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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 5 SPEECH—PART 1

# Our Strength Is Indomitable

'Next year marks the first year of the 21st century,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Let us stand up together and brightly declare our indomitable strength to the world.'

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 50th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 5.

The 20th century has been one of resounding victory for the Soka Gakkai. Dedicated to justice and truth, we have triumphed over all kinds of schemes and intrigues to bring us down, all kinds of slander and abuse designed to discredit us.

This victory has been made possible solely through the fortitude, perseverance and efforts of each of you. How incredible is the benefit that you are accumulating as a result! I wish to sincerely thank all of you—my beloved fellow members in Japan and

throughout the world—for your tireless devotion.

### Let's open a brilliant Century of Soka!

Struggle is eternal. All living things in the universe are engaged in a struggle to survive. Those who base their efforts on the ultimate law of the universe, the Mystic Law, are victorious.

As we of the SGI prepare to take on the challenges of kosen-rufu in the 21st century, let us all—including my friends of the Many Treasures Group, whose vibrant daimoku keeps



SGI President Ikeda praises Italian soccer star Roberto Baggio and his wife, Andreina, at the 50th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 5.

them young—unite anew and launch a fresh drive toward everlasting victory.

I also ask the women and youth to spearhead a new phase of development for the Soka Gakkai and the entire kosen-rufu movement.

Arrogant leaders—those who have stopped growing, lost the spirit of challenge and just strut around self-impor-

tantly—are, if anything, a hindrance to our movement.

It is the time for a new generation of talented people to take the stage, confidently and without hesitation. May the young people stir up a storm with their youthful power and energy, creating a whirlwind of dynamic progress for kosen-rufu in the new century—in Japan and around the globe.

Rising serenely above the petty, narrow-minded mentality of Japan, let's open a brilliant Century of Soka—our century!

**Buddhism is a battle between enlightenment and destruction.**

The famous German poet Friedrich von Schiller writes,

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 4

# SGI-USA History Celebrated in Arizona

Photo by DIANA DECKER



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima encourages members at 40th-anniversary celebration in Glendale, Ariz., on Oct. 15.

By DIANA DECKER

PHOENIX CORRESPONDENT

More than 1,000 members and guests from Arizona, New Mexico and the El Paso, Texas, area gathered in Glendale, Ariz., on Oct. 15 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the American kosen-rufu movement.

Also in attendance was SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, who stressed the importance of determination. "Single-minded determination is invisible," Mr. Nagashima said, "but will eventually create a huge result. Never put yourself down, but rather, have boundless hope."

Also speaking were Paul Eppinger, president of the Inter-Faith Action Coalition of Arizona, and Nemi C. Jain of Arizona State University, who spoke of the contributions of his mentor, Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. Eppinger shared his memories of a visit to the Soka Gakkai Headquarters while living in Japan in 1957. "I was so impressed. I wondered when this was going to come to America," he said. "In 1960, it did."

Twenty Boys and Girls Group members impressed the audience with a reading of SGI President Ikeda's poem, "Soar—Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Cen-

ture!" Ken Komoda shared a deeply moving experience about his young son William's struggle with autism. William, now 6 and doing well, ran to the stage to join his mom and dad. And members and guests laughed and cheered during a slide show of 30 years of SGI-USA activities in Arizona, New Mexico and El Paso.

The program also included performances by Phoenix jazz artist Sherry Roberson and the Arizona Cactus Chorus.

Kurt Staller of Safford, Ariz., a 30-year SGI-USA member, said: "The meeting was fantastic. We need to have more like it in Arizona." **WT**

# SEVENTY YEARS OF SOKA SPIRIT

## EDITORIAL

By JEFF FARR  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**‘Looking back over the Soka Gakkai’s 70-year history,’ Jeff Farr writes, ‘we can see how our organization has a fearless tradition of protecting the people.’**

The strong stance that the SGI took when Nichiren Shoshu started to act against our membership a decade ago was at first a surprise to many of us. But looking back over the Soka Gakkai’s 70-year history, we can see how our organization has a fearless tradition of protecting the people.

It was at a frightening time for Japan that the Soka Gakkai was founded. With Emperor Hirohito coming to power, Japan became increasingly nationalistic and militaristic. As many countries headed toward World War II, Japan’s leadership seemed eager to join them.

The Soka Gakkai’s appearance on Nov. 18, 1930, pointed Japan and the world in another direction — toward peace. First and second Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, based on their



Buddhism was the best way to avert the immense human disaster looming before them.

This is why, in June 1943, Makiguchi put himself at great personal risk. When the priesthood summoned Soka Gakkai leaders to the head temple and ordered them to accept the Shinto talisman — under which the government was attempting to unify all religious groups in the war effort — Makiguchi soundly refused. He knew that the Daishonin would have forbade such compromise.

A friend recently asked me: “Why does the SGI keep going back to the incident with the Shinto talisman? Why is this emphasized so much?” Makiguchi’s refusal was an important moment in the history of Buddhism; it was when Soka Spirit — the fearless faith to protect the people that is the heart of Buddhism — reappeared after a long absence.

The Daishonin writes that “life flashes by in but a moment. No matter how many terrible enemies you may encounter, banish all fears and never think of backsliding” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 395). He also

study of Nichiren Daishonin’s writings, decided that selflessly spreading this Buddhism was the best way to avert the immense human disaster looming before them. He knew that the Daishonin would have forbade such compromise. A friend recently asked me: “Why does the SGI keep going back to the incident with the Shinto talisman? Why is this emphasized so much?” Makiguchi’s refusal was an important moment in the history of Buddhism; it was when Soka Spirit — the fearless faith to protect the people that is the heart of Buddhism — reappeared after a long absence. The Daishonin writes that “life flashes by in but a moment. No matter how many terrible enemies you may encounter, banish all fears and never think of backsliding” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 395). He also

Daishonin] states that a nation will experience disasters — such as internal strife, revolution, famine and pestilence — and be led to ruin [if it slanders the Lotus Sutra]. Our past history indicates that we experienced such incidents and simi-

lar national disasters. The cause for the current Japan-Sino conflict and the war in greater East Asia lies in the nation’s slander of the Law” (p. 122).

Essentially, he was un begrudgingly giving his life for the sake of the Law with this statement. Consider to whom he was saying this — officials working for the emperor, whom they regarded as divinity. To tell them that the Pacific War was

due to Japan’s slander of the Law was, in their eyes, the height of blasphemy. And this was in a country with no freedom of belief at the time. Makiguchi’s death in prison came at age 73, from malnutrition. It was Nov. 18, 1944 — the 14th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai’s founding. His spirit, though, has never died. President Toda inherited it to rebuild the organization, which was in ruins after the war. And SGI President Ikeda brought the same spirit with him to America and the world, sharing it with all of us.

***The Soka Gakkai’s appearance on Nov. 18, 1930, pointed Japan and the world in another direction — toward peace. The first and second Soka Gakkai presidents decided that selflessly spreading this Buddhism was the best way to avert the immense human disaster looming before them.***

“Let us return to the time of the Daishonin!” President Ikeda often says. The Soka Gakkai’s 70th anniversary reminds us to also return to the time of Makiguchi. Although the world has changed drastically in recent decades, if we practice with the same resolve that he had, the Soka Spirit tradition will never die. **WT**

## The Eight Winds

### Back to the Basics

By JASON HENNINGER  
LOS ANGELES

In “The Eight Winds,” one of Nichiren Daishonin’s many letters to lay believer Shijo Kingo, he writes: “Worthy persons deserve to be called so because they are not carried away by the eight winds: prosperity, decline, disgrace, honor, praise, censure, suffering and pleasure. They are neither elated by prosperity nor grieved by decline” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 794). In a way, this can be read as an elongated definition of the Daishonin’s famous phrase “Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is

to enjoy” (WND, 681).

The Daishonin explains in “The Eight Winds” how to reveal our Buddha nature, which is innate in all of us. Neither fame nor obscurity, neither wealth nor poverty can awaken Buddhahood. Because Buddhahood is inherent in all people, its manifestation cannot be contingent solely on responses to external forces. Whatever happens, it is up to us to bring forth Buddhahood.

