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SGI President Ikeda writes a new poem for all SGI-USA members that depicts the Bodhisattvas of the Earth taking flight into the new century. See pages 5–8.

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SGI-USA Subscribers, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

No. 3306

\$2.00

AUGUST 11, 2000

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



'SOAR— INTO THE VAST SKIES OF FREEDOM! INTO THE NEW CENTURY!'



SGI President Daisaku Ikeda

Advancing With Appreciation and Determination

By SGI-USA
GENERAL DIRECTOR
DANNY NAGASHIMA

On July 21, SGI President Ikeda completed his new poem "Soar—Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!" I strongly believe that he wrote this poem to each of us; he calls us his "sublime fellow SGI members in America." It not only reflects his joy about our growth, but his vision for our future—that America move to the forefront of a new age of humanity.

Consistent with his previous three major poems dedicated to America—"To My Young American Friends" in 1981; "Arise, the Sun of the Century" in 1987; and "The Sun of *Jiyu* Over a New Land" in 1993—President Ikeda

discusses the Bodhisattvas of the Earth at length. The beginning of this new poem—"The Bodhisattvas of the Earth / have emerged! / They have arisen!"—is a wonderfully bold and powerful statement, which I believe expresses his confidence that we have set out on the correct path toward American kosen-rufu. Essentially, he is proclaiming certain victory in each of our lives.

Together with his mentor, Josei Toda, President Ikeda established a vision for America. This vision has taken shape in the form of Soka University of America. It is our dream to welcome President Ikeda and Mrs. Ikeda to America for the opening of the new SUA campus at Aliso Viejo, Calif., on May 3, 2001. In this poem, he concretely states his determination to spend the culminating years of his life in America, fostering many young successors toward his dream

of a world of peace, prosperity and joy.

I know that in establishing this university, President Ikeda wishes to express his appreciation for the untiring efforts of the thousands of pioneer members who have made this unprecedented era of our movement possible. Without them, I am certain we would not have this opportunity to advance together with our mentor into this new century.

Toward May 3, 2001, let's infuse our lives with this poem. Let's truly emerge from the earth, triumphing over our lesser selves—challenging our current struggles and helping our fellow members overcome their sufferings. Let's create lives of joy and appreciation, so that we can greet President Ikeda next year with our hearts ablaze as we "soar into the vast skies of freedom!" **WT**

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 29 SPEECH—PART 2

Life Is a Magnificent Dance

‘Live your life like a magnificent dance, a ballet!’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Spread the dance of life, joy of all joys, across the world!’

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 47th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, June 29.

I hope that the members of SGI-Korea — representatives of whom are here today — will move forward in exemplary harmony and friendship, according with one of KSOG's mottoes, “Harmony First.” Getting along well is a great source of strength. Where people get along amicably, there is happiness. Discord is hell; it is misery. And it leads to a life of defeat.

Nichiren Daishonin teaches us how crucial it is to be united in purpose, in the spirit of many in body, one in mind. I hope all our members will support and respect each other and live beautiful, fulfilling lives.

Today, we have members from the United States, Korea and Cambodia here for training courses. Welcome! Thank you for coming to Japan! We also have representatives from France, Italy, Spain, India, the Philippines, South Africa, Brazil, and the Sakha Republic in Siberia, part of the Russian Federation. Thank you all so much for coming from so far away!

SGI-Cambodia General Director Vuthi Seng and five other members from the Kingdom of Cambodia are visiting Japan and have joined us today. I visited Cambodia in 1961, the year after my inauguration as Soka Gakkai president, and I chanted there. Twenty-five years ago, in 1975, I met with His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia in Beijing and carried on a friendly discussion with him. Over the last four decades, my wife and I have continuously prayed for the peace, prosperity and happiness of Cambodia. We are so happy to see Cambodian friends here today in good health and spirits!

SGI-Cambodia has just been officially recognized as a religious organization by the Cambodian government. This is proof of the victory of the Cambodian members, who have worked hard and patiently as good citizens of their country over the years. Together with our SGI members the world over, I want to mark this fresh departure for the SGI-Cambodia with a round of applause. Congratulations!

True faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is to always focus on kosen-rufu.

It will soon be July 3, the Soka Gakkai's Day of Mentor and Disciple. It was on this day in 1945 that Mr. Toda was released from prison and that, in 1957, I was detained in prison [for questioning over the Osaka Incident]. July 6 marks the day that both Mr. Toda and Mr. Makiguchi were imprisoned in 1943. And July 17 is the day, also in 1957, that I was released and the famous Osaka Rally was held.

The Osaka Rally took place at the Nakanoshima Civic Hall amid pouring rain and crashing thunder. Two banners carrying the Daishonin's words hung in the hall that day. One was a quote from “Letter to the Brothers”: “Devils will arise without fail. If they did not, there would be no way of knowing that this is the correct teaching” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 501). This passage warns that practitioners of the Lotus Sutra will be called on to wage a rigorous struggle against the three obstacles and four devils and the three powerful enemies.

The other passage was from “On the Buddha's Prophecy”: “I say that without fail Buddhism will arise and flow forth from the east, from the land of Japan” (WND, 401). This is a

great declaration of the kosen-rufu of all Jambudvīpa — the entire world.

The true spirit of faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism is to always be focused on and always be striving for the goal of worldwide kosen-rufu.

Our fellow members in Kansai have battled with single-minded determination to win without fail against each and every powerful opponent they have faced. Kansai is a model for all. I hope all our members will continue to courageously pursue the goal of worldwide kosen-rufu, just as our Kansai members have.

At the Headquarters Leaders Meeting commemorating May 3 this year, held on April 25, I announced that the SGI had members in 156 countries and territories. Today I report to you, as we prepare to celebrate July 3, that the SGI now has members in an additional seven nations, bringing the total number of countries where our members are practicing to 163.

When you talk about our organization to non-practicing

family or friends, I hope you will proudly tell them that we have members in 163 nations.

The only way to achieve peace is to reach out to the world.

The first additional country where we now have members is the Kingdom of Tonga, a beautiful South Pacific paradise. I want to visit this island kingdom one day. In February, my wife and I, as representatives of all of you, were privileged to receive honorary citizenship from the king of Tonga. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima kindly accepted this honor in my place. I have also been informed that one of Tonga's beautiful beaches will be named the Daisaku Ikeda Beach.

All of these honors will eternally illuminate the path of all SGI members who follow in our footsteps in generations to come.

The SGI network now also extends to the Republic of Mongolia, a land that was of such concern to the Daishonin. This, I feel, is profoundly

significant in terms of Buddhism. We have also welcomed the president of the Republic of Mongolia to Soka University. [In 1998, Mongolian President N. Bagabandi gave a lecture at Soka University, in which he expressed his gratitude to SGI President Ikeda for his efforts to promote educational exchange.]

I have also received repeated invitations to visit Mongolia. Many nations invite me to visit, but unfortunately my schedule does not always permit me to do so.

We now also have members in Uzbekistan in Central Asia. In ancient times, this region flourished as a cultural center under the rule of King Kanishka and was a transmission point for the eastward spread of Buddhism into China and beyond. Now, SGI Bodhisattvas of the Earth have appeared and are practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism in that distant land. This is evidence of the epic “westward transmission of Buddhism” being carried out by the Soka Gakkai. This is



During the 47th Headquarters Leaders Meeting held June 29 at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, SGI President Ikeda congratulates SGI-Cambodia General Director Vuthi Seng and five other members from Cambodia on the recent establishment of SGI-Cambodia as an official religious corporation in that country.

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

all in exact accord with the Daishonin's prediction.

