



40-YEAR JOURNEY FOR PEACE
celebrated in Los Angeles, Michigan, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle

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Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

NEXT YEAR'S THEME ANNOUNCED

'Year of Total Victory for the New Century'

By TED MORINO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya announced at the 50th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting held in Tokyo on Oct. 5 that next year's SGI theme would be "Year of Total Victory for the New Century."

In his speech, Mr. Akiya stated, "Total victory" means victory in every aspect of our movement for kosen-rufu."

SGI-USA will discuss how to implement this theme in America at its Central Executive Conference slated at the beginning of December.

Referring to the direction of the SGI in the 21st century, Mr. Akiya mentioned: "May 3, 2001, signifies a point from which we will go on to complete our climb of the first mountain of kosen-rufu—a fierce challenge that our mentor has been spearheading for us for the past 40 years—and make a new departure to scale the next one in the 21st century. Our new departure denotes the commencement of a new cycle of the second seven bells for the worldwide promotion of kosen-rufu. (See the Sept. 8 *World Tribune* for detailed information about the seven bells.)

"It is the mission of the SGI to put into action this passage from *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*: 'If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing, Nam-myoho-

renge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 736). We will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Soka Gakkai on Nov. 18 this year. Our next major milestone is the year 2030, which will coincide with the 100th anniversary of our organization's establishment. Aiming toward that day, let's make a fresh, dauntless start in fulfilling the great cause of the Soka Gakkai."

Mr. Akiya encouraged all present: "The tolling of the first seven bells marked a great record of victory after victory on the part of our mentor, SGI President Ikeda, who has realized every dream that our second president, Josei Toda, entertained for kosen-rufu. The time has finally come for us to show with the spirit of lion kings, proof of winning in every one of our endeavors for kosen-rufu. Only when we win completely can we say we are his true disciples. A truly determined person can definitely tap wisdom, courage and limitless ability from within. Victorious disciples enable the first of the second seven bells to ring."

Mr. Akiya concluded that the dynamic practice of dialogue and the development of capable people in each community would be the key to bringing about complete victory in the new era of the kosen-rufu movement. **WT**



Tiana Henry performs in Philadelphia's 'Unleashing the Power of the Human Spirit' festival, held Oct. 1 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

40TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATED

SGI-USA Celebrates

In the month of October, SGI-USA members all over the country held joyful celebrations to commemorate the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first trip to the United States, which began Oct. 2, 1960. Inside we feature eight full-color pages of celebrations in Los Angeles, Michigan, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle.

Soka University of America: *Making It Happen*

By **MATILDA BUCK**
SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER

After recently exploring Soka University of America's campus-in-progress, surrounded by the roar of tractors and drills, I was bowled over by the scope of this institution — by the magnitude of its goals and by its attention to the smallest detail.

But what really resonates for me is this: Because of Soka University, we — every single one of us — have an opportunity to be part of the future. We have a concrete way to support the future, to help the next generation shape its view of the world and especially its view of world peace.

I was reminded of a comment I read a few years ago in the July 8, 1991, *Time* magazine: "The primary reason youngsters need to study multiple cultures is to learn how to develop multiple perspectives. This capacity is essential to developing intelligence. We have, I hope, elevated the question from a political debate concerning whose history to teach to the question of how to enable youngsters to use broad, often conflicting bodies of information to arrive at sound judgments" (Edmund Gordon, Yale University professor of psychology).

This comment brings home to me our essential need to de-



velop broad understanding and flexibility. This is true in every aspect of daily life, whether we are a college student or a corporate executive or a parent. I believe this is a key ingredient in building peace. And that's why Soka University is a natural extension of our commitment to kosen-rufu.

Throughout my own education, it was the rare teacher who cared enough to reach out and encourage me, but what a difference such people made — I will remember them to the end of my life. In my fifth- and sixth-grade years, it was Mr. Boswell's extra effort that gave me hope. I owe him a great debt.

Now, at Soka University, I have a chance to thank Mr. Boswell. Maybe even enable a student to find his or her own Mr. Boswell. What a great feeling!

In October, we celebrated the

40th anniversary of the SGI-USA. Forty years ago, it was SGI President Ikeda's unyielding conviction and sense of responsibility to respond to the prophecy of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin's intent. He did not depend on some clever plan or strategy. Instead, he nurtured the existing, fragile membership with the utmost care and trust.

Take a moment to think about where we will be 40 years from now, and the effect our actions today will have. We can, each of us, "nurture the existing membership with the utmost care and trust" through our efforts to support Soka University of America.

The problems that our children will face — technical, social, and so on — are different from the problems many of us faced in our youth. That's why it is so important to fully empower these students, these future leaders, to help them be flexible, to help them become individuals who can think from many angles. Multiple perspectives and flexibility — these are our insurance for the future.

