Soka Gakkai was in the midst of a storm of slander and abuse motivated by vicious jealousy, the leaders of Africa's diplomatic community in Tokyo



SGI President Ikeda speaks to youth after receiving the title of International Grand Patron of Northern Nigeria at the Soka University Auditorium, May 13.

encouraged us and supported us. I ask the youth division members to never forget this fact. Let us vow together today that we will strive to repay this debt of gratitude to Africa throughout our lives!

Our SGI members in Nigeria—now some several hundred strong—are exerting themselves earnestly as good citizens of their country and communities. The central fig-

ure of SGI-Nigeria, Chapter Leader Boye Afolabi, is a doctor of medicine engaged in malaria research.

Freedom cannot be won by cowardice.

Through the kind efforts of Mr. Dogon-Yaro, I have had the good fortune to meet Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a preeminent leader working for the realization of democ-

racy in Africa, on three occasions—in April and October 1992 and in April 1999. I will never forget our discussion of the grand vision of a future "United States of Africa."

Because of his work for truth and justice, President Obasanjo has been maligned and falsely accused, has had his life threatened and has been imprisoned.

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 3

'Thank You!' From the General Director

Dear SGI-USA Members,

Congratulations for such a tremendous success in this year's May Commemorative Contribution activity. We accomplished another victorious step in our advancement toward May 3, 2001.

I am so happy to express my profound gratitude for your wholehearted participation and generous support. I sincerely respect your dedication, and I am convinced it predicts the glorious prosperity of our movement as the 21st century continues to unfold. As our Women's Division



Leader Matilda Buck encouraged us at the beginning of May, "We should take pride in making this kind of commitment for American kosen-rufu."

I was thrilled to let you know that in order to progress another step, the SGI-USA will be opening 15 new activity centers this year. Now I am able to announce the first eight locations scheduled to open these new activity centers. They are: Lihue, on the island of Kauai, Hawaii; Fresno, Calif.; Austin, Texas; Milwaukee, Wis.; South Jersey, N.J.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Ft. Walton Beach/Pensacola, Fla.; and St. Maarten in the Caribbean.

Congratulations to all the members practicing in these familiar and important American cities. Let's

celebrate the growth of our movement for humanity's happiness and take the time to congratulate ourselves for making such great progress. I look forward to announcing the additional activity center locations in the very near future.

With this solid foundation created by all your efforts this year, let's remain committed to fulfilling our dreams and create a rising tide of joy throughout our SGI-USA family toward May 3, 2001. Thank you again for all your sincere efforts and the successive victories we have created.

Danny Nagashima
SGI-USA General Director

Righteous Anger

Back to the Basics
 By TED MORINO
 EDITOR IN CHIEF

Nichiren Daishonin was very interested in the various forms of evil that he witnessed in 13th-century Japan. What concerned him most were evil doctrines —

evil in the sense that they led people away from the correct path to happiness and enlightenment. He was relentless in pointing out the roots of evil that he saw in teachings that disguised themselves as legitimate Buddhism.

In "Letter to Akimoto," he states: "I, Nichiren, one man alone, declare that the recitation of the name of Amida Buddha is an action that leads to rebirth in the hell of incessant suffering, that the Zen school is the inven-

tion of the heavenly devil, that the True Word school is an evil doctrine that will destroy the country, and that the Precepts school and the observers of the precepts are traitors to the nation" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1016). Behind such harsh words is the righteous anger that arose from his compassion for people and his desire for peace.

Anger, of course, can lead to either good or bad. In last week's "Back to the Basics,"

Sacramento Region Leader Geoff Rohde addressed the negative aspect of anger. I want to address the other aspect: Anger can be an expression of the greatest compassion.

The Lotus Sutra urges us to better our community and land through awakening compassion for others in our lives. Nichiren Daishonin's sense of justice originates from this compassion, the bedrock of Buddhism.

Compassion leads to anger at evil. To put it another way, if we cannot get angry at evil, our compassion is weak. It is as if we do not care that people are being deceived. A philosopher once stated to the effect that "once we

have become humanistic, what we need to do is develop anger toward that which is evil."

In recent guidance, SGI President Ikeda encourages us to "get really angry at evil. The person who can do so is truly human." I see in his strictness his ceaseless indignation at the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood's callousness, which has been in evidence in recent years. President Ikeda's message is that Buddhism lives in our strength to point out what is wrong, to lead people away from misery and to guide ourselves and others to what is correct. Righteous anger can lead people to happiness. **WT**

JULY 3: DAY OF MENTOR AND DISCIPLE

SIGNIFICANT DATES
 ON MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND THE SGI
 By GEOFF ROHDE
 SACRAMENTO REGION LEADER

SGI President Ikeda sure writes a lot about the oneness of mentor and disciple and Nichiren Daishonin does, too. Even Master Yoda, trainer of Jedi Knights in a distant galaxy a long time ago, said, "Always two there are."

I've been working hard to understand this important concept, and it has not been easy.

One day I read how second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's noble character, not Buddhist doctrine, convinced the young Daisaku Ikeda to join the Soka Gakkai. But the next day, I read that the desire to be constantly together with the mentor is not the proper wish of a true disciple. That I must seek instead to struggle with all my might as a self-sufficient prac-

itioner. It seems so contradictory. What does any of this have to do with July 3?

We commemorate July 3 because that was the day on which President Toda was released from prison (in 1945) and the day on which young Daisaku Ikeda was jailed on bogus charges of election law violations 11 years later. OK, but who goes to jail today and how does it relate to the issue of mentor-disciple?

It relates because the willingness of presidents Toda, Ikeda and Makiguchi to exchange life or freedom for the cause of human happiness is totally consistent with the example set by Nichiren Daishonin — the Daishonin never held back or took the easy way out. Nichiren Daishonin was quite prepared to die at any moment and thought only of teaching others how to stop suffering and enjoy life to the fullest extent possible through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

According to the Lotus Sutra, the constant thought of

the Buddha is how to enable all people to enter the Way and quickly attain enlightenment. Those who devote themselves to this task with their prayers, thoughts, words and actions are acting as Buddhas. Such persons are profoundly in sync with the Law, with the universe, with Nichiren Daishonin and with the first three presidents of the Soka Gakkai. How many more such persons will it take to change the destiny of all humankind? While the transformation of any community starts with the human revolution of one person, it will not become "effective" unless that spark is transmitted to others.

My current challenge is to grow out of the "feed-me, feed-

me," greedy-for-benefit thinking with which I joined this practice. The path of mentor-disciple requires me to become much more concerned about the happiness of others and the long-term viability of the SGI-USA.