In Europe, we now have members in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Balkan Peninsula. SGI members there are working to overcome the tragedy of the civil war that has wracked the region, holding discussion meetings and making home visits. They are creating a great wave of human revolution — of inner transformation — toward peace and reconstruction. Our courageous members in Bosnia and Herzegovina are moving boldly ahead, determined that a nation in which the sound of the Mystic Law reverberates will prosper and be protected.

Another addition is the Republic of Malawi in southeast Africa. *Malawi* means flame. SGI members have also begun to be active in this nation of hope for the 21st century.

I will leave the other countries for introduction another time. Suffice it to say, our SGI members in each country are working hard to earn the trust of their fellow citizens and carrying out activities that are models of intercultural dialogue.

Over the years, I have exerted myself wholeheartedly behind the scenes, perhaps more than anyone can imagine, to open the way for the spread of the Mystic Law in all these nations. Let us joyously celebrate this advance of kosen-rufu to 163 countries around the globe!

Thinking back, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi strove hard to change Japan's narrow, island mentality and open the hearts of the Japanese people to the world. He was a great man, a visionary and pioneering world leader.

If we Japanese, as the people of a tiny island nation, just sit back and watch the world from afar, we will be left behind. We will become orphans, alienated from the rest of humanity. We must, with the broad-minded spirit of global citizens, form vibrant friendships with people all around the world and take a fresh look at our own nation from that broader perspective.

The world must be our focus. This was Mr. Makiguchi's wish.

Such a vast perspective is demonstrated by the Daishonin, who casually dismissed the arrogant political despot of his day as "the ruler of this little island country" (WND, 765).

The only way to achieve peace is to reach out to the world in friendship and form alliances with the peoples of all nations. In the future, I

hope you will step out into the wide world.

Earlier today, SGI-USA Arts Division Leader Pascual Olivera and his wife, Angela, performed an exquisitely beautiful dance for us. Thank you very much!

Life is a dance. The struggle to achieve kosen-rufu is also a dance. In my 1989 lecture at the Academy of Fine Arts of the Institut de France in Paris, I spoke of the "dynamism of creative life." I cited part of the following passage found in the Daishonin's "Great Evil and Great Good": "When great evil occurs, great good follows. Since great slander already exists in our land, the great correct Law will spread without fail. What could any of you have to lament? Even if you are not the Venerable Mahakashyapa, you should all perform a dance. Even if you are not Shariputra, you should leap up and dance" (WND, 1119).

Live your life like a magnificent dance, a ballet! Spread the dance of life, joy of all joys, across the world!

One who continues to act with love for humanity is a victor in life.

Recently, five items in the collection of the SGI-affiliated Victor Hugo House of Literature, located in the city of Bièvres on the outskirts of Paris, have been declared national treasures by the French Ministry of Culture. House of Literature Director Philippe Moine is with us today. Congratulations!

Let me tell you about the five items. The first is a printer's proof of the masterpiece *Les Misérables*. The proof has detailed corrections in Hugo's own hand and is a unique treasure.

I have been very fond of Hugo since my youth. There is a passage in *Les Misérables* that says: "Philosophy should be energy; it should find its aim and effect in the improvement of mankind.... To make them good men... — such is the province of true philosophy?"

Philosophy is energy. It is not just words in a book. Buddhism is energy, too. It is a force to direct our lives toward good.

It is often said that Japan today has no philosophy and that our confusion is only deepening. The increase in violent crimes committed by young people is a reflection of the warped state of adult society. The Soka Gakkai, in contrast, has a firm philosophy, is working for the sake of society and is a great spiritual pillar not only for Japan, but for the entire world.

A rare first edition of Hugo's epic poem, *The Legend of the Centuries*, was also designated a French national treasure. Hugo bound this volume himself and he also marked revisions in it. It contains a long handwritten dedication, as well.

To whom did he present this special volume? A very brave woman — a woman who, at grave risk to her own life, gave Hugo shelter when the authorities were persecuting him. Hugo expressed his enormous gratitude to her: "That I was not captured and subsequently shot, that I am alive at this moment, I owe entirely to Madame Juliette Drouet who, at the peril of her own liberty, and her own life, saved me from every trap, unceasingly watched over me, found me secret hiding-places, and saved me, with what heroic courage God alone knows, and will reward."

Although the situation is of

course different, it is believed to have been a female follower of the Daishonin who warned him of the imminent attack on his dwelling and facilitated his escape in what became known as the Matsubagayatsu Persecution.

Great indeed is the strength, the courage, of women.

The Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions are aware of all the efforts our women's division members are making to support and protect the Soka Gakkai, which is advancing in accord with the Buddha's intent and decree.

The benefits we accrue in the course of our struggle to realize kosen-rufu are immense. They will never fade. And they belong to all of you.

Another of the items is the only surviving copy of a printer's proof of *Les Contemplations*, a volume of poetry that Hugo wrote while in exile.

Also designated is an autographed copy of his draft of a decree of amnesty for exiles. As a political figure, Hugo called for the pardon of those who had been driven from France when the Paris Commune [the insurrection of Paris against the French government in 1871] failed. This decree of amnesty was Hugo's cry for human rights in the French parliament. A true political leader is prepared to do anything to protect those who are fighting for truth and justice.

The 21st century will be the century of human rights. It is especially important for young people to be sensitive to human rights. We must fight vigorously against all intrigues that seek to suppress religious freedom and against malicious slander and defamatory attacks. We must address and challenge such wrongs.

The final item to be designated a French national treasure is a sheet of paper with the last words written by Hugo, three days before his death. They are the profound words, "Love is action. Victor Hugo."

A person who continues to act with love for humanity to the end is a victor in life. This is a perfect description of the members of our Many Treasures Group [a group for elderly members, many of them pioneers from the early days of the SGI's movement]. They are the heroes of kosen-rufu, more important than any celebrity. We must praise, support and respect them to the utmost.

When Hugo was around my age, 72, he declared: "I am like a forest that has several times been felled; the young trees are increasingly strong and vigor-

ous. For half a century now, I have been setting down my thoughts in prose and verse, but feel that I have uttered only the thousandth part of all that is in me...." I can say the same of myself. I still have so much I want to write for the sake of my dear fellow members.

Ten thousand people are no match for one serious individual.

The Daishonin asserts, "But still I am not discouraged" (WND, 748). I hope you will all engrave those words in your heart today.

Kosen-rufu is an eternal struggle. To fight and fight on, right through to the end, with the lion-hearted spirit of the Daishonin — this is the hallmark of a truly great life.

Leaders cannot succeed by show or by their wits alone. It is intensity of purpose and unity that win the day. A passionate, all-out effort opens the way forward and leads to victory. Ten thousand people are no match for one serious, dedicated individual. You can have a group as large as you like, but if its members are not earnestly committed, it won't be a force for anything. Shakyamuni Buddha stood up alone. Nichiren Daishonin also stood up alone to embark on his struggle. Everything starts with the individual. The individual is key. This is the teaching of Buddhism.

We must have courage. Compassion is born from courage. And courage is the essence of Buddhism. As Shakespeare writes in "*Coriolanus*," "It is held / That valour is the chiefest virtue, and / Most dignifies the haver." With these words, I close my speech today.

Please take care of yourselves! Let us meet again! **W**



Members from the United States, Korea, Cambodia, France, Italy, Spain, India, the Philippines, South Africa, Brazil, the Russian Federation and Japan attend the 47th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, June 29.

World The
TRIBUNE SGI-USA's
Weekly
Newspaper

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org SGIUSUBS@aol.com
Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

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

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New England Throws Dance Party

Photo by KAITLIN SHEPHERD and MARION SHAPIRO



Kids of all ages dance the night away at the New England Culture Center, June 10.