Gail Thomas, dean of faculty at SUA, agrees. "Flexibility is the key to openness," she said. "I'm so excited about our multidisciplinary approach.

"We see today a separation in the workplace — people acquire technical skills, but not

people skills like teamwork, getting along, being able to think in broader terms. This is humanism and, ultimately, this is what Buddhism teaches. SUA recognizes that humanism is one of the most important hallmarks of a leader — people who have compassion, the ability to think broadly and who care about others."

In November, we have the opportunity to contribute in a concrete way to the SUA scholarship fund. This is money that will go directly to Soka University, earmarked specifically to help with tuition scholarships. In other words, our contributions will make it possible for many students to experience the challenge and the wonder of

Soka education.

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima said: "It is not a coincidence that, as a new century dawns, Soka University of America is opening in our country. Perhaps only in future generations, decades or even centuries from now, will the significance of this time be fully appreciated" (September *Living Buddhism*, p. 5).

Nor is it a coincidence that we are the very people who can contribute to Soka University of America. Perhaps we are not individually donating an entire building or endowing a chair, but I am grateful that I can, in a meaningful, concrete way, help enable a student to be part of this wonderful new venture. **WT**

Photos by LISA KIRK



Matilda Buck meets with representatives from around the country during a recent visit to SUA, Aliso Viejo.

Correction: In the Oct. 27 *World Tribune*, page 7, in the last paragraph in the second column, the second sentence should have read: "It was *not* a narrow-minded perspective on religion." We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

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HONORING OUR PIONEERS

GREGORY NAKASUJI: PHOTOGRAPHER OF KOSEN-RUFU

Photo by BYRON COHEN



Age: 70 (born Oct. 14, 1930)
Joined SGI: Sept. 19, 1960
Hometown: Gobo, Japan
Occupation: Photographer
Favorite camera: Canon A1
Favorite photographer: Ansel Adams
First shot: SGI President Ikeda's first visit to L.A., 1960.
Most difficult shot: Fireworks from a boat at the Seattle Convention, 1971.
Words of wisdom: Don't hesitate.

Gregory at the 'Joy2K' meeting (see pages 4-5) in Los Angeles, Oct. 14.

Greatest challenge:

Just after the Women's General meeting in Los Angeles in July 1966, I woke up and couldn't see. There was a mucous-like film covering my corneas. I went to see a doctor, who took X-rays. He thought it was a tumor on one of my eye muscles. I began chanting four to six hours a day at the first community center in the United States located in East Los Angeles. Two to three days later the mucous disappeared. I thought that was the end of it, but the mysterious condition returned several times—usually before important SGI events.

clearly. It was so difficult to photograph. Just after the convention, I woke up and my eyes again were completely healed. The doctors couldn't believe it.

My prayer was for my eyes to heal if I had a mission. The rest is history.

Most memorable year:

In 1980, when SGI President Ikeda came to the United States to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the kosen-rufu movement, he asked to see my photographs for the past 20 years. He looked at all of them one by one, and selected the best ones for a book covering the history of the NSA organization in America, *NSA Album*.

Also that year on my birthday, Oct. 14, President Ikeda presented me with a medal commemorating the 50th anniversary of the SGI. I was shocked and honored; I never expected it.



Gregory receives a warm handshake and a certificate from the SGI president at the Second SGI General Meeting held in Honolulu, August 1981.

This happened on and off for nearly 10 years. Then in 1976, I went to New York to cover the Bicentennial Tri-City Convention, in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. Because I was afflicted with the condition, I kept falling down and bumping into things because I couldn't see

Advice to photographers:

As a photographer you have to be on time. You have to be responsible on a daily basis. Sometimes if you make even one mistake you can end up with nothing, whether you are late or mishandle film or whatever. The hardest part is

to take full responsibility—mistakes and all.

It's important that you pay attention to your surroundings when you take pictures. For example, at a meeting, try to capture the atmosphere and spirit of the people there.

No matter how the world changes, we still need photographs. And remember to use photography to protect people. As photographers for kosen-rufu, our job is to create harmony in people's lives.

Final determination:

In 1995, I officially retired as the *World Tribune* photographer. I sent a memo to President Ikeda that day. The following year he came to visit. I saw him at Soka University of America, Calabasas. As soon as he saw me, he came right over and expressed his concern for me. "Please don't retire from photography," he said. At that moment, I determined to keep taking photos as long as I live—or as long as my body holds up anyway! I have been very fortunate with respect to my health.



'My First Shot': SGI President Ikeda is met by members at the Los Angeles airport for his first visit to Los Angeles, October 1960.

Advice to the youth:

As a photographer for the past 40 years, I feel I did my best to support President Ikeda's dream for peace. I feel a deep sense of pride. If I had to do it all over again, I would.

Chant to find your own mission. Every day is your campaign. As much as you can, devote yourself to kosen-rufu,

whether in society, at work, with friends or family. You have to decide in your own mind what you are going to challenge. That's the way to create world peace.

