

Photos by FLORIDA BUREAU



Students from the St. John Country Day School perform at the opening of 'Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities' exhibition at the Avenues Mall in Jacksonville, Fla., Oct. 14.

SEE PAGES 8-9 FOR SUMMARY OF SGI
PRESIDENT'S EDUCATION PROPOSAL

BUILDING A SOCIETY CONDUCTIVE TO EDUCATION

In this proposal, SGI President Ikeda focuses on the problems facing the Japanese education system and draws conclusions about the fundamental nature and mission of education. He points out that the problems young people face today are primarily caused by the degeneration of the educational function of society as a whole, a phenomenon reflecting a deterioration of the ethics of adult society.

Stressing that it is crucial to reverse our society's tendency to treat education as a means rather than an end, Mr. Ikeda urges that society be reformed to serve the essential needs of education. He calls for the restoration of the bonds between individuals and between humanity and the natural environment for the sake of our children, who are surrounded by pathological phenomena acutely symbolized by a breakdown in communication.

Children's Rights Exhibit Visits Northern Florida

By ALONZO DAVIS AND
ANDREW BRUCK

JACKSONVILLE, FLA., CORRESPONDENTS

On Oct. 14, a bustling crowd of dozens of curious and interested on-lookers converged on the first day of the "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" exhibition, hosted by the Jacksonville, Fla., SGI-USA members and co-sponsored by the Avenues Mall. Children quickly surrounded the exhibition's panels to observe and interact with its many displays.

The grand opening took place with a number of community dignitaries and co-sponsors who were highly supportive of the exhibition. Jacksonville City Councilman

Lake Ray presented a Mayoral Proclamation making the date "Children's Rights and Realities Day."

Keynote speaker Dr. Duane Dumbleton, president of Florida Community College at Jacksonville-Kent Campus, observed: "[This exhibition] gives us a chance to focus one more time on one of the most essential elements not only in the history of the planet but in the future of the planet.... You only can serve at your current level of awareness. What does this obligate us to do? To know more, to understand more, to try to find ways in which we can be of more service to this world of humanity."



PLEASE SEE EXHIBIT, 3

A young exhibition viewer imagines what profession she might choose down the road.

'The Human Revolution' Selected to Represent 20th Century by Writers Association in India

The Writers Forum for Harmony of India has selected *The Human Revolution* by Daisaku Ikeda as a novel representing the 20th century in recognition of its message of world peace and triumph of human spirituality. The screening committee of the Forum announced its unanimous decision during a celebration held at the Gandhi Memorial Hall in New Delhi on Oct. 23. Founded in 1997, the Writers Forum promotes goodwill and the Gandhian principles of nonviolence in society. Included among its 600 writers are Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and B. N. Pande, with Dr. A. Padmanabhan, Governor of Mizoram, serving as president. In addition to its literary activities, the Forum also sponsors lectures and seminars to raise public awareness of pressing social issues, including gender equality.

Soka Gakkai Malaysia Sponsors Women's Peace Conference

During October, Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM) women sponsored women's peace conferences, titled "Leading the Way to a Culture of Peace," at 24 locations. Approximately 17,000 women attended. At the Kuala Lumpur conference on Oct. 29, more than 1,000 women gathered



to discuss women's roles in establishing peace. As a prelude to discussion, the history of war throughout human civilization and the violence and conflicts that jeopardize today's society were portrayed through visual panels and videos. Malaysia National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr. Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, along with three other panelists, urged women to take more initiative in promoting peace among the races in their country, beginning with creating "the culture of peace" in their daily lives. Women, especially as caregivers and educators of children, hold the key to bridging social and cultural barriers and building peace. The culture of peace must be instilled in the young. Dr. Sulaiman commended SGM for organizing the peace conference and hoped more NGOs would take such initiatives in the future.

Animation of 'Shining Kingdom in the Himalayas' Broadcast in Nepal

An animation based on *Shining Kingdom in the Himalayas*, a children's book by Daisaku Ikeda, was broadcast

on Nepal Television on Oct. 13. The story is about an initially faint-hearted Nepalese boy who, through confronting challenges, develops courage and strength of character that can be epitomized by the Himalayan mountains. The boy aids a queen in trouble and is regarded as a hero in the end.

SGI-Iceland Members Hold Study Session

On Oct. 21–22, SGI-Iceland members held their annual study session in Reykjavik, with SGI-Europe Chair Shoichi Hasegawa. The participants exchanged their experiences of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and shared reports about recent activities, including an SGI-Europe youth gathering held in Denmark in summer.

SGI-Hong Kong Sponsors Lecture on Chinese Literature

On Oct. 20, SGI-Hong Kong sponsored a public lecture by renowned Chinese author Liu Zaifu at the SGI-Hong Kong Culture Center. Mr. Liu, a former director of the Institute of

Literature at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has taught as a visiting professor at various universities in Europe and the United States for the past ten years. Mr. Liu traced the history of Chinese literature following the 1911 Revolution in Wuchang, China, and spoke of changes in sensitivity relative to the times. He emphasized the necessity for increasing people's awareness as world citizens. He stated that the current times demand the "human revolution" espoused by the SGI, and expressed support for SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's consistent efforts to help people awaken to their own inner humanity and develop rich human relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

SGI Children's Exhibit Opens in Two German Cities

The SGI "World Boys and Girls Art Exhibition" is currently on display in two German cities. The exhibit at the Oldenburg City Culture Center opened on Oct. 8 with 200 guests attending. Erlangen City declared the exhibit, which opened in a local theater on Oct. 15, as an official event of its annual October cultural exchange activities. In September, the children's art exhibit was in Wolftratshausen. Erlangen is the fourth German city to host the SGI exhibit.

Courtesy of SOKANET
(www.sokagakkai.or.jp)

BUDDHISM IN DAILY LIFE

THE TEN FACTORS

In many teachings of Buddhism, the Buddha was presented as a superhuman being, whose abilities and wisdom were far beyond the reach of ordinary people. However, the Lotus Sutra reveals that there is no separation between the life of a Buddha and that of an ordinary person. A Buddha is a person who has polished or revealed his or her inner state of life to a point where the qualities of wisdom, compassion, life energy and courage are fully developed. As the 13th-century Buddhist teacher, Nichiren, wrote: "While deluded, one is called a common mortal, but once awakened, he is called a Buddha."

The ten factors are introduced in the Lotus Sutra to define the fundamental reality of life. "The true aspect of all phenomena can only be understood and shared between Buddhas. This reality consists of appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, internal cause, rela-

tion, latent effect, manifest effect and their consistency from beginning to end."

These ten factors are common to all living beings, in any of the ten states of life [ten worlds], from hell to Buddhahood. As SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has written: "To say that the beings of the ten worlds all possess the ten factors... is nothing less than an affirmation that, as seen with the eye of the Buddha, there is no difference between the life of the Buddha and the lives of others. The enlightenment of all people, therefore, is a certainty."

The ten factors provide a useful guide to the essential components that make up all life.

No one could say that he or she has no "appearance." Such a person would be invisible. Equally, no one could claim not to have a personality, to have no energy, or to carry out no activity. So long as we are alive, we manifest the ten factors. We all have a physical identity consist-

ing of our features, posture and so on — our appearance — and a nature — the unseen aspects of our temperament or personality such as a short temper, kindness or reticence. Our entity or fundamental identity is expressed through these two aspects.