By FLETCHER DALTON
BOSTON BUREAU CHIEF

At sunset on June 10, when traffic is usually light on Main Street, there was a flurry of activity. Cars, vans and a motorcycle or two drove up and left off smartly dressed passengers. Balloons floated above the gates of the New England Culture Center as though giddy at the thought of this night's dance party. Inside the large auditorium a fog machine and colored spotlights created a cloud-nine ambience.

The tunes came from three sources: Geoff Wilson, a well-

known local DJ; a men's division band calling themselves The Doctors of Faith, with a guest soloist that set the heart strings throbbing; and the always powerful youth division musicians and dancers, on this occasion calling themselves The Lotus Band.

The inspiration for the dance party came from the Arts Division of the Culture Department, the energy from eight weeks of chanting sessions, and the appreciation from SGI families and their friends who enjoyed socializing on a level not previously experienced.

In the children's room, lots of introductions and lots of play-

The Importance of Study

Back to the Basics

By GEOFF ROLDE
SACRAMENTO REGION MEN'S LEADER

Many of us approach our study of Buddhism with the same passion we reserve for vigorous aerobic exercise and vegetable-rich diets. We know all three are good for us, but some of us just don't seem to act on them.

Some people don't do gongyo once a month, so why study the writings of Nichiren Daishonin even less frequently? Blue dye is produced from indigo, but something soaked in it repeatedly becomes even bluer than the indigo plant itself. Based on my experience, I guarantee that if we immerse ourselves in the

Gosho, as if soaking in a warm, comfy vat of blue dye, we will begin to look and feel very different. Indeed, if we want to manifest the vibrant hue of the enlightenment that Nichiren Daishonin is talking about—and see the corresponding changes in our environment—we cannot “spray it on” as if it were fine perfume. We need gallons and buckets of study!

You may recall the Daishonin's letter to Sairen-bo that encouraged him to make the teachings part of his life. The Daishonin tells Sairen-bo: “Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study.... You must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 386).

Speaking of teaching others, I recently learned that the school principal who introduced first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi to the Daishonin's Buddhism

in 1928, did so over 10 days of intense dialogue. This man had obviously taken his study of Buddhism very seriously. So, too, did the founding presidents. In fact, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda concluded that only thorough familiarity with the Daishonin's writings enabled them to withstand the persecutions they faced during World War II. In his writing “The Fourteen Slanders,” the Daishonin chastises the priests of his day, saying that if one “fails to study the Buddha's teaching and to refute its slanderers but simply spends his time in idleness and chatter, then he is no better than an animal dressed in priestly robes” (WND, 760). So let's immerse ourselves in the writings of Nichiren Daishonin—as if our very lives depend on them! **WT**

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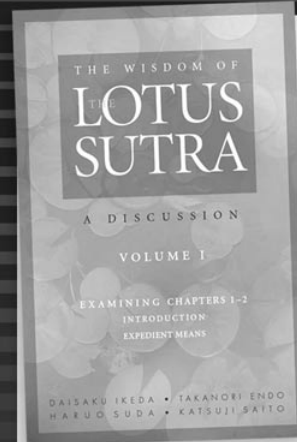
ing together took place. In the auditorium many kids took a turn around the dance floor with their parents. It was a fun night that brought several hundred people together who, on their own, might never have become acquainted. It was a night that made the Culture Center seem like a very natural place for close friends to meet. **WT**

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—Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President

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The following poem was written by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and dedicated to SGI-USA members. Shin'ichi Yamamoto is a pen name President Ikeda often uses when writing poetry; he also uses it as the name of the primary character in the narrative of the Soka Gakkai's history titled *The New Human Revolution*, which is being serialized in the World Tribune. President Ikeda was awarded the title of World Poet Laureate by the World Poetry Society Intercontinental—Dr. Krishna Srinivas, president—on Aug. 8, 1995.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NEW POEM

'SOAR— INTO THE VAST SKIES OF FREEDOM! INTO THE NEW CENTURY!'



Daisaku Ikeda, SGI President

Photo by LAYNE KENNEDY/CORBIS

*Dedicated to my sublime fellow SGI members in America
—Shin'ichi Yamamoto*

The Bodhisattvas of the Earth
have emerged!
They have arisen!
They have started to stir,
to move!

Here, on the American
continent,
the winds of a new era
have begun to blow.
Raising ruby goblets,
we toast the further
completion
of this wondrous new path
glittering with happiness
and peace.

Lifting our voices
high in joyous song,
we watch the stars and stripes
stream and ripple above
our fifty American states,
illuminating the future.

These fifty states—
pioneering a new history,
resounding with the peal
of liberty's bell,
here our cherished
Bodhisattvas of the Earth
have made their stand!
Gathering speed and
momentum
they commence their struggle!

In this great land of America
—the world in miniature—
new waves, a new movement,
has arisen and begun!

Wings unfurling,
we take flight—
toward a vast new century,
toward a world of certain good.

Charged with new energy,
the wings of life itself
carry us confident
and composed
into a majestic future.
Embraced by winds
pure and vigorous,
we fly into a new era,
resolutely transcending
the borders and limitations
of old, past life.

Our lives renewed,
we begin a grand movement,
spreading the spirit of true
friendship
throughout society.

We have awakened to the truth
that within this state of life
is to be found limitless
strength, joy, reality
—our true selves—
brilliant with lasting
and glorious light.

"No wind or tempest,
will rend or break these wings.
For in the depths of my life
I have found the
very philosophy,
the rich completeness
long sought by scholars and
philosophers."

"Whatever waves crash
over me
I will know no fear!
Even if the lure of lethargy
lies ahead,
my spirit, like the dawn,
will continue to shine
radiantly."

"I have risen up,
with a sun-filled soul.
I have no time to waste
on those decrepitly fixed
on power and fame."

"My spirit propels me to a life
of fierce and ceaseless
engagement
for the cause of
justice!"

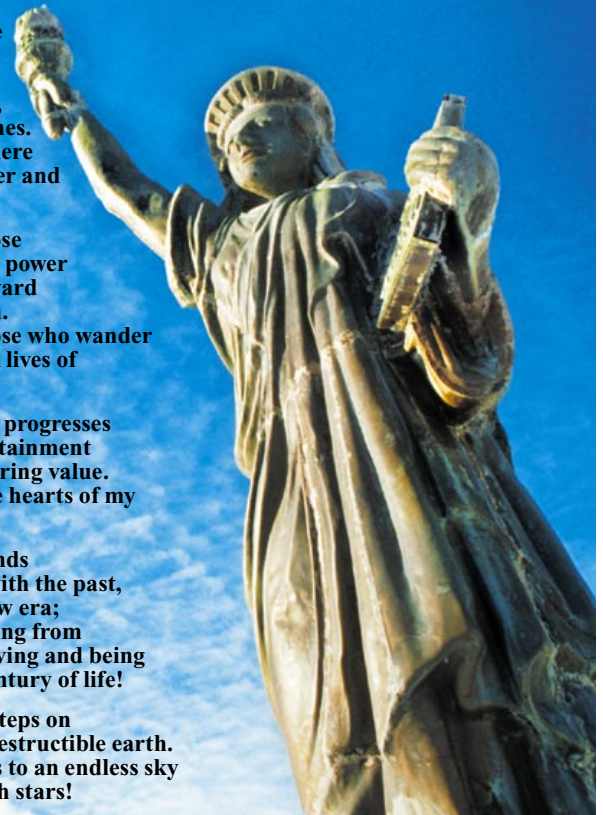
"I will plunge
into the
midst
of maddened,
hellish flames.
I will build there
a path of order and
right!"