Let me conclude with a new approach to this matter. President Ikeda wrote about the Lotus Sutra: "They change, from being voice-hearers who hear the teaching to voice-hearers who cause others to hear the teaching. They become voice-hearers who talk about Buddhism among the people. [They change from] 'disciples who have been saved' to 'disciples who save others,' 'disciples who join the mentor in his struggle'" (*Lectures on the*

"Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, pp. 46-47).

We can be either a powerful transmitter of the Buddha's positivity or a passive receiver that reduces the aggregate level of compassion in the universe. Once we discover in our hearts the compassionate intentions of the universe (as documented in *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, for example), we can rebroadcast those signals back out into the universe through our prayers, thoughts, words and deeds. By so doing, we are on the same compassion wavelength and frequency as Nichiren Daishonin and living the mentor-disciple relationship to the fullest possible extent! **WT**

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FROM SPEECH, I

The same has happened to me. "There can be no freedom in fear"—this was President Obasanjo's courageous cry.

Freedom cannot be won by cowardice. Unless we fight at the risk of our lives, we can never accomplish undying achievements in the pages of history. "I am afraid of nothing!"—this is the spirit of a hero, a leader, a revolutionary. This is the Soka Gakkai spirit.

What is the fervent wish of humankind that history now entrusts to the youth of the 21st century? It is to make it possible for those who have endured the greatest oppression, degradation and suffering to lead lives of supreme happiness. To make this happen, young people who champion the cause of human justice must win in their struggle. Their victory will bring a new dawn of humanism.

Nelson Mandela, that indomitable crusader for human rights and former South African president, persevered through all with the conviction "Although evil may be on the rampage temporarily, the good must win the laurels in the end" (*Higher Than Hope—The Authorized Biography of Nelson Mandela*, p. 408). Turning a blind eye to arrogance and harboring contempt toward the people should be unthinkable for youth. To speak out bravely with youthful passion, to denounce injustice and to take action for the welfare of society and the people—this is the finest way a human being can live.

One has to patiently fight through the fiercest storms.

Tomorrow is Mother's Day. There is a wise proverb from the region where Mr. Dogon-Yaro's mother grew up: "With patience, one can dig a well with a needle." Superficial appearances and popularity are not important. One has to patiently fight one's way through the fiercest storms. All true hope, victory and progress spring from the one word *patience*. I want you to triumph with the power of patience.

I want to share with you several other Nigerian proverbs, all golden nuggets of wisdom:

"However long the moon disappears, someday it must shine again." This proverb tells us that we need to have the wisdom to wait for and create the time.

"A bird does not change its feathers because the weather is bad." We must stick to our chosen path and see things through with determination.

"An oil lamp feels proud to give light, even though it wears itself away." The passion to work for the sake of others is the noblest quality one can possess.

"A single tree cannot make a forest." This tells us that the unity and cohesiveness that creates a whole forest of talented individuals is crucial. It's important not to be isolated. We must expand our network of like-minded friends and unite in common purpose.

"Criticism is easy but it does not create." Criticism alone produces nothing. Only when we act with a deep sense of responsibility can we create true value.



SGI President Ikeda sees off the delegation of 34 Nigerian leaders, headed by Mr. Dogon-Yaro, after the May 13 meeting at the Soka University Auditorium.

"If you tell a lie, you will break into a cold sweat even in the water." Lies are always exposed. The truth always triumphs.

"He who does not look ahead always remains behind." Life is continually moving forward. If you do not make an effort to press ahead and improve yourself—worrying only about what others do or say—you will be left behind. Please always advance, eyes firmly on the future.

"Courage is the father of success." Courage is vital. Even compassion comes from courage. Mr. Toda used to say quite bluntly, "Let the cowards leave!" I hope that all of you, the youth division members, will embark today with fresh determination, with "Courage" as your first motto.

Everything starts from one person.

I recall that it was in the same month that Nigeria won its independence—in October 1960—that I embarked on my first journey outside Japan in pursuit of world peace. On that trip, I had the opportunity to observe the proceedings of the U.N. General Assembly in New York [Oct. 14, 1960]. It was during that regular session of the General Assembly that Nigeria [on Oct. 7] and several other newly independent African nations were admitted as U.N. members. From that time, I was certain that the 21st century would be the Century of Africa.

In the four decades since, I have cultivated close relations with the leaders of Nigeria, a country with which I feel a profound connection, and many other African nations. By building bonds of trust and friendship with one person and then another, I have worked to spread a human alliance of philosophy and culture across Africa, that continent of limitless hope.

Forming a genuine friendship, based on deep sincerity, with one individual links one to 1,000 and then 10,000 others. I am determined to continue to work, together with you, the youth who are my trusted heirs, with ever-increasing boldness and resolve for the glory and victory of the Century of Africa, which translates as a Century of Life.

One person is important. Everything starts from one person. I want each youth division member to bravely stand up—for the happiness of the people, for the prosperity of your country, for world peace!

In closing, I offer my sincerest prayers for the good health and happiness of all our distinguished guests. I also pray wholeheartedly that Nigeria, "a nation where peace and justice reign," as your national anthem declares, will prosper eternally.

Thank you very much. *Na gode!* ("Thank you" in Hausa, the official language of northern Nigeria.) **WT**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

The Power of Patience

From This Speech:

There is a wise proverb from the region where former Nigerian Ambassador to Japan Mai-Bukar Garba Dogon-Yaro mni's mother grew up: "With patience, one can dig a well with a needle." Superficial appearances and popularity are not important. One has to patiently fight one's way through the fiercest storms. All true hope, victory and progress spring from the one word *patience*. I want you to triumph with the power of patience.

- 1) Why does Buddhism teach that "superficial appearances and popularity are not important"? Why do people tend to seek various kinds of superficial happiness? And how does this lead them to suffering?
- 2) How does Buddhism help us to seek a greater kind of happiness?
- 3) Why is patience so important in seeking true happiness? Why is it impossible to achieve this happiness without a lot of patience? Why can't it be achieved immediately?
- 4) What part of your life requires the most patience right now? What do you do to overcome your impatience?

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Changing High School Into Medicine

By JASON HENNIGER
SEATTLE

Devadatta's changing the Avichi hell into the blissful Land of Tranquil Light, and the Dragon King's Daughter's attaining Buddhahood without changing her form, were nothing other than [the realization that Hell becomes the Land of Tranquil Light for those who embrace the Lotus Sutra]. (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 457)



time. I felt nearly invisible, insubstantial as a ghost, and incapable of really mattering to anyone. Nevertheless, I did have a few friends, though I often suspected that they only kept me around because I listened well when they voiced their own pains. And when I expressed my fears and occasional hopes in poetry and stories, I assumed the favorable reactions I got were just patronizing courtesy.