At the same time, though, external forces can sway us from attaining Buddhahood if we let them. The Daishonin had personally experienced each of these eight winds in gale force but was never slowed in the least. His admonition to Shijo Kingo, based on his own experience, was a reminder to focus on the true goal of Buddhism and not to place undue importance on

matters of fleeting influence.

It should be noted that the Daishonin did not endorse a “que sera, sera” attitude regarding personal struggle. Nowhere does he recommend a blasé, passive acceptance of our situation over consistently moving forward and facing obstacles. His point is that, while struggling to show actual proof in the real world, we should never let the ups and downs that we must experience affect us.

After all, he follows “enjoy what there is to enjoy” with “Regard both suffering and joy as facts of life and continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, no matter what happens” (WND, 681). To continue chanting, no matter what happens, is the heart of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. And it is the means by which the eight winds are faced. **WT**

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# Rock Against Racism in Pittsburgh

By **SUSAN GALL**

PITTSBURGH, CORRESPONDENT

On a beautiful sunny August afternoon, the high-spirited SGI-USA members of Pittsburgh Area cosponsored and participated in "Rock Against Racism: A Festival for Racial Reconciliation."

The program, presented by Neighborhood Collaboratives Against Racism, was held at Schenley Park in the Oakland area of the city. The purpose of the event was to bring together organizations and individuals from throughout the Pittsburgh area to educate each other, exchange ideas and discuss issues of racial reconciliation and diversity. The community's concern and efforts brought together diverse groups for a day of cultural exchange through dance, poetry and music.



Photo by BARRY LAVERY

Head painting at the SGI-USA face painting table during the 'Rock Against Racism' event in Pittsburgh.

Approximately 50 members of Pittsburgh Area attended the festival throughout the day, including youth members from the outlying areas of West Vir-

ginia, State College, Pa., and Dayton, Ohio. SGI-USA participants set up and staffed a table, where they discussed Nichiren Daishonin's Bud-

dhism, distributed literature and introduced the SGI-USA to the Pittsburgh community. A second table was set up by the young women, who provided face painting.

SGI-USA members thoroughly enjoyed the event and the opportunity to create new friendships in the Pittsburgh community. "The young men had highly spirited discussions about religion and racism," commented Remi Muños, "and we deepened our friendships as young men of varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds by having a common purpose of improving ourselves and our community. We learned about other groups dedicated to working for justice and peace and fighting discrimination, and shared with them the philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Bud-

dhism and described our Victory Over Violence project."

Richard Williams, a men's division member, remarked that "it was a beautiful day — warm — just as the spirits of the people around us, whose purpose and main objective of being there was to fight racism. At the SGI-USA table, we answered questions in an honest and true-hearted manner. I enjoyed sharing my feelings about the practice and talking with people in an open and casual atmosphere."

Thirty-seven organizations, including community groups, churches, professional associations and the SGI-USA in Pittsburgh cosponsored the event. Everyone who attended enjoyed an energizing day filled with music, discussion and the exchange of ideas to take action against social injustice. **WT**

## Redwood Coast Members Spread Friendship

By **CRAIG ELLIS**

FORESTVILLE, CALIF., CORRESPONDENT

On Oct. 8, members of SGI-USA's Redwood Coast Region celebrated SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's first visit to the United States when he embarked on his mission to spread Nichiren Daishonin's 40 years ago. Three hundred members, friends and families gathered for a picnic and entertainment provided by local talent under the autumn sky, brilliant sun and countless prayers for a successful activity. Also in attendance was SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck.

The weather was pleasant and the eggs from the egg toss did not break when the children missed. The theme for the celebration helped everyone grasp the significance of the meeting:

"Spreading the spirit of true friendship in society." A true friend wants the best for you and to see you happy.

Melissa Sylvester, a recent graduate from the University of California at Santa Barbara shared her experience in forming a core of practicing students at school. Her first approach was devoted only to her vision of the group. As such, despite a handful of members who remained "faithful," her meetings were sparsely attended. Melissa realized her focus needed to be for each member's happiness. When she began chanting for her members, she connected deeply with their lives.

The attendance grew beyond Melissa's imagination. The group continues to meet in her absence, and Melissa stays in contact with her friends. **WT**

Photo by CRAIG ELLIS



Children enjoy egg toss at Redwood Coast Region gathering, Oct. 8.

## Leadership Appointments



Dr. Eric Hauber  
SGI Academic  
Division Leader



Dr. Maria Guajardo Lucero  
SGI Educators  
Division Leader



Daniel Habuki  
SGI-USA Senior  
Vice General Director

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## FROM SPEECH, I

"I do what's right, and care for no man's hate." The Soka Gakkai, too, follows the path of justice, so it fears nothing.

And Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a good friend of Schiller's, says, "Life's drudgery / Alone makes us appreciate life's rewards." Only by experiencing and living through hardships can we appreciate how wonderful life is. This is a truth that resonates with the teachings of Buddhism.

Buddhism is eternally a battle between the Buddha and devilish functions — between the enlightened and destructive forces inherent in life and the universe. It is a battle against devilish functions and those held in their thrall, against those forces that seek to obstruct Buddhism, people's happiness and the progress of kosen-rufu. The onslaught of devilish functions is strong because the devil king of the sixth heaven, the dogged commander of these destructive forces, dominates the realm of human affairs.

*Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The devil king of the sixth heaven takes possession of the bodies of wives and children, and causes them to lead their husbands or parents astray. He also possesses the sovereign in order to threaten the votary of the Lotus Sutra, or possesses fathers and mothers, and makes them reproach their filially devoted children" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 496).*

But these forces must not defeat us. Only by triumphing over them can we attain Buddhahood.

Buddhism is a battle — it is either win or lose. No matter how much we believe in the Mystic Law, if we are cowardly we cannot attain Buddhahood. This is the Daishonin's strict teaching.

**The SGI's unparalleled development is all thanks to you!**

We will soon celebrate the milestone 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding, on Nov. 18. Once again, my deepest appreciation to all of you. The Soka Gakkai's unparalleled development is the actual proof you have achieved through your sincere faith and selfless, ungrudging devotion in the same spirit as the Daishonin to advance kosen-rufu, to uphold the integrity of the correct teaching.

Shortly before he died, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda called me to his side

and said: "Daisaku, I don't care if the Soka Gakkai gets any bigger. As long as our members lead happy and healthy lives, that's all that matters."

Mr. Toda knew that as the Soka Gakkai continued to grow, the risk of persecution would increase. Growth would bring suffering and hardship. Growth would invite envy and jealousy from people in society.

He was worried about the arduous struggles that would lie ahead of me. That is why he said what he did. I am grateful to have had a mentor who cared about me so deeply.

However, I did not shirk from difficulties and obstacles. I used them as an impetus to build today's Soka Gakkai and to open new roads for kosen-rufu around the world.

Whereas most people in the world have heard of Jesus Christ, hardly anyone has heard of the Daishonin. Even many Japanese have little knowledge about him. Nevertheless, we of the SGI have succeeded in spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism across the globe. How happy this would make the Daishonin! How happy it would also make Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda!

This is due solely to your unceasing efforts to take the lead for kosen-rufu throughout the world. You are truly praiseworthy. I wish you good health and long, fulfilled lives. I hope you will continue to work wholeheartedly in your endeavors.

**Leaders who throw their weight around are failures.**

Next year marks the first year of the 21st century. Let us stand up together and brightly declare our indomitable strength to the world.

To succeed in a struggle, we must persevere, we must fight with all our might. Let us advance with compassion and goodwill, joyfully and cheerfully, quietly and calmly, and with indignation at injustice, as the situation demands. Let us advance, making friends all over Japan and throughout the world. And let us lead lives of victory.

Please remember there can be no battle or contest without opponents. So there is nothing to fear. Opponents only make us stronger.

The 21st century will soon be here. We have at last entered the age of the Soka Gakkai. Let us cheerfully make our way on the global Silk Road of kosen-rufu, forming a long, continuous caravan of the world's people. The SGI has now spread to 163 countries and territories. We can find SGI members virtu-



Italian soccer star Roberto Baggio presents his uniform to SGI President Ikeda at the 50th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 5

ally anywhere on this planet. The world is our stage. I especially wish for our youth to travel the globe for kosen-rufu.