There are those
attached to power
who walk toward
destruction.
There are those who wander
through dark lives of
vengeance.

But my heart progresses
toward the attainment
of clear, enduring value.
So also do the hearts of my
comrades.

So many friends
are parting with the past,
entering a new era;
they are moving from
old ways of living and being
into a new century of life!

Take steady steps on
this firm, indestructible earth.
Lift your eyes to an endless sky
glittering with stars!



Burning with cheerful resolve,
forge on, radiantly embracing all
with the boundless expanse of
your own inner sky.

We know what the times require.
We know people's hopes and dreams.

So many have lost hope
in this world of ceaseless conflict,
of mutual abuse and contempt.

Yet we are filled
with vigorous resolve,
upholding the principle
for living fully,
with unabated joy
in harmony with the cosmos.

We will never lose hope.
For we possess the pride
of living to the fullest,
a crown adorned
with precious jewels.

We also know the end of
living;
we have confident faith
in the eternal path of life
beyond the horizon of
death.

Fully active and
engaged,
we seek to reach
those whose spirits
wander
in darkened night,
to teach them of
the moment-by-
moment struggle
to transform life
in its very depths.

America!
This land of freedom
in which I live.

In the early years of
the twentieth
century,
the founding
president of our
movement,
Tsunesaburo
Makiguchi,
saw in America
the land where
future civiliza-
tions
would encounter
and unite.

Josei Toda, our sec-
ond president,
often recalled that it was
America that brought
freedom of religion to post-war Japan,
opening the way
for a peace movement based
on this Buddhism to unfold.
"Daisaku!" he would say,
"I want to go to the U.S.
to repay our debt of gratitude!"

And thus, as their direct disciple,
I determined to take the first step
in my travels for peace
here in my beloved America.

And I am determined
to work with my American friends
to assure that the United States
always enjoys
trust, prosperity and security.

As we greet the night,
together let us offer
prayers of appreciation.
Together let us offer
vows of construction.
And let us, with clear voices,
sing the future's songs.

Each day a vibrant, energetic dance...
Each morning and evening
we delight in the
limitless company
of nature's benevolent forces.

Liberty Bell photo by LEIF SKOOGFORS/CORBIS



How noble are your prayers
as you encourage your friends:
"The breezes of happiness
will blow through your life as well!
May the clouds disperse
and the blue skies shine!"

How inspiring you are
as you appeal to your friends
with a beautiful, natural
human sincerity:
"Please know, in your suffering,
that for you, too, the times of wind and rain
will give way to clear and balmy days.
You without doubt will experience
days of harmony and victory!"
We know
there is no greater power
than that of a pure and noble spirit.

And we know
a path of mission
that infinitely transcends
a life without meaning,
clamorous disputations
or charitable efforts
whose real purpose is fame.

We grieve
for those who are drifting into old age
ignorant of life's true meaning;
for those who are carried along
by days of pretense
never knowing true youthfulness,
the lushness of fresh green growth.

More effectively than
countless doctoral theses,
you are sharing with others
the profound and subtle
teachings of Buddhism.
You are indeed the most remarkable
people of knowledge and learning!

Beyond the politicians
and their eloquent discussions
of political programs;

beyond the
sociologists
proud of their
in-depth
investiga-
tions,
their grasp
of world
events
and their
statistics...
Your wisdom and
your actions
resonate precisely in
the depths
of the lives of those
you address.
You bring to so many
weary people
the joy and strength to
live on.

As philosophers and people of
action,
you brilliantly inspire millions
in a dynamically expanding
process of dialogue.

And all around
the broad and flowered
lawns we tread,
are the earnest words and acts
of a sincere humanism.

Our conversations and exchanges
give rise to joy.
New doors swing open
like the masterful turn
of a graceful dancer.

"I have embraced the source
of energy and power
to ponder deeply
the significance of my own life and death,
to review the days that have passed
while living fully into the future.
From now on I will no longer
be pushed and tossed by
the fickle winds,
for I can now look into the
precious depths of my own life."

"I will no longer be defeated
by the most powerful forces of fate.
For I now possess the secret means
by which to confront and triumph
over the demonic tyranny of misfortune."

Ahead of us
the Buddhist deities
gather for a festive
banquet of welcome,
awaiting our arrival.

Today, once more,
accumulate the treasure of experience,
transcend and triumph
in life's gales and storms.
Direct your steps
on this grand and golden
path,
which others, inspired by
your example,
will also yearn to tread.

Walk again today
this pleasant path of
courage and good will,
creating the harmonious
unity of millions,
singing the songs you
love
in a clear and resonant
voice.

Today again set out
on this broad avenue of happiness,
occasionally pausing to take refreshment,
always savoring the joyous company
of true friends.

From this path can be seen
unmistakable vistas
of victory and flourishing.

From this path
have been driven
all confrontation, all conflict,
all evil and destruction.

For we know
that this is a way
embodying a law, a principle
eternal and universal.

We have bid farewell
to a shallow, cruel, purgatorial world.
We have declared the victory
of our lives,
our hearts resounding
with a brightly burning passion.

Awake! Arise!
That you also may know
life's deep and genuine joy.
Turn away from a life of sadness,
from passive drifting,
from tragic weeping at death and loss.

Unbowed by stubborn, arrogant folly,
beating out the sustained rhythms
of unsurpassed joy in life —
walk this path toward the fruition of your
eternal and profoundly compassionate self.

We know the hollow whistled tunes
of pitiful lusting after fame.
We know the faded hues
of a weak and jealous life,
the malicious pillaging
of one's own being.

The questions for each and all of us —
How will we spend our final hour?
How will we pass our last days?

What could be the meaning
of a life squandered in pursuit
of superficial recognition and praise?
Mere emptiness and vanity,
a shred of winter wind.

So many people...
trapped in feverish torment,
their most strenuous exertions
coming to naught,
constantly lacerated
by a suffocating
absurdity.

Shallow and empty hearts
are swallowed into
darkness...
Forgetful that none are
assured
of even tomorrow's
life,

Bowed with secret despair,
their grieving hearts
continue their bitter steps.

Those whose only desire is fame.
We whose names are utterly unknown!
Yet who, in the dawning of eternity,
will perform the songs and melodies
of life that has been lived true and with joy?

They are people of hapless misery;
ours is a life of boundless fortune.
They have destroyed their own future;
we have full confidence
in a future that continues eternally.

Laughing off
the corrupt and degenerate,
we know that a life free from
all doubt and regret awaits us.

The malicious acts
directed against us
— ludicrous invented
incidents
petty empty criticism —
only bring suffering
upon their authors.

In our spirits and our souls
we have developed and
distilled
the inner strength to win
however intense the challenge.

In our lives is engraved
a massive badge of "victory."

We know that this spirit —
never fearing,
never collapsing before hardship —
is itself the spirit of a Buddha.

"All insult and abuse
rebound from my soul.
I have surmounted
innumerable trials.
And now about me wave
countless banners of glory.
Misery has no claim
or territory
within my heart!"

We treasure human
society.
We respect the ways of the
world.
Because Buddhism comes to life
only in the midst of social realities.

No one can survive in isolation.
Our lives are grounded in
empathy and solidarity
with others, with people
and with society as a whole.

The sutras provide
this penetrating insight:
"All secular phenomena
are manifestations of the Buddha's law."

From the perspective of faith,
for people who live
with lofty and utter conviction,
to be swayed by appearances
is foolishness and error.
"I do not choose
or discriminate among them
whoever they may be —

unaware that twilight comes to all,
mindless that they walk a path
of imprisoned confinement,
still they desire their golden goods,
and frantically crave their fame.

