

World TRIBUNE

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Julie Glenn gives back to her fellow SGI members.

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Youth Festival Electrifies New York

By **JAMIE LIPTAN**
STAFF WRITER

Celebrating the 19th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's poem "To My Young American Friends," written in New York during his 1981 visit, the youth members of New York staged a Day of New York Festival on June 18 at Union Square Park.

The festival, themed "The Power of Youth for the New Century," was open to the public and welcomed more than 4,500 people.

In addition to the many inspiring musical and dramatic

performances by SGI-USA members, the youth set up information booths on Soka University of America, SGI-USA publications and the Victory Over Violence campaign. At the VOV booth, which included members' artwork and the VOV video, 500 people signed the VOV pledge form.

Later that evening, 28 guests attended an introductory meeting on Buddhism at the New York Culture Center. (Please see our color photo essay, as well as SGI President Ikeda's message to the event, on pages 6-7.) **WT**



Photo by MIDA CRYSTALL

Midwest Youth Hold Summer Festival

By **CHERYL A. UTLEY**
AND **ERIKA RYSER**

KANSAS CITY, MO., CORRESPONDENTS

The Midwest Region Youth Festival, held June 24-25 in Kansas City, Mo., was attended by 141 youth from seven states: Missouri, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Nebraska. Travis Wells, 14, of Omaha, Neb., said that "it was fun to meet people from different states and see people I haven't seen in a while." Many of the youth came from small towns where there are few members their age.

Highlights of the weekend included small group discussions on the meaning of faith, based on SGI President Ikeda's *Discussions on Youth*, and a night at Rockhurst University, where the youth held a talent show and dance.

SGI President Ikeda sent a message to the festival encouraging the participants that "to be on the great path

of correct faith means always to encourage and praise one another while advancing toward kosen-rufu and the

attainment of Buddhahood in this lifetime. Activities carried out when your hearts are in accord, linked by

strong bonds of trust, will enable you to joyfully bring forth limitless power and potential." **WT**



Photo by CHERYL UTLEY

Friends reunite in Kansas City, Mo., for the Midwest Region Youth Festival.



Photo by CONNI GUTELIUS

Dancing at Rockhurst University, where the youth also held a talent show.

Compassion for Others

Back to the Basics

By **GEOFF ROHDE**
SACRAMENTO REGION MEN'S LEADER

How many of us just relish the opportunity to admonish a fellow member—or, even better, a

leader—for his or her authoritarian nature, shabby attitude or otherwise poor example?

After all, doesn't SGI President Ikeda tell us to say what needs to be said?

Ah, righteous indignation. Without the Bad Housekeeping Certificate of Exclusive Moral Virtue and Correctness, the Crusades, Inquisition and Cultural Revolution could have never happened. As Buddhists,

we should be the last to succumb to the tendency to project evil onto others—and then proceed to blast them with a clear conscience for just cause.

We all seek to protect and perpetuate the wonderful teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, but what is the most effective way to accomplish this?

First and foremost, we must live them ourselves, as we demonstrate through our good

example the lessons of the Daishonin's writings and compassionate traditions of the SGI. Seeking to bring out the best in us, in others and in the organization is, I submit, the Buddha's behavior for the 21st century.

And while the Daishonin tells us to reproach, oust or to punish those who slander the Law, he also tells us that when a person's slanders are minor, he or she may be able to correct those faults

without being confronted. If we find it absolutely necessary to reprove a person for acting against Buddhism, we should also take responsibility for leading him or her to obtain benefits.

In other words, in Buddhism we admonish others with compassion, not anger! In "The Hero of the World," a letter to Shijo Kingo—a stalwart defender of the Law if there ever were one—the Daishonin thus writes, "Even should the people on your side make a slight error, pretend not to see or hear it" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 839). **WT**

'Soka' Means Victory for All

EDITORIAL

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

'The spirit of "soka" applies directly to our lives,' writes Jeff Farr. 'While we define "soka" generally as value creation, it also means the victory creation in our lives that we alone can accomplish.'



mastering our minds and warns against letting our minds master us (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 390). To keep telling ourselves that we will win, to keep praying and taking action with that confidence—this is fundamental to practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism correctly.

The Daishonin often encouraged his followers to have this feeling in their hearts. And he set the example for them by living confidently when all the world seemed against him. To his disciple Shijo Kingo, the Daishonin joyfully stated, "Already I have the feeling that I have achieved victory" (WND, 685). At that time, 1276, opposition in Japanese society to the Daishonin's movement was at its peak; his confidence that he had already won deeply impressed his followers, who were being heavily persecuted for supporting him.

His meaning to Shijo Kingo was more than just "Don't worry, be happy." It was "Know that you are guaranteed to win! Live with complete confidence in this!"

SGI President Ikeda shared a similar message with Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms, president of Queens College of the City University of New York, when they talked on May 31 in Tokyo. "Life is a battle," President Ikeda said. "Whether we have won or lost in life—this is something that we must decide for ourselves. It is not something that someone else can decide for us. The important thing is not to be defeated. It is to have the powerful determination and spiritual fortitude to vow, 'No matter what happens, I will not be defeated!' Those who res-

olutely maintain this conviction will ultimately be victorious."

The world is in need of this victorious mind of *soka* today; the decay of humanity's confidence in itself underlies all the disturbing things that we see in society, from the Chechen war to the persistence of world poverty.

Historian Jacques Barzun suggests in *From Dawn to Decadence* that the creative mind—the mind that believes it can always find new solutions—has in our time been replaced by blankness. Barzun goes so far as to say that humanity can think of "no clear lines of advance."

But Buddhism teaches that a clear line of advance can begin with any one of us. "A great human revolution in just

a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation," as President Ikeda has taught us, "and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind."

We each have a decision to make—to become happy or not. From our total resolve to become happy, others will be led to happiness, too. Livin' *la vida soka* is the direct line to *el mundo soka*.

Toward May 3, 2001, as we involve ourselves in a variety of challenging SGI-USA activities, their purpose is important to keep in mind: to help us become happy and share our happiness widely. If we remember this, the nine months leading up to May 3 will be an unforgettable time of *soka*, of victory creation, for every one of us. **WT**

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The aim of the SGI-USA's current focuses—Soka University, Soka Spirit and Soka Caring—is the happiness of each of us. All three come from *soka*, the main point being, through these kosen-rufu efforts, to create value for every member.

SGI-USA activities help us to create value, but ultimately it is up to us. The answer to SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima's favorite question—"Are you happy?"—can only be answered by us.

In other words, the spirit of *soka* applies directly to our lives. While we define *soka* generally as value creation, it also means the victory creation in our lives that we alone can accomplish.