I want our leaders to win the love and trust of many people — to be the kind of people of whom their juniors can say: "He is dependable like a father or big brother." "She is warm and caring like a mother or big sister."

Leaders who, in contrast, throw their weight around, whose attitude at meetings is so off-putting that it causes members to wish that they had not bothered coming, are failures at their job. The times have no need for such leaders.

We should encourage the members to be strong. And it is perfectly all right for members to take a strict stance toward leaders. Please know that society as a whole is moving into an age of increased respect for the dignity of each human being.

**SGI-Brazil members have surmounted all obstacles and emerged triumphant.**

This is also the Kanto General Meeting. Congratulations! Our Kanto Region organization [comprising prefectures surrounding Tokyo] is making wonderful strides in its activities. As the old saying goes, "Rule Kanto, and you rule all of Japan."

To Kanto area followers [Toki Jonin and others], the Daishonin wrote letters containing such famous lines as "You must not spend your lives in vain and regret it for ten thousand years to come" (WND, 622) and "Life is limited; we must not begrudge it. What we should ultimately aspire to is

the Buddha land" (WND, 214).

During World War II, despite being under constant surveillance by members of the Special Higher Police, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi traveled boldly throughout the Kanto region, writing a glorious history of selfless devotion to propagating the Law. [Mr. Toda also began his regional propagation campaign from the Kanto prefectures of Tochigi and Gumma.]

I hope the Kanto members will emulate Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda and — with the heart of lion kings — leave behind an immortal page in the annals of our movement. Please become a model for the rest of the world.

In commemoration of the Soka Gakkai's Outlying Islands Division Day on Oct. 7, we are joined today by representatives from the islands of Iki, Tsushima, Amami Oshima and Yoron-to. We also have with us members from the island of Miyakejima, who have recently suffered the hardship of being evacuated [following the eruption of Mount Oyama. Thank you so much for being here today.]

I hope all of you will continue to chant earnestly to surmount the challenges before you — not only for your own sakes but for the happiness of your ancestors and your descendants, and for the prosperity of your communities.

I also ask our leaders to take good care of our members living on remote islands, making sure to extend warm support and encouragement to them.

To our members on 240 out-

lying Japanese islands: I wish you all the best of health!

A warm welcome also to our SGI members from the United States and other parts of the world here today. Thank you for traveling so far to be with us.

I ask our Japanese leaders to take good care of them during their stay, making every effort to ensure that the visiting members are not tired out and can enjoy a meaningful training course.

We also have with us representatives from SGI-New Zealand, led by their young, new general director, Jimmy Wallace. New Zealand will be one of the first countries in the world to greet the start of 21st century. It will beat Japan, land of the Rising Sun, by four hours.

Thank you also to the representatives from SGI-Korea for joining us today. Rose of Sharon blossoms, South Korea's national flower, have been in bloom in the Makiguchi Memorial Hall's gardens all summer long, and they are in beautiful bloom today as well.

I am also delighted to meet again with friends from SGI-Brazil. Visiting Japan this time are five representatives of the Brazil Kirishima Group, including Vice General Director Julio Kosaka and 10 representatives of the Brazil Tokushima Group, including Vice General Director Isamu Onozato. I will never forget our respective meetings in the city of Kirishima, Japan, 17 years ago and the city of Tokushima, Japan, 15 years ago. You are all infinitely precious to me.

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 5

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

FROM SPEECH, 4

In the past, when Brazil was ruled by a military dictatorship, our members there suffered persecution arising from prejudice and misunderstanding. Also, for a long time, the Brazilian authorities would not allow me to enter the country. The members of the Kirishima and Tokushima groups here today are true champions of Soka, warriors of kosen-rufu, who stood up bravely and fought fearlessly at that most difficult of times.

I propose that we leave a lasting record of their noble names on the grounds of Soka University of America. It was this core group of leaders who endured and triumphed over persecution, and forged SGI-Brazil into a model organization of our worldwide kosen-rufu movement.

Our members in Brazil have surmounted all obstacles and emerged triumphant. They have also won total victory over the corrupt Nichiren Shoshu priesthood. The São Paulo temple, Ichijo-ji, which Nichiren Shoshu illegally occupied, has been restored to SGI-Brazil, its rightful owners, and renamed the SGI Brazil Ever-victorious Center.

The Brazilian members have also won incredible recogni-

tion and trust from their local communities. Again this month, for instance, a Makiguchi Park will open in São Paulo State. And in the not too distant future, I understand, I will be named a nonresident member of the Amazonian Academy of Letters and receive a commendation from the City of Manaus. [The honors that President Ikeda has received from Brazil to date number close to 100.]

All of this is due to the Brazilian members' earnest prayers and their sincere, tenacious efforts to contribute to the community and promote the SGI's ideals.

On Oct. 1, Brazil launched an innovative new electronic voting system in its nationwide municipal elections. One of the people involved in developing this system is a young SGI-Brazil chapter leader, Osvaldo Imamura.

We must always manifest the teachings of Buddhism in society, and society must always be the place where we put the teachings of Buddhism into practice. It is the mission of Buddhists to contribute to society, to invigorate society and to create value for society.

To be continued in the Nov. 17 issue

# Another Nichiren Shoshu Priest Decides To Leave

By TED MORINO  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



Yuyaku Hara

Yuyaku Hara, chief priest of Koan-ji temple in Miyagi Prefecture, Japan, declared his secession from Nichiren Shoshu on Sept. 29. Mr. Hara, 61, is the third priest to leave Nichiren Shoshu this year, following Endo Ishida, a senior administrator in Nichiren Shoshu's Overseas Bureau, in July and Rando Shuho, chief priest of Kenmyo-ji temple, on Sept. 4.

In his letter of secession to High Priest Nikken Abe, Mr. Hara first protests the Nichiren Shoshu Administration Office's interrogations of local chief priests based upon complaints from local temple members. "The current Administration

Office does not trust us, the chief priests, at all," Mr. Hara writes. "Many chief priests are terrified at how the Administration Office has been reacting to believers' letters. Sadly, many chief priests are bogged down currying favor with their believers."

Mr. Hara points out that local chief priests and their families have had to make great sacrifices to survive due to the financial policies of Nichiren Shoshu. Meanwhile, he says, High Priest Nikken has been enjoying a luxurious lifestyle.

Mr. Hara also refers to how

Nichiren Shoshu wasted a lot of money on the Seattle Incident litigation, only to lose the case in the Tokyo District Court (Nichiren Shoshu's appeal recently began in the Tokyo High Court).

"There is no justification for High Priest Nikken's decision to destroy the Sho-Hondo," he goes on. "While Japan's economy is facing great difficulty, Nichiren Shoshu is demanding more offerings from believers for the construction of the Hoando [which will replace the Sho-Hondo]."

In the last nine years, since the priesthood's 1991 excommunication of all SGI members, a total of 49 priests have severed their ties with Nichiren Shoshu in opposition to High Priest Nikken's leadership. **WT**

# Kansas City Members Discuss Soka Care

By CHERYL UTLEY  
MIDWEST BUREAU CHIEF

Fred Zaitu, SGI-USA senior advisor, encouraged members in the Kansas City area during the weekend of Sept. 29. Mr. Zaitu's visit included attending local district meetings and chanting sessions at the members' homes in Kansas City, Mo., and Lawrence, Kans.

While attending these meetings, he had the opportunity to get to know members individually. For example, he chanted one hour and did morning gongyo with the members in Metro District. The members then recited their motto: "My life is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo; I am a Buddha; I am living as a Bodhisattva of the Earth; therefore, I can bring this power out and solve my problem. Not only do I deserve to be happy, I must become happy; that's how I will demonstrate the Great Law" (June 9 *World Tribune*, p. 4).

Experiences and benefits of the practice were also shared, including Mitchell Williams' account of getting a pay raise at work.

Mr. Zaitu informally talked to members and answered questions on how to chant, what to do when we are con-

fronted with obstacles and how to take care of members. He clarified the meaning of *Soka Care* as chanting for the happiness of members and doing home visits. He talked about building friendships as a first step in sharing this practice with others.