Power is life's potential strength or energy to achieve something, and influence is the movement or action produced when this latent power is activated. Internal cause consists of the possibilities inherent in our life and the inner karmic tendencies or orientations we have created by our past thoughts, actions and deeds. Relation is the external cause that activates the internal cause. Latent effect is the result produced simultaneously in the depths of our lives by this interaction, and manifest effect is the visible external result that eventually appears. Consistency from beginning to end means that all these nine factors are perfectly consistent in expressing our life state at any given moment.

In the case of someone who develops cancer, the internal cause could be a genetic "po-

tential" to develop the illness. With the action of an external cause such as an unhealthy, stressful lifestyle or being exposed to radiation, the cancer gene is triggered (latent effect), and as it multiplies (manifest effect), the symptoms of cancer appear. While the person may fall into a hellish state initially, when they realize they can change and challenge the situation, they may even experience a state of joy, which will manifest itself in a consistent, integrated manner through all the ten factors.

The ten factors can be used as a framework for analysis of any given situation. By viewing a given state of affairs with the perspective of the ten factors, it can become easier to identify the root of suffering and change the situation so it leads to joy. The ten factors also form part of a broader theoretical framework of "three thousand realms in a single moment of life."

On a deeper level, Nichiren explains that the ten factors are in fact a manifestation of the underlying creative and compassionate life of the cosmos. He expressed this as the Mystic Law

or Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. To view all things as the manifestations of the Mystic Law of life is thus to perceive what the Lotus Sutra refers to as the "true aspect of all phenomena."

But this truth does not justify a laissez-faire attitude to life. It is not correct to say that someone is a Buddha just as they are, even if they make no effort or carry out no practice. Simply saying that reality full of suffering and problems is itself the true entity, manifesting the enlightened life of the cosmos, cannot lead to improvement in people's lives or society. Rather, the true aspect should be understood as a potential to be realized. Nichiren taught that it is not enough to be aware on a theoretical level of the true aspect of our lives. Rather, he urged his followers to commit themselves to their Buddhist practice in the midst of the realities that confronted them. It is by transforming ourselves and our surroundings, making them shine with the positive potentials they hold, that we reveal the true aspect of all phenomena — the state of Buddhahood — in our own lives. **WT**

Santa Barbara Supports Nuclear Abolition

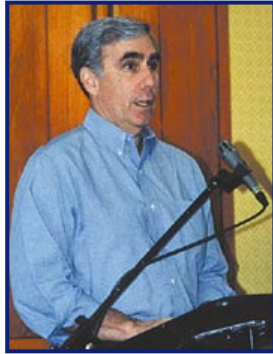
By FRANK R. HOTCHKISS
SANTA BARBARA CORRESPONDENT

SGI-USA's Santa Barbara Chapter recently joined 32 other community organizations in supporting a month-long public awareness campaign for the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and its goal of abolishing nuclear weapons in this century.

The focus of the chapter's support was a two-hour-long meeting and reception at the local SGI-USA community center that featured a brief speech by the Peace Foundation's president, Dr. David Krieger, and a testimonial by Ms. Miyoko Matsubara, survivor of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima.

Dr. Krieger, who has met with SGI President Ikeda and is expected to co-author a dialogue with him in the near future, thanked the organization for the 13 million signatures the Soka Gakkai gathered in Japan in support of the anti-nuclear weapons cause. These signatures were subsequently presented to the United Nations.

"I have a dream that in this



Dr. David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, discusses his organization's activities at the SGI-USA Santa Barbara Community Center.

country we match or exceed the 13 million signatures from Japan," Krieger said. "But I can't do it alone. SGI-USA could play a major role in turning this country around. Our population is double that of Japan, so we ought to be able to gather 26 million signatures. The only way your voice for peace will be heard is through your actions."

Ms. Matsubara, 67, put a

face on nuclear weapons. She was 12 years old and was standing less than one mile from the epicenter of the blast when it occurred at approximately 8:00 a.m., Monday, Aug. 6, 1945. Details of her story were previously published in the Nov. 28, 1997, *World Tribune*, but she reminded her audience that effects of her exposure were not momentary but long-lasting.

"No one wanted to sit next to me because they were afraid of radiation sickness," she said. And no one would marry her for fear her children would be deformed, she added. So she decided to dedicate herself to telling her nuclear story in hopes that it would never be repeated by someone else, in another time and place.

It took many years for her to overcome her animosity toward America for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, she said, but eventually she came to understand Japan's role in the war and its awful effects. She subsequently toured the United States offering her testimonial in an effort to reduce the threat of nuclear holocaust.

"And I was greatly impressed by the words of Daisaku Ikeda," Ms. Matsubara, a devout Christian, said. "That the world can be changed by the change in the destiny of just a single man."

The SGI-USA event was one of 15 held in Santa Barbara throughout the month of September, centered on an elaborate exhibition at Westmont College titled "A Message of Peace—Hiroshima/Nagasaki International Exhibition." It featured photos and artifacts from the atomic bombings "to preserve the memory of the tragic consequences of the atomic bombings of these cities in the hope of strengthening the resolve to abolish these weapons."

Dr. Krieger cited the SGI's long history of opposition to nuclear weapons as his reason for urging SGI's support. "I believe anybody who stands up against the war machine deserves our absolute respect," he said in reference to Tsunaburo Makiguchi, first president of the Soka Gakkai who was imprisoned by Japanese military authorities during World War II for his opposition

Photos by FRANK R. HOTCHKISS



Miyoko Matsubara, a survivor of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, shares her experience and vision for peace.

to the imposition of Shinto as a state religion.

"And Toda called nuclear weapons 'an absolute evil,'" Krieger said, referring to Josei Toda, who resuscitated the Soka Gakkai following the war and was principally responsible for its early growth.

SGI's Victory Over Violence video and group discussions of the origin and meaning of violence among people rounded out the session. **WT**

FROM EXHIBIT, 1

SGI President Ikeda, in his message for the opening ceremony stated, "I sincerely hope that this exhibit will become a significant milestone to further awaken people to the importance of children's rights and the dignity of human rights."

A group from St. John's Country Day School donned headbands with the South African flag to entertain us with a lively choral performance. SGI-USA Senior Advisor Fred Zaitzu thanked the Avenues Mall and commented, "I hope this exhibit will strengthen dialogue among children and those who visit the exhibition, and that it will expand the message of peace and hope in this wonderful community of Jacksonville."

In related activities during its 16-day stay, passers-by were entertained in the mall stage area by the Edward Water College's nationally renowned concert choir, the International Peace Performers, which included refugee children from eastern Europe and a choral group from nearby Paterson Elementary School.

The media took note of the

exhibition with two newspaper articles, a TV segment on opening day and coverage of the grand opening by the community-oriented public radio show Jacksonville Exchange. This coverage, along with the high pedestrian flow in the mall, in excess of 20,000, generated tremendous community awareness of the SGI-USA and the exhibition.

Two satellite panel discussions concurrently held at the University of North Florida placed a local as well as national focus on challenges facing children. The first, on the theme "Overcoming the Culture of Violence, Its Impact on Youth in the 21st Century," was co-sponsored by the local United Nations Association chapter. The audience viewed SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee's Victory Over Violence exhibit, setting the tone for an in-depth look at passive violence.