Our biggest obstacle to becoming happy is usually internal—it lies in our own minds. There are plenty of reasons we can come up with for letting go of the dreams that we intended to cherish. Maybe we tell ourselves that we don't know how to reach them; maybe we know how, but we fret over how hard it will be; maybe we doubt if we are ready to win. If we can handle it. If we deserve it.

This is why the Daishonin places so much emphasis on

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EXPERIENCE — JULIE GLENN, HENDERSON, NEV.

The Gift of Giving

Julie Glenn finds inner peace by giving back to the SGI members of New Millennium District.

I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism at a very young age by a very strong member who has practiced for the past 38 years. She was poor while struggling to raise six children. Through her practice, she achieved great financial rewards and self-awakening and changed her life completely, which encouraged me to practice. This courageous woman was my mother, Mary Glenn. She says that this practice is her legacy that will be handed down through our family, thereby securing our happiness.

Because I was very unhappy for most of my childhood, suffering from "middle child syndrome," I believed if I could attain all my "earthly desires" I would be happy. When I began my Buddhist practice, I also amassed much wealth financially and for years material gain was mostly what I prayed for.

By January 1999, I was definitely at the crossroads of my 26-year practice. I realized I needed to challenge the study aspect of Buddhism, which I neglected to do because I *knew* Buddhism worked. Then I joined the Sophia Group, a women's study group. Little did I know then that this opportunity would change my practice and consequently the rest of my life.

Reading and understanding SGI President Ikeda's efforts and struggles toward *kosen-rufu* was the booster shot I needed to make my practice healthy again. As I came to understand Buddhism by reading *The New Human Revolution*, I experienced my own human revolution. I discovered that there was more to this practice than "getting benefits." I found the courage to self-reflect and with that came an inner peace that I had been searching for.

I graduated from the Sophia Group of 2000 with so much appreciation for the practice, the SGI organization and my life — things I had taken for granted for so many years. I had felt as though the SGI should be grateful for me practicing instead of

the other way around.

Whenever I was asked to take on responsibility as a district leader, I refused. I would arrogantly say: "I am too busy," "I don't want to be responsible for anyone else," "I have a life."

I also didn't want to practice in my local area. I traveled across town to practice in another district. The best thing that happened was when we were asked to practice within our zip code area. I was asked to give my area another chance. So I did. I was asked to become a district leader again and this time I accepted. My life was ready for this challenge. This was the beginning of a new journey. I would experience life and my Buddhist practice as never before. I would find more happiness in my present life-condition.

Our district grew tremendously. I worked with members that, like me, basically did not want to practice in our neighborhood for one reason or another. I had always enjoyed sharing Buddhism with others and this provided an excellent opportunity. I thought about how my leaders never gave up on me no matter how arrogant or uncooperative I was.

The district grew so large that it was divided into two. We took charge and responsibility for our new district and our lives. We named our new district the New Millennium District. We made up our minds to achieve *kosen-rufu* in our community.

We made the meetings what we called "member friendly," and started to chant together monthly for our personal goals and for the happiness of people in our district. We also started a "rap session" where we could vent our problems or concerns and successes. We discussed questions about the practice in a casual setting and created "dream boards" where we put our dreams and goals on a board in order to better visualize them and therefore focus on achieving them. Last but not least, we chanted for unity in the district to accomplish our goals.

Our success became an inspiration to other districts. Other people started attending our meetings for ideas and encouragement.

Not all the comments were positive but this challenged our determination to continue to chant a lot. I took this as my personal challenge. I received encouragement from a senior

in faith to keep me focused on my prayer to develop our district. I also self-reflect and saw that this opposition was a result of my life-condition, my arrogant nature. I had tried to keep this nature hidden by putting up protective walls. The walls developed over the years as my environment, my struggles, my life constantly sucked my confidence, courage and wisdom. Because I experienced a lot of racism in my life, I displayed a dislike for certain people and cultures. How could I continue to encourage people with this in my heart?

I discovered through praying and studying that this was why I was challenging the same things over and over again in my life. I realized fear was why I had never challenged this problem before. I decided to change it.

President Ikeda has said that you can't understand or know a person until you understand their culture and where they came from. When I shared my experience about racism at our district meeting, we came up with what we call our Cultural Moment, where we take 10 minutes for a presentation on the history and events of a different culture. Starting this in the district prompted me to take it further, so my daughter and I prepared a presentation for the area board in Las Vegas. Our idea was approved, and we will now host the SGI Peace Cultural Group, which will sponsor quarterly lectures and periodic displays on the history and events of various cultures.

Six years ago I was diagnosed with Epstein-Barr virus, which forced me to quit my full-time and very lucrative sales position. Therefore I started a company based out of my home which has supported my daughter, Shanté, and me for nearly five years.

Then practically overnight business waned and my company was in jeopardy and my world was falling apart. I couldn't pay my bills. I got serious and began to pray a lot — hours a day in fact — what I call "extreme" chanting.

Shanté joined me in my struggle and her chanting increased. Her life-condition immediately changed. As our young women's district leader, she made a determination to develop the youth in our chapter. It increased from three youth to 23. I also decided to develop



Julie Glenn shares her experience at the Southern California Zone Leaders Meeting at the Hollywood Palladium in California, June 17.

our Boys and Girls Group. Our July World Peace Prayer Meeting was completely run by the Boys and Girls Group.

My co-leader and I took responsibility for setting up rides to the meeting and lunches for the youth. The participation was tremendous. Consequently, our chapter has grown from 8 active members to 52, with 95 percent of them receiving the *World Tribune* or *Living Buddhism*.

When one of our members was diagnosed with a tumor on her pituitary gland and told that she would have permanent damage to her eye, members got together daily to chant for her. She was so encouraged that she never missed a day of *gongyo* through all of her pain. This made the difference for Dawn. She had excruciating pain and her eye was nearly popping out but now her new diagnosis has changed and it's even amazed the doctors.

Dawn has introduced her entire family to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and has encouraged so many people's practice, including my own, through overcoming this struggle. She understands her mission and is determined to win.

I now know why I had to go through my own struggle of fighting in my life. It was so that I could understand Dawn's heart and her struggle along with those of the other members in my district. I needed to endure those struggles so that I could encourage my fellow

SGI members in their own challenges. I had prayed for years for the wisdom, the courage, the confidence and the compassion to overcome the obstacles in my life to fulfill my mission for *kosen-rufu*, but I never understood what it meant until now. I realize that only by repaying a debt of gratitude, showing appreciation and caring for others can I achieve true happiness. The members always tell me that they feel I understand their hearts, and I'd like to thank President Ikeda for always emphasizing the importance of the heart. I experienced such proof of the power of Buddhist practice through our district. This is practicing for ourselves and others.