At a district meeting in Lawrence, Mr. Zaitu joined members from Topeka, Kans., who had traveled 23 miles to attend. As members introduced themselves, he engaged them each individually, encouraging them to continue their efforts to bring Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism into the local community.

The following Sunday, Mr. Zaitu spoke at the World Peace Day gathering. The atmosphere of the Kansas City Community Center was described as "awesome and full of high energy" by Vivian Ford who lives in the small city of Marshall, Mo. His lecture on "Soka Spirit and Soka Care" encouraged her to be more diligent in her practice and to get more involved in SGI-USA activities, starting with the bus trip to Chicago to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of SGI-USA and SGI President Ikeda's first visit to the United States. **WT**



SGI-USA Senior Advisor Fred Zaitu visits members in Lawrence, Kans.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

## The 21st Century and Beyond

From This Speech:

**The 21st century will soon be here. We have at last entered the age of the Soka Gakkai. Let us cheerfully make our way on the global Silk Road of kosen-rufu, forming a long, continuous caravan of the world's people. The SGI has now spread to 163 countries and territories. We can find SGI members virtually anywhere on this planet. The world is our stage. I especially wish for our youth to travel the globe for kosen-rufu.**

1) Next year is the start of the 21st century — what are your goals for next year? What did you accomplish this year that set the stage for what you are going to do next? What do you think is the best thing that will happen to you next year? What was the best thing that happened to you this year? What is one experience from this year that you will never forget?

2) What do you think the "age of the Soka Gakkai" will be like? How do you think the 21st century will be different from the 20th century? In what ways do you think it will be the same?

3) What do you think SGI President Ikeda means when he says, "The world is our stage"? And why do you think he encourages young people to travel to foreign countries? Why is it important for people of all ages to see other cultures?

# Problems and Anxieties Mean Growth

## New Series: DIALOGUE OF HOPE

**‘When you run, you create resistance,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘When you climb a mountain, you get short of breath. In the same way, you experience problems and anxieties because you are growing.’**

*Part one of a discussion on the meaning of the word smart among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai junior high school division leaders Kenji Shiratsuchi (young men's leader) and Keiko Maekawa (young women's leader).*

**SGI President Ikeda:** All right, let's begin! We're calling this series "Dialogue of Hope."

**Kenji Shiratsuchi:** Thank you, President Ikeda, for joining us in this dialogue.

**Keiko Maekawa:** Yes, thank you so much.

**Ikeda:** The junior high school years are an especially important period of life. It is a time when you build the foundation for the rest of your life.

Have you ever seen a butterfly break out of its chrysalis?

**Shiratsuchi:** In photos.

**Maekawa:** Me, too.

**Ikeda:** When it breaks out of its chrysalis, the butterfly has undergone a complete self-transformation, having changed from a caterpillar into a butterfly. Exposing itself to the cool breezes of the outside world, it gradually stretches out its crumpled wings, until finally they are fully spread in all their colorful glory. Then it flaps them a couple of times and, before you know it, takes off, flying into the sky. It is like a second birth.

We human beings have a

second birth, too. Our first birth takes place when we are born from our mother. But later, the time arrives when we begin to fly on our own wings. For most people, this takes place during junior high school, at about 13 or 14.

Because this is a period of so much growth, it is also a period of many problems and anxieties. When you run, you create resistance. When you climb a mountain, you get short of breath. In the same way, you experience problems and anxieties because you are growing.

Youth is the time when hopes and problems fight it out. It's a contest to see which will win in your heart.

I want all our junior high students to win in this contest. I want you all to have a youth that you can look back on and say, with satisfaction, "It was a wonderful time." I will gladly do anything I can to make that possible.

I want to give you hope and courage, to support you with my entire being. If there's anything you want to ask—anything at all—please feel free to do so.

There may be parts of our discussion that are a little difficult, but now that you're in junior high, you're an adult—that's how I will treat you in this discussion. As a "senior in life," I want to share life's truths with you. If there are places that are hard to understand, please just skip over them and go on reading. You don't have to understand everything right now. Just read the parts you do understand.

All right, then, let's begin.

**Shiratsuchi:** I have a letter from a member, who just entered junior high, asking for advice. He lives in Tokyo, is an only child and is attending a local public school.

He writes: "From elementary school, I haven't been good at studying. Since starting junior high, it seems that the pace has picked up and the classes are harder. At first, I tried my best. But somehow, I just can't manage to keep up. The other students in my class seem to understand the lessons, though, and it makes me really anxious. I'm worried that I'm going to get left behind. I'm beginning to think that I'm just not bright. What can I do?"



Photo by Bob Rowan; Progressive Image/CORBIS

**'Just because you have gotten bad grades so far, does not mean that you are not bright. You musn't think that way.'**

**Ikeda:** Thank you to that student for sharing this with us! It's certainly true that junior high is completely different from elementary school. It's a completely different world.

In most elementary schools, you have one teacher who teaches almost all the subjects, but in junior high you have a different teacher for each. There may be teachers you get along with and teachers you may find intimidating.

**Shiratsuchi:** And, as he said, the pace of classes does pick up. In Japan, you also start studying English for the first time, and arithmetic suddenly gets a new, fancy name: mathematics. You also have to deal with new concepts such as mid-semester and end-of-semester exams, which can be quite daunting.

**Maekawa:** I've heard first-year junior high students say with surprise that their teachers talk in loud voices and are quick to yell at students.

**Ikeda:** Those teachers may simply be excited because they've got a fresh class of students to teach!

**It is human to have problems.**

**Ikeda:** Everyone is anxious and insecure in a new environment. It's quite natural. Maybe you think you're hopeless when you see friends who do better at school than you

do. Maybe you feel depressed and discouraged.

But you're not alone. Everyone is anxious or worried—that's how it is. Even your friends who appear confident have some kind of problem of their own.

It's human to have problems. You're all human beings. You're

all junior high students. It's natural to feel anxious. There's nothing wrong with being anxious, but it's wrong to let it defeat you.

**Shiratsuchi:** I was very timid

PLEASE SEE DIALOGUE, 7

## SGI PRESIDENT'S OCT. 13 ENCOURAGEMENT

# Create Fresh Ranks of Capable People

**SGI President Ikeda asks leaders to make raising capable people 'the focus of our energies in the year ahead.' This is the key for the kosen-rufu movement's future expansion.**

**S**GI President Ikeda asked leaders gathered at a Tokyo No. 2 Joint Territory executive conference in Hachioji, Oct. 13: "How do we create fresh ranks of capable people for the advancement of kosen-rufu in the 21st century? I want this to be the focus of our energies in the year ahead."

He said that a genuine leader is one who is selflessly committed to raising people to shoulder the future. That is the key to realizing the organization's eternal prosperity and growth.

President Ikeda stressed that in all spheres, it is important to

have a firm sense of purpose, always asking ourselves, "What can be done to advance kosen-rufu?" For example, he said, depending on how earnestly those in supporting positions, such as vice leader positions, pray and make careful, considerate efforts, our strength will multiply fivefold or tenfold.

It is also important to define the responsibilities of each leader and to form a solid core of leaders working together in harmony. He further said that when we take swift action and complete each task with care and precision, our momentum toward victory increases. **WT**

FROM DIALOGUE, 6

myself. I was nervous and worried about junior high even before I started.

**Maekawa:** I was more relaxed, I guess. But I went to a pretty tough junior high, with a reputation for senior students enforcing a strict hierarchy that had to be obeyed or else. And when people told me that the classes would be a lot harder in junior high school, I did feel pressured.

**Ikeda:** It must be difficult for junior high students with all that pressure, plus other things going on at school, to have things further compounded by the classes getting harder.

**Shiratsuchi:** Some students are ready to give up from the start, it seems. When you talk to a lot of junior high students, they immediately blurt out that they're just not bright, just like the student whose letter I shared.

**Maekawa:** Yes. When I chide them for saying that and want to know why they feel that way, they say, "Well, because I've been dumb since elementary school." It wrenches my heart to think of the suffering that has been inflicted on these youth as a result of others' criticizing them or putting them down.

**Ikeda:** I think we should ask ourselves what *smart* means, actually. I once heard it said, "A smart person is one who has a lot of questions."