For us, this proud and brightly lit way...
We advance with confident smiles.
Embracing the law of cause and effect
— this governing principle infinitely
extending —
we enjoy eternal protection.

Off in the distance,
there may be those who criticize us
with wan, foolish, sarcastic smiles.
Concealing the pain of their own hearts,
they watch with longing and envy —
our lives, shining with commitment and
courage.



Photo by
GREGORY NAKASUJI

SGI-USA young women of San Diego.

this wise and clever friend;
this person wracked by
poverty's pain;
the person plagued
by the deepest sleeplessness;
this person isolated
in the remote regions of being
different...
I share life with them all,
live in profound meaning,
live as a good friend to each."

Unfathomable mystery
of the Bodhisattvas of the
Earth...
Charged with the solemn
early morning task of prayer,
you have emerged,
you are pushing up
the shoots and buds of
new growth
here in America.
Your voices, resounding to
the heavens,
are earnest, devoted and sincere.

That bell
is not an evening bell,
but the bell of dawn.
Your face is brightly lit
by the light of the Mystic Law.

Your gaze is focused on
the Buddha.
As you fuse with this
magnificent
state of being,
there arises within you
a life vibrantly filled
with the ultimate joy
of the universe
— your Buddha nature —
eternal, unceasing and bound-
less.

Transcending
the rewards and punishments
of the world,
beyond apathy,
beyond calumny and abuse...

Advancing step by step,
the bodhisattva's heart,
the bodhisattva's life,
feels not the slightest pain or tremor
however fierce the raging rains
of insult and slur.

Those who libel us,
flaming with envy,
are unconscious of the
dark shadows enveloping
their ashen, aging spirits.

America!
Where people leave behind
old authorities and conventions
as they seek to create
a new, ideal nation.
This great America!
Struggling for freedom
and for human rights.

As one poet noted:
The twentieth century
has been a century of humans
murdering their fellows,
a truly hellish century.



Photo at top by YOGI, INC./CORBIS

and catastrophe.
It is you who will decide
which of these will win! —

Toward the civilization
of the twenty-first century;
for the sake of the young
leaders and scholars;
for the sake of the
peace, prosperity and joy
that come from humanistic
education!
Soka University of America
has been constructed...
Gazing out upon the waves
of a monarch Pacific Ocean,
carrying the burden
of the hopes and expectations
of the centuries,
its construction has been
matched
by innumerable voices
raised brightly in song,
by an unending array
of young people ascending
that vibrant hill in Orange
County.

For the sake of
these free, young spirits,
I have determined to spend
the culminating years of my life
in this America I love,
together creating infinite
memories,
sounding the reverberant
trumpet of the dawn.

We advance with this cry:
We praise, salute and call for
peace!
We praise and salute daily life!
And above all we praise, salute
and call forth happiness!

Before us lies
the ominous quaking
of life's tortured pulse.

People whose eyes are filled with pain.
People with sad, abandoned eyes.
Eyes that gleam sharp and bestial...

And yet we advance unhesitating
into the very midst of humanity.
We advance with proudly beating hearts,
among our fellow human beings.

Hot tears of compassion
borne secretly in our breasts,
we take no notice of the sad,
ignorant, barbarian songs.
Forging characters
of true strength and great depth,
our eyes burn with hope.
Our blood also burns
with the determination
to ease the pain
of the troubled and suffering.

Speaking at the University of Denver,
with which I have a strong bond,
the future president, John F.
Kennedy,
uttered these words:

— It is said that civilization
is a race between education

There is no paradise;
it does not exist.
Therefore walk forward
into this world of suffering!
And there you will see
the reality of the dream,
of this eternally bright,
eternally joyful and serene,
this eternally noble dream.

July 21, 2000



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda with New York youth, June 1996.

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 33-34

Shin'ichi Yamamoto remembers President Toda's teaching that 'whether we can achieve a life of eternal victory, whether we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime, is determined by how we respond when the Soka Gakkai is faced with persecution.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto recalled his mentor's words at the Kansai Headquarters in Osaka in July 1957. Shin'ichi had just been released from jail, following his arrest on false charges of violating the election laws. Mr. Toda said to him: "This all happened because I encouraged some of my disciples to run for the House of Councilors, and a number of them succeeded. The ruling establishment feared the rise of a new popular force. They're afraid of the solidarity of the Soka Gakkai, which has managed to organize ordinary citizens.

"They know what a strong force the people can be when they unite, and so they set out to destroy the Soka Gakkai. That is why they wanted to arrest me. That was their real aim.

"So they dug up minor violations of the election law by our members and tried, by fair means or foul, to connect me to the crimes. If they could arrest me and make me out as a criminal, they could create an image of the Soka Gakkai as an anti-social, criminal organization.

"Targeting the leader of an organization or movement is a standard means of oppression. It was also in order to get at me that they arrested and harassed you.

"Shin'ichi, you saw right through their tricks. And you tried

to take all the blame yourself...." Toda's eyes grew moist with tears. It was a sight forever burned in Shin'ichi's mind.

Toda continued with great intensity: "Shin'ichi, this series of events has been a rehearsal for you. You can be certain that before long the authorities will reveal their devilish nature and attack the Soka Gakkai in earnest.

"Government oppression is not a thing of the past, something that happened only during the war. True, Japan has become a democratic country after the war, and lese majesty and the Peace Preservation Law, which were used to arrest Mr. Makiguchi and myself, no longer exist. The freedom of religion is now also guaranteed.

"But the inherent insidious nature of the political authori-

phenomenal growth. The authorities, desperate to secure their survival at all costs, will frantically move to attack the Soka Gakkai, using whatever unscrupulous means they can get their hands on, in an attempt to prevent our organization from developing further.

"At that time, you will become a target, Shin'ichi. You should be prepared."

It was a cry from the inner depths of Josei Toda, an indomitable champion of the Mystic Law who fought fiercely to prove to all the truth and integrity of his mentor Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who died in prison for his beliefs.

Toda continued with an even more impassioned tone: "I encouraged some of our members to run for political office because I felt that in Japan it would be difficult to secure happy, stable lives for the people unless government was put back into the people's hands. I was well aware that if we tried to change society for the better, we would be persecuted.

The fact is, when you throw a stone into a pond, it makes ripples.

"But we would be betraying Nichiren Daishonin's spirit to 'secure the peace of the land through establishing the correct teaching,' if we ignored the suffering in society and closed ourselves off in the religious world,



content just to sit in peace and quiet, chanting daimoku. The practice of Buddhism lies in the struggle to eliminate misery and suffering from the world, to defend human rights and human dignity, and to build a peaceful society.

"In our bold efforts to do so, it is only natural that we will be subject to persecution and attack. But if we let that intimidate us, we will not fulfill our true mission as Buddhists. Furthermore, the only way for us to change our karma and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime is by triumphing over the persecution and obstacles we encounter in the course of working for the Law.

"That is why I have steered us toward creating a more humane society. I have been calling forth obstacles and the three powerful enemies. The Daishonin states, 'In this age as well, it is not one's allies but one's powerful enemies who assist one's progress' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 770).

"If we win in the struggle against malicious people and evil authorities bent on destroying kosen-rufu, we attain Buddhahood. That is why the Daishonin says that our great enemies actually do more for us than our friends.

"Those who fight with courage against harsh persecution become strong. They become lions.

"During this latest incident in Osaka, the Kansai members

fought bravely. Not a single one stood by indifferently when they learned of your arrest. It was a wonderful display of unity.