President Ikeda says: "In life and in *kosen-rufu*, we either win or lose. I would like you to be absolute victors in both. No matter what excuses we try to make, giving in to defeat brings misery and loses us the respect of others. I hope each of you without exception will adorn your life with indestructible triumph" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 84).

A winner in life is a person who amasses "treasures of the heart," the mental and spiritual capacity to have mastery over the self and to have genuine concern for others. So instead of complaining about what I don't have, I am grateful for and appreciate my own unique gifts. This makes me a winner in life. **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

My Mentor's Words

'While others may have let his words go in one ear and out the other,' SGI President Ikeda writes, 'my mentor's words struck deep, deep into my youthful heart, as powerful and penetrating as bolts of lightning.'

I have written in the past about my daily morning classes at "Toda University," during which my mentor, Josei Toda, instructed me on a wide variety of subjects.

Many other people also came to Mr. Toda every day to receive guidance and advice. Even if he was in the middle of work, he would meet them in a private room and spend time with them. They brought with them all kinds of problems and sufferings. There were people who were poor, who were deadlocked in their lives, who were dissatisfied or who had given up their faith.

Mr. Toda kept me at his side at these times. Assisting him behind the scenes on a daily basis, I was sometimes called upon to communicate his advice and guidance to many others. As a result, I listened to his each and every word very carefully, engraving them in my mind.

My mentor always based his guidance on Nichiren Daishonin's writings.

Sometimes Mr. Toda would give guidance using concrete, easy-to-understand examples, sometimes he gave rousing encouragement, and sometimes he just presented his conclusions in a simple, concise manner. Sometimes he told a lot of different anecdotes, smiling and conversing in a warm, friendly way that soothed the listener's heart.

Sometimes he could be as fiercely angry as a strict but loving father, pointing out a person's laziness, weakness and arrogance in an effort to correct those faults. Yet when an impoverished mother came to see him with one infant on her back and another holding her hand, Mr. Toda would open the Goshō and cite passages that encour-

aged and heartened. He would always humbly stress before doing so: "These are not my words. These are the words of the Daishonin, whose Buddhism you practice." I can still picture the way Mr. Toda reached out to people with infinite warmth and compassion.

"Those who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, but winter always turns to spring" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 536). "Those who now believe in the Lotus Sutra will gather fortune from ten thousand miles away" (WND, 1137).

He quoted easily comprehensible passages from Nichiren Daishonin's writings to encourage these women who were struggling amid bitter economic hardship, trying to make their way along life's steep path. He would reassure them by emphasizing again and again: "These are the teachings of the Daishonin. They are not just my words."

At other times, when his young disciples of the youth division came to see him, he would quote passages from the Daishonin and instruct them rigorously.

When young women came to ask for advice, he would offer them direction from the Daishonin's golden words, firmly setting them on the right path by saying, "This is for your future happiness."

One day when giving guidance to a person who could not get along with his siblings, Mr. Toda read and explained one of the Daishonin's letters to the Ikegami brothers (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1108). Two brothers united in action, the Daishonin says, are like two wheels of a cart or two wings of a bird. The Daishonin then says that if they look up to him as their teacher, they would resolve their differences and unite in purpose. If they would not, they should be aware that the Buddhas and heavenly deities would no longer protect them.

He reminds them that as upholders of the Lotus Sutra, they already had clearly defined enemies. And if they fought among themselves, they would be like the sea bird and the clam, which, while arguing, were both caught by the fisherman.

The Daishonin made his point eloquently by quoting an old fable.

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President Toda encourages members at the head temple in the summer of 1956.

Mr. Toda also severely rebuked those who slandered their fellow members, quoting several important passages. One was "You must respect him [one who upholds the Lotus Sutra] as you would the Buddha. This is what the sutra means when it says, 'You should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect you would a Buddha'" (WND, 757). Using this passage, Mr. Toda would stress the importance of members showing the same respect for one another as they would for a Buddha. For this, he said, is what both the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin teach.

Quoting the words "Therefore, the best way to attain Buddhahood is to encounter a good friend" (WND, 598), Mr. Toda would impress upon members how important is the presence of good fellow members in helping one attain Buddhahood.

Citing the passage "In this defiled age, you should always talk together and never cease to pray for your next life" (WND, 449), he would tell his listeners: "The Daishonin strongly urges us, living as we do in this corrupt world, to always talk with one another, work wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu and thereby attain eternal happiness together. We do not have the time to criticize one another or argue among ourselves. We will be

scolded by the Daishonin if we allow ourselves to be carried away by petty emotions."

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When leaders came to him with problems in the organization, he would base his guidance on passages from the Daishonin that taught the fundamental principle of unity. In both life and Buddhism, the basics are what count: "If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals, whereas if one in body but different in mind, they can achieve nothing remarkable" (WND, 618). "In contrast, although Nichiren and his followers are few, because they are different in body, but united in mind, they will definitely accomplish their great mission of widely propagating the Lotus Sutra. Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth" (WND, 618).

Mr. Toda also lectured firmly on a crucial passage from "The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life": "All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond

is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren's propagation. When you are so united, even the great desire for widespread propagation can be fulfilled" (WND, 217).

The Soka Gakkai is an organization of harmoniously united believers working together for kosen-rufu, an organization in which this spiritual heritage of the Daishonin flows. Therefore, we must not let anything destroy this organization, which Mr. Toda described as being more precious to him than his own life. The Soka Gakkai will always win through the unity of many in body, one in mind.

Speaking with great passion and conviction, Mr. Toda declared that only by protecting and strengthening the Soka Gakkai, which has inherited the Buddha's intent and decree, would it be possible to realize kosen-rufu.

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The Nirvana Sutra states, "Rely on the Law and not upon persons" (WND, 872). The Soka Gakkai is strong because it is based on the Daishonin's writings. No matter the times, as long as we always return to this foundation, we will never be deadlocked.

In his preface to the Soka Gakkai edition of the *Nichiren*

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Daishonin Goshō Zenshu (Collected Writings of Nichiren Daishonin), Mr. Toda writes, "It is my most fervent and enduring wish that this precious scripture be disseminated to people throughout Asia and the entire world." Today, in accord with Mr. Toda's wish, the Daishonin's writings are being translated into many different languages around the globe.

The Goshō has already been translated into Korean, and a Chinese translation will be published to coincide with this year's 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding.

Just last year, a long-awaited revised English translation was published. Since this makes the Daishonin's writings accessible to some 1.8 billion English-speaking readers worldwide, it is an extremely important event.