**Maekawa:** Not someone who knows a lot.

**Ikeda:** Yes. In this view, a really smart person is a person who questions, who is curious, who wonders about things—someone who is not afraid to admit they don't understand this or don't get that, someone who wants to know why this is so or why that is like it is.

**Maekawa:** Then getting good grades isn't always the same as being smart, is it?

**Ikeda:** Of course, it is better to get good grades. But just because you have gotten bad grades so far, does not mean that you are not bright. You mustn't think that way. You are insulting yourself. Each of you is a treasure chest filled with infinite potential.

**Everyone is a genius at something.**

**Ikeda:** There are many ways to be smart. Good memory is one thing, and the ability to think is another. There is inventiveness and creativity, and there is insight. There is perceptiveness and expressiveness.

All of these are different. It's just like how the ability to run fast and the ability to throw a ball a long distance are two completely different skills.

**Shiratsuchi:** School exams mainly test memory.

**Ikeda:** Our society is in trouble because we tend to regard memory and retention of information as the only marks of in-

telligence, of being smart. As a result, we have produced a lot of people who passively accept whatever others write or say.

**Shiratsuchi:** In Japan, there are many people who tend to accept rumors as truth without any attempt to verify them.

**Ikeda:** Such people can't be called smart.

Scientists are now saying that our brains are all pretty much the same. Of course, we all have particular things that we are and aren't good at. And we have individual talents. We don't learn everything at school.

Our brains contain many gifts and abilities: the ability to paint beautiful pictures or to make people laugh; the ability to get along with others; the ability to organize; the ability to comfort others; the ability to write good letters; the abilities to excel in music and sports. All of them are there.

**Maekawa:** Everyone is an individual.

**Ikeda:** Everyone is different, and everyone is a genius at something. This is what we call our mission. Each of us has a mission that is ours alone, that only we can accomplish.

That is why we were born. If we didn't have a mission, we would never have been born in the first place.

Look up at the stars. There are so many. In this universe filled with countless stars and planets, you were born here, on this earth, at this time. That is definitely not an accident.

SGI PRESIDENT'S OCT. 17 ENCOURAGEMENT

# The World Needs New Ideas

**'We are at the end of the 20th century, an age that has been void of philosophy,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'What we need now are new ideas and a new philosophy that will show humankind the path to follow into the future.'**

SGI President Ikeda attended a joint executive conference with leaders from Yamanashi and Nagano prefectures at the Yamanashi Study and Training Center in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan, on Oct. 17. Expressing his delight at the exemplary progress of Yamanashi and Nagano prefectures, President Ikeda made the following points:

- As long as we are alive, we must strive to leave behind something of value, some lasting legacy. Worldly prosperity is nothing more than relative happiness. There is no higher truth or greater happiness than that found in the realm of the Mystic Law.
- We are at the end of the 20th

century, an age that has been void of philosophy. What we need now are new ideas and a new philosophy that will show humankind the path to follow into the future. These are what thinking people are earnestly seeking. That is why the SGI has realized such tremendous growth worldwide.

- Faith that is dedicated to the cause of kosen-rufu produces wonderful benefit. Those who strive to spread the Law will never fail to become happy—they will absolutely win. With this firm conviction, I hope you will continue to pray wholeheartedly and engage others in dialogue, thereby achieving a life of great fulfillment that will endure throughout the three existences. **WT**

There is a meaning to your having been born. You were born because it was a good thing for you to be born. You have a mission that only you can fulfill. You are a genius at

something. It's just that you don't know what it is yet. That's why you mustn't ever write yourself off or think that you aren't bright. **WT**

# New England Campaigns Against Violence

By FLETCHER DALTON  
BOSTON BUREAU CHIEF

How does one initiate a dialogue with survivors of unspeakable acts of violence? SGI-USA members in New England made a start Oct 21 by displaying shirts created by survivors of physical, emotional and psychological assaults. On loan from The Clothesline Project, the shirts were hung in dazzling sunlight on a line that zigzagged over the lawn and flowerbeds of the New England Culture Center.

Printed on the shirts were powerful and poignant messages from women and men to the perpetrators who had harmed them. Some shirts were created to honor the memory of

relatives or friends who did not survive an assault.

Many messages described the survivors' determination to transform the negativity of the shadowy past into a bright future. One shirt read: "Our lives are precious and powerful, no matter what happened to us." Another declared: "I am beautiful. I am a winner. I'm going to change the world."

The Clothesline Project got its start when in 1990 the Cape Cod Womens Agenda put up the first clothesline. They had discovered the amazing fact that during the time of the Vietnam War, 58,000 American soldiers had lost their lives while during the same period 51,000 women were murdered in the United States by husbands or lovers. Since then,

more than 250 Clothesline Projects have been organized around the world.

The shirts displayed at the New England Culture Center were on loan from the Clothesline Project of Somerville, Mass., and the Somerville Commission for Women. However, tables were set up on the culture center lawn and members and visitors were able to create shirts bearing their own messages. Some of the shirts now hang in the lobby of the culture center.

The Clothesline Project kicked off an intensive campaign against violence that will culminate in the Nov. 4 Victory Over Violence dramatic and musical program sponsored by the youth members of New England. **WT**



Photo by SANTOSH CHACKO

The purpose of New England members' Clothesline Project is to eradicate domestic violence.

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# Never Forget Your Mission As Leaders

**‘Leaders are there to work for the members’ happiness and inspire them to unite joyously together for a lofty cause,’ SGI President Ikeda writes in this essay commemorating the Soka Gakkai’s 70th anniversary. ‘They are there to help everyone strive in their Buddhist practice and deepen their faith, so that all can lead worthwhile, fulfilling lives. Leaders must never forget this most fundamental mission and spirit.’**

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda gave strict instructions: “Always act with complete propriety concerning leadership appointments and finances, and do not allow any problems to arise.” He also sternly declared, “Any leaders who try to use the Soka Gakkai for their own purposes or do anything that arouses the disdain of other members should be dismissed from their positions.”

If there should be leaders who exploit our organization, are self-serving and arrogant, deceive honest, sincere members and cause confusion and disorder, we must resolutely drive them from our midst. The reason the Soka Gakkai’s president and leaders exist is to give guidance to this effect while protecting the members and taking the lead in kosen-rufu activities. That is why we have leadership positions.

Leaders are there to work for the members’ happiness and inspire them to unite joyously together for a lofty cause. They are there to help everyone strive in their Buddhist practice and deepen their faith, so that all can lead worthwhile, fulfilling lives. Leaders must never forget this most fundamental mission and spirit.

Mr. Toda was insistent that anyone who harmed the Soka Gakkai should be expelled, and that any leader who brought shame on it should be removed from his or her position. The great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore said that to silently endure injustice is to be a party to injustice.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Mr. Toda was very strict. He severely reprimanded anyone who was late coming into work. He said: “Morning decides the day. A person who arrives at work late and is scolded by his boss will never amount to anything. New employees, especially, in the interest of earning trust and credibility in the workplace, should come into work

earlier than anyone else. Without the willingness and enthusiasm to come in early and tidy up in preparation for the workday, for example, and to be on hand ready to greet their boss and colleagues, they will not get far in life. This is the first step to success in life.”

Mr. Toda taught us many detailed, practical lessons for success in the real world.

On one occasion, he thundered with white-hot fury: “Young people must never, ever lie! A young person with the eyes of a snake who lies without compunction is not a human being. He is an animal!”

He could be very severe.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Mr. Toda was also strict about the attitude we should have when studying Nichiren Daishonin’s writings. He said: “As you read each line, you should try to absorb it deeply, so that you can say: ‘How true! It is just as the Daishonin states!’ Based on that approach, when you come across a passage you do not understand, you should work humbly and sincerely to interpret and comprehend its meaning. You must never read the Daishonin’s writings lightly, just skimming over the surface and pretending to understand what is written there without pondering and striving to grasp its deeper meaning.”

Mr. Toda drummed into us that forging ourselves through the strict training afforded by our Buddhist practice and study, reminiscent of the relentless training of a master swordsman, is the honored tradition of the Soka Gakkai.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

One day at a meeting, a young man asked: “I want to go back to my hometown with honors. I do not have any honors right now, so what should I do?” Mr. Toda had been smiling warmly, but hearing this question, he suddenly grew angry. “Striving to achieve kosen-rufu and being a Soka Gakkai leader

are the highest honors there are,” he said. “No matter how you look at it, there can be no greater honors!”