The other panel discussed the state of foster care in Florida. Both forums reached surprisingly similar conclusions. Cathryn Goldman, a panelist from the State Attorney's Office, said: "It's imperative for each of us to take responsibility for every child. Whether or not they look or



School children enjoy a game of tic-tac-toe.

talk like us, they are still our community, in the broad sense, our world's children. Until we look at them as our own, we're not going to be living up to our potential."

The preparations for this event began about eight months prior to the exhibition's arrival. At that time, local members started having regular meetings to help create an activity that would be remembered and well received by both the members and the viewing public. We sought out

Photo by FLORIDA BUREAU

interested people and started brainstorming for ideas.

Little by little the final plan of action emerged. Volunteers wrote letters, made arrangements and contacted participants. We even designed, made and distributed posters with a version of the exhibition logo that was personal-

ized for Jacksonville. Our excitement began to build as the big day approached.

It was obvious that this activity made an indelible impression on the many parents and children who witnessed it. Hyontea Jardine noted: "I thought the exhibit was an eye-opener. It made me aware of what children go through these days. I'm taking a nutrition course, and prior to seeing the exhibit, I wasn't aware that we could end world hunger with so little money

compared to the amount people spend on cigarettes, and thought it was astonishing."

For more information on this story, please visit the Florida Region's Web site at www.sgi-usa-florida.org and click on the Children's Rights section. **WT**

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EXPERIENCE — KAREN DENNIS, LAS VEGAS

'A 21st Century Woman'

In the following interview, Karen Dennis, USA track and field head coach for the 2000 Olympics and SGI-USA member, spoke with World Tribune Staff Writer Stephanie Celano about her life as a coach, her role as a mentor, the Sydney challenge and victory and the importance of Buddhism in her life.

World Tribune: What attracted you to practicing Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism?

Karen Dennis: I began my Buddhist practice in 1974. My older brother, Tim, introduced me. He told me he had the key to happiness and to make a list of things I wanted to change in my life. I had a statistics class that I had only attended once that I needed to pass. I thought, "If I could pass this class, I'll chant." I tested it. I passed, and 26 years later, I'm still practicing.

At the time, I was poor, a single parent and trying to finish my undergraduate degree in agricultural economics.

WT: When did you get involved in athletics?

Dennis: I had previously been an athlete when I was a teenager in Detroit. I belonged to a grass-roots track club called the Detroit Track Club. The first time I ran, I beat the state champion.

In 1964 and 1968, I tried out for the Olympics in track and didn't make it. After two disappointments, I just dropped out of track, out of school—I just didn't do anything productive.

For a few years, I actually got on the wrong track by hanging out with the wrong people, using drugs and eventually getting pregnant. With an infant and very few skills, I knew I had to clean up my life to provide for my daughter, Ebony, who was depending on me. I was 24, and

fortunately my former track coach, Jim Bibbs, encouraged and helped me to attend Michigan State University and resume my athletic career.

After a six-year layoff, I seriously doubted ever running again.

I was overwhelmed with a demanding schedule of study, work, track practice and caring for a toddler. I started chanting for energy to accomplish my daily goals. That was the beginning.

I also began learning gongyo (the recitation of morning and evening prayers), which was difficult, but the Lansing, Mich., members visited me every day to teach me. They were dedicated, and I probably would not be practicing Buddhism today if they hadn't done that. Once I learned gongyo, that's when I felt my life beginning to change. I became more organized, I required less sleep, and I had more energy. As the Buddhists kept coming to my house, the people who tried to influence me to take drugs stopped coming around.

With new priorities, my athletic training progressed despite a terrible injury-plagued first year. My coach, however, was very patient and encouraged me to believe in myself—because he did. He helped me to keep up my morale as I rehabilitated from various injuries.

In 1975, I was competing again and qualified for the national collegiate championships in the 200-meter dash. A week prior to the meet, I chanted three hours a day to do well. I ended up winning the 200-meter title. Everyone wanted to know "where did she come from?"

WT: That's incredible. How did you begin your coaching career with an agricultural economics degree?

Dennis: After winning the na-

tional championship and completing my undergraduate degree, the women's athletic director at MSU asked me to assist her in the program while pursuing my master's degree in sports administration. My tuition was completely paid for by doing a graduate assistantship.

That's how I started coaching. My success is because of my Buddhist practice, because I chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. I got really focused. There's no telling where I'd be without it. I know I would not have been able to accomplish my goals because I had lost sight of them.

During my assistantship, I was responsible for the entire track and field program. I did the recruiting, developed training programs for the sprinters and hurdlers, organized the relays and kept the team focused on goals. At times I resented it. I also thought I might have a nervous breakdown. It was a lot of work—particularly when I was pursuing a graduate degree and raising a young child at the same time.

When I finished my master's in '77, I continued to work at MSU. In retrospect, all the hard work I did prepared me for the position of head coach, which I eventually was offered in 1979. It was quite an opportunity to become the head coach for a Division I team at a major university. I stayed at Michigan State from 1979-91. It was hard to leave.

In '91, I took a risk and accepted the position as head coach at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. It was the right time.

WT: How has your personal experience helped the women you coach?

Dennis: The fact that I've overcome negativity in my own life has inspired them when they are faced with problems or when



USA Track and Field Head Coach Karen Dennis holds the proclamation and key to the city of Las Vegas presented to her by Mayor Oscar B. Goodman. Oct. 18 was named 'Karen Dennis Day' in the city of Las Vegas.

life doesn't seem to go the way they've planned it. I have coached kids who were molested by their parents, kids whose parents are drug addicts and kids who were raised by parents who were teenagers themselves. They've had a myriad problems.

Because my life wasn't perfect—although it started out pretty perfect because I had great parents and a wonderful family—but because of the problems I experienced later in my life, I could relate to their problems. I was sensitive and had more empathy than what they may have gotten from any other coach. I think I may have helped many of them recover from the problems they were challenged with and to regain their confidence to accomplish their goals. Buddhism has taught me that you can't let obstacles get in the way of achieving or striving for success.

My challenges in school, as well as being a single parent, are certainly experiences that I can relate to my young athletes. I also talk to them about how to survive when confronted with poverty and about how to challenge themselves now while they are young.

WT: How did you become the USA track and field head coach for the 2000 Olympics?

Dennis: After my success as the assistant coach of the 1995 World Championships squad in Göteborg, Sweden, the 1996 Olympics coach nominated me for the 2000 Olympics. I had heard my name going around but I honestly never expected it to happen.

WT: Tell me about Sydney. What was your greatest challenge?

Dennis: Sydney was the most challenging experience of my entire life—words can't describe it fully.

In the two and a half years that that we prepared for Sydney, the one thing that I had communicated regularly to my athletes was to be flexible, to expect change, to expect the unexpected. I knew things were going to be hard, but I didn't know they would be as hard as they were. What made it so hard was that so many things did change—as I expected. I had to respond to these changes quickly, and the decisions I made had to be right. That was what created so much pressure.