The SGI, with members in 156 nations, is unified around the core of the Daishonin's writings.

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The Daishonin teaches us that nothing surpasses the strategy of the Lotus Sutra. The Goshō is the key to winning in every struggle.

Mr. Toda used to state with firm assurance, "Those who strive to actualize the Daishonin's teaching of widely spreading the Mystic Law are bodhisattvas and Buddhas." Buddhism is about emerging victorious. That is why it is vital that we fight and survive, fight and win through all struggles according to the principles taught by the Daishonin.

For this is the true way of faith of disciples of the Daishonin. The benefits we attain as a result are everlasting, our good fortune immeasurable and our eternal victory assured.

My mentor always urged me to read great books.

Simply producing experts only interested in furthering their knowledge cannot be called true education. This only creates intellectuals in narrow, specialized fields. True learning—learning that equips people with the means to become happy—is found in acquiring the knowledge to develop ourselves as human beings and pursuing knowledge based on humanism.

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My mentor in life always strongly urged me to read. I have mentioned this on many occasions.

He was very strict, frequently inquiring: "Daisaku, what book did you read today?" "Daisaku, what are you reading now?" His

constant grilling helped make me what I am today, giving me intellectual strength and a solid grounding in literary expression.

Being scolded and prodded by someone who has your best interests at heart can be an immense source of happiness. There is no greater folly than failing to understand that mentors and teachers take you to task because they care about you, and instead responding to them with resentment, rebellion and criticism.

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The first guidance that Mr. Toda gave to me in the form of a reading assignment was asking me to read British author Hall Caine's *The Eternal City*. It was early spring, 1951.

"Daisaku, read this book," he said. "And when you're finished, pass it on to other members you're close to." We were at the old Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo's Nishi-Kanda, and Mr. Toda handed me a book with a red cloth cover. I was surprised. When I look back on that day now, I still feel tremendous gratitude for his kind, fatherly words.

Mr. Toda's business was in a crisis. Why did he want me to read that book? Why did he suggest that one? Why then? The answers to those questions contained profound, precious instructions from Mr. Toda to me.

The Eternal City was set in Rome in 1900—coincidentally, the year of Mr. Toda's birth. The young, idealistic hero of the novel, David Rossi, rises up against the corrupt authority of the state and the Church and begins a revolutionary struggle to bring them down. He calls out to the people of Rome, "Be brave, be strong, be patient, and tomorrow night you will send up such a cry as will ring throughout the world."

But the dictator Bonelli, maddened with envy and enmity toward the young revolutionary fighting for justice and the happiness of the people, throws the full weight of his power against the young man. Bonelli even goes so far as to implicate Rossi in a transparently concocted, utterly baseless plot.

To slander and vilify popular leaders who are loved by the people and respected pillars of solidarity, to try to destroy the beautiful alliance of the people—these are the unchanging tactics of corrupt power holders throughout history who live by the creed of divide and conquer.

But Rossi's companion in the struggle, Bruno Rocco, refuses to speak against his dearest comrade, though Bruno is ar-

rested, imprisoned, tortured and presented with a letter—a clever forgery by the authorities—whose contents suggest that Rossi has betrayed him. Bruno goes to his death crying: "Long live David Rossi! Long live David Rossi!"

Eventually the day arrives when the despotic regime is toppled. Rossi is chosen to head the new republic, and the door is opened at last to the creation of an eternal city, where human harmony prevails. This is the dream that he and Bruno, comrades in life and death, had cherished. The sun of a new day rises brightly in the sky.

In another memorable passage, Rossi declares: "Educate! Educate! Associate! Associate! These are our watchwords and our weapons of warfare."

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Through this novel and the picture of oppression by authoritarian powers that it offers, Mr. Toda wanted to deeply impress on the youth the form that the three powerful enemies of Buddhism—which the Daishonin warns will arise in the course of propagating the Mystic Law—will take in society.

Mr. Toda said: "Let those who want to criticize us go ahead. Let those who want to slander us do as they will. But nothing can change the fact that truth is truth, and justice is justice." Mr. Toda's guidance on this subject, citing various episodes and examples in *The Eternal City* to make his point as he did so, left a deep impression on me.

I will never forget Mr. Toda's firm stance and resolute words, like those of a strict father. While others may have let his words go in one ear and out the other, my mentor's words struck deep, deep into my youthful heart, as powerful and penetrating as bolts of lightning.

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No matter what nefarious schemes, jealousy or malicious attacks I encounter, I am not afraid. I know that those who spread spiteful, unjust accusations and all deceitful, morally degenerate individuals who try to subvert the truth will receive strict retribution in accord with the law of cause and effect, manifested by the workings of the heavenly deities, the protective forces of the universe.

I remember a passage from the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau that Mr. Toda made the youth of our day study: "To be just requires severity: to tolerate wickedness, when one has the right and the power to repress it, is to be

wicked oneself." This attitude of severity toward injustice perfectly describes the spirit of Mr. Makiguchi, who did not begrudge even his life in his powerful struggle against evil.

While the elderly Mr. Makiguchi was in prison during the war, he declared that the persecution that had befallen him was infinitesimally small when compared to that which the Daishonin suffered. This is a true example of the faith that is found in the Soka Gakkai—the faith that is the essence of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

◆◆◆◆

The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who fought against the Nazis during World War II, was a contemporary of Mr. Makiguchi. Churchill says, "If you travel the earth, you will find it is largely divided into two classes of people—people who say 'I wonder why such and such is not done' and people who say 'Now who is going to prevent me from doing that thing?'"

Everything begins from the passionate determination of individuals who have a strong, clear recognition of their mission and responsibility.

The great statesman Churchill did not let the Nazi bombings of his beloved country cover him or deter him from his course; he resolutely led his country to triumph over the enemy. His words have enormous weight.

Speaking proudly of how Britain valiantly withstood the Nazi attacks and emerged victorious, he declares: "Alone, but upheld by every generous heartbeat of mankind, we had defied the tyrant in the height of his triumph.... The Island was intangible, inviolate."

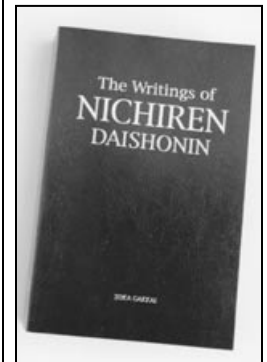
I have but one prayer: That all our precious members attain happiness. I pray that they may be safe each day, be healthy, live long and have lives overflowing with good fortune.

I also pray that, amid the harsh realities of this world, they may be proud victors, savoring the full joy of life. This is my first and foremost prayer, night and day.