Special thanks:

As you may have guessed, I wasn't always a photographer. When I first came to the United States in 1956, I was a farmer. I've done everything from operating a lathe to fixing sewing machines to gardening. Literally, I took my very first photograph with a camera that I just received for my birthday. It was of President Ikeda's first visit to Los Angeles.

I continued taking photos over the years. I remember President Ikeda encouraged me to dedicate myself to recording the history of American kosen-rufu with my photographs. I developed a real sense of mission at that time, and I'd like to thank President Ikeda for having confidence in me.

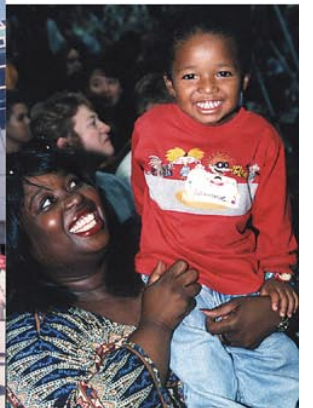
I'd also like to thank the many people who have helped me to learn photography over the years—Glen Allison, Byron Cohen, Jean Pritchard and many others. In fact, the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* have been so fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers, many whom I've had the pleasure of working with, that contribute their time and creativity, without which we could never produce such great publications. I, too, began as a volunteer photographer for the *World Tribune*, and I will never forget the training and benefit I received. **WT**



Gregory at the Grand Canyon, December 1972.



'JOY2K':



By KATHLEEN SLATTERY
LOS ANGELES BUREAU CHIEF

More than 10,600 people attended the Southern California Zone "JOY2K: Buddhism in the New Millennium" celebration at the Los Angeles Convention Center Oct. 14, commemorating the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first visit to Los Angeles.

It was 40 years ago that President Ikeda, with a will to realize second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's dream, set out to launch worldwide kosen-rufu, making Los Angeles one of the pioneering stops. Because of the dedication of a few pioneers of our Buddhist movement with whom he met in October 1960, the Southern California Zone members were able to celebrate the event in such a fun and natural way. During the commemorative meeting, these pioneer members were honored for their efforts to spread this Buddhism and become happy by replying to the expectations of their mentor, President Ikeda.

The commemorative meeting also featured a mother sharing her experience of how, through faith, she and her husband saved her infant daughter's life, as well as a video presentation on the importance of the mentor-and-disciple relationship to the expansion of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

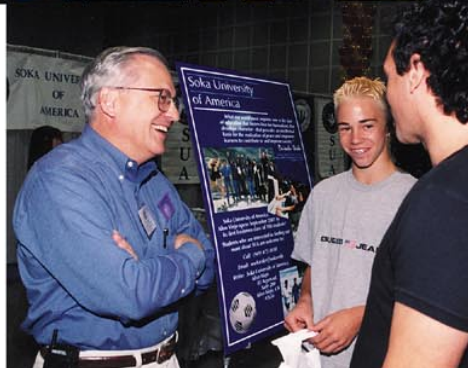
Large pastel banners with excerpts from President Ikeda's latest poem to America, "Soar—Into the Vast Skies of



Los Angeles Celebrates



Photos by
GLEN ALLISON,
BYRON COHEN,
AUDREY DEMPSEY,
DON HODGSON,
GREGORY NAKASUJI,
JEAN PRITCHARD.



Freedom! Into the New Century!," flanked the convention center halls and greeted participants as they entered the Middle Way Mall. There in the mall, educational exhibits on applying this Buddhism to such daily life concerns as family, education, the workplace, culture, health and the environment were just some of the 20 exhibit booths installed. The fun, carnival-like atmosphere provided an exposition on Buddhism that offered something for everyone.

Other exhibits introduced Soka University of America, tolerance through understanding, Victory Over Violence, the life of Nichiren Daishonin, an introduction to Buddhism and 40 years of SGI-USA history. There was also a Myoho Café, a bookstore and an interactive children's area, where children could play and draw.

Multi-cultural entertainment was featured throughout the day, reflecting the diversity and globalism of the SGI-USA family, including songs and dances from Thailand, Africa, China, Korea, North and South America, Japan, Spain and more.

The five-hour event was an expression of the spontaneous creativity of individuals working together to bring the joy of this Buddhism to everyday Americans.

California Governor Gray Davis sent a message of congratulations, and the event was featured in the religious section of the *Los Angeles Times* with the headline "10,000 Buddhists To Pledge Victory Over Violence." **WT**

'Global Ambassadors' Ignite



By MONICA SOTO
SEATTLE CORRESPONDENT

*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.*
—Daisaku Ikeda (Aug. 11 *World Tribune*, p. 5)

With SGI President Ikeda's powerful and inspiring words, more than 365 youth opened the Pacific Northwest Region's Youth Culture Festival, Oct. 8 highlighting the theme "Global Ambassadors of Peace!"