Since then, I have grown quite a bit. My practice is consistent now and my self-esteem is stronger than ever before. I have many friends whom I cherish profoundly, including a

couple from high school.

When I found out about our 10-year reunion, I was eager to attend. I figured that maybe only a couple people would remember me, but it would still be worth it.

I was not at all prepared for what happened. Throughout the night, many old friends told me how happy they were to see me. Did I still write poetry? Was I ever published? They all wanted to know!

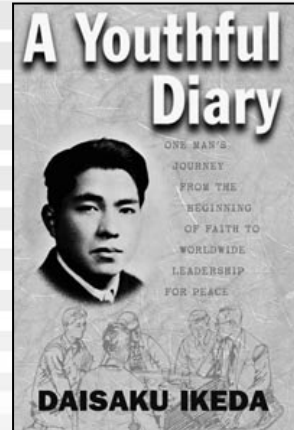
One by one, they told me that my stories and poems were among their most treasured memorabilia. In fact, one guy told me he is now a poet, and whenever he reads poetry magazines he looks for my name, hoping to see the one who inspired him.

The above quote may seem an odd accompaniment to my experience, but like Devadatta and the Dragon King's Daughter, once the hell inside me had changed, it was as if the fears of worthlessness had never existed. In one night, years of pain were scattered like dust. I could see, for the first time, all the beauty I had created. **WT**

Looking back on my high school years, I clearly remember the deep sadness, isolation and self-loathing that I felt every day. In truth, I don't recall much else from that

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'We Will Win!' Say Texas and Oklahoma Members

By BARBARA FELLMAN
AUSTIN CORRESPONDENT



(Above) Killeen Chapter members have made tremendous strides in their propagation efforts.



Photos by RAYNA MANGER TEDFORD



More than 500 members traveled from all areas throughout Texas and Oklahoma to attend the May 21 leaders meeting in Austin, Texas.

Deep in the hearts of Texas and Oklahoma members, there's a burning passion for propagation. This inspired SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima to spontaneously attend their daylong leaders meeting on May 21 in Austin, Texas. He observed: "The entire Texas-Oklahoma Region is burning with a passion that's contagious! Texas-Oklahoma Region is moving, helping to create an amazing new rhythm in America."

One area that is a fireball of propagation is Killeen Chapter. Women's Division Chapter Leader Ryoko Herrmann explained their key to success: "Daimoku, unity...and lots of planting of seeds." The chapter has already accomplished three new members per district this year. Mrs. Herrmann adds modestly, "We'll have seven more

new members in June."

More than 500 members traveled from all areas throughout Texas and Oklahoma to attend the meeting, held at the beautiful LBJ Presidential Library Auditorium on the University of Texas campus. Members came from San Antonio, Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Corpus Christi, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, a six-hour drive. Two hundred members also participated via a simulcast to their community centers.

In his general lecture, Mr. Nagashima spoke of the mentor and disciple relationship and shared his 20-year struggle to understand this important but difficult concept that is the "essence of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism." While he once thought it involved merely following, he learned that it means to take responsibility and action to fulfill your mentor's dream. "The mentor is always showing the disciple his vision, dream, enlightenment and awakening, self-

lessly dedicating his life toward that vision—so that the disciple can stand up," he said. "The disciple is able to awaken unlimited potential. Your determination, your heart and your efforts to fulfill your mentor's dream will enable you to grow and truly add depth to your life."

After the meeting, Hoss McBain from Dallas said: "This was the shot in the arm that members here needed for reaffirming their faith and conviction to achieve kosen-rufu. I'm determined to fulfill my mentor's dream." Members returned to each area with the resolve that "We will win!" in sharing this Buddhism and the vision of Texas-Oklahoma Region becoming the Kansai of the United States. **WT**

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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

'AT THE HELM'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 4, PARTS 21-22

In a message to the women's division, Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages women 'to develop yourselves and freely contribute in the field of your choice, be it the media, science, the arts, education or medicine.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto firmly believed that the women's division members were the bright sun of the Soka Gakkai. With appreciation and respect, he wanted to inspire them with great hope for the future. On Feb. 11, Josei Toda's birthday, Shin'ichi began to write a message to the women's division, reminiscing about his mentor as he did. He titled the message "To the Women's Division" and opened with a poem that Mr. Toda had composed for the women's division.

This poem, Shin'ichi felt, described the women with beautiful symbolism:

*A noble gathering
Like fragrant white lilies
Pure-hearted friends.*

Shin'ichi then wrote: "My predecessor, President Toda, once dedicated this poem to the women's division. I hope that you will live true to its words, as you strive to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime based on pure, consistent faith like flowing water. And I hope that you will work together in solid unity until kosen-rufu is achieved, becoming the best women's division in the world.

"Nichiren Daishonin says: 'It is the power of the bow that determines the flight of the arrow, the might of the dragon that controls the movement of the clouds, and the strength of the wife that guides the actions of her husband' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 656). These words emphasize just how important women are in their families and their communities.

"I want you to always be the shining suns of your families. No matter what storms of adversity you may encounter, please chant daimoku resolutely to overcome them all.

"And please be women of great wisdom who help their husbands apply themselves fully to their work and their Soka Gakkai activities. At the same time, I hope that you will be good mothers and friends to your children, aware of your responsibility to raise them with love and understanding to become capable leaders of the future."

After touching on the roles of women as wives and mothers, Shin'ichi talked about the mission of women in a broader sense: "The Daishonin further states: 'There should be no discrimination among those who

propagate the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women' (WND, 385). This is a statement of democracy, of equal rights for men and women....

"My earnest wish is that you, the women's division members who are striving for kosen-rufu, will, in accord with your individual circumstances, abilities and personalities, work to develop yourselves and freely contribute in the field of your choice, be it the media, science, the arts, education or medicine.

"It also goes without saying that your tireless efforts to care for your families, your close attention to details that men may tend to overlook and your sincere support of your fellow members are all noble activities in the struggle for kosen-rufu."

Next, Shin'ichi set forth several guidelines in faith for the women's division. He cited the Atsuhara Persecution of the Daishonin's time, in which the three brothers Jinshiro, Yagoro and Yarokuro were beheaded. According to some sources, there was also a female follower with them at the time of their arrest. She demanded that her execution not be postponed just because she was a woman—that she be executed along with the men. Shin'ichi urged the women's division members to make this spirit of selfless dedication to propagating the Mystic Law a model for their own faith.

He then touched on the tremendous influence a woman's faith has on her family: "I have heard that one of the reasons why so many leaders and members abandoned their faith when first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was imprisoned was that



many of the women members had weak faith and discarded the practice even before their husbands and children. That is frightening, indeed.