For example, with our 4x100-meter relay, I carefully planned how we were going to win the gold medal. We planned to go to Europe during the summer to train and run in some international competitions, allowing our athletes to stay sharp. That way I could monitor their progress and work on the baton pass in a competitive situation. It's diffi-

THE DENNIS DOSSIER

USA Track and Field Head Coach—2000 Olympics	Present
U.S. Women's Assistant Coach—World Championships	1995
Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Coach of the Year	1993
District VIII Indoor Coach of the Year	1993
President—USA Track and Field Women's Coaches Association	1990-92
U.S. Women's Coach—Pan American Games	1991
District IV Indoor Coach of the Year (Michigan State)	1990
U.S. Women's Assistant Coach—World University Games	1989
Track Coach—U.S. Olympic Sports Festival	1985-86

Photo by RENA SACHARTOFF

cult to have accurate baton exchanges in a practice setting because the level of intensity of running is not the same as when competing.

When you actually get to the Olympics, you don't have time to work on these details. It was a perfect plan and it worked. What I didn't plan for was two key runners getting hurt. Every day something happened that was not good.

Each day before dawn, I got up to chant for at least an hour. It was my way of keeping some kind of order through this chaotic situation.

At the same time, I had the world press after me every single minute asking about our status — if there were any injuries, if there were any changes. Of course, I didn't want the world to know that we were really a mess. I managed to respond to them without disclosing how dire the situation was for us on a day-to-day basis.

Eventually, I started chanting two hours every morning because I needed to improve the situation — I needed my injured athletes to get better. What was I going to do without two runners on a relay team? I chanted for the wisdom to make the right decisions.

People were really flipping out from all the pressure. At one point, I thought about Nichiren Daishonin when he was exiled on Sado Island. At that time he said he was the happiest man in Japan. I figured, if the Daishonin could withstand the cold, lack of food, isolation and extreme deprivation, then who was I to complain? I was at the greatest sporting event of all, the Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, with the greatest athletes in the world, surely I could prevail.

I realized this was my crucial

moment, and that "the sword of the Lotus Sutra is useless in the hands of a coward." Excited about our challenge, I greeted my staff each day proclaiming "It's another beautiful day in paradise." That kept me fearless and up beat so I could encourage them.

To make a long story short, we ended up using people in that 4x100 meter relay who had no Olympic experience. Everything that could go wrong did. I wanted a gold medal, but we got the bronze — even that was a tremendous benefit.

The 4x400-meter relay was about an hour and 15 minutes later. Marion Jones, our premier sprinter, was very disappointed after the first relay and so was I. But another coach saw how distraught I was and said, "Karen you better get yourself together." That's when I snapped back.

Before the 4x400-meter relay, the media called me daily asking where I was going to put Marion. *Sports Illustrated* picked the Russians to win the gold, and maybe the United States would take home the bronze medal. I never told the media our strategy because I didn't want the world to know. Otherwise, other teams would organize their relay squad to try and beat us. I ended up running Marion on the third leg, knowing she would run against slower legs on the other relay teams. We wanted to open up a large enough lead where none of the fast anchor legs would catch ours.

Since we were disappointed about not winning the gold in the 4x100-meter relay, we talked about how we could win if everyone ran up to expectation. Our strategy worked out,



Karen Dennis on the track spotting Chantel Ransom of the Rebels on the hurdles at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

and we won the gold medal. It was the last event of the Olympic competition so we ended on a high note and returned home very excited.

WT: I heard you had quite a homecoming celebration.

Dennis: I was completely exhausted when I returned home. Many people — SGI-USA members, my team at UNLV, and citizens of Las Vegas were there to greet me. They had roses and signs — it really lifted me back up. It was such a heartwarming welcome, and I felt so appreciative.

The next day, Mayor Oscar Goodman welcomed the Olympic participants from Nevada. He gave me a proclamation and designated Oct. 18, 2000, "Karen Dennis Day." It

was all pretty overwhelming.

The school also had a reception for the Olympians from UNLV. My kids gave me a card that said I was truly an example of a "21st century woman." It was incredible.

On Nov. 27, we're going to the White House, where the President will honor the entire U.S. Olympic delegation. I've never been to the White House and look forward to it.

WT: You mentioned that your kids called you a "21st century woman." What do you think that represents?

Dennis: I think a woman of the 21st century is one that will have to master multiple responsibilities. She has to have confidence, self-esteem and be

capable. She is a woman who will have a career and must still keep an eye on the youth, as well as the future.

WT: Do you have any final thoughts on mentoring?

Dennis: Just as SGI President Ikeda is my mentor in life and Jim Bibbs, Nel Jackson and Ed Temple were my mentors in coaching, I have to assume some responsibility in mentoring our youth. As I said before, I've not had a perfect life, and it made me want to give my kids a second chance. I had a good first chance, and I almost blew it. But I think my practice of Buddhism gave me a second chance at life. I know that's what helped me through. **WT**

Photo by DICK GEYER



Karen Dennis is met by members of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas track and field team, the Rebels, which she coaches, at the airport returning from the 2000 Olympics held in Sydney, Australia.

Introducing SUA's Library Director John Sheridan and Librarian Carol Withers

Courtesy of SUA

By PAUL CARBAJAL
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

When John Sheridan was appointed Library Director of the Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library on the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus in January 1999, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity he just couldn't pass up...the rare chance to build a new library book by book.

"There are not too many university libraries being built from the ground up in the country today," notes John. "So I really have to say this experience is a lifetime opportunity that was hard to say no to."

John hopes to put together a college library that supports student curiosity as well as the university's curriculum with books, journals and electronic resources.

"A library is a place where students can safely lose track of time in the process of learning" says John. "I think a library should be place to foster independent learning investigations by students that go beyond their classroom assignments."

Prior to joining SUA, AV, John spent 15 years as the Head Librarian of Tutt Library at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colo. He served as an American Li-

brary Association/United States Information Service Library Fellow at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla in Ukraine from December 1996 to May 1997. While in Ukraine, John established that country's first automated library system in the capital city of Kiev. John was also Head Librarian at Transylvania University for seven years, and prior to that held similar positions at Knox College and Kearney State College.

"As head librarian I will be able to put into practice the concept of student learning at the center of the library," says John. "And to me that was something that was not often evident at other college libraries."

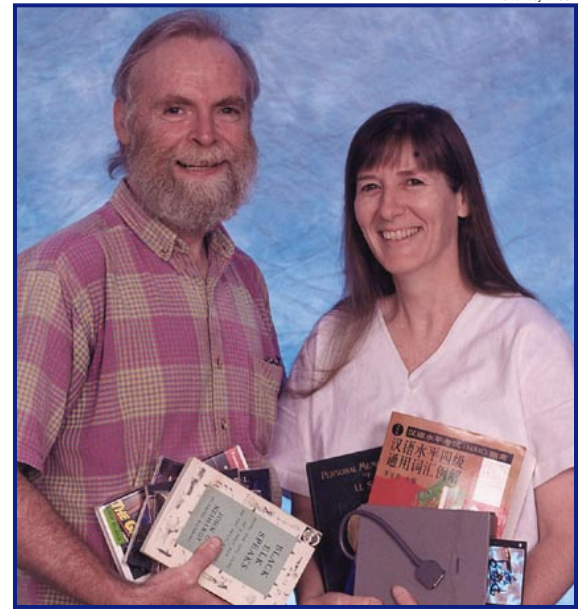
John received his M.A. in Library Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and an A.M. in Classical Studies from Indiana University. He earned his B.A. in Classics from City College of New York, where he won the Ward Medal in Latin and was a Regents Scholar.

Helping John collect the thousands of volumes that will be sitting on the shelves when the campus opens for instruction in August 2001 is Librarian Carol Withers. Carol came to SUA, AV from Indiana University, Purdue Uni-

versity and Indianapolis University Libraries.