The culture festival, held in three performances at the University of Washington's Meany Hall Theater, commemorated the 40th anniversary of President Ikeda's first visit to Seattle. Roughly 2,400 SGI-USA members, friends and dignitaries attended the event, including U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott.

Using President Ikeda's poem, "Soar — Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!" as a roadmap, the youth told the story of a grandson who, with the guidance of his grandmother, awakens to his mission as a global ambassador of peace.

Along the way, the grandmother illustrates her words of wisdom with

each performance, which included the vigorous reverberations of taiko drummers, cultural dances from throughout the world, the Youth Band, a solo flag dance and Crescendo, an adaptation of the popular Broadway show "Stomp."

To prepare for the event, youth from throughout Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho dedicated eight-and-a-half-hour days for weekend rehearsals, which included an hour of chanting and study of *The New Human Revolution*, volume 1, at each practice. The Gropp family, of Salem, Ore., took the eight-hour roundtrip to Seattle each weekend to participate on the dance team.

The youth challenged each setback, whether it was adapting to a change of venue two weeks before the performance or one of the lead actors spraining her ankle hours before the performance.

"When I first heard about it, I didn't think it was going to be that hard," said Yoko Kono, 15, a high school sophomore who helped choreograph and teach the dance team. "As practice went on, it got more difficult." Kono said she challenged herself to encourage other dance members, relying on a section of President Ikeda's poem to keep moving forward.

Pablo Figueroa, 15, a high school junior who helped prepare study sessions for practices, said the culture festival challenged him to maintain a consistent practice

while building new friendships.

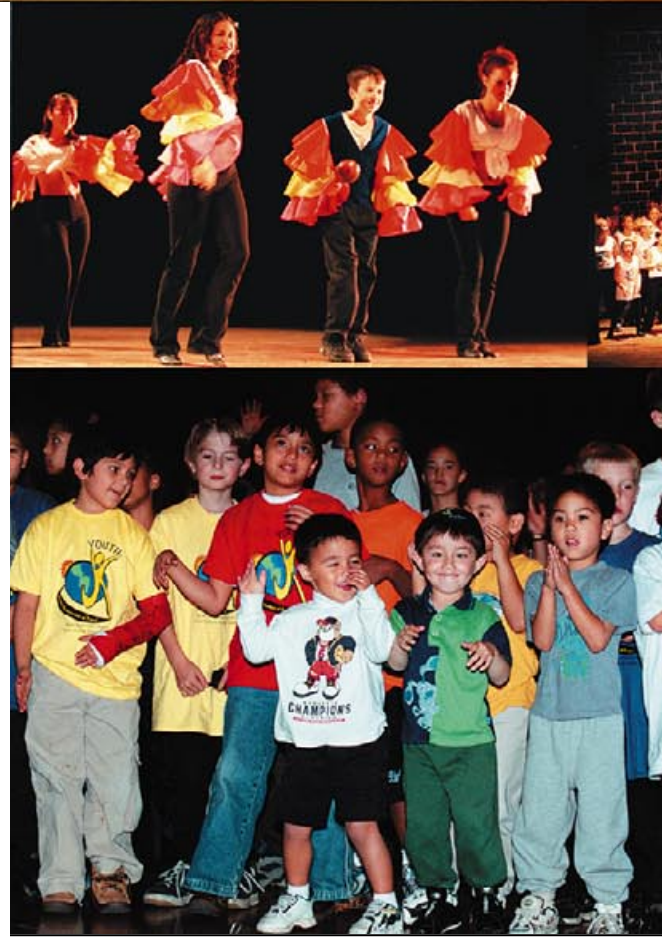
"I think the most valuable thing I got out of it was just really feeling President Ikeda's spirit," he said. "All the (obstacles) that we encountered made it so much more than a performance."

Brenda Sawyer, who co-directed the culture festival, said the event would not have been possible without unity among all the members. SGI-USA men's and women's members drove participants to early morning practices, prepared snacks and lunches, sewed costumes and provided constant encouragement to the youth.

For Sawyer, the culture festival was an opportunity to develop a sense of confidence. With each obstacle, she said, she read and reread a portion of President Ikeda's poem to refresh her spirit.

"People who can reach out to others and help them, even in a small way — that's what a global ambassador of peace is to me," she said. "People who muster that courage are the ones who will emerge victorious."

The culture festival was capped off by a region-wide general meeting Oct. 9 with SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, who came to Seattle directly from a visit to Japan. In addition to receiving encouragement from him, members viewed a video of President Ikeda receiving an award from Morehouse College in Atlanta. **WT**





Photos by DIXON HAMBY

SAN FRANCISCO:



Photos by RON BAIRD, LLOYD CARLSON, PAM HOLTZ, MIKE MULLEN, KINGMOND YOUNG

By RON BAIRD

SAN FRANCISCO BUREAU CHIEF

With the awareness that through our own strenuous efforts we can shape the future, SGI-USA members in San Francisco began planning and brainstorming for the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first visit abroad in 1960. This historic trip paved the way for the SGI we know today, since be-

fore 1960 there was no organization outside of Japan.