"It is vital that the Soka Gakkai keep improving toward the future, and in that respect it is imperative that we never allow such a tragedy to happen again.... I hope that you, the Soka Gakkai women's division members, will possess stalwart faith that will support your husbands and children."

Shin'ichi further discussed the kind of consideration the women's division leaders should show others, expressing the hope that they would especially reach out and embrace those members striving for kosen-rufu who were widowed or whose husbands were not practicing, and give them warm encouragement and guidance.

He then offered some guidelines for the kind of lives the women's division members should aspire to live: "Please aim to be trusted and loved not only by your fellow members but by people in society at large. And I hope that you will acquire a deep understanding of the Daishonin's teachings and, though your efforts may be modest, become philosophers of everyday life and women leaders.

"I declare that there is no need for you to listen to any male Soka Gakkai leader who, regardless of his position, says anything that contradicts the organization's guidance or bespeaks emotionalism, self-interest or exploitation of the

Soka Gakkai or its members. Rather, I hope that you will be strong women, who strictly improve such people.

"In closing, I state that you, the Soka Gakkai women's division members, are pioneers of the Mystic Law, who champion the cause of true liberation for women. May you advance in friendship with joy and grace, proud of being standard-bearers of freedom and peace."

Shin'ichi had endeavored to infuse his message with heart-felt hope, gratitude and respect toward the women's division members. After completing the draft in one sitting, Shin'ichi reread and revised it again and again.

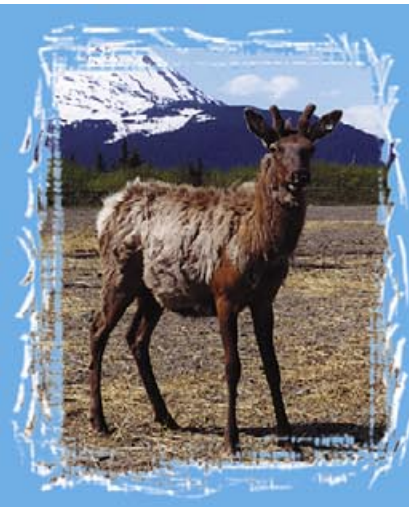
The next morning, Feb. 12, he handed the finished message to Soka Gakkai Women's Division Leader Katsu Kiyohara, who had come to see him. A women's division leaders meeting was to be held at Tokyo's Taito Gymnasium that day.

"Ms. Kiyohara, I won't be able to attend today's meeting, so I have written a message for the members instead. It will appear as my editorial for the March issue of the *Daibyakurenge* [the Soka Gakkai's monthly study journal], but I want to ask you to please convey it to the women's division at your meeting today."

Kiyohara's face lit up at the news.

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





Portage Glacier, near Anchorage, Alaska.

Alaska Celebrates!

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUI

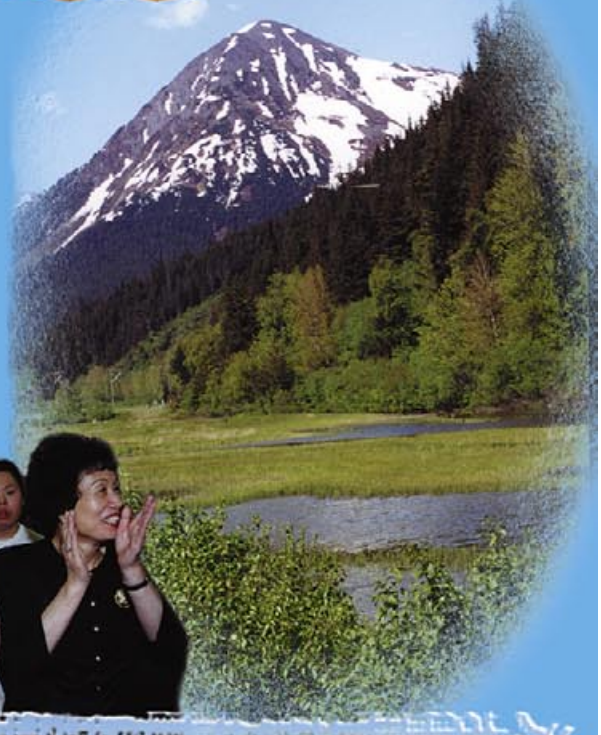


Book presentation at Z.J. Loussac Library in Anchorage, the largest library in Alaska.





Alaska members celebrated the 17th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first visit to their state with their annual general meeting, a picnic and culture festival during May 26-28 in Anchorage. Mayor Rick Mystrom proclaimed May 27 as SGI-USA Victory Over Violence Day. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima attended all the festivities, which included a book presentation to the Z.J. Loussac Library, the largest library in Alaska. A beautiful quilt, which took two years to create, was sent to President Ikeda in honor of the occasion and of the 40th anniversary of his inauguration as Soka Gakkai president.



ALL LIVING BEINGS DESERVE RESPECT

A Record of My Life by Daisaku Ikeda

Reflecting on the dark side of the French Revolution—how it ‘devolved into a gruesome power struggle’—SGI President Ikeda says that true revolution can be found in Buddhist compassion, in putting into practice the teaching that ‘all living beings are noble and worthy of respect.’

There is still a great deal of argument and debate about the significance of the French Revolution. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, an old acquaintance of mine, once asked Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai his opinion on the French Revolution. I understand that Premier Zhou replied that it was still too soon to give a proper evaluation.

From the standpoint of China's 4,000 years of history, 200 years is probably far too short a span of time from which to draw any conclusions. We are, after all, talking about a country whose citizens still debate the rise and fall of the three kingdoms, which is depicted in the historical classic *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, as though these events from 2,000 years ago happened only yesterday. It's safe to say that people's perceptions of time are different.

Besides, this was Zhou Enlai, who had given himself heart and soul to the construction of a great China, consistently viewing the circumstances with a long-range perspective. These were most likely his honest, true sentiments.

If we do not look at events or changes over the long term, we cannot appreciate their true value. Although perhaps on another level, the movement we of the SGI are advancing is also a revolution—a revolution on the most fundamental level, aiming toward the wide-open future with a vast perspective.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda used to say, “The

real significance of our efforts won't be understood for another 200 years.” It will definitely take some time before the true merit and worth of our movement shines brilliantly for all to see. It is important that as we move forward, we remain aware of the judgment that history will make 10,000 years hence.

The significance of the French Revolution lies in the enormous role that the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity set forth in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) have played in elevating people's awareness and support of human rights, and the development of democracy.

Yet, where there is light, there is also darkness. I imagine that it is because the French take so much pride in their history that many of the people whom I met in France in 1987 also recognized the dark portions of their country's past.