One of Carol's primary duties is helping to build the massive library collection, including purchasing books, journals and various electronic resources to use once the campus opens next year.

"We want the students to take what they learn here and apply it to life after college," notes Carol. "This takes an ability to find, evaluate, and analyze credible information sources...a lot more than just surfing the Web." **WT**



John Sheridan and Carol Withers.

Soka University of America 'Book Buy' Begins!

Soka University's new Aliso Viejo campus has the beautiful new Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library capable of holding 225,000 volumes, but right now it's empty. The library staff is working on the exciting challenge of filling the library with its first 70,000 volumes...and they are offering everyone the opportunity to help out!

Beginning Nov. 18, you can go to the SUA Web site at www.soka.edu, click on the

Aliso Viejo campus photo — and then click on "Book Buy" to find an opportunity to buy a book for SUA and help lay the foundation for a great library.

The library staff has compiled a long list of books that they would like to purchase for the new library. If you would like to help out, you can click on the book or books you would like to donate and pay for them by credit card.

A bookplate template will

pop up that you can fill out so that your personal bookplate will appear in the book that you have donated.

You may also donate a book in someone else's name as a special gift.

Then you can just print out the template of the bookplate and send it to them!

Search the book list by your favorite subject, by price or by language...and then give a gift that will keep on giving for generations of students to come! **WT**

Q & A WITH SUA

ALISO VIEJO CAMPUS

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

Question:
I don't know what my GPA

is. What should I put down?

Answer:
Nothing. Sections II and III are to be filled out by your

high school counselor or principal. GPA stands for grade point average, and your school will put down the correct number based upon the scale used at your individual school.

Question:

In Section II of the Secondary School Report Form it asks for Grading Scale. Our school uses 1-10. What should I put down?
?

Answer:
The student should fill out only Section I of the Secondary School Report Form.

Sections II and III are to be filled out by your high school counselor or principal. They will put the grading scale and information in the "other" section if you have a scale not listed on the form.

Please do not fill out this section if you are a student.

Question:

What does High School CEEB mean in Section I of the Secondary School Report form? How do I find this?

Answer:
This is an identification

number for high schools in the United States and in several other countries.

International students do not need to fill in the CEEB space unless they are taking the SAT or SAT II tests. U.S. students can get the number from their high school counselor.

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

T Y O F A M E R I C A

Students Name SUA, Aliso Viejo's Streets!

By WENDY HARDER
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

In late 1998, Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo ran a contest for students to help name the five streets on the new Aliso Viejo campus.

"We had two reasons for running the contest," said Daniel Habuki, president of SUA. "We wanted to find the best street names for our new campus and we wanted potential future students to start thinking about SUA. We had more than 1,600 entries, so we were very pleased with the enthusiastic response from so many people.

"It was interesting to see that two of the winning names, Hope and Friendship, were in the top five names submitted from both the United States and Japan."

SUA's faculty and staff reviewed the entries and selected the following winning names. The names were then reviewed and approved by SUA's Board of Trustees and by the County of Orange. So here—with thanks to everyone who supported SUA by entering the contest—are the official results of SUA's Street Naming Contest:

- **University Drive** is the name for the main entrance road. SUA's new permanent mailing address is now 1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656.

- **Lion's Way** is the name for the road to the athletic complex. The lion is SUA's mascot and is also a symbol for courage.

- **University Circle** is the name of the campus loop road that is an extension of University Drive.

- **Friendship Lane** is the name for the street that leads to the Alumni Center, the Athenaeum and the Guest Residence in the back portion of the campus.

- **Hope Street** is the name for the secondary entrance road to campus.

"We hope everyone reading this will have a chance to come and visit our campus some day," added Dr. Habuki. "You can enter at University Drive, walk down Lion's Way to see the athletic facilities, take University Circle past the academic buildings, library and residence halls, explore Friendship Lane—and go home on Hope Street!" **WT**



Soka University, Aliso Viejo invites you to...

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★ Big Band Dancing ★ International Entertainment

Dress: Black Tie and Tennis Shoes
(Optional) (Required! Campus under construction!)

Attend the FIRST evening event at SUA's new Aliso Viejo Campus!

December 31, 2000
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S U A A T A G L A N C E

	Calabasas Campus	Aliso Viejo Campus
Academic Program	Graduate School	Liberal Arts College
Dedication date	Feb. 3, 1987	May 3, 2001
Degree offered	Master of Arts (MA)	Bachelor of Arts (BA)
Major	Second and Foreign Language Education	Liberal Arts
Concentration(s)	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	Humanities; International Studies; Social and Behavioral Sciences
Program duration	1 1/2 years	4 years
Fall 2001 admissions deadlines	April 30, 2001	Jan. 15, 2001 (Regular)
Admissions e-mail	grad_admissions@soka.edu	admission@soka.edu
Admissions telephone	818-878-3717	888-600-SOKA (toll free), 949-389-9500
Fax number	818-880-9326	949-472-3059, 949-362-3775
Web page	www.soka.edu/calabasas	www.soka.edu/homeav.html
Address	26800 West Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, CA 91302	1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656



- Travertine and granite floor in Founders Hall (Student and Community Services Building) is nearing completion.
- Final roofing materials are being applied to the recreation center.
- Final plastering on both academic buildings (Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi Hall and Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall) is being completed.
- Excavation is complete on campus swimming pool, and grandstand bleachers are complete.
- The first carpeting is going into the Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library. **WT**

A SUMMARY OF SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA'S PROPOSAL ON EDUCATION

Building a Society Serving the Essential Needs of Education: My Views on Education in the 21st Century

Toward a Grand Current of Humanistic Education

Malfuncting of the Educational System

It is the overall decline of the educational functions that should be inherent not only in schools but in our communities, families and society as a whole that lies behind our children's pathology of absenteeism, delinquency and the so-called "flight from education," which are rampant in contemporary society.

I believe that, unless adults possess a kind of self-reflective attitude to correct in themselves that which is mirrored back to them by their children, attempts to reform the system, however well intentioned, may ultimately end as stopgap or temporary measures that merely work around the edges with the system.

Review of the Fundamentals of Education Act Requires Care

With the decline of morals in adults casting a dark shadow in the hearts of our children, there has been a series of moves toward educational reform, including review and possible amendment of the Fundamentals of Education Act. This law has been the mainstay of the post-war education system in Japan and as such I believe that any revision should be undertaken only after careful thought and review; hasty revision is to be avoided.

More fundamental is the urgent need is for a paradigm shift from looking at "education for society's sake" to building "a society conducive to education."

The Modern Tragedy Resulting from Seeing Education as a Means to an End

Education is the very purpose of human life, the primary factor in character building; that which makes human beings truly human. Nevertheless, education has consistently been reduced to a subordinate position and been viewed as a means to other ends. This view

has prevailed not only in Japan, but can be seen worldwide. This has reduced the educational system to a mere mechanism that serves national objectives, be they political, militaristic, economic or ideological. A certain type of personality, not the total development of character, has been sought, as if to cast individuals from a uniform mold. Treating education as a means rather than an end is ultimately related to and reinforces a utilitarian view of human life itself.

Children's Happiness Is the First Priority

In contrast, the first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, never ceased to stress that the purpose of education is ensuring children's happiness.