As the leader of and person responsible for our worldwide organization, this is my job and duty.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the May 23 and June 2 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE DAY OF NEW YORK FESTIVAL

FRIENDSHIP IS THE GREATEST HAPPINESS

'True friendship binds one person to another,' writes SGI President Ikeda, 'regardless of position, nationality, race or even religion.'

My heartfelt congratulations on holding your Culture Festival commemorating the Day of New York. I thank you deeply for all your continuing energetic struggles.

It is our conviction that humankind's bright future exists where youth who have grown

up amid different cultures can generously exchange ideas, deepen friendships and form ties based on a common humanity. True friendship binds one person to another regardless of position, nationality, race or even religion. Having trusted friends is the greatest happiness in life.

I hope you will take time to enjoy this day while engaging in warm and pleasant conversation. I pray from the bottom of my heart for your excellent health and abundant good fortune.

*Daisaku Ikeda
June 18, 2000*



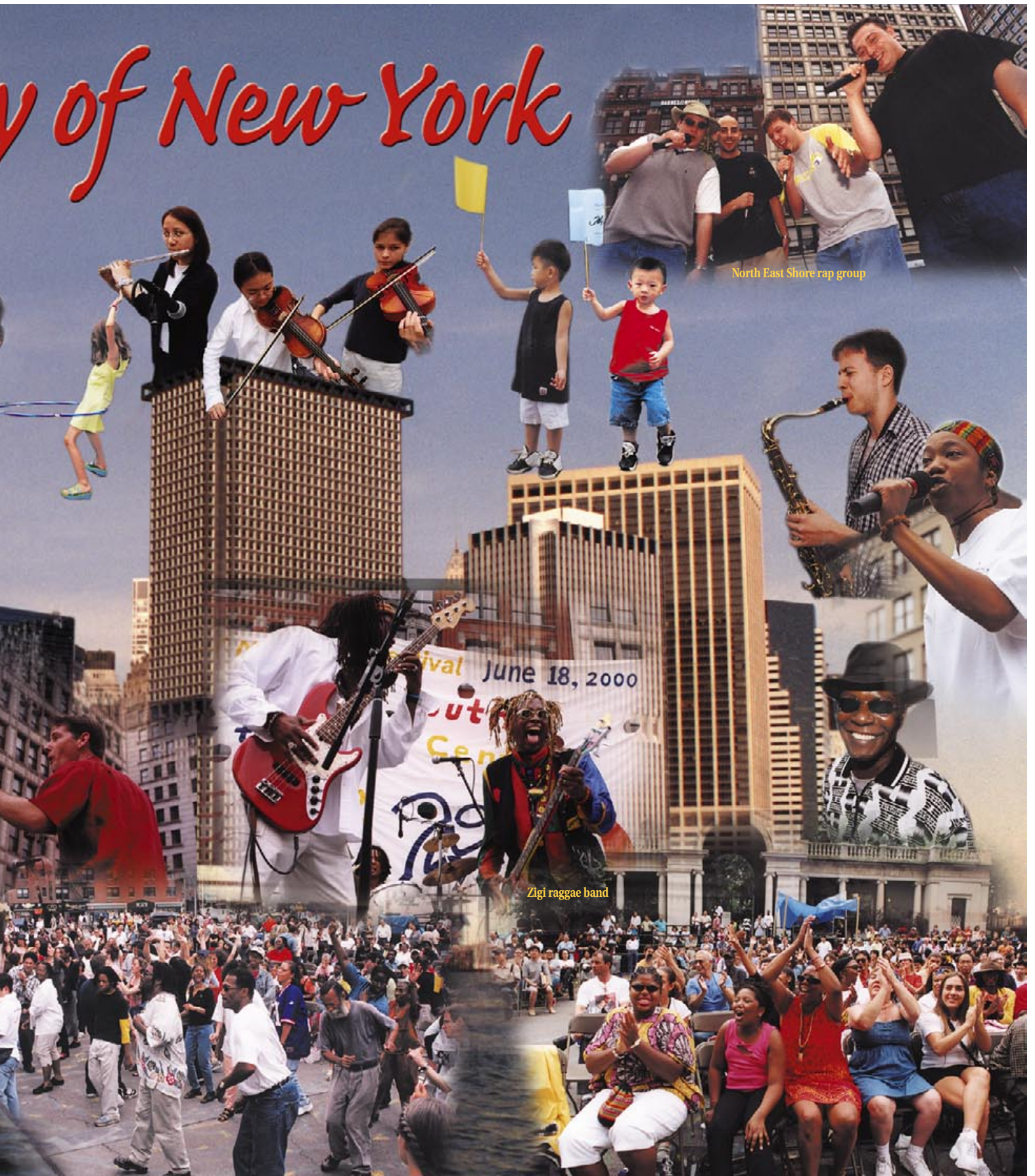
New York Men's Chorus

New Jersey Men's Band

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Bronx Youth Band

y of New York



North East Shore rap group

Zigi ragga band

To Listen With an Open Mind

A Record of My Life by Daisaku Ikeda

'Listening with an open mind to the opinions and ideas of others is not an easy task,' SGI President Ikeda writes.

'Whether the ability to do so depends on one's state of life or one's depth of experience, what matters most is that we pay close attention to what others have to say.'

On the topic of turning 60 (see last week's "A Record of My Life"), I am reminded of Confucius' words about listening. In the *Analects* he says, "At 60, my ears were obedient." Looking back over his life, Confucius observes that at 60 he had become able to listen to everyone's opinions.

It is well known that Confucius says that 40 was the age when he "had no doubts." He is talking here about gaining confidence in his direction in life. And when he says that at 50 he came to understand the "commands of Heaven," he means that he awakened to his life's mission.

My mentor, Josei Toda, was persecuted and imprisoned by Japan's militarist authorities. While in prison, he thoroughly read the Lotus Sutra. Having then become enlightened to the essence of life at age 45, he declared, "Five years later than Confucius I became free of doubt, and five years earlier than him I came to understand my mission."

Returning to the phrase "My ears were obedient," the fact is that listening with an open mind to the opinions and ideas of others is not an easy task. Whether the ability to do so depends on one's state of life or one's depth of experience, what matters most is that we pay close attention to what others have to say. I always make an effort to be a good listener.

It is generally thought that as we get older, we become increasingly attached to our experiences, growing more stubborn and unyielding as the

years pass. But it is precisely in our advanced years that we should give full play to the wisdom we have gained through our experiences and listen with an open mind to what others have to say. I feel that I have become an even better listener the older I get.

Buddhist texts frequently warn that the great obstacles of hatred and jealousy will arise the wider the correct teaching is spread. The Great Teacher Miao-lo of China says with regard to jealousy, "'Jealousy' [refers] to those who take no delight in listening to the doctrine" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 240). This brings to light how fearful it is to close one's ears to the truth.