The revolution had succeeded. But the overthrow of the old regime quickly devolved into a gruesome power struggle in the new. This eventually gave way to the Reign of Terror (1793–94).

Disorder and confusion reigned. Suspicions begot fear, and betrayal ran rampant. There was no new morality to replace the old system of thought that had been repudiated. People lost all sense of goodness and virtue.

It was a time of dismal antagonism and conflict that seemed like it would never end. There was no one to believe in or trust. Filled with hatred, people turned one another in to the authorities. Terrorism and purges were prevalent.

A great deal of blood was needlessly shed in the name of the revolution. Victims numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Every day, between 100 to 200 more people were thrown to the bottom of the Loire River, which flows through Nantes, the other major center of revolutionary activity after Paris. As a result, the Loire was cynically referred to as a “public bath.”

The revolution began as a struggle for the sake of the people, for the sake of all humanity. But somewhere along the way, it became an abuser of human rights, striking fear into the hearts of the people and suffocating their humanity. It was an example of the tragedy that ensues when people commit evil out of the desire for good.

This is not a history isolated



SGI President Ikeda exchanges views with Michel Baroin, director of the Committee to Commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, in Tokyo in January 1987.

to some 200 years ago. We have seen the same horror occur in this century as well—in the independence movements of developing countries and in the struggle to protect the human rights of society's underprivileged—all in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity.

What happened? A great many revolutions, while waving banners proclaiming justice and human rights, have created histories stained with blood. To quote the British author Samuel Johnson, “Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel”—there is an endless supply of those who will play upon the pure passions of the people in order to advance their selfish ambition for power.

How can humanity put an end to this ongoing cycle?

I spoke with Michel Baroin, director of the Committee to Commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, in Tokyo in January 1987. I will never forget his profound remarks at that time: “The ideals of the French Revolution are liberty, equality and fraternity. But I feel that today the order should be changed to fraternity, liberty and equality. That's because the ideals of liberty and equality can only be realized based on fraternity.”

Truer words were never spoken. If the ideal of fraternity, or friendship, had been firmly established during the French Revolution, the terror perpetuated in the revolution's name could probably have been

avoided. Fraternity must not, however, be limited to one citizenry or to the members of a particular social class. It mustn't be conditional fraternity.

I talked to Mr. Baroin about the Buddhist spirit of compassion, how it enables people to create friendships of real substance that are grounded in a deeper level of life.

Human rights have been at the very core of Buddhist philosophy from the beginning.

An early Buddhist text states: “Whatever living creatures there are, moving or still without exception, whichever are long or large, or middle-sized or short, small or great, / whichever are seen or unseen, whichever live far or near, whether they already exist or are going to be, let all creatures be happy-minded.... / Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbounded mind towards all beings” (*The Group of Discourses*, p. 17).

Compassion in Buddhism does not end with fellow feelings among people. Buddhism teaches that all living beings are noble and worthy of respect. In that sense, human rights have been at the very core of Buddhist philosophy from the beginning.

Nichiren Daishonin says, “If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-enge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 736). There is no discrimina-

tion in the vast, boundless compassion of Buddhism. There are no restrictions or exceptions.

Rather, the compassion of Buddhism arises from a sense of responsibility to pray for the happiness of those whom one has not even met, or who have not yet been born. Mr. Baroin agreed heartily with my assertion that though we might speak of liberty and equality, these concepts will only begin to be realized when a spirit of compassion becomes the foundation of society.

The revolution's ideals and its reality—brilliance and darkness. The bicentennial of the French Revolution, in addition to closing one chapter of France's grand history, also marked the country's departure toward a new future. When we look into this bright future, we can see that the principles promoted during the revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—fundamentally aimed for the same universal philosophy expounded by Buddhism.

Just 19 days after our meeting, Mr. Baroin's life came to a tragic end. The plane that he was flying on crashed in Cameroon, Africa. When I went to Paris in June 1988, I expressed my condolences to his wife and son, and together we visited his grave. The day of the opening of the “French Revolution and Romanticism” at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, I planted a cherry tree in Mr. Baroin's honor in the art museum's garden.

Later, I composed the following poem in his memory:

*A single mystic encounter
that comes but once in a life-
time.
I pray that this tree may bloom
in all its glory
fragrant every spring.*

*Oh,
you who boundlessly sought
to awaken the human spirit,
and exerted yourself to give
new life
to the standards of the revolu-
tion—
liberty, equality and
fraternity—
Mr. Baroin,
in keeping with your will
I promise to circle the globe
for the sake of a new day.
No, for the sake of people
ten thousand years to come.*

**Bringing about a fundamental
change in the individual is the
most essential of revolutions.**

The door to the modern age has been opened through revolutions of many kinds. These range from citizen revolutions, as occurred in the United States and France, to socialist revolutions, from the Industrial Revolution to the information revolution.

Each of these, however, was inherently limited in the extent to which it could win respect for the sanctity of life. But each did contain a valuable lesson. That is, that simply changing the current of popular opinion or the social systems that created the modern age is not in itself sufficient to ensure the healthy development of society.

Herein lies the importance of human revolution, which starts with the human being and ends with the human being. As early as 1876, Victor Hugo declared that his was a time whose mission was "to complete the French Revolution and start on the human revolution."

The French author André Maurois proclaims: "The more profound revolutions are spiritual. They transform people, who in turn transform the world." And: "It is said that the true revolution is the revolution of a single person. More precisely, a single person, whether hero or saint, can set for the masses an example which when emulated will turn the planet over."

The movement to bring about a fundamental change in the individual is the most essential of all revolutions. Now is the time for humankind to take on this challenge.

The Daishonin speaks in his writings about "the example of one person" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 564). When one person sets an example of great human revolution, it will inspire a second

and a third to do the same, having a ripple effect throughout society that eventually changes the world. This is the theme that runs through my novel *The Human Revolution*.

We can confidently say at this juncture, when the limitations of the various revolutions attempted by humankind throughout history are becoming clear, that we have entered an age when the world seeks more than ever the brilliant light of our endeavor for human revolution.

The blood and sweat of countless forebears have been shed in order to establish human rights as a universal standard for humanity. Numerous ordeals have been challenged. The life of the Daishonin, who steadfastly carried out a nonviolent struggle against the devilish nature of the political and religious authorities of his day, was itself an incredible battle for human rights. The writings he produced through the course of such struggle radiate with a philosophy of human rights illuminating the future of humankind.

In one place he says, "Even if it seems that, because I was born in the ruler's domain, I follow him in my actions, I will never follow him in my heart" (WND, 579). This famous passage is cited in a volume compiled by UNESCO titled *Birthright of Man*. In the midst of a feudalistic age, the Daishonin issued a courageous, gallant declaration of freedom of thought and belief.