While Makiguchi's pedagogy is gaining recognition today, it was originally conceived under the pre-war militarist regime in Japan, which mobilized every educational institution to foster obedient imperial subjects. It was against this process that Makiguchi resisted, asserting that education's true aim should be the life-long well-being of children. In other words, he was a farsighted individual who, during a period of fanatical militarism, held fast to the belief that society should serve the authentic needs of education and that education must not be sacrificed to nationalist goals.

Restoring the Bonds Between Human Beings

Happiness, however, must not be confused with mere pleasure. Mistaking momentary pleasure for a life of genuine satisfaction and happiness exemplifies the skewing of values that in my opinion has been at the root of the distortions of post-war Japanese society, especially in its educational system.

The experience of a truly humane life — genuine happiness — can only be realized in the bonds and interactions between people. Herein lies the essence of the Buddhist perspective on human life and happiness. While enmity, contradiction, and discord may seem to be an unavoidable aspect of relations between humans, our individuality and character will



Photo by BOB ROWAN; Progressive Image/CORBIS

'Highest priority must be given to cultivating in young people the strength of character and values that will enable them to take the lead in building of world of creative coexistence.'

shine with a brighter beauty to the extent we persevere and transform these conflicts. It is through this process of forging our own character that the bonds between people can be restored and rejuvenated.

Creative coexistence is clearly one of the keywords for the 21st century. To build a society that serves the essential needs of education in the 21st century, we must build human bonds that transcend race and nationality. Highest priority must be given to cultivating in young people the strength of character and values that will enable them to take the lead in building of world of creative coexistence.

Makiguchi's Foresighted Proposal

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the publication of Makiguchi's *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*. Challenging the myopic and superficial nature of contemporary Japanese attempts at educational reform, he proposed that two new institutions be established to develop an educational vision for a new era, namely an "educational headquarters" to act as a supervising council body and a "national institute for educational research" to assist it. The latter was indeed founded soon after the war, but an educational council as he envisaged has yet to be realized.

Based on Makiguchi's far-

sighted vision and practice, I would like now to propose the establishment of an educational center — a permanent educational council committed to the long-term reconstruction of the entire framework of the educational system. This should be started as an independent agency that is institutionally insulated from all political influence.

The Independence of Education

I have in the past called for the principle of the separation of powers to be expanded to give education a status and independence coequal to that accorded the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. Because education is a grand endeavor that shapes the individuals of future generations, it should be completely independent of political interference.

It is international exchange and cooperation in the educational arena, transcending national interests, that will serve as a foundation for world peace. For this reason I have been promoting a vision conceived over 20 years ago, for a "United Nations for Education," that would make education independent of political interference throughout the world.

The Need for New Types of Schools

In Japan, various reform

plans to improve the quality of education in the classroom have been discussed. However, as Makiguchi emphasized, methodological reforms must be preceded by unambiguously defining the purpose of education in terms of the happiness of students. Institutional changes that are not guided by clearly defined goals and principles could — and in the past have — easily backfire.

In this context, I would like to propose that new and different types of schools be officially accredited and "experimental classes" be promoted — a shift to decentralization for the genuine, internal transformation of school education in Japan by encouraging educators' creative energy.

Amid growing concern about the "flight from learning," it is now the vital role of education to strive to create a kind of school where children can always find the joy of learning and living.

Fundamental Reform of Universities for the 21st Century

Promoting Diversification of Admission Processes

The university entrance examination system is considered

one of the focal points of educational reform in Japan. With smaller families, Japanese society is presented with a good opportunity to review this system and renew it to become one that is truly beneficial to both students and colleges.

The method of university admission should not be limited to written entrance examinations. Through diversified processes such as admission on grounds of recommendation and special talents and merit, broader opportunities should be opened up; all these efforts should respect and encourage the applicants' will to learn. The beginning of the university academic year should also be moved to September both to accommodate exchange students and those returning from studies overseas as well as to provide graduates of Japanese high schools time and various opportunities after graduation.

In a rapidly changing society, academic disciplines are likely to become further subdivided and highly specialized, reducing the weight of basic liberal arts subjects in college curricula. This will limit the scope of education a student can receive. Liberal arts at universities are lacking a clear-cut goal or principle. I would therefore like to stress that liberal arts education be reexamined. Simultaneously, the quality of professional education should be enhanced in conjunction with graduate school.



Photo by ROBERT MAASS/CORBIS

'We must now go back to the original purpose of education—children's happiness—and reflect upon the state of our respective societies and our ways of living.'

The Goals of Soka University of America and the Efforts of Soka University, Japan

It is vital that we define the ideal direction for humanistic education and create a new current of education for the 21st Century. Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, will open in 2001 as a liberal arts college focusing on a well-rounded general education while preparing students for the world of work as well as graduate studies.

It is probably universities that are facing the most serious stalemate in terms of the quality of education, yet are receiving least attention. In Japan, Soka University established a Center for Excellence in Teach-

ing and Learning in 2000 in an effort to support the faculty in various projects to develop innovative teaching methods and provide learning assistance services. The purpose of these is to help students gain the ability to resolve learning difficulties on their own.

Revitalizing Universities Through International Exchange

Another task that universities should address, I believe, is to open their doors to international exchange. The excellence of American universities' educational standards in comparison to those of Japanese universities is often mentioned here in Japan. I am convinced

beings, "education" is in no way limited to classrooms but is a mission that must be undertaken and realized by human society as a whole.

We must now go back to the original purpose of education—children's happiness—and reflect upon the state of our respective societies and our ways of living. Education separated from society can have no vital force; likewise, there is no future for a society that has lost sight of the fact that education is its true mission. Education is not a mere right or obligation, but the mission of every individual. To awaken this awareness throughout society must be the starting point of all our endeavors. **WT**

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NEW from World Tribune Press



Florida Nature and Culture Center 2001

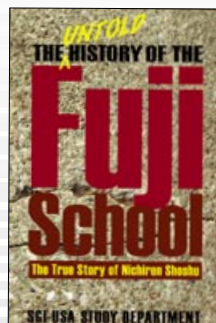
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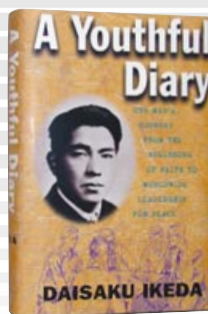
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Daisaku Ikeda
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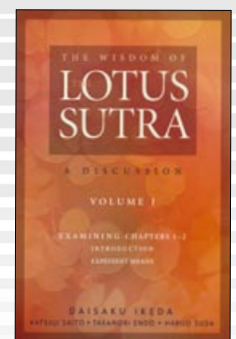
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The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra: A Discussion, Volume I

Daisaku Ikeda, Katsuji Saito, Takanori Endo, Haruo Suda
In clear, down-to-earth terms, this book explores the profound meaning of the Lotus Sutra.

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The Century of Life 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.

6" x 9", \$12.95, M/O #: 4112



Available at all SGI-USA bookstores Or purchase your copies via mail order: 1-800-626-1313; sgiusamoc@aol.com

EXPERIENCE — ALESSANDRA MAIOLINO, UNITED KINGDOM

The Job of a Lifetime

Architect Alessandra Maiolino laid strong foundations for her Buddhist practice in Italy. Despite a tough beginning, she created the right circumstances in which to build her future in London.