"They prayed desperately, their hearts filled with righteous anger, determined to crush the malevolent forces at work. They went out tirelessly, striving with all their might to communicate a true picture of the Soka Gakkai.

"Many of them wished that they could take your place in prison. If you hadn't been released today, I think that there would have been big trouble in Kansai.

"Whether we can achieve a life of eternal victory, whether we can attain Buddhahood in this lifetime, is determined by how we respond when the Soka Gakkai is faced with persecution. Do we simply stand by, telling ourselves it doesn't concern us directly? Or do we jump into the fray and fight courageously for what's right?

"The Kansai members stood up and confronted persecution alongside you, Shin'ichi. They fought fearlessly against great injustice.

"As a result, our Kansai organization will grow even stronger. The Kansai members have made a giant leap toward attaining a boundless state of life that overflows with good fortune."

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



The page numbers that appear in parentheses after each of the following sample questions direct the reader to where the answer can be found in the SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Textbook or the August 1998 issue of Living Buddhism. (The material published in Living Buddhism is taken from Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 73–94, and Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, volume 1 (pp. 35–43; 53–83; 133–40). (The study material will not be available in one booklet.)

Most of the Oct. 29 exam questions will be in a multiple-choice format. Correct answers need only be selected from among several possibilities. Therefore, this sample test is more difficult than the actual exam will be. It is not necessary to learn the Japanese-language version of terms or principles. Also, of these sample questions, only 40 to 50 percent will appear on the exam, which is expected to consist of 30-some questions.

The Spanish, Korean and Chinese versions of these sample questions will be available soon either through the organization or in future issues of the World Tribune. The Japanese version of the sample questions will differ slightly from what appears here and will be available through the organization in August.

We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam.

Contents:

- Q 1–13 “Letter to the Brothers”
Q 14–22 “The Person and the Law”
Q 23–32 *Ichinen Sanzen* (A Life-Moment Possesses 3,000 Realms)
Q 33–48 *Lectures on the “Expedient Means” Chapter of the Lotus Sutra*
Q 49–60 “The One Essential Phrase” I & II
Q 61–75 *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue* (pamphlet)

“Letter to the Brothers”
SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Text Book (pp. 6–13, 22–25, 31–51, 57–61, 67–74, 80–84, 89–104)

1. What was the crisis in the brothers’ lives that prompted Nichiren Daishonin to write this letter? (pp. 22–25)
2. According to this Goshō, what are the three reasons believers meet difficulties? (pp. 22–25)

STUDY DEPARTMENT

Elementary Examination Sample Questions

The Elementary Examination, which any current SGI-USA member who has passed the Entrance Examination is eligible to take, will be held Oct. 29. (The date was originally Oct. 22.)

3. The Daishonin states: “The three groups of men of Learning, however, had to suffer through the period of *sanzen-jintengo*, and the great bodhisattvas, through that of *gohyaku-jintengo*, because of the sin they committed by discarding the Lotus Sutra.” This shows what an unimaginably terrible sin it is. Why is it such a terrible sin to discard the Lotus Sutra? (pp. 31–34)



Kate Mason of Charlottesville District, Virginia–Carolina Region.

4. In the quote, it is even more difficult than for a one-eyed turtle to find a piece of floating sandalwood or for someone to dangle Mount Sumeru from the sky with a fiber from a long stem, what does *even more difficult* mean in a broader sense? (pp. 34–35)

5. The Daishonin uses many examples in this Goshō to point out the effects of following an erroneous teacher. One is a quote of Dengyo’s about the Great Teacher Tz’u-en, which states, “Even though he praises the Lotus Sutra, he destroys its heart.” Explain how someone destroys its heart. (pp. 35–38)

6. In the passage “If one befriends an evil person, he will lose his mind,” the Daishonin stresses the importance of not tolerating evil, because it will lead to abandoning faith. According to this Goshō, what do evil persons fool others into believing? (pp. 38–40)

7. In our lives we possess both fundamental darkness and fundamental enlightenment. The fundamental darkness can manifest itself as the Devil of the Sixth Heaven that is the source of evil in bad friends. This force can also manifest itself internally as greed, anger, and ignorance, which

distorts our understanding of the correct path of faith. According to this Goshō, what attitudes and actions will help us win in this battle against our own fundamental darkness? (pp. 54–61)

8. The Daishonin uses the story of Shariputra offering his eye to the Devil of the Sixth Heaven who was posing as a Brahman to emphasize the importance of never abandoning our faith. Why did Shariputra renounce his bodhisattva practice? (pp. 57–61)

9. In the Goshō, the Daishonin encourages the husbands and wives from different perspectives. To the husbands he says: Women are faint-hearted and your wives have probably given up. Yet you must grit your teeth and never slacken in your faith.” To the wives he says: “You two wives should have no regrets even if you are harmed by your husbands because of your faith in this teaching. If you both unite in encouraging their faith, you will follow the path of the Dragon King’s daughter and become the

odel for women attaining enlightenment in the evil Latter Day of the Law.” What is he teaching them about the attitude an individual should have in the midst of the hardship? (pp. 80–84)

Answer questions 12 and 13 based on this quote from the Maka Shikan (Great Concentration and Insight): “As practice progresses and understanding grows, the three obstacles and four devils emerge, vying with one another to interfere.... You should be neither influenced nor frightened by them. If you fall under their influence, you will be lead into the paths of evil. If you are frightened by them, you will be prevented from practicing true Buddhism.”

10. From where do the three obstacles and four devils originate? (pp. 94–100)

11. Explain why obstacles are confirmation we are progressing toward enlightenment? (pp. 94–100)

12. Although our happiness or enlightenment depends solely on our own efforts, not the actions of others, the Daishonin states: When a husband is happy, his wife will be fulfilled. If a husband is a thief, his wife will become one too, and, if either of you gives up halfway, you will both fail to attain Buddhahood. Explain the meaning of these statements. (pp. 100–02)

13. In the passage one should become the master of his mind rather than let his mind master him, what does *mastering one’s mind* mean? (pp. 102–04)

“The Person and The Law”
SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Text Book, pp. 107–27

14. Through the story of Tokusho Doji and his mud pie, Nichiren Daishonin is making two points about offerings. What are they? (pp. 115, 119)

15. Generally speaking, offerings to the Gohonzon take two forms. Explain them. (pp. 118–19)

16. In commending Tokimitsu’s support over the years, the Daishonin writes, “one who makes offerings to the votary of the Lotus Sutra in the Latter Day of the Law for even a single day will gain incomparably greater fortune than he would by offering countless treasures to the Buddha for one hundred thousand eons.” Explain the reason for this, comparing the teaching expounded by “the votary” with that by “the Buddha.” (pp. 115–18)

17. Explain why we call Nichiren Daishonin “the original Buddha?” (p. 116)

18. What is the difference between Buddhahood revealed by Shakyamuni and Buddhahood revealed by the Daishonin? (pp. 116–17)

Answer the following questions based on this passage: “Although I live in such a forsaken hovel, deep in this moral flesh I preserve the ultimate secret Law inherited from Shakyamuni Buddha at Eagle Peak. My heart is where all Buddhas enter nirvana, my tongue, where they turn the wheel of doctrine; my throat, where they are born into this world; and my mouth, where they attain enlightenment.”

19. “I preserve the ultimate secret Law inherited from Shakyamuni Buddha at Eagle Peak.” What does this statement refer to? (p. 121)

20. What does the Daishonin mean by “the ultimate secret Law”? (p. 121)

21. “My heart is where all Buddhas enter nirvana, my tongue, where they turn the wheel of doctrine; my throat, where they are born into this world; and my mouth, where they attain enlightenment.” What does Nichiren Daishonin reveal by this statement? (p. 122)

Read this passage and answer the following questions. “Since

the Law is supreme, the Person is worthy of respect; since the Person is worth of respect, the Land is sacred."