The Daishonin's description of himself as the "son of a humble family" (WND, 169) demonstrates his stance against discrimination. And his statement "Only the Lotus Sutra explains that women can become Buddhas" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1188) can be thought of as a declaration of women's rights. His teaching "A sovereign is supported by the people, and they in turn live under his protection" (WND, 952) expresses democratic values. "Life is the foremost of all treasures" (WND, 1125) points to the absolute sanctity of life.

Through these succinct statements, we can see that the Daishonin's Buddhism sheds a universal light on humankind, and that it encompasses the most progressive principles of human rights promoted in the world today. It goes without saying that the Daishonin spent his life demonstrating that human rights are not gained by sitting down—they are something that people must stand up and win for themselves.

Six in a series



Members and guests at the New York Culture Center learn that the philosophy of the Lotus Sutra and the power of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo contain the eternal formulae for overcoming negativity and reviving society.

New York Youth Hold Introductory Lecture

By LESLIE WINES
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

On April 28, youth members of New York's Eastern Region gathered at the New York Culture Center to commemorate the first invocation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo by Nichiren Daishonin on that same date nearly 750

years ago. In many ways, the youth meeting contrasted dramatically with the Daishonin's first recitation of daimoku: He chanted facing the sea, surrounded by the splendors of nature. But they used the occasion to introduce their friends to Buddhism through a lecture about the philosophy's relevance to modern life and the stresses of living in a technologically advanced, emotionally fragmented society.

A number of troubling contemporary phenomena were discussed by Iris Pagan and Tony Kolens, including "the

loneliness of cyberspace," the ethical dilemmas created by cloning technology, the persistence of violence despite the end of the Cold War, school shootings, police brutality and challenges presented by significantly expanded life spans.

"How can we connect with others? How can we find happiness in this information-

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which contain the eternal formulae for overcoming negativity and reviving society. People today, like those in the Daishonin's time, contain all the wisdom and fortune needed to overcome adversity, if they chant daimoku. The role of the Gohonzon was also noted, including the fact that

the Daishonin saw the danger in statue worship, which encourages a passive attitude and belief that power resides outside oneself, as well as the perils of a fascination with looking only inside oneself. "Nichiren Daishonin gave us the

Gohonzon to enable us to have an external object but one that allows us to focus on what is inside," they said.

And so, after linking past to present and noting the undying relevance of Buddhism, the youth and their friends joined in a few minutes of slow, heartfelt daimoku. **WT**



Tony Kolens and Iris Pagan give a lecture about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism's relevance to modern life on April 28.

overload age? How can we overcome our destructive impulses and establish harmonious relationships with one another?" the lecturers asked.

After a brief foray through Buddhist history, they arrived at the answer to such questions: the philosophy of the Lotus Sutra and the power of

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

The Beautiful Soka Spirit

‘No matter what kind of devious attacks may be directed against us, no matter what vile plots and intrigues, nothing can halt our advance for kosen-rufu,’ SGI President Ikeda writes. ‘This is the beautiful Soka Spirit shared by mentor and disciple who are bound by strong faith.’

May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, is a day that SGI members around the world greet proudly and joyfully. The day is bright and clear, as if we have realized all our dreams, as if 10 million tiny suns shine forth with the pride of victory.

We know that Buddhism is an eternal struggle between the Buddha and devilish functions—between positive and negative forces. We know that, on one level, the history of kosen-rufu has been one of relentless struggle against those who have abandoned their faith and come to oppose the Buddha’s teachings.

As disciples of Nichiren Daishonin, we must solemnly recognize this fact, never allowing ourselves to forget it.

To those cowardly individuals who are steeped in the world of Animality: Beware the strict workings of the Buddhist law of cause and effect!

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Let us turn to the Daishonin’s times. He had many disciples who received close, compassionate instruction from him, only to betray him and abandon their faith in the end. I am talking of people like Sho-bo, Noto-bo, Sammi-bo, Ota Chikamasa and Nagasaki Tokitsuna. In contemporary terms, all of them could be described as “top leaders” of the lay community.

These individuals, whose actions ultimately accorded with the function of lowly “parasites in the lion’s bowel” did not initially intend to abandon their faith and betray the Daishonin when they first embraced the Mystic Law. Why, then, did they lose their faith? Why did they turn on their mentor and repay their debt of gratitude with enmity? I want to briefly discuss this as a lesson and guide for future generations.

Let’s look at the case of Sammi-bo, one of the most accomplished disciples of the Daishonin: He was very intelligent and articulate, and had a supe-

rior understanding of the Buddhist teachings. He was comparable to a graduate of a leading university today.

But while he was studying at Mount Hiei (the center of Japan’s Tendai School of Buddhism), he was invited to give lectures on Buddhism to the nobility, which he enjoyed doing. This, however, went to his head—to the point where he bragged about it to the Daishonin, displaying the tendency to get caught up and swept away by worldly ambitions and cares. In other words, he was conceited, a show-off.

The Daishonin sternly rebuked him for his vanity, saying to the effect: “The Mystic Law is the foremost teaching in all the world. We should fear nothing, yet here you are all puffed up just because you have preached to the nobility. Do you now look down on Nichiren?” The Daishonin’s anger was due in part to the high hopes he held for his disciple.

At the time of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, Sammi-bo, knowing that it might cost him his life, accompanied the Daishonin to the execution ground. And when the Daishonin was exiled to Sado Island, Sammi-bo became one of the central disciples of the Daishonin in Kamakura.

However, the real motive behind Sammi-bo’s actions was simply a desire to look good in the eyes of others. Ultimately, he forsook his faith. He did so right at the time of greatest crisis—during the Atsuhara Persecution that led to a number of the Daishonin’s peasant followers laying down their lives for their faith.

Sammi-bo had been sent by the Daishonin to assist Nikko Shonin, who was engaged in remarkably successful propagation activities in the Atsuhara area. Swayed by the flattery of

the opposing forces, though, Sammi-bo tumbled down a path that led to his discarding his faith. This is exactly what happened to several top Soka Gakkai leaders in more recent times.

The tragedy of Sammi-bo’s fall is also a story of jealousy. With pride in himself as an intellectual, he bridled at the prospect of merely assisting Nikko Shonin, whom he looked upon as his inferior. That dissatisfaction and jealousy ate away at him, permitting devilish functions to take the advantage. Nichiko, the 59th high priest, a very learned scholar of Buddhism, reached this conclusion about Sammi-bo’s downfall.