I started practicing this Buddhism when I was a student of architecture at the prestigious University of Florence. I chose to become an architect because I had the right talents, and because I wanted to contribute in a very practical and tangible way to society.

At that time in Italy, all Buddhists, including myself, used to practice "full time." That means doing gongyo together, chanting lots of daimoku and having meetings almost three times a day! Being a student, I could easily devote most of my time to activities and chant two hours a day. From this period of intense Buddhist activity, I built the foundations of my practice and the way I have since lived my life — not missing gongyo, chanting abundant daimoku, the importance of study; understanding the mentor-disciple relationship; and the importance of practicing for others.

After two years in Florence, I decided to go back to my home town in Calabria, in the south of Italy, so that I could look after my family at a time of acute family troubles; and to introduce them to Buddhism. In Calabria, I was one of the pioneers of our Buddhist movement for kosen-rufu. On weekends, we used to go from Calabria to Buddhist activities in the city of Salerno. Thus I started to develop a karmic relationship with this town.

I continued my architectural studies, but it wasn't easy. I have always been a slow but diligent student, yet I determined to devote time to Buddhist activities. I transferred to a local but less prestigious university. Just to get there, I had to make a round trip of several hours by train. The course itself was also not easy. My relationship with my tutor was difficult and he neglected to support me

for my graduation thesis. This delayed my studies by two more years. I started to doubt whether I really wanted to become an architect. My family situation also distracted me. However, both my sister and mother started practicing Buddhism, which made great changes within our family. More people in the region began to practice. I also found a good teacher who really inspired me to want to be an architect.

During this period, I went regularly on training courses, including visiting the European Buddhist Center in Trets, France. While there I met a man from the UK doing *keibi* (the voluntary activity of protecting the Center). The first moment I saw him, I thought I would marry him one day. After the course, I kept in touch with him and came to visit him in London; I was so convinced he was the right man for me.

After many years of struggle I eventually finished my doctorate with the highest possible marks. I couldn't quite believe that, considering the length of time it had taken, my professor would so greatly esteem my work. The university wanted to publish my thesis and offered me a faculty position. Keeping sight of my dream of actually constructing buildings for society, I declined the offer and, feeling that this was my destiny, came to live in London without any guarantee of employment, to live with the man I had met in Trets.

I suddenly started to feel conscious of my age, and anxious to find a job as soon as possible. It was so difficult! I spent one year in an office where I was paid very little, and when I left I hadn't gained much experience to let me move forward to a better job.

The only offer came from an architectural practice in Malaysia, which I felt I had to take it. The firm had a good reputation. So, having to leave my partner in London, I went all on my own to live far away on the Asian continent. I arrived there at the time of the economic crisis that afflicted Southeast Asia from 1997, and lost my job after a few months. I managed to find another job on the beautiful island of Bali, but this too, ended quickly because of the economic situation.

Back to London.

I had to face lots of different kinds of problems — in my relationship with my partner — that made my job search more difficult. I went to a senior leader in the UK for guidance in faith to resolve these issues. It felt as though he had no answers for me at all. Instead, he talked about the difficulties I would face in trying to find a job as an architect. He told me how an architect friend of his had given up finding employment. Then he concluded, "But he doesn't practice and you do." So I had to find a job to be happy. Even my doctor had told me the same.

I started doing other jobs, but that was not enough and I did not have much money. I started to give in to sadness and disappointment. Fortunately, one day I went to Taplow Court for a Buddhist activity, where I heard some guidance from SGI President Ikeda that really struck me:

"As for self-confidence — self-confidence come from hard work and effort. You're deluding yourself if you think you have self-confidence without it. Only those who strive to challenge some goal and work toward it at their own pace and in their way, only those who keep trying, no matter how many times they may fail, can develop unshakable confidence in themselves. Self-confidence is synonymous with an invincible will. You cannot be said to have true self-confidence if your opinion of yourself seesaws from high to low every time you compare yourself to others. A life spent judging yourself by others will end in frustration and deadlock."

I told myself that even without the job I had studied so many years for, my life was still valuable for kosen-rufu, and no matter what, I would be happy. I started doing a lot of beautiful activities with my local Buddhist friends and chanting more daimoku. I also started my job hunt again.

One evening a Buddhist friend came to our place for dinner. He said that, based on his theory of value, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the founder of the Soka Gakkai, taught his students to understand what they really wanted and to go for that goal. I could no longer deny to myself that what I really wanted was to work for the architect



Alessandra Maiolino at her office in London.

whom I admired the most in the UK — David Chipperfield; he was becoming world famous as one of the new generation of British architects.

The next day, I took my portfolio to his office. But nothing happened for about three months. Eventually my portfolio was sent back to me. I did not give up and kept chanting. A friend of mine worked at that office. I was envious of her! But one day I received a phone call from her saying they were urgently looking for Italian-speaking architects. I sent my portfolio again, and after two days I received a phone call: I was invited for an interview. I went to the office on a Friday and was offered a job starting the following Monday. Of course I was incredibly happy.

I started working on a project in Venice. After a few months, we worked on an international competition in Italy, for the Law Court building in Salerno (where I used to go for activities), and we won it. This project is one of the biggest construction works in the whole of Italy, and very prestigious — it even got coverage on national TV. Through working on this project, I have gained an enormous amount of experience: a foundation for the rest of my architectural life. I am also introducing people in the office to Buddhism. I had transformed what had been a weakness in my chances of finding a job — being an Italian with not much experience — into my greatest strength.

My firm has been voted the

second favorite architectural practice in the UK — after Norman Foster — by other architects in a recent Royal Institute of British Architects survey. Next year I bet it will be first. Traveling to Italy for work means I am able to visit my family more often, without paying the air fare. Coincidentally, a new Buddhist center for all members in the south of Italy is going to be created in Salerno. I feel so proud of the efforts we pioneers made over the years, now becoming manifest in the form of this new center.

I now see that the meaning of the guidance I was given was that through resolving my job situation, I was able to resolve all the personal and partner issues that I had. My partner and I deepened our relationship and were married in July.

I learned from my senior leaders in Italy that when we fulfill our personal dreams through our Buddhist practice as part of our daily life, it is natural to feel gratitude. Then we naturally want to transmit the benefits of practicing Buddhism to others. This is how I feel right now and I want to devote the rest of my life to kosen-rufu.

Courtesy of UK Express

If you have any questions about your subscription to the World Tribune or Living Buddhism magazine, please call 1-800-835-4558

Championing Human Rights in Southern Ohio

By DONALD HARDY

COLUMBUS, OHIO, CORRESPONDENT

SGI-USA members of the Southern Ohio Area and their guests gathered at the Columbus Community Center on Oct. 15 for an event titled "Open House to Champion Human Rights."

Warm temperatures and sunshine welcomed the attendees to the community center. In one room, visitors could see an exhibit of SGI-USA's accomplishments in the Victory Over Violence project. The exhibit, created by local youth, also included a documentary of the Hiroshima bombing.

After opening entertainment from the Culture Department and youth, a panel of five speakers began the day's human rights discussion. The panel included Judi Carter, a local SGI-USA member, Gene Harris of the Columbus public schools, Rev. William Barndt of Pastors for Peace, Winifred Wurst of Amnesty International and Paul Matherny of the Stonewall Union.