When we heard these words, it was as if a ray of sunshine illuminated our hearts. Filled with confidence and hope, we realized that being Mr. Toda’s disciples was the most noble thing we could aspire to.

We were also struck to the core by the greatness of this wonderful world of the Soka Gakkai, where people were working tirelessly to achieve kosen-rufu—the realization of happiness and lasting peace for all humankind.

It is highly likely that some at that meeting felt a stab of remorse when they heard their mentor’s words, having recognized that they were too concerned with appearances and had let themselves be blinded by vanity. By the same token, there may also have been some who, superficial and fickle, and easily swayed by the desire for worldly fame, only pretended to accept Mr. Toda’s words.

It is crucial to cast out vanity, fickleness of mind arising from a lack of substance and principle, and all such dark tendencies from our lives.

The base pretenders in our midst that day must surely have been knocked flat by Mr. Toda’s words and left trembling, having had their true feelings penetrated and laid out before them so vividly.

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Mr. Toda also said: “You must keep your promises. The most important practice for young people is to keep their promises. Youth who are easy-going and make promises thoughtlessly and then break them just as readily will never become people of any substance. No one will trust them. They are paving their way to defeat. Learning this lesson in the crucial time of your youth and winning the trust of others is the most precious of treasures.”

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first



Photo by JACK ALDRICH

**‘We should continue our victorious advance, our lives exuding a fresh invigorating spirit, our hearts always filled with joy and our heads held high.’ (Above) Members enjoy the South Bay Oct. 5 Commemorative Meeting at Morris Daley Auditorium, San Jose State University, Calif.**

prime minister of independent India and a man whom Mr. Toda wanted very much to meet, wrote a series of letters to his daughter, Indira (later Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi), from prison, where he was placed by the British colonial authorities. In one of them, he wrote: “Life is rich and varied, and though it has many swamps and marshes and muddy places, it has also the great sea, and the mountains, and snow, and glaciers, and wonderful starlit nights (especially in jail!), and the love of family and friends, and the comradeship of workers in a common cause, and music, and books and the empire of ideas.”

In our long lives, we must not allow ourselves to get mired in the mud. We should continue our victorious advance, our lives exuding a fresh, invigorating spirit, our hearts always filled with joy and our heads held high.

Every jeweled word of wisdom in Mr. Toda’s strict but loving guidance was designed to help us do just that.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Our mentor also left us with several final injunctions. One of them was “Support the third president! If you support the third president, you will achieve kosen-rufu without fail.” The senior leaders of the Soka Gakkai all know that he said that.

About a year after Mr. Toda’s death, the call went up for the vacancy of the presidency to be filled. (The position had remained open since Mr. Toda’s death.) It started in Tokyo and

neighboring Saitama, and then spread across Japan and to our members scattered around the world. They insisted that the third president be appointed without delay, their cry resounding like the roar of billowing wave.

At the time, General Director Takashi Koizumi was the highest-ranking Soka Gakkai leader. He had decided that the best time to appoint the next president would be after the third memorial (second anniversary) of Mr. Toda’s death [to be conducted in April 1960]. Until then, he felt that time was needed to tie up various loose ends and unfinished projects left in the wake of Mr. Toda’s death and to stabilize the Soka Gakkai in preparation for its future growth.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Mr. Toda had already given us detailed instructions for the future of worldwide kosen-rufu. For example, he said: “The day will come in the future when there will be many members overseas, and *Seikyo Shimbun* correspondents will be dispatched to cover our activities in different countries. Our leaders may also come to travel abroad regularly to give guidance to members in various parts of the world. One thing they [the correspondents and leaders] must strictly adhere to when they do so is to always show the utmost respect to the people of the countries they are visiting. They must not become the kind of Japanese who are loathed for their narrow-minded

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, 9

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PART 5-6

*Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages a young women's leader who is full of fresh ideas—some of which her seniors do not accept. 'Those who become discouraged just because others do not accept their ideas are not qualified to work for kosen-rufu,' he tells her.*

Michiyo Watari, the new Soka Gakkai young women's leader, became involved in the socialist movement during her high school days. She wanted to find a solution to the contradictions of a society that ignored the plight of the poor and the weak, and to help build a peaceful nation. But she was discouraged to see how the other activists, having sacrificed their happiness for their cause, ultimately wound up in despair.

Also, realizing that there were so many problems that social reform alone could not resolve, such as incurable disease and family discord, Michiyo began to feel that the socialist movement had its limitations.

Around this time, she learned about the Soka Gakkai from Seichiro Koyama, a young man who delivered milk to her home. His assertion that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism aimed to achieve both social prosperity and individual happiness inspired her to take faith.

Michiyo joined the Soka Gakkai in November 1952, while she was a university student. She began practicing with the intention that she would give it her all for one year—but if she didn't get the results she was looking for by then, she would quit.

Determined to get something out of her efforts, Michiyo exerted herself diligently in her Buddhist practice. She visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters branch office in Ichigaya, Tokyo, almost every day and even sought guidance on occasion from President Toda. Eventually, she came to firmly believe that only the Daishonin's Buddhism had the power to liberate people from their sufferings.

When a year had passed, Michiyo strengthened her determination to live out her life with the Soka Gakkai. After graduating from college, she began working for the Headquarters as a *Seikyo Shimbun* correspondent. She was the first woman to hold such a position.

As a reporter, she placed great importance on the social perspective of any story she covered. When, for example, she reported on the experience of someone who had overcome an illness through faith, she would visit the attending doctor and find out how he or she viewed the recovery from the medical standpoint. She made a conscious effort to write articles that were free of dogma and that would convince others of the power of Buddhism.

She would also call upon noted editors of magazines or other publications and ask their opinion of the *Seikyo Shimbun*. Her desire for self-improvement was strong, and she always strove for perfection in her work. Our personal growth depends to a large degree on whether we possess such a desire for self-improvement.

Michiyo became the head of the planning department in the young women's division and, under the leadership of Young Women's Leader Tokie Tani, began to demonstrate enormous ability. She was full of fresh ideas, but as a result, her seniors in the women's and young women's divisions did not always accept them. Frustrated, she often went to Shin'ichi Yamamoto for guidance.

Shin'ichi wanted Michiyo to fully utilize her talents to benefit the young women. For this reason, he was

sometimes strict with her.

Once, when Michiyo came to him disheartened because a proposal in which she had been quite confident was rejected, Shin'ichi said to her: "In one sense, kosen-rufu is a bloodless revolution to create happiness and peace for all people. Even socialist revolutionaries have fought with their lives, enduring one persecution after another without compromising their ideals.

"Those who become discouraged just because others do not accept their ideas are not qualified to work for kosen-rufu."

With that, Michiyo renewed her resolve and threw herself back into activities—so much so that she began to neglect her physical appearance. Seeing this, Shin'ichi said to her: "As a leader of young women, it is important to pay attention to how you look and dress, and to always try to be neat and presentable. Women at the top of their fields throughout the world are careful about this. No one will follow a leader who lacks inner latitude."

On another occasion he said: "If you are always trying to do everything yourself according to how you want it, your members will not grow. It is important to think about how to enable each member to cheerfully and joyfully make the most of her potential and to put the spotlight on others, not on yourself.

### FROM ESSAY, 8

edness and ready arrogance. Nothing is achieved unless we win the trust of the people in those countries. Otherwise, our efforts will end in failure. Please be extremely careful in this regard when you go overseas. I also hope that you will always warmly and courteously welcome members from abroad, when they visit Japan."

These were very detailed, precise instructions. However, they convey an important larger message. And that is: As SGI members, we must try to avoid causing meaningless conflicts and resentments. It is important that we contribute to the countries in which we live, that we make friends based on sincerity and respect for others.

I have made this vision of Mr.



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

"It is also vital to listen carefully to what others have to say and to be warm and accepting. A leader who is cold and mechanical will only end up rejected by everyone. Always remember that the purpose of faith is to polish our humanity."

Michiyo steadily developed her capacity as a leader of the young women.