In October 1960, at the foot of a statue of Columbus on San Francisco's Telegraph Hill, President Ikeda remarked that his visit would in time "be remembered as a day of profound significance in the history of our movement." Comparing the voyages of Columbus with the contingent from Japan, he further explained. "We are engaged in a far nobler undertaking, for we are striving

to create here on earth a new world where indestructible happiness and eternal peace reign supreme."

This year, the San Francisco members wanted to recall this historical event and inspire themselves by reviewing the SGI president's efforts and capturing his vision toward kosen-rufu, so that all the members can deepen their own sense of responsibility.

The weekend schedule included an introduction meeting on Oct. 5,

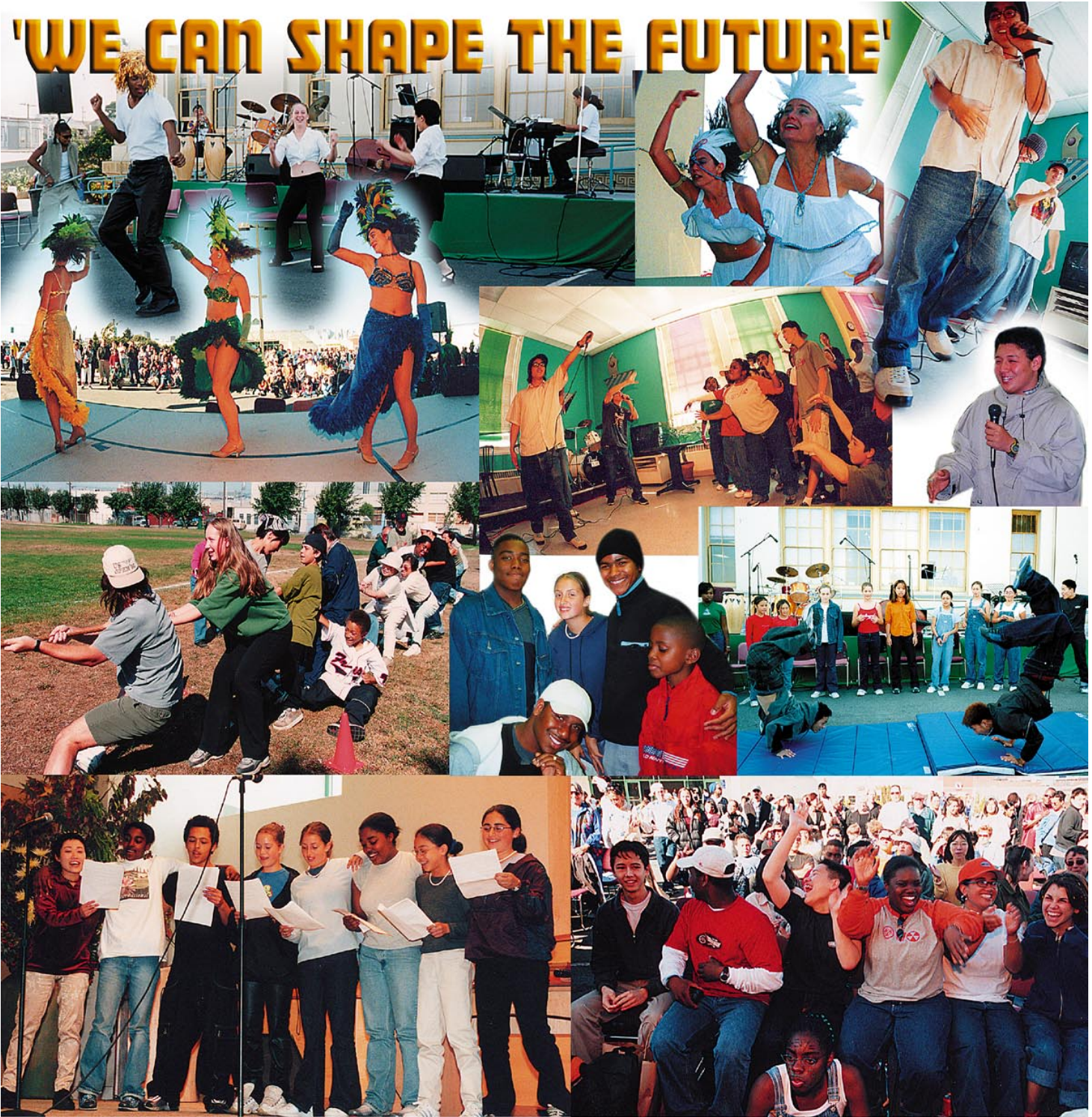
a commemorative meeting on Oct. 7 attended by SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck and later a Jr. High/High School dance. On Oct. 8, a sports festival took place, followed by a barbecue and various performances throughout the San Francisco Culture Center and Ikeda Auditorium.