Each panelist brought his or her own special perspective to the open house, but how much they all had in common became readily apparent. Judi Carter spoke of the local SGI-USA human rights efforts and presented an SGI perspective. She spoke of introducing Buddhist ideas into her local community, specifically Victory Over Violence in the Cincinnati area, noting that it is important that every person contribute to efforts for human rights in whatever way that he or she can.

"It is important to recognize the fortune in one's own life," she said, "and make the effort to extend that fortune to others."

Gene Harris spoke of Project Grad, a new program in the Columbus public schools that targets those students who previously had fallen through the cracks. Mr. Harris spoke of reaching those students who have been ignored and succeeding at educating them. This success required family involvement and raising the expectation of students who believed that college and graduation were things other people did. He noted that we want only the best education for our own children; it should be only natural to want the same for all children.

Ms. Wurst focused on



Photos by CLAYTON GLASS

Panelists discuss concrete actions individuals can take at the 'Open House to Champion Human Rights' event at the SGI-USA Columbus Community Center, Oct. 15.

human rights violations at an individual level, echoing that one person can make a difference. She spoke of the power of the individual to influence human rights issues around the world by drawing attention to abuses that would otherwise continue in secret. People are still imprisoned and tortured, she reported, for peacefully expressing their religious and political beliefs. Something as simple as a toast for freedom can still lead to jail. "Ending violence isn't simply passing laws," she stated, "but rather changing the way people think and act."

Mr. Matherny spoke of educating the public about tolerance for the gay community. One comment from his remarks can immediately be seen as re-

lating to prejudice in general. He stated that prejudice is often based on ignorance of the person or group that is the target. Specifically, disliking a group whom you have never associated with. This intolerance

manifests itself in racial prejudice and religious intolerance as well as the specific example of discrimination against gays.

Rev. Barndt spoke of humanitarian efforts to provide medical equipment to strife-ridden regions of the world, such as the sending of medical supplies to Central America where the need is so very great. A dentist's throw-outs filled a clinic in a needy country. He spoke of those neglected and caught in the midst of war and political gamesmanship, those who severely need what we take for granted. He also spoke of those in need in central Ohio—not all of the needy are in some far-off country, he said, stressing that we on this planet are all one people.

Although the panelists came from diverse backgrounds and had different perspectives on human rights, it was clear by the end of the day's events that the battle for human rights is far from over and that everyone has a role to play in the struggle. **WT**



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THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

A Mother and Her Children in Nepal

My first visit, but for some reason it seemed familiar.

The landscape that spread out around me, Nepal's tranquil countryside, reminded me of Japan decades ago.

Cows grazing with their calves; children playing, covered with mud and dirt.

It was the autumn harvest. After threshing, rice straw could be seen piled everywhere in the yards of farmhouses.

Nov. 3, 1995. I had just received an honorary doctorate of letters from Nepal's Tribhuvan University. After the ceremony, we headed away from the city to a hilltop from which I could get a good picture of the Himalayas.

After an hour's drive beyond the bustle of the capital, Katmandu, a completely new scene emerged. The poetry of the landscape framed in the car window refreshed my travel-weary spirits. We finally arrived at our destination.

Just as our car pulled up, a young girl, her back laden with rice straw, walked before us. My wife and I alighted from the car and called out to her, "Namaskar!"—"Hello!"—pressing our palms together in Nepalese fashion.

The girl nodded and returned our greeting with a smile. She was wearing a pretty pink overcoat. Even the belt over her head, with which she supported the load of rice, looked like a hair band.

Soon, a little boy came running over, as quick as an arrow. "What's my sister up to," he seemed to be thinking. He held a small piece of carrot in his little hand, probably a between-meal snack.

A moment later, their mother appeared. She, too, carried a full load of straw on her back. Nepal was entering its dry season. Soon the grasses that livestock grazed on would wither and die, and so rice straw was cut as fodder.

As I smiled and pointed my camera toward them, the mother whispered something to the boy: "He's going to take our picture, so smile!" she seemed to be telling him.

I am particularly fond of this picture of a Nepalese mother and her children.

In that essential human gathering called the family, one finds the brightness of spirit, the warmth of heart to survive together, to strive together.

The girl was smiling as if to say, "I can't help it if I'm happy. I can carry as much straw as my mother can!"

"Mom, soon my brother will get big too and it will be much easier on you!" I could imagine their conversations.

The newly cut straw had a fresh scent. It was the smell of sunshine, fragrance that comes from breathing in abundant light. The children of Nepal are hardworking. By the time they turn 5, they are looking after the younger children and starting to do chores they can manage.

The children grow up watching their parents at work; as they lend a hand, they are taught about the princi-

ples of nature and society and learn the skills they need to live. Later, when they get older, if they ever feel like giving up, they need only recall the sweat gleaming on their mother's brow, and they surely will be inspired to stand up again.

If, when they get bigger, they lose their way along the path of life, they need only recall the load their mother carried, and they can start walking ahead once more with confidence. "When I think of her bearing

you can accomplish anything!"

It bore a dark-blue pattern on a white background. Each stitch of its intricate design embodied his mother's profound effort and care. My mentor kept this coat with him until the end of his life.

Released from imprisonment in his struggle against militarism, my mentor returned home to find the at-sushi his mother had given him untouched by the ravages of wartime bombardment. Overjoyed, he told his wife, "Because this Atsushi is unharmed, I will be fine. Everything is going to be all right. Don't worry about making ends meet or about anything else!"

Those who keep their mothers in their hearts are strong; they are happy. Even for those without a mother, or for those who grew up without knowing a mother's love, there is the wonderful Soka family.

In Nepal, the festival of Mata Tirtha Puja—Mother's Day of Reverence—is held each year toward the end of April and the beginning of May. On this day, families show their appreciation and respect for their mothers by celebrating with an exquisite meal.

To celebrate this day, children break open piggy banks to buy their mothers presents, daughters who have married and left home return, and joyous laughter enfolds the entire household.

On Mata Tirtha Puja, daughters and sons bow down before their mothers in a gesture of veneration, and mothers reach out and touch their children's foreheads to give them her blessing. A life of respect for one's mother is a life that is happy and fulfilled.

"Mother, thank you!" These words blossom with happiness like a spring bouquet. They express our gratitude for having been born; our thanks for living here today; our gratitude for our mothers who, though we may have been poor, turned our homes into a palace of enjoyment.

Mother! Even on those wintry days, your smile had a mysterious power to warm us, like the summer sun!

In addition, if you saw a bully, you would always side with the one being picked on, leaning over and saying, "Don't worry about it. Just do your best!"

Moreover, whenever you wrote to us, you would always say, "Take good care of your health!"

Now it is our turn to send our love and affection!

Mother, thank you!

When people's appreciation for their mothers enfolds the planet, peace will come; a century of respect for life will arrive. I took my leave of this warm family, and stood atop a hill with a commanding view of the villages below where plumes of smoke floated skyward from dinnertime fires. From a distance, the Himalayas watched over these happy homes like a great protective father.



that burden, I know I can endure any hardship!"

As long as they remember their mothers, people will not go astray. If they forget their mothers, however, the road of life becomes perilous.

My mentor, in the spring of his twentieth year, made up his mind to leave his boyhood home of Hokkaido. With snow still covering the ground, he set out for Tokyo.

At that time, his mother gave him an unlined topcoat called an *atsushi*. This gift carried her wish for her son, "As long as you have this, then no matter what suffering you may have, if you wear this and work hard,