In May 1959, the year after President Toda's death, she married Goro Watari. He was also a *Seikyo Shimbun* reporter, and the two had fallen in love.

When they came to tell Shin'ichi that they were to be married, he said: "Is that so? Congratulations! I know that if Mr. Toda were still alive, he would be very happy."

President Toda had once told

Shin'ichi that he would like to see the two young people get together because he thought they would make a charming couple, and Shin'ichi had never forgotten this.

Michiyo continued to work for the *Seikyo Shimbun* after marrying and even after giving birth. She also continued to fulfill her responsibilities as the head of the planning department of the young women's division. She was determined to carry out her mission without retreating a single step, no matter how her circumstances might change.

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

Toda my own and, while chanting wholeheartedly for its realization, have worked to open the way for the global spread of our movement. And my beloved fellow members have worked earnestly alongside me.

That is why, transcending societal conflicts and disputes, and overcoming persecution, we have extended our alliance of peace and happiness to 163 nations and territories around the world today.



In the famous "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the Daishonin discusses the profound significance of the "lion's roar," which is expounded in the Lotus Sutra. Noting that the word *lion* is written with Chinese characters for *teacher* and *child*, he says: "The Chinese

character *teacher* represents the Mystic Law as it is passed on by the mentor, and the Chinese character *child* indicates the Mystic Law as it is received by the disciples. The Chinese character *roar*, meanwhile, refers to the sound of mentor and disciples chanting in unison" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 748).

Letting the lion's roar of mentor and disciple resound powerfully far and wide, the Soka Gakkai will forever advance on the path of undefeated victory.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" series in the Oct. 24 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

EXPERIENCE — KIMBERLY MITCHELL, LONG BEACH, CALIF.

# Becoming a First-Class Individual

**While studying in Italy for a year, Kimberly Mitchell, 18, realizes that her challenges are a source of growth.**

In summer 1998, I went on a tour of Europe for 16 days with my high school. In addition to seeing Greece, France, Switzerland and England, we made a stop in Italy. It was love at first sight. I had never seen such a beautiful place in my life. Not only was it beautiful, but the people I met there had the warmest hearts you could ever find. When I returned to Long Beach, I dreamt of living in Italy, marrying an Italian and growing wine grapes on a vineyard in the hills of Tuscany.

That September, I started my junior year of high school. I remembered the year before my friend had tried to go to Germany through a program called AFS, so I asked for information on the program from my counselor. It was discouraging at first because my counselor could say nothing but "It's going to be difficult going in your last year of high school. You may not be able to graduate in time." After that, the idea was abandoned because I didn't want to complicate my life. Junior year is already the most stressful year of high school and I couldn't imagine doubling the anxiety.

I went home and chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo; I chanted my heart out. My parents still marvel at how much I chanted. I thought: "If this is something I want to do, I have to put my all into it. I can't just give up."

I decided to ask my parents for advice. The first response I got was, as usual, discouraging. I don't think they took me seriously. But I wouldn't give up.

By November, I rearranged my schedule with my counselor in order to go to Italy and graduate on time, my parents started to take me seriously. We had made an agreement that I could go only if I took on a job to help pay for it. Before they could say the word *job*, I was on the phone arranging two babysitting jobs. School also became really difficult. I was taking 14 classes throughout the course of the day. I started getting some serious migraines that year, but it wasn't about to make me lazy. I con-

tinued to also participate in clubs, keep my grades up, look into universities and have a social life with my friends. I had my doubts that I could do it, but that year made me a believer in myself. It made me believe that I could do just about anything if I was really determined.

After all these struggles, I thought I was going to have an awesome year abroad. I worked so hard to get there, it had to be good. The struggles, I can tell you from experience, will never stop. But that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

So I went to Italy with these false ideas in my head. I figured that it was going to be a breeze and never really thought how difficult it might be. In the course of a year, I lived with three host families. One treated me like a hotel guest instead of a family member; one had a daughter with psychological problems; and one whose mother put on a façade, acting like she loved me in public only to impress her colleagues.

As I changed families, I also lived in three different cities. The first was Potenza, a newly built city with no real Italian characteristics. The second was Pietragalla, a village of 3,500 people in the countryside outside of Potenza. And the last was Naples, a metropolis that reminded me of a miniature New York City. I experienced three totally different realities in Italy in the course of a year. It was very stressful and I felt homesick, and I was constantly on the phone with my parents and sister crying and complaining about my problems, which ended up being a benefit in disguise because I really deepened the relationship I have with them. But I also really deepened my relationship with the Gohonzon. Constantly hearing my mother say, "Do gongyo, do gongyo," I finally got into gear and started practicing Buddhism on a regular basis. This really helped me keep my head on straight.

In the midst of all the chaos, I found a diamond — my boyfriend, Pasquale Antezza, whom I met in October. He is one of the most amazing people in my life. I introduced him to Buddhism and he is actively practicing and attending meetings in Italy. He proved to be a key person in my life while in Italy because he knew me, but he also knew Italians. He taught me that I can't look at an aspect of Italian life and say: "That's weird. It's so

different from the way Americans do things." I did that even if I didn't like to admit it. Instead of coming to Italy to learn and take in the culture, I ended up pointing out the differences to the Italians. What I needed to do was to become Italian for a year. Even if there are things that I didn't agree with, I had to accept them because I chose to go there.

Cultures are different and that is a fact of life. There are even differences between the culture of Long Beach and San Francisco and there is only a car ride between us. This was the most important lesson I learned in Italy.

This brings me to today. While in Italy, I remember thinking that I wasn't getting anything from the experience. I would pray desperately, thinking: "When is this going to stop? Just cut me a little slack." But I realized that all those problems were really my benefit. I realized no matter how wonderful life could be, there will always be challenges.

These problems prepared me for problems that I'm sure to face in the future. I always felt so grown-up when I was younger, but I now realize that I won't have someone there to take over every time things get



Kimberly Mitchell, 18 (center), in Naples, Italy, with two fellow exchange students from Australia, Lauren and Jade.

out of hand. I have matured. I know I'll have to bite the bullet and go through it but go through it with the determination to take the best of what I can out of that situation. This is what will make me stronger. Although I had some pretty difficult relationships with my host families, I really appreciate them because I wouldn't be who I am today without them. I chant for them every day to find happiness.

Now that I'm home, I plan to use everything that I learned over this past year to fulfill my dream of attending Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo.

I want to become a diplomat and use my knowledge of the Italian language.

SGI President Ikeda says: "There is no person who has ever achieved first-class standing in his or her given field merely on innate talent or favorable circumstances alone. It is the number of life-and-death struggles a person has experienced that forges and creates an individual of genuine first-class standing" (*Guidance Today*, vol. 2, p. 326). If that's what it takes to become a first-class diplomat, I think I got a pretty good head start. **WT**



*Send in your own questions, and we'll share the answers!*

#### Question:

I thought I would apply for Early Admission, but I just couldn't get all of my recommendations (or other parts of the application) completed by Oct. 15. Do I need to start all over for Regular Admission? Will SUA be confused if it only has part of an application?

#### Answer:

We realize that it takes a

lot of effort to get all of these materials to SUA. If you have a "partial file" at SUA after the Early Admission deadline of Oct. 15, we will keep it open so that you may complete it before the Regular Admission deadline of Jan. 15, 2001. You do not have to start over. SUA's college application requires the application, an essay, three recommendation letters, a financial aid form, a Secondary School Report Form (sent in by your high school with your high school transcript), your SAT/ACT and/or TOEFL scores (sent in by the testing

agency) and an application fee. Please don't be discouraged. We will accept the majority of our class during the Regular Admission period.

#### Question:

Where can I find the Soka University, Aliso Viejo college code for SAT? ACT? TOEFL?

#### Answer:

The codes are printed on your application form under Admission Applications Procedures. They are: SAT-4066; ACT-0467; and TOEFL-4066. With the SUA college code, the testing agency can send results directly to SUA.

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

EXPERIENCE — STACEY MITCHELL, LONG BEACH, CALIF.

# Recognizing Life's Wide, Open Expanse

Photo by TERRI MITCHELL

**Stacey Mitchell, 22, develops a hopeful dream for the future by rekindling her Buddhist practice.**

Although I was born into a family that practices Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I haven't always remained consistent in my Buddhist practice. Actually, I only practiced when I wanted something such as clothes, beer money or to improve my relationships with boys. Though I didn't really take the practice seriously, I always knew that it worked.