The sutras also teach that our life itself is an irreplaceable treasure tower adorned with seven kinds of treasures. These are the seven essentials of Buddhist practice: hearing the correct teaching, believing it, keeping the precepts, engaging in meditation, practicing assiduously, renouncing one's attachments and reflecting on oneself (see WND, 299).

First among these is hearing the correct teaching; this essentially means listening to Buddhism. On a broader scale, it underlines the importance of listening to others. And it is those people who can take constructive criticism from others who grow as human beings.

Those who pursue the lasting obtain eternal youth and immortality.

Since ancient times, people have sought eternal youth and immortality. But what are they really looking for? When Shakyamuni decided to expound this teaching, he declared, "Open...the doors...to Ambrosia [immortality]!" (*The Book of Kindred Sayings*, vol. 1, p. 174).

So what does *immortality* mean? Of course, it doesn't mean that we go on living for ever and ever.

Let's take a look at a number of passages from the sutras that relate to eternal youth and immortality. One passage reads: "Even splendid royal coaches are subject to decline. / Similarly, the body grows old. / But those who lead noble lives enjoy the virtue of unaging." Another says: "Even though they had everything in life, / Many hundred thousand men and women from all walks of



'I always make an effort to be a good listener,' SGI President Ikeda writes. With a young friend in Paris, 1987.

life / Must go beneath the power of death. / Collections in the end disperse, / Whatever rises must also fall... The final end of life is death" (*The Tibetan Dhammapada Sayings of the Buddha*, pp. 39-40).

Those who are attached to such ephemeral things as a flashy lifestyle, wealth, status or position will see their lives diminish along with the disappearance of such attachments. The life of those who pursue the lasting, on the other hand, pulses with the vitality of eternal youth and immortality. It comes down to what we aspire toward and what we seek. In order to leave behind a history that endures, we need to live in pursuit of something meaningful and everlasting.

My friends, let's live eternally! Let's live out our lives dedicated to the spread of Buddhism, the eternal hope of humankind. Those who live in accord with the great Law of Buddhism can create a brilliant history of genuine fulfillment in lifetime after lifetime.

Another passage from the sutras reads: "Completely crush all demon ranks. / O monks! Do this and transcend life and death" (*Tibetan Dhammapada*, p. 42). The Buddha is called the Victorious One (Skt Jina). Buddhism is about winning. The life force of eternal youth and immortality burns within the strong spirit to defeat the devilish functions that seek to destroy one. It is struggle itself that frees us from the fear of death.

Another text says: "Caution (*apramada, bag yod*) is the ground of immortality / Carelessness the ground of death. / With caution death does not occur, / With carelessness there is always death" (*Tibetan Dhammapada*, p. 49). Age creeps up on those who give in to their weaknesses, to the desire to idle away time. Shakyamuni declares that such an existence is equivalent to death. Elsewhere he says, "A person who has learned little ages like an ox; his flesh increases, but not his insight" (*The Dhammapada: Sayings of Buddha*, p. 52).

I am putting all my energy into my writings and other activities each day. The reading I did during my youth is indispensable. Above all, the guidance and training that I received from President Toda has been a great source of sustenance.

At the same time, I continue to read as much poetry and other works as I can. Like anyone, I wish to absorb even a little of the wisdom the world has to offer. I want to live out my life filled with boundless hope, together with all the SGI members. It is with this feeling in my heart that I have been carrying out dialogues with the world's leading intellectuals.

Each day is a fresh departure into a hope-filled future.

Let the sun rise!

Today, again, I will give my life to the worldwide spread of Buddhism!

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SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'AT THE HELM'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 4, PARTS 29-30

Shin'ichi Yamamoto shares the story of Ishimatsu Yoshida, 'The Count of Monte Cristo of the Showa Era,' who was unjustly imprisoned for a murder that he did not commit.

Having decided to attend the regional Komei-kai meetings, Shin'ichi Yamamoto began to organize the points he would emphasize. First, he thought he should confirm the fundamental spirit of the Komei-kai.

As he had often discussed with the Komei-kai members, the established political parties in Japan gave priority to protecting the interests of big business or the labor unions and ignored the people's welfare. The Komei-kai had been formed to put an end to the biased practices of the existing political parties and to realize a government benefiting all citizens equally and contributing to their happiness and welfare. Shin'ichi felt it crucial that he state unequivocally that neither the Komei Political Federation nor the Komei-kai were created with the narrow-minded goal of enabling the Soka Gakkai to take control of the Japanese government.

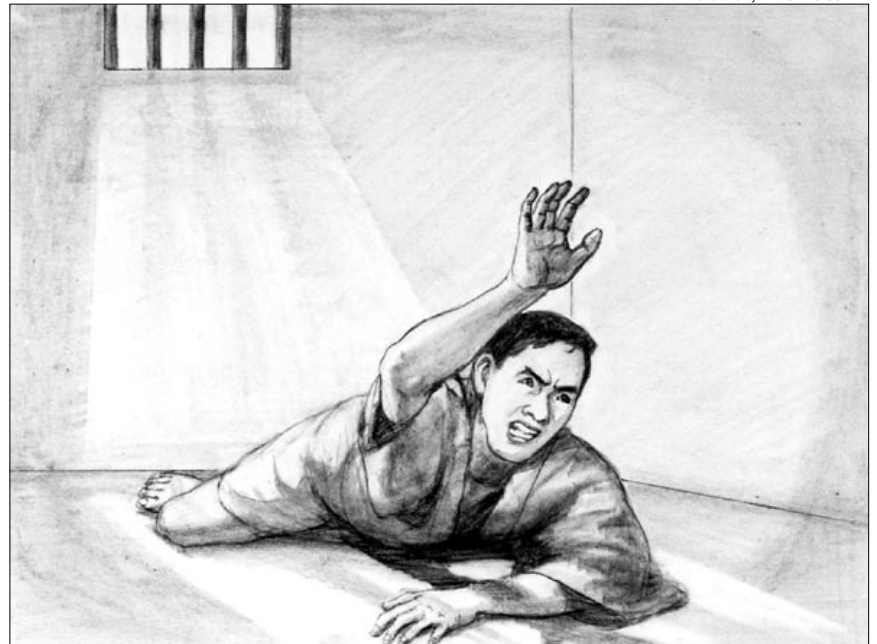
Shin'ichi's second point concerned the fact that, although it had effectively become the third-largest force in the Upper House, the Komei-kai was still a minority. In order to carry out its programs in the political world, the Komei-kai would most likely have to cooperate with other po-

litical parties on occasion.