At the Oct. 5 introduction meeting, members shared their feelings from reading President Ikeda's recent poem "Soar—Into the Vast

Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!" Josh Volper, 18, expressed his determination to start his own business to finance his goal of attending Soka University in Japan. One section of President Ikeda's poem that encouraged Josh reads:

*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.*

'WE CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE'



(Aug. 11 *World Tribune*, p. 5)
 Julie Hamada, a mother of three and a real estate agent, determined to double the amount she chants in the morning after reading the poem. As a result, she begins her day feeling like a racehorse raring to run and has revived many of the goals that had faded from sight. "Through this poem, I feel that President Ikeda is sharing his inner thoughts with us," she said.
 Borrowing words from the

poem, the "Three Baritones" presented their own version called "Eternal Dream," putting his words to the familiar music of "O Sole Mio." "This song is meant to help us make a determination toward our dreams 40 years from now," explained baritone Horus Tolson.
 On Saturday, prior to the commemorative meeting, pioneer members posed beside a gigantic cake made for the occasion. After watching a video showing Presi-

dent Ikeda's accomplishments, listening to the brass band and hearing two members' experiences, SGI-USA Vice General Director Richard Yoshimachi expressed how fortunate we are to spend our lives together with President Ikeda, and that by matching our lives with that of a mentor, our own lives will definitely develop.
 In her words of encouragement, Mrs. Buck stated that to "live as pioneers is the most important thing.

We should believe in our own Buddhahood and continue to move forward."
 Activities on Sunday were a culmination of the efforts of countless members exhibiting their talents. A sports festival was held at a nearby playground, featuring a softball game, basketball, a tug of war and relay races. Performances at the culture center consisted of four dance groups, 16 musical groups, poetry reading, comedy acts, a

magic show, circus workshop and face painting for kids of all ages.
 At the same time, a picnic and festival was held in the Redwood Coast Area to the north. Other activities to further celebrate the 40th anniversary of President Ikeda's historic visit include an Oct. 15 meeting at San Jose State University, a Victory Over Violence celebration in Oakland, and a meeting at Sacramento State University, both on Oct. 22. **WTF**

VOV Week at University of Michigan

By DAVID KREMER
MICHIGAN CORRESPONDENT

SGI-USA members in Michigan, along with several student organizations, celebrated 40 years of SGI-USA history with a stirring weeklong Victory Over Violence Festival at the University of Michigan during the first week of October. There was an illustrious list of lecturers, including Dr. Lawrence Carter Sr., dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College. The festival culminated in a spectacular concert on Oct. 7 by Super Sounds, which includes eight world-renowned jazz performers who are also SGI-USA members.

The festival was the realization of the dreams of members of the SGI-USA Michigan student division to take a strong stand against the pervasive influence of violence that now permeates our society.

More than 100 people attended the opening ceremony at the Student Union building on Oct. 1. The mayor of Ann Arbor, Mich., Ingrid B. Sheldon, proudly read a proclamation announcing Victory Over Violence Week for Oct. 1-7. She expressed her appreciation and admiration that youth are taking the initiative in this campaign.

On Oct. 3, Dr. Carter, who had just met with SGI President Ikeda in early September, spoke eloquently about nonviolence and reflected on the connection among the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and President Ikeda.

Two panel discussions were held on Oct. 5, including Dr. Grace Lee Boggs, author and peace activist for more than 55



Photo by JOHN BROOKS

(L-r) Mayor Ingrid Sheldon of Ann Arbor, Mich., and University of Michigan students Justine Lauer and Masakazu Sueda at the opening ceremony, Oct. 1.

years; Renee Farris, director of Michigan Institute for Nonviolence Education (MINE); and Hilliard Hampton Jr., mayor of Inkster, Mich. Attendance at the meetings ranged from college students to senior citizens.

Just six days before the festival began, Dr. James Yamazaki, author of *Children of the Atomic Bomb*, and Taro Yamazaki, a Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, were invited to lecture at the conference. Taro Yamazaki began his Oct. 6 lecture by presenting a series of powerful photographs of human suffering. Despite the heart-wrenching images that

Mr. Yamazaki displayed, there was a clear message of hope and compassion about being able to turn the tide in even the most desperate circumstances.

Dr. Yamazaki was a U.S. soldier captured by the Germans in World War II. As a prisoner, he experienced the intense Allied bombing of Germany. Back in the United States, his family was in internment camps surrounded by barbed wire. After the war, he was sent to Japan to study the children born of women exposed to the atomic bomb. He also discussed the impact on children of nuclear tests in the Pacific Ocean.