Ultimately, it is such ugly states of mind as arrogance,

Nothing can halt our advance for kosen-rufu. This is the beautiful Soka Spirit shared by mentor and disciple who are bound by strong faith. It is our honor and glory. It is our supreme pride.

vanity and envy that can destroy something so noble and precious as faith. Behind all of these ugly states lies the weakness called cowardice.

The Daishonin’s famous admonition “Nichiren’s disciples cannot accomplish anything if they are cowardly” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 481) was, after all, written to Sammi-bo.

Lamenting the weakness of Sammi-bo and others like him, and harshly condemning their actions, the Daishonin writes that on those “who are cowardly, unreasoning, greedy, and doubting, my words have no more effect than pouring water on lacquerware or slicing through air” (WND, 998).

No matter how much one attempts to guide such “unreasoning” people, they will not understand one’s true meaning. And no matter how such people may try to teach Buddhism to others, acting as if they understand it fully, they in fact do not have a true grasp of its teachings. In the above passage, the Daishonin is telling us that such cowardly foolishness is simply the flipside of fearsome arrogance.

At the crucial moment, the people of this bent are bound to completely forget and abandon their faith. They fall away from the correct path of faith because of their cowardice, foolishness, greed and doubt.

The Daishonin exhorts his followers: “Strengthen your faith day by day and month after month. Should you slacken in your resolve even a bit, devils will take advantage” (WND, 997). Weak individuals who do not engage in a personal spiritual struggle to strengthen their faith will be corrupted, become twisted and be washed away by the angry waves of suffering. This underscores the importance of our SGI activities. And our daily efforts to realize kosen-rufu.

In another Goshō, the Daishonin condemns ex-followers who betray and attack his teachings: “Among these are some who oppose me more furiously than those who slandered from the beginning” (WND 502).

In other words, to justify their about-face to the world, they launched even fiercer attacks against the Daishonin and his followers than they had once received themselves as the Daishonin’s disciples.

We see base people just like this today, as well. We have all witnessed the sad spectacle of their half-crazed assaults on the Soka Gakkai, and it is readily apparent that they are following the formula spelled out by the Daishonin above.

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After the Daishonin’s death, the five senior priests betrayed their mentor in exactly the same way. The priests I am referring to are Nissho, Nichiro, Niko, Nitcho and Nichiji.

As Nikko Shonin’s “On Refuting the Five Priests” and other writings clearly show, these treacherous priests called themselves Tendai shramana (Tendai seekers of the way)—in other words, disciples of Tendai, as the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai of China is known in Japanese. This was in spite of the fact that they were supposed to be the Daishonin’s loyal disciples.

Why did they do this? Because they wanted to find favor in the secular world, and they

feared persecution. We can discern in them no trace of pride as disciples of the Daishonin, who had declared that the hallmark of his disciples—the proof that they were votaries of the Lotus Sutra—was their encountering great persecution (WND, 33).

Further, the five senior priests disrupted the unity that should have prevailed among the Daishonin’s disciples by refusing to follow Nikko Shonin, the Daishonin’s true successor, instead declaring themselves to be his “direct disciples.”

Here we see another pitiful example of people consumed by self-interest, arrogance and envy—people ruled by the world of Animality—who turned against the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

Being wise to this pattern, it is crucial that we keep our eyes wide open so to clearly see through the activities and schemes of treacherous individuals, always maintaining a strict attitude toward them. We must be eternally committed to remonstrating against such evil, based on the correctness of the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

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Looking back at Soka Gakkai history, when the military government moved to suppress the organization’s activities and imprisoned our founding president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, there were members who immediately turned on him and started cursing and berating him. “That damn Makiguchi!” “It’s all his fault!” “He deceived us!” they said. They blamed him for what happened, claiming that he duped them. Some of these people even went to Mr. Makiguchi’s house and verbally abused his family members.

When Mr. Toda, our great mentor, was released from prison, he directly confronted these traitorous disciples. In his treatise “The History and Conviction of the Soka Gakkai,” he left a clear account of their panic and shallow ingratitude in the face of persecution. “The Soka Gakkai organization had disappeared without a trace,” he wrote, “and everywhere I looked I saw people who doubted the Gohonzon, resented Mr. Makiguchi and hated me.”

Among them was a certain Mr. Nojima, whom the Soka

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, 11

Former Hokekko Chairperson's Wife Urges High Priest To Resign

By TED MORINO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The wife of the former chairman of the Hokekko Federation has called for High Priest Nikken Abe's resignation. Prompted by the high priest's destruction of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), Hisako Hirasawa, wife of the late Masukichi Hirasawa, wrote a letter to the high priest on April 22 to urge him to resign immediately. (The Hokekko Federation is the umbrella organization of the groups that belong directly to their individual local temples of Nichiren Shoshu.)

Mrs. Hirasawa's request for the earliest resignation of the high priest, which also serves as her wake-up call to all temple members, is significant as it can be viewed to represent the voices of the many temple members in Japan.

Mrs. Hirasawa starts her letter by lamenting the plight of the head temple under the leadership of High Priest Nikken. She says: "High Priest Nikken, the beautiful settings surround-

ing the head temple of Nichiren Shoshu have been in constant decline in recent years as you have destroyed many important buildings on its grounds, one after another. Even the Grand Main Temple, which had been highly regarded by the world's people, was brought to ruin in dark smoke and ashes."

Mrs. Hirasawa asserts that the high priest is solely responsible for the decay of the sect. She then points out the significance of Judge Fumio Shimoda of the Tokyo District Court clearly stating in the recent ruling in the Seattle Incident trial that High Priest Nikken's remarks can't be trusted.

While she refers to the reasons why High Priest Nikken's legitimacy as a Nichiren Shoshu high priest is doubtful, she delves into another deep-seated cause that propelled him to run counter to the former high priest, Nittatsu, and the SGI. She states: "It seems to me that you, High Priest Nikken, deeply resented the fact that High Priest Nittatsu did not nominate you as next high

priest before he died. Your grudge against him prompted you to destroy the hallmarks of his accomplishments, one after another. Your dark emotions coerced you to destroy even the Grand Main Temple."

She then states: "I most reverently and wholeheartedly empathize with the following people in conjunction with the destruction of the Grand Main Temple: First, how would Nichiren Shoshu High Priest Nittatsu feel about its destruction? How would all the priests and their family members who participated in making offerings for the construction of the Grand Main Temple feel about its destruction?"

"Second, how would Daisaku Ikeda, who was then the head of all Nichiren Shoshu lay societies, who initiated the construction of the Grand Main Temple feel? How would the 8 million believers who made offerings for its construction feel?"

"Third, how would Mr. Kimio Yokoyama, who put his life into designing and constructing it to reply to the high expectations

that were placed upon him by all those people, feel now?"