22. Explain this passage in terms of the life of Nichiren Daishonin. (p. 123)

Ichinen Sanzen (A Life-Moment Possesses 3,000 Realms); SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Text Book, pp. 128-60

23. The figure three thousand is derived from *ichinen sanzen's* component principles. Name these principles. (p. 131)

24. When T'ien-t'ai writes, "Life at each moment is endowed with the ten worlds," he means that within a single moment of life there exists the potential for ten conditions. List the ten worlds. (p. 135)

25. Explain the concept of the mutual possession of the ten worlds. (p. 135)

26. List the ten factors. (p. 136)

27. Explain the difference between the *ichinen sanzen* (a single moment possesses 3,000 realms) of Nichiren Daishonin and that of Shakyamuni? (p. 138)

28. Contrast the six lower worlds with the "four noble worlds" in how they become manifest? (pp. 144-45)

29. Explain the major differences between the world of Bodhisattva and the worlds of the two vehicles? (p. 146)

30. The factor of "consistency from beginning to end" explains that both the beginning and end are inseparable. What is the "beginning" and what is the "end"? (p. 156)

31. What does the fact that "living beings are no more than a temporary union of the five components" tell us about how we should view our relationship with other "living beings"? (p. 159)

32. The realm of the environment also possesses the ten worlds. What is the difference between the environment and "living beings"? (pp. 159-60)

Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra Vol. 1, pp. 5-43, 53-83, 133-40

33. What are the different expressions of this "manifold Lotus Sutra"? And, what do they have in common? (p. 9)

34. "Votaries of the Lotus Sutra" refers to what people? (p. 12)

35. How did the Daishonin read the Lotus Sutra with his life? (p. 14)

36. What is the benefit of reciting the sutra? (pp. 16-18)

37. What are we praising when we do gongyo? (p. 21)

38. What four conditions must be met for a Buddha to expound the Law? (p. 30)

39. What is the crucial element in creating "that time"? (pp. 32-33)

40. What does *wisdom* mean? And how can we obtain it? (p. 40-42)

41. What practice represents the quintessence of the Daishonin's Buddhism? (p. 56-57)

42. What is the most difficult undertaking there is? (p. 62)

43. What was the Daishonin's sole intention? (p. 72)

44. Where does the world of Buddhahood appear? (p. 83)

45. What must be understood in order to grasp the vastness and profundity of life in its entirety? (p. 137)

46. What is "the eye of the Buddha"? (p. 138)

47. From the standpoint of the Daishonin's Buddhism, what does the true entity of all phenomena mean? (p. 140)

"The One Essential Phrase" I & II (Learning From the Goshu, pp. 73-94)

48. According to Nichiren Daishonin, what was the significance of lady Myoho-ama asking the question "Can one attain Buddhahood just by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo?" and what is the importance to us of asking such questions? (pp. 73-74)

49. Explain what the concept of the six difficult and nine easy acts means in terms of our practice. (pp. 75-76)

50. Nichiren Daishonin states in this Goshu that "This is a sure indication that if you embrace the Lotus Sutra, you will certainly attain Buddhahood in your present form." Explain in terms of the three properties of the Buddha what it means to attain Buddhahood in your present form? (pp. 77-78)

51. What is the basis for attaining Buddhahood in your present form? (p. 78)

52. Nichiren Daishonin explains that "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is only one phrase, but it contains the essence of the sutra." Explain what this quote means. (pp. 78-79)

53. Why does everything become a source of value when we base ourselves on daimoku? (pp. 78-81)

54. What does it mean to "ceaselessly chant daimoku" in terms of our practice? (pp. 84-85)

55. With what spirit should we read the Goshu and what is one indication that we are deeply reading the Goshu? (pp. 84-86)

56. The Daishonin states, "A candle can light up a place that has been dark for billions of years." This phrase explains two important principles of faith. Name these two principles and explain them. (pp. 89-90)

57. In his lecture President Ikeda explains that "It is precisely when faced with challenging circumstances that we need to pray." He also explains what the nature of our faith and prayer should be. Explain what attitudes keep us from realizing our dreams and what will lead us to our dreams. (pp. 91-92)

58. Explain the relationship between prayer and action. (pp. 92-93)

59. At the end of this letter, Nichiren Daishonin states "Do not doubt this in the least." What shouldn't we doubt and what encouragement does the Daishonin give us to back up his statement that we shouldn't doubt? (pp. 89, 91-93)

Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue (pamphlet)

60. Nichiren Daishonin warns us that to fail to understand the fundamental principles of faith will make our practice an "endless painful austerity," and that without correct understanding, it would be useless to embrace the Lotus Sutra. In light of the priesthood issue, what constitutes correct faith? (pp. 9-10)

61. "You, yourself, are a true Buddha who possesses the three enlightened properties. You should chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with this conviction" (MW-1, 30; WND, 299-300). How is this different from what the Temple teaches? (p. 13)

62. "Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" (MW-1, 213; WND, 832). What does Nichiren Shoshu say about this concept? (p. 14)

63. How does the Nichiren Shoshu sect define the master disciple relationship? (p. 15)

64. The most essential difference between the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu lies in the area of attitude and behavior. Describe that difference specifically? (pp. 15-16)

65. What prompted Makiguchi and Toda to question and defy the High Priest's instructions? (p. 18).

66. What are two of the three reasons why the Temple claims the Gohonzon issued by the SGI are counterfeit and why are those reasons not valid? (pp. 21-22)

67. Explain why the Gohonzon issued by the SGI is not "counterfeit." (pp. 21-22)

68. Explain why members are exchanging their Nikken-transcribed Gohonzon for one transcribed by Nichikan and if this means that there is a difference between these Gohonzon. (pp. 23-24)

69. Why shouldn't we visit a Nichiren Shoshu Temple? (pp. 25-26)

70. How should we view the continuous persecution of the SGI and President Ikeda that has been instigated by Nichiren Shoshu? (pp. 27-28)

71. Why don't the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu talk to each other? (pp. 29-30)

72. Is the unity of priesthood and laity essential? If so, why? If not, why not? (p. 30)

73. What effect will the priests' errors have on those who follow them, and what can I do for those people? (pp. 31-32)

74. How will the Temple issue affect SGI in the future? (p. 33)

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World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

General Director
Daniel Nagashima

Publisher
Fred M. Zaitso
Assistant Publisher
Greg Martin
Editor in Chief
Ted Morino

Managing Editor
Margie Hall
mhall@sgi-usa.org

Associate Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

Staff Writers
Stephanie Celano
scelano@sgi-usa.org
Jamie Liptan
jliptan@sgi-usa.org

Contributing Writer
Terry Ellis

Contributing Artists
Stephanie Sydney
ssydney@sgi-usa.org
Linda Eberle

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers

Gregory Nakasuji
Kirk Condyles
Jonathan Wilson
Dixon Hamby
Carol Barnstead
Martin Cohen
Jean Pritchard

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
marvilisa@cs.com

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READERS COMMENTS

Send to:
Mailbox
606 Wilshire Blvd. PO Box 1427
Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907
or e-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS

1-800-835-4558
or e-mail: SGIsubs@aol.com

FRIENDS FOR PEACE

ffp@sgi-usa.org

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EXPERIENCE —

JERRY SHUBERT, ANTELOPE, CALIF.

Buddhism Is Win-Win

Jerry Shubert helps his wife, Mitsue, recover from kidney failure and peritonitis.