The finale of the weeklong festival was a cultural celebration on Oct. 7. After a wonderful performance by 40 children drumming the West African welcome song "Sanga Alafia" and congratulatory messages, Shingairai Chitanda, director of the University of Michigan Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center and honorary chairperson of the VOV Festival, delivered a impassioned speech with the theme "Protest Without Violence."

The final event was a 90-minute concert by the Super Sounds band. The musicians included Mike Clark on drums,

Larry Coryell on guitar, Onaje Gumbs on piano, Bennie Maupin on saxophone, Shunzo Ono on trumpet, Nestor Torres on flute, Buster Williams on bass and renowned vocalist Ernestine Anderson.

Throughout the astounding concert, the audience was thrilled to see each member of the band perform virtuoso solos, stretching themselves and their instruments to inspiring levels of musical expression. Capping a magical evening, Ms. Anderson led the audience in a moving rendition of all seven verses of the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome," a fitting end to a very special week.

After the festival was finished, student division member Masakazu Sueda commented: "I would like to dedicate our victory in the weeklong festival especially to the SGI-USA members in Michigan. They have raised me for 14 years, and it is so wonderful to see the bright smiles on their faces. We have now reached the starting line for the 21st century, and we will continue to grow together joyfully." **WT**

Photo by LINDA BROOKS



(L-r) Rev. Emmett Green, Dean Lawrence Carter and Professor Tom Lauer sign the VOV pledge.



Photo by RAJIV MISTRY

Jazz great Ernestine Anderson.



Photo by RAJIV MISTRY

Super Sounds, a group of renowned jazz musicians and SGI-USA members, perform at the VOV concert, Oct. 7.



Photo by RAJIV MISTRY

Larry Coryell of Super Sounds.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PART 3-4

On May 3, 1963, the Soka Gakkai members celebrate all the progress they have made in the last year. Overseas growth had been outstanding, with two general chapters created in South America and Europe, and nine new chapters started in Saigon, Rangoon, Peru, Bolivia, Hawaii, West Germany, New York, Paris and Seattle.

The 25th Headquarters General Meeting took place on May 3. The weather that morning in Tokyo was bright and sunny, just as it had been on the day of the Headquarters General Meeting three years before, when Shin'ichi Yamamoto was inaugurated as the third Soka Gakkai president.

Though the participants did not have to assemble at the meeting place, the Nihon University Auditorium in Ryogoku, until 9:00 a.m., many had begun to arrive hours earlier. When overseas members from America General Chapter and Southeast Asia General Chapter entered the auditorium at 7:00 a.m., they were met with applause and cheers from the already full venue.

The overseas members strode happily and proudly into the auditorium carrying banners: Los Angeles Chapter, Hong Kong Chapter, Bangkok Chapter, Saigon Chapter and Jakarta District. This gave the Japanese members a strong sense of the international scope of the kosen-rufu movement. In the two-and-a-half years since President Yamamoto's first overseas trip, the dream of the worldwide propagation of Nichiren Daisshonin's Buddhism had become a reality that they could see before their very eyes.

The meeting was declared open at 9:45 a.m., and President Yamamoto entered the auditorium led by the Soka Gakkai Headquarters flag to a grand chorus of "Song of Innovation."

After opening words, Vice General Director and Guidance Division Leader Hisao Seki reported on the Soka Gakkai's activities over the past year. Re-

markable growth had been achieved in every area. In May of the previous year, the membership had stood at 2.6 million households; there were now more than 3.3 million, an increase of more than 700,000 in just one year.

On the organizational front, four new headquarters, 21 general chapters and 135 chapters had been established. Overseas growth was particularly outstanding, with two general chapters having been created in South America and Europe and nine new chapters started one after another in Saigon, Rangoon, Peru, Bolivia, Hawaii, West Germany, New York, Paris and Seattle. A new community center had also been opened in Los Angeles.

In addition, the Soka Gakkai had built and donated 15 new temples to Nichiren Shoshu. And the Academic and Arts Department of the Culture Bureau had been dissolved and reformed into two independent departments.

Hearing that all of this had been accomplished in a single year freshly inspired the participants. Each year was like a new dawn, with the movement of kosen-rufu advancing by unprecedented leaps and bounds.

The Soka Gakkai's momentum was building. The joy of one victory led to another, which became the energy and force behind even greater victories.

Next came the appointment of new leaders. Eight new directors were named, bringing the number of members on the Soka Gakkai's board of directors to 127. Kyushu Headquarters was divided into three, and the leaders of each new headquarters were announced. The Soka Gakkai young women's leader, Tokie Tani, moved to the women's division, and Michiyo Watari, previously the young women's planning department leader, was appointed in her place. Overseas, Chou Chi Kong was made the leader of Hong Kong Chapter to replace Ikuyo Oka, who had returned to Japan.

Michiyo Watari, the new young women's leader, was married to Goro Watari, head of the student division. Both of them were young leaders whom Shin'ichi Yamamoto had personally raised.