"Foolish as I am, I can never forget the sight of its destruction I saw it on video. I can't resist crying, due to the sorrow I feel each time I recall the sight of the Grand Main Temple falling."

Touching upon the authoritarianism that crept into Nichiren Shoshu after High Priest Nikken took office in 1979, Mrs. Hirasawa cites this example: "In the days of the former high priest, Nittatsu, it was indeed a honorable thing to take a position in the Hokekko, since it was based upon an appointment system. However, these days when we are assigned to a new position, the certificate we receive says 'you are now ordered to fulfill the responsibility of....' The wording in the certificate sounds like a lord giving an order to his subject."

She then describes how she feels toward the head temple: "When High Priest Nittatsu was in office, it was a great pleasure to visit the head temple. But nowadays, we don't want to go

to Taiseki-ji. I don't feel like paying a visit to the head temple, where acolytes don't smile at all. They always look nervous and give me the impression that they are scared of something."

Mrs. Hirasawa then calls to each temple member as follows. "The current chairperson of the Hokekko Federation shows up occasionally at Kuon-ji temple of Mount Minobu. Dear Hokekko members, don't you care that the correct faith of Nichiren Shoshu is being lost? ... I urge Hokekko members to open their eyes and judge things correctly with the sharpened eyes of faith... Blessed with an extended life span thanks to faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I am still alive at the age of 80. All Hokekko members, please take what I wrote here as a sincere old believer's heartfelt cry."

Mrs. Hirasawa ends her remonstrance with High Priest Nikken saying that "I am ready to sacrifice myself for Buddhism any time. With this resolution, I wrote this to refute the slander of High Priest Nikken." **WTT**

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FROM ESSAY, 10

Gakkai's executives had unofficially decided to appoint general director in the autumn of 1943. Not only did he abandon his faith after he was imprisoned in the wave of persecution that beset the Soka Gakkai, but he heaped vile abuse on both Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda.

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Even today, across the span of many decades, I am struck powerfully by Mr. Toda's passionate guidance, based on the oneness of mentor and disciple — on the Buddhist teachings.

Mr. Toda declared that those members who tried to give the impression that they were exerting themselves diligently in their Buddhist practice — but were actually just cleverly floating along in the organization while others did the hard work — would quit practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism.

In any event, low-minded people, those who live only for selfish interests, and those who use the world of faith to gain personal prestige, may at first appear to be practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism. Unless they make ceaseless efforts to develop and grow in their Bud-

dhist practice, however, they often end up betraying and attacking the Soka Gakkai.

We have seen many such sorry individuals. Often, they have the mentality of persons of the two vehicles — people of the worlds of Learning and Realization (voice-hearers and cause-awakened ones) who seek only their own enlightenment without helping others. These people tend to think that they know more than anyone else and, in their arrogance, lose faith. We have also seen many who have achieved high positions thanks to the support of the Soka Gakkai members but have then grown arrogant and fallen into the abysmal path of ingratitude.

The so-called Dharma sword of Buddhism — the workings of the causal law of life — will no doubt pass strict judgment on the likes of such people.

The Daishonin writes in "Letter from Sado": "There are also those who appeared to believe in me, but began doubting when they saw me persecuted. They not only have forsaken the Lotus Sutra, but also actually think themselves wise enough to instruct me. The pitiful thing is that these perverse people must suffer in the Avichi hell


even longer than the Nembutsu believers" (WND, 306).

The fate of such traitors is always misery. Their end is truly wretched. No matter how cleverly they may speak and manipulate the mass media in order to justify themselves, all that is left to them, having betrayed their fellow members and their mentor, is a life of failure and defeat.

*Weathering the storms
Of countless harsh attacks,
The citadel of Soka
Flourishes more than ever.*

No matter what kind of devils attacks may be directed against us, no matter what vile plots and intrigues, nothing can halt our advance for kosen-rufu. This is the beautiful Soka Spirit shared by mentor and disciple who are bound by strong faith. It is our honor and glory. It is our supreme pride.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" series in the April 11 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.




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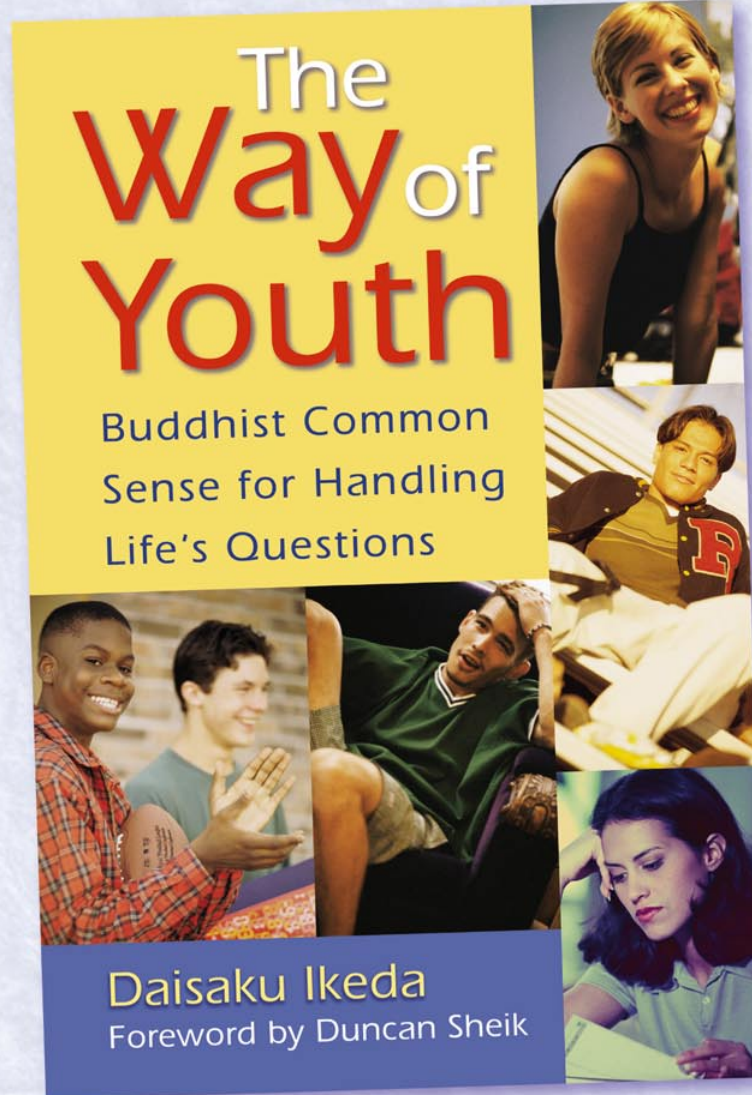
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