From a certain perspective, politics was a realm where you could not function without compromise. Shin'ichi wanted to clarify in no uncertain terms that when it came to the practical operations of the Komei-kai, the Soka Gakkai, its main supporting body, would distance itself. It would leave the parliamentary group to act as it saw fit to achieve its goals.

His third point was Mr. Toda's instruction to keep a careful eye on government. To achieve world peace and happiness for the people, the Soka Gakkai needed to maintain a close watch on the activities of all political parties in Japan—and the Komei-kai was no exception. Shin'ichi also thought he should make it clear that the Soka Gakkai would vigorously denounce any Komei-kai representative who behaved in a corrupt, self-serving manner and who, forgetting the aims and ideals on which the group was founded, provoked some scandal.

At each of the regional Komei-kai meetings, Shin'ichi based his speech on these three points. On March 3, he attended the Nagoya Komei-kai meeting in the city's Kanayama Gymnasium. He began by voicing his



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

hope that the Komei-kai would be a parliamentary group dedicated to protecting the interests of ordinary citizens. Then he spoke about the case of Ishimatsu Yoshida, who had been dubbed "The Count of Monte Cristo of the Showa Era."

Just a few days earlier, on Feb. 28, the Nagoya High Court declared Yoshida innocent of a crime that he was falsely accused of committing some five decades earlier. Yoshida was arrested by police as the principal perpetrator in the robbery and murder of a farmer in the Nowa area of Chikusacho, Aichi County (present-day Imaike, Chikusa Ward, Nagoya City), on Aug. 13, 1913.

Yoshida's arrest came about after two men who worked in a glass factory were taken into custody following a police investigation of the crime. These men gave statements to the police claiming that Yoshida, who worked at another glass factory, had committed the murder. He was then arrested.

The 34-year-old Yoshida knew nothing about the crime, and his arrest came as a total shock. The police tortured him mercilessly during questioning—he was stripped, kicked and beaten. When he went un-

conscious, they doused him with water.

But all through the police questioning and the trial, Yoshida maintained his innocence. The courts, however, accepted the word of his two accusers, and in April 1914, he was convicted of first-degree murder by the Nagoya District Court and sentenced to death. The other two men were convicted as accomplices and given life sentences.

Naturally, Yoshida appealed. But in July that year, the Nagoya Court of Appeals simply commuted his death sentence to life imprisonment.

A further appeal to the Supreme Court, his last hope, was rejected in November that year, and his life sentence was rendered irrevocable. But Yoshida continued to declare his innocence in prison, and for a time he refused to wear a prison uniform or perform prison labor.

Whenever he encountered the two men who had accused him of being the perpetrator, he would tussle with them. And each time, he was punished.

Yoshida was a kind man, who adored his mother. As long as she lived, he continued to send her money from prison. Having her see him in handcuffs when she visited pained him to no end.

Yoshida petitioned twice for a retrial, but he was rejected both times. Intent on clearing his name, he decided to leave a complete record of the events. To do so, he learned how to read and write in prison.

In March 1935, some 22 years after his arrest, Yoshida was released on parole. To prove his innocence, he began seeking ways to have his case retried. Several supporters—in the form of young journalists with a strong sense of justice—came to his aid.

During his original trial, the most important piece of evidence against him was the false testimony of his so-called accomplices. With the help of the young journalists, Yoshida managed to persuade the two men to acknowledge their testimony as false and write letters of apology to that effect. Yoshida felt he had at last glimpsed a ray of light.

In 1937, he petitioned a third time for a retrial. Seven years later, in 1944, the Supreme Court declared that the letters of apology were coerced, and Yoshida's petition was dismissed once again.

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



AROUND THE SGI-USA

General Director Visits Phoenix

On June 4, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima added Phoenix to his list of cities visited on his quest to meet members. Via telephone hookup, members from El Paso, Texas, Albuquerque, N.M., Tucson and Sierra Vista, Ariz., also head his message of encouragement. Strong momentum comes from determination and strong prayers, he emphasized.

—DIANA DECKER



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima talks with Phoenix members at the SGI-USA Phoenix Culture Center, June 4.

Gulf Coast Members Gather

Members of Gulf Coast Area gathered from Pensacola, Fort Walton Beach, and Panama City, Fla., and Mobile, Ala., on May 7 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the SGI. More than 150 members brought 36 guests to this unique activity. Area Leader Frank Hatcher encouraged the members to contribute to their communities.

—BOB CASEY



Korean members perform a fan dance at the Gulf Coast Area meeting in Navarre, Fla., May 7.

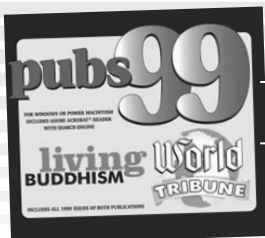
Singapore Artist Holds First Solo Exhibition in the United States



Liu Kang attends the opening of his exhibition at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, May 11.

The Museum of Tolerance, the Singapore Soka Association (SGI-Singapore) and other organizations cosponsored the “Liu Kang at 90: A Celebration of Singapore’s Treasured Artist” exhibition in May and June. The highlight of this first solo showing of Mr. Kang’s art in the United States was a portion of his work *Chop Suey*, illustrations of the Japanese army’s atrocious conduct in Malaya and Singapore during World War II. Mr. Kang, who attended the May 11 opening of the exhibition at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, was a witness to these atrocities. He has decided to share his experiences through art to make a powerful antiwar statement. **WT**

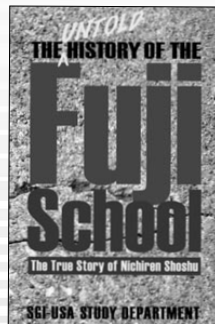
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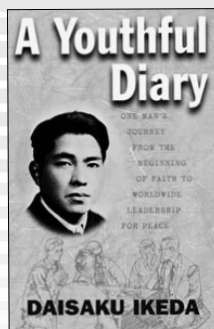
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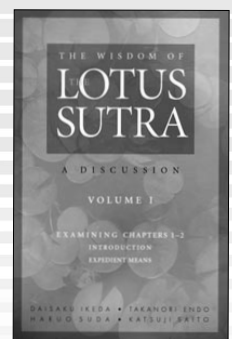
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Inspired and Thankful

I am a year into my practice and from the beginning I looked forward to the *World Tribune*, and I still do. I thoroughly enjoy the personal experiences and the "Back to the Basics" section. Because my practice is still so new, I look for encouragement daily.