Michiyo was born in 1932, in Iri, Korea. She was 13 and living in Seoul when World War II ended. Her father worked for the railways and could not leave Korea immediately, but it was decided that the rest of the fam-

ily—herself, her two grandparents, her pregnant mother and her two siblings—would return to Japan.

It was not an easy journey. When they finally arrived at Shimonoseki, a port city on the southwestern tip of Honshu, Japan's main island, the family boarded a packed train and began making their way toward Chichibu in Saitama Prefecture, central Japan, where they would live with relatives.

At one point, the train stopped in the middle of a burned-out expanse that had once been a city. It was Hiroshima. This horrific image of her home country was etched into young Michiyo's mind forever.

From Hiroshima, they transferred to a coal-carrying freight train. The roofless cars overflowed with passengers. Along the way, rain began to fall. Raindrops mixed with the tears running down Michiyo's cheeks.

Life in Chichibu began. The family of six lived in an old cowshed with flooring installed. To help make ends meet, Michiyo worked while attending school, carrying bundles of firewood down from the mountains to the road. At times, her heavy load cut into her shoulders until they bled. In winter, she continued to labor, dragging along on chilblained feet.

Eventually, her father returned to Japan, and the family moved to neighboring Kumagaya City. Michiyo had decided that she wanted to attend college, but the family couldn't afford to send her.

She had managed to pay for her high school expenses herself by working part time. But when her family moved to Omiya, a city east of Kumagaya, they happened to be close to a middle school. Taking advantage of this, Michiyo borrowed some money from her father and turned the front of their house into a school-supply shop. Through this business, she saved enough money for her university tuition and entered the Law Department of Waseda University.



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

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



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Members of the African Dance group perform.



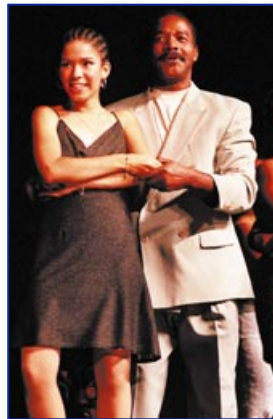
Nicole Hicks (center) performs with the Boys and Girls Group.

Philadelphia Unleashes 'Power of the Human Spirit'

By STEPHANIE ARNOLD
PHILADELPHIA CORRESPONDENT

More than 3,000 members and guests filled the Pennsylvania Convention Center on Oct. 1 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the SGI movement in the United States. People came from all corners of the region, including West Virginia, Pittsburgh, Delaware, Williamsport, Poconos, Harrisburg and Atlantic City, N.J., to participate in this historic meeting.

In preparation for the event, performers and speakers worked extremely hard to ensure that members and guests alike had an enjoyable and inspiring afternoon. The room was filled with song, soothing music, energetic dance routines, the sharing of moving experiences and words of encouragement throughout the afternoon.



Performers in the Latin dance routine.

The celebration, titled "Unleashing the Power of the Human Spirit," was kicked off with a song by a 56-member chorus singing "America the Beautiful," followed by com-

memorative messages from SGI leaders, including SGI President Ikeda. Karen Lewis and Daniel White III showed members and guests actual proof of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism through their moving experiences.

A video documenting SGI-USA's triumphant history reminded members about the pioneers who sacrificed so much to propagate this Buddhism in the United States. "From a two-bedroom apartment on Chestnut Street to community centers in Philadelphia, South Jersey and Pittsburgh," the members of Philadelphia Region continue the pursuit of worldwide peace, the video narrator said.

Collectively, the musical presentations reflected the diversity of Philadelphia Region and the SGI-USA. Performances included traditional

Japanese and Korean folk dances, performed by some of the SGI-USA's pioneer women, a children's performance group, a Latin salsa routine, a chorus, youth rappers and hip-hop dancers and a men's conga drum group that provided the exciting background rhythm for a brightly costumed African dance troupe. An orchestra and jazz band supported the festival with musical accompaniments.

In their remarks to the group, both Mid-Atlantic Zone Men's Leader Ronnie Smith and SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck commented on President Ikeda's reference to "liberty's bell" in his recent poem, "Soar—Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!" (The Liberty Bell is displayed near Independence Hall in Philadelphia.) In the poem, President Ikeda writes:

*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!*
—(Aug. 11 WorldTribune, p. 5)

In the poem, Mrs. Buck said, President Ikeda was clearly praising the faith of American members. She called the 40th anniversary celebration a new departure for the Philadelphia Region.

Prior to the meeting, participants had a chance to visit booths on subjects such as the history of Buddhism, Buddhism and health, SGI's contribution to world peace and basic principles in Buddhism. Each booth, which was set up and staffed by outlying areas in the region, featured a table-top display and literature. **WT**



(L-r) Donna Bonnett, Ron Geary and Wayne Byman applaud performers during finale.



Quintine Draper (center) and Deniese Hamilton (at left) perform with the African Dancers.