About four-and-a-half years ago, my wife's kidneys failed and she had to go on dialysis. This consisted of being connected to a dialysis machine at the hospital for three hours every other day of the week; the machine pumped the blood out of the body, washed it and pumped it back in again. Because Mitsue has a small body frame, this proved to be a very violent process for her. Her blood pressure would drop excessively, she was nauseous the entire rest of the day, and she would not feel "normal" until the following day. And that's how it went for one-and-a-half years — one good day and one bad one every other day of the week. We were literally held prisoners in our immediate environment. Prior to Mitsue's illness, we did a lot of traveling because I was financially secure. Our idea of fun was to lock the front door, get in the car and go and come back whenever we felt like it. All of that changed due to her illness.

About a year and a half ago, we graduated to home dialysis. What a difference! The "washing machine" was placed in her stomach, so the blood never left the body. There were no blood pressure drops and no nausea. As a matter of fact, I would "plug her in" around 10:00 p.m. and by 7:00 the next morning, when I "unplugged" her, she could resume normal living. The machine was very portable. We got back to traveling and going out, and it was a great life — with limitations, of course.

During the second week of April last year, Mitsue developed peritonitis. She was taken to the hospital and had to have an emergency operation.

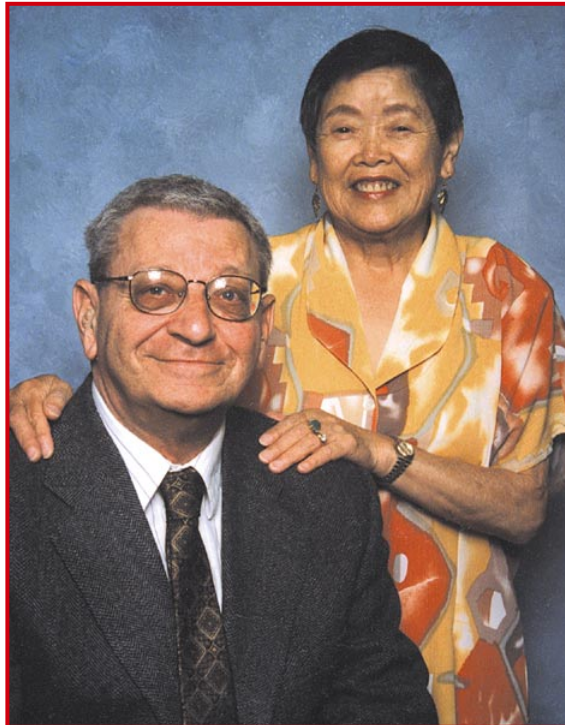
I was told that this condition was extremely dangerous, and her entire stomach had become infected. Therefore, anything inside the stomach, like the catheter, which enabled her to do home dialysis, had to be removed immediately. Also, at that time they would assess the damage.

The doctors reported extensive damage in the stomach walls, i.e., tears, scrapes, torn cartilage and lots of scar tissue. The pain from all this would be excruciating, and they would have to give Mitsue morphine and high-performance drugs so that she could live through it. It seems, as well, that a white mass developed on the right side of her brain that could cause mental problems. As a result of all this, she was to remain in the hospital for an indefinite time.

It was impossible to carry on a conversation with her because she really went "loony tunes." Most of the time she did not know where she was. The nurses attempted to exercise her by walking her down the corridor, holding her up in addition to using a walker. Mitsue would walk with her head downward and, unable to lift her feet, would shuffle along for a short distance before having to rest. The situation was gloomy, to say the least.

While all of this was going on, my SGI family really helped me. People called on a daily basis. And the great thing was that many of them did not just say, "I will chant for her," but instead would inform their group and chant together just for my wife. I have a brother and sister who are both Jewish and another sister who is Catholic, and they all said they would pray for my wife. Now there was no way that I was going to miss out on all that, so I managed to chant a couple of hours every day.

Finally, on the 14th day of Mitsue's hospitalization, the doctor said that she would be released. I immediately responded that it would be great



Jerry and Mitsue Shubert say they 'appreciate life fully, day by day.'

finally to bring her home. I will never forget what the doctor then said to me: "You don't understand, Mr. Shubert. I'm not talking about sending her home. I've told you before how dangerous her condition is. She almost died on the operating table. If we had performed the operation 15 minutes later than we did, she would be dead now. This white mass that developed on her brain and made her mentally unfit is irreversible! As far as her physical ability is concerned, don't expect too much there, either. You can't handle the situation! We have to put her in a nursing home."

I've been chanting for 39 years, my wife for 40. In that time, there are certain truths that you learn about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. The first is to believe in the Gohonzon — with absolute, faithful, unimpeachable trust. The second is that this Buddhism is not a "count-your-blessings" religion. This Buddhism is not a "be-thankful-for-what-you've-got" religion. It is win or lose. (I actually take it a step further, and say it's a win-win religion). I simply would not accept the fact that she would not improve. I would not accept the fact that my wife's illness would cause her imminent death. This religion is really about how we handle problems and, with ultimate trust and faith in Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we come out in better

shape than before we had the problem.

So, I somehow convinced the doctor to "put me to the test." He let my wife come home for a week or so, to see if I could handle her or not. Mitsue was released from the hospital on a Monday afternoon. There were daily chanting sessions going on in my home as well in other people's homes and at the community centers. Although Mitsue could not join us the first two days, she did make a few appearances in front of the Gohonzon after that. On the following Sunday, only six days later, at her request, we drove to the Ikeda Auditorium in San Francisco. We attended a ceremony and when they called out our names, with only the use of a cane, she walked up to the stage! It was truly great! A lot of the people attending came up to her and wished her well, and there were many smiles.

About a week later, we had a follow-up meeting with the doctor who had proclaimed her illness irreversible. She walked into his office using only my arm as support. He was carrying on a normal conversation with her. He kept shaking his head. Then he sent her down to have a CAT scan of her stomach area. While we were waiting for the results, he said to me that he was amazed at her incredibly fast recovery and wanted to know what I had done. I immediately responded, "What you

are witnessing doctor, is the raw, unbridled power of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo." He said that he had heard that phrase before and wanted to know its meaning. So, of course, I began to tell the doctor about Buddhism. When the results from the CAT scan came back, he looked at them several times and, after consulting with another doctor, confirmed that there were no signs of an infection anywhere! There was no scar tissue anywhere! Her stomach looked perfectly normal! Wow! It doesn't get much better than this! Now I don't want to downplay the seriousness of this disease. It is a maiming disease, a deadly disease. But we have the Gohonzon and we have this wonderful SGI organization, which I believe is synonymous with the word *family*.

I would like to quote my favorite passage from Nichiren Daishonin, which states, "Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1001).

The strategy of the Lotus Sutra is our faith in the Gohonzon. With regard to this, SGI President Ikeda states: "We must pray and make efforts. Then it is important to have the unshakable confidence to leave everything else to the Gohonzon. When we genuinely devote ourselves to the Mystic Law, we can bring forth infinite wisdom and strength, making the impossible possible. When we encounter a difficult problem or situation, for which there seems no solution, we must first decide that 'I will overcome this problem,' or 'I will resolve this situation,' and then pray earnestly to the Gohonzon" (Feb. 7, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 10).

Although Mitsue is still undergoing dialysis three days a week at the hospital, we no longer fear the deadlines of her disease. She and I are back to traveling once again but on a limited basis. Her illness has caused us to live one day at a time with no regrets; we appreciate life fully, day by day. **WT**

Correction: In the Aug. 4 *World Tribune*, page 3, Michael Choi was incorrectly identified as his brother, Ted. We apologize for the confusion this caused.

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