Throughout high school and college, I rebelled against having anything to do with the practice going so far as keeping the Gohonzon wrapped in a box hidden in a drawer for three years. I neglected to tell any of my friends of my Buddhist upbringing because I always had this fear of being different from others. Because I was accepted by the "in crowd" through my grammar and high school years, I never wanted to stray from anything that was accepted as being "cool." Because I neglected to put to use the power I had inside me, I suffered tremendously. I was more than often nasty to my family, choosing to go out and drink beer with my friends on both weekends and weekdays.

In college, although I missed my family much and was so worried about my father's health (he struggled to overcome cancer), I steered clear from home most of the time feeling that I didn't want to know what was going on. I usually chose to hang out with my boyfriend, who also had no hope for the future. I enjoyed dwelling in my own suffering for some reason. I had no goals or aspirations, no mentor, no hope. I had nothing but sleep and parties.

I don't know how I ever pulled off getting the grades I got because I would buy close to \$300 in books each quarter and would not even open one. Because I was so accustomed to being unhappy and unmotivated, I didn't realize that I had the power within me to ever overcome this. I was habitually depressed.

Breaking up with my boyfriend did not seem beneficial at the time, but the break-up pushed me to really get to know my family again. I began to go home every other weekend, which seemed extremely excessive to my friends and roommates, just to get away from my depression while at school. I didn't know what else to do but to run away. My relationship with my mother and father deepened because I spent more time with them, and I finally made an effort to get to know my sister, Kimberly.

Watching them, I began understanding why they practiced Buddhism. For a long time I had wondered why and how they remained happy when we were always extremely broke—money was always an issue. My father's confidence was higher than it had ever been because of his curing cancer and being able to buy a house for the first time instead of constantly renting and moving. My mother, although always hit with a load of stress, was able to hold everything together in crazy times. My sister remained her happy self like she always seemed to be.

I became jealous of their happiness and wanted to begin practicing, but my stubbornness and arrogance kept me from getting in front of the Gohonzon. This was also depressing because they would often chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo together and do morning and evening prayers, while I listened from the living room immersed in some pointless TV show. I knew something had to change.

One weekend in the summer of 1999, I had plans to visit a friend in Los Angeles, and Kim asked if I could drop her off at practice for the Grand Youth Culture Festival in Santa Monica. I rolled my eyes and reluctantly agreed to take her. On the way, she raved about how great the festival was going to be and how many friends she had reconnected with and also how many new ones she had made. I became interested in what went on at the practices and started feeling the need to see those kids that I had grown up with at Buddhist meetings.

The moment I stepped onto



Stacey Mitchell (right) with her best friend, Holly, on her graduation day at the University of California, Santa Barbara in June.

the property of Crossroads School, where the practices were held, everything inside me changed. The power of Buddhism was so incredibly apparent in the faces of all of the youth. You could see SGI President Ikeda's vision for peace being formed right before your eyes.

Because I didn't really know anyone, I tagged along with my sister, finding that I didn't want to leave to go see my friend. I wanted to spend all of my time with Kim. I knew that participating in these practices was the medicine I needed to escape the depressing void I was living in. For the first time in my life, I felt what it was like to really be happy—what an amazing feeling.

Kim left a short time afterward for Italy. Her leaving was surprisingly difficult for me. In the short time that we hung out together, I started feeling what it was like to really have a sister—I fell in love with her.

Her leaving did not stop me from going to practices though. I started going on my own, which was amazing to myself and parents because I had never gone to any activity on my own, and I definitely was never excited about them. I requested every weekend off from work and gave up partying with my roommates on the weekends. My roommates began getting angry with me because they were so accustomed to me begging them to party but they started recognizing the positive change in me.

The biggest changes I experienced from renewing my

practice are threefold: One, I finally enshrined the Gohonzon, which was an amazing feeling. Second, I made a deep connection with many SGI-USA members in Santa Barbara, where I went to college. Third, I now have an amazing relationship with my mother, father and sister.

I can now say that I am happy. Of course, I still struggle and am currently a little lost; I'm still searching for my dreams. But instead of letting those struggles keep me down, I use them as a means of going after what I want in life. My Buddhist practice is consistent, and because of this I finally value my life by setting goals and sticking to them. I am excited about the future and the possibility of landing my dream job in film production. I am such a different person—my family can vouch for that. I thank my Buddhist practice and the SGI-USA organization for this.

The following passage from President Ikeda encourages me to continue to challenge myself: "When you encounter a wall, you should tell yourself, 'Since there is a wall here, a wide, open expanse must lie on the other side.' Rather than becoming discouraged, know that encountering a wall is proof of the progress that you have made so far. I hope that you will continually advance in your Buddhist practice with this conviction blazing ever more strongly in your heart" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 308). **WT**

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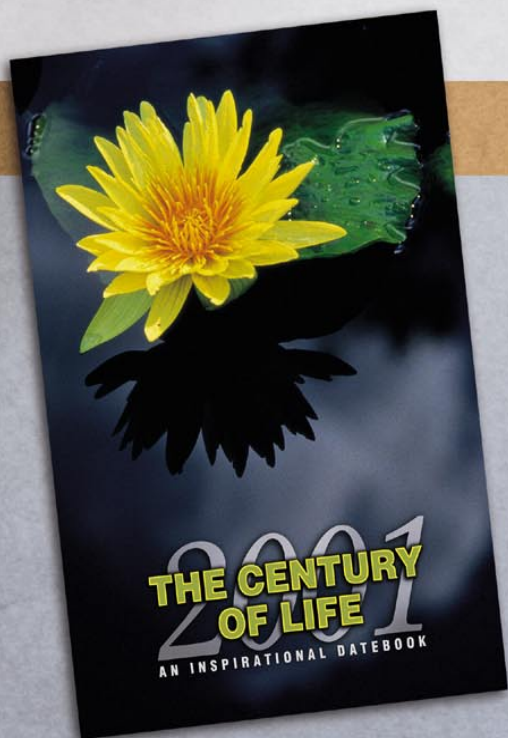
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# Calendars for 2001!



## The Century of Life 2001

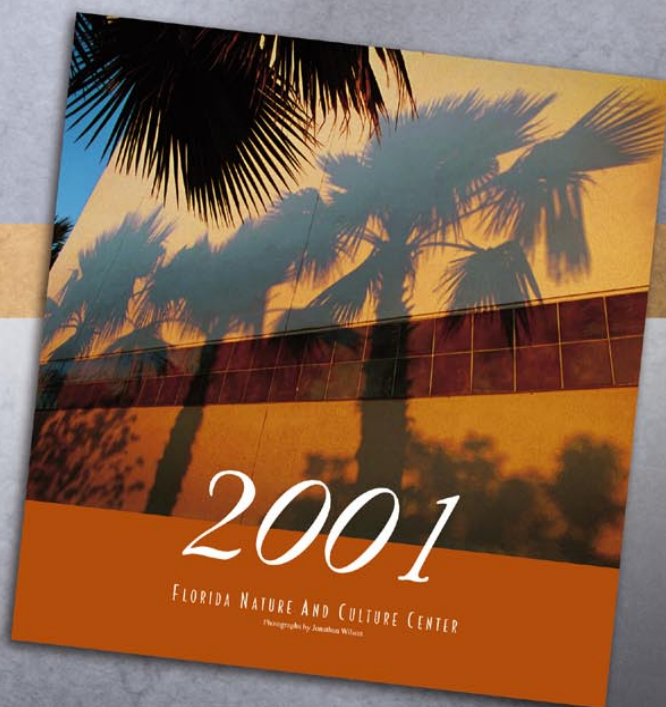
The Century of Life datebook is back with a new edition for 2001. This gorgeous week-by-week calendar features stunning photography by SGI-USA members together with inspirational quotes from SGI President Ikeda. This year we've added a place for phone numbers and addresses, too.

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## Florida Nature and Culture Center 2001

A wall calendar featuring the unique beauty of the Florida Nature and Culture Center in photographs by Jonathan Wilson.

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