The article "Prayer: A Real Force for Change" by Matilda Buck in the June 9 *World Tribune* was what I needed. As I took the quiz, I had to answer true to "I sometimes doubt I can overcome my problems." The guidance in that article touched me so deeply and put into words thoughts that I have. The article is on my altar, so I can refer back to the steps to overcome doubt.

—CANDACE ROSS
White Oak, Md.

As I flipped through the July 7 "Seize the Day" section of the *World Tribune*, I saw Shan Serafin's article "Violence Wears a

Tricky Mask." I had never heard of the Milgram Study, but I will conduct my own study and make sure I don't simply "cooperate with authority," especially when it isn't based on true humanism.

Then I saw Shavawn Berry's "Perspective," "With the End In Mind." This, too, hit home. She joyfully made me re-examine my own personal mission to make sure that I will have no regrets. Thank you, Shan and Shavawn!

—LISA MCGOWN
Torrance, Calif.



Milestones

A mother, friend and true pioneer has passed from among us. What can I say? To those of us who were fortunate to be close to her, Mrs. Kazuko Sims was just like a mother. She would gently but strictly encourage us, saying: "You can't fool the Gohonzon. It's inside your life." Mrs. Sims truly exhibited the Soka Spirit of communicating truth in a manner appropriate to

the time and capacity of those around her. She will remain in our hearts. Thank you very much, Mrs. Sims—Barbara Simmons, Calumet City, Ill.

Lost & Found

Judith Newball would appreciate any help in finding three lost SGI friends: Keiko Andreas of Columbia, S.C.; Maya McKeldin of Bellevue, Wash.; and Kumiko Rosa of Port Richey, Fla. Mrs. Newball can be reached at 254-699-0255. Thank you for your help!

New Web Site

The Summer 2000 edition of Florida region's Web site is now online! We feature the Arts Division Conference "Victory Over Violence: A Concert for Peace"—information about the concert, behind-the-scenes shots and a digital/downloadable photo album. We also have local information, an activity calendar and information about the upcoming Florida Youth Culture Festival on Aug. 5. Stop by and take a look anytime: www.sgi-usa-florida.org

Correction: Our apologies to Spanish Pages subscribers for printing problems that we had with the July 7 edition. A reprint will be sent to each Spanish Pages subscriber separate from the World Tribune.

Subscribe to the Justice Chronicle

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

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The *World Tribune* welcomes reader submissions. If you are interested in contributing an article or photograph, please contact us for guidelines. Together we can make a great newspaper.



This week, we start a new Q-and-A series for prospective SUA students and their families. Send in your questions, and we'll share the answers!

Question:

When I see the cost to attend Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo (\$16,500 tuition, \$7,500 room and board), I know that my parents cannot afford to send me there. I don't want to cause them worry, but I don't want to give up my dream of attending SUA either. What can I do?

Answer:

You have a great attitude!

Please don't give up your dream just because of cost—apply to SUA anyway. Ninety percent of all students at American colleges and universities receive financial aid. That will be true at SUA, also—for both U.S. and international students. SUA's financial aid will be awarded based on need. Our determination at SUA is that no student whom we have accepted will have to say no because of cost. We have created the SUA Millennium Scholarship Endowment Fund, and we're gathering donations from around the world. Because so many SGI members are showing such a sincere

spirit for helping future SUA students, we are moving well toward our goal.

When you apply to SUA, we will evaluate your application without considering your financial ability. If you are accepted for the first class in 2001, our financial aid coordinator will sit down with you and your parents or guardian and construct a financial aid package that meets your demonstrated need. A typical package might include a combination of on-campus work-study, loans and SUA scholarships. Quite often, students applying to college find they qualify for significantly more financial aid than they thought they would. So if you really want to go to SUA, please apply, and let us work with you.

Question:

I have heard that SUA has received many applications already. For example, I heard that 800 applications have been received from Japan alone. It discourages me to think that my application has

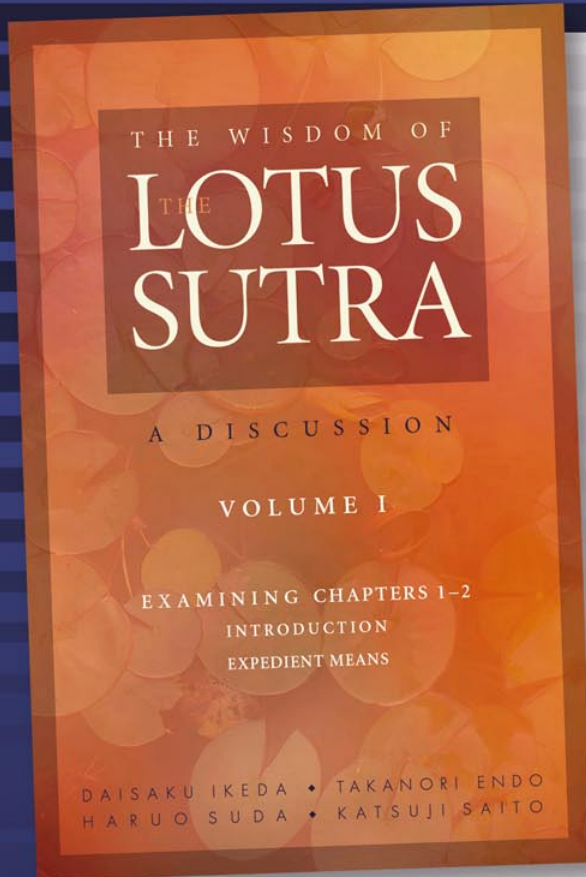
so much competition. Are these stories true?

Answer:

As with many rumors, these stories are not true. It is true that we have received many requests for information about SUA, but it is very early in the application process. SUA expects to receive a number of applications just prior to Oct. 15, the deadline for early admission applications. The majority of our applications will probably come just before Jan. 15, 2001, the deadline for regular admission applications. Please don't be discouraged by rumors. If you want to go to SUA, get your application in, and give it your best try!

If you have questions of any kind about SUA, please send them to SUA at either admission@soka.edu or info@soka.edu. We will use this World Tribune column to share our answers with others who might have the same questions.

NEW from World Tribune Press



THE WISDOM OF THE **LOTUS SUTRA** A DISCUSSION, VOLUME ONE

The popular and important dialogue series from Living Buddhism now in book form. In clear, down-to-earth terms, SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai Study Department leaders Katsuji Saito, Takanori Endo and Haruo Suda explore the profound meaning of the Lotus Sutra's twenty-eight chapters. Basing themselves on Nichiren Daishonin's lectures on the Lotus Sutra, "The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," they explain the concepts that form the very basis of SGI members' Buddhist practice.

VOLUME ONE examines the first two chapters of the Lotus Sutra: "Introduction" and "Expedient Means."

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—Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President



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