



HIGHLIGHTS

SGI-USA women's activity guidelines for 2001.

page 5

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

No. 3324

\$2.00

DECEMBER 15, 2000

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NOV. 9 SPEECH—PART 1

Welcome to the Age of Women!

‘Every woman who devotes her life to kosen-rufu is a person with the noblest of missions,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Moreover, the 21st century will be an age of women. That is why it is crucial for men to respect women and treat them with the highest regard.’

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 51st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, Nov. 9.

We celebrate the Soka Gakkai's 70th anniversary in great triumph! Thank you for the part

you have played in this wonderful achievement!

I extend my deepest respect and appreciation to all of you, my eternal comrades—comrades in the struggle for kosen-rufu throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law. I hope that you will advance with confidence and pride, achieving lives of

even greater victory.

Life is precious—it would be a shame to end it in defeat. Those who fail to exert or challenge themselves are strangers to the true thrill and meaning of life.

Life's true pleasures are those shared with others.

In his educational treatise *Emile*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote that we ought to be “hardy in good deeds and courageous in speaking the truth.”

My mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, was a strict taskmaster when it came to reading. He rigorously trained me, always grilling me



Photo by CONNI GUTELIUS

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 8

Women of North Kansas City District.

SGI PRESIDENT'S ENCOURAGEMENT IN SINGAPORE

Walking the Lion's Path

On his third visit to Singapore, SGI President Ikeda attends two meetings with Singapore Soka Association and SGI-Australia members. ‘The future of worldwide kosen-rufu will be secure,’ he emphasizes, ‘as long as we walk the lion's path.’

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a meeting commemorating 40 years of the SGI's worldwide kosen-rufu movement at the Singapore Soka Association Headquarters, Nov. 25.

Whether we like it or not, we have been born as human beings. Some in Singapore, some in Japan, some in Australia and so forth. We have to do our best and live out our lives wherever

we are. This is an inescapable reality, our destiny.

What is the purpose of life? We could live an aimless, hand-to-mouth existence. But there is no knowing when we might fall ill. And each of us, without exception, will die one day.

How do we solve the problems of the human condition—the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death?

No matter how impressive



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda encourages members at a joint leaders meeting of the Singapore Soka Association and SGI-Australia in Singapore, Nov. 26.

our academic credentials, how high our social status, how vast our material wealth—all these things are of no use to us in the face of death. If we pursue these things alone, we will only be

left with a feeling of emptiness when we die. Buddhism describes this reality as “the impermanence of all phenomena.”

Where, then, is true happiness to be found? In a way of

life that is “permanent, joyful, endowed with self, and pure” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 733), a way of life in

PLEASE SEE SINGAPORE, 6

The Fusion of Reality and Wisdom

Back to the Basics

By MARK KORAL
LOS ANGELES

In "The Essentials for Attaining Buddhahood," Nichiren Daishonin says: "Is not the meaning of the sutra and the commentary that the way to Buddhahood lies within the two elements of reality and wisdom? Reality means the true nature of all phenomena, and wisdom means the illuminating and manifesting of this true nature. Thus when the riverbed of reality is infinitely broad and deep, the water of wisdom will flow ceaselessly. When this reality and wisdom are fused, one attains Buddhahood in one's present form" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 746).

Simply put, when Nichiren Daishonin says, "Reality means the true nature of all phenomena," he is pointing to the Gohonzon, which as the embodiment of his enlightened life, is the wellspring of universal life. When he says that "wisdom means the illuminating and manifesting of this true nature," he is pointing to our inherent Buddha nature, which we are able to manifest directly in our lives by chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo to the Gohonzon — thereby fusing with the ultimate reality of the universe.

The practical implication of this principle manifests itself in our everyday life. Whatever activities make up our daily lives and our own unique environment, they are a part of our in-

dividual karma. The ability to harmonize with that environment and create value and happiness there corresponds to the fusion of reality (the truth of our environment) and wisdom (our ability to create value with various circumstances). There may of course be tense and difficult situations on the job, at school or in the home, where it may seem such harmony is lacking. This is where Buddhism's focus on growth and development is vital. If we merely make excuses or blame the environment for our unhappiness, we are missing our opportunity to grow.

According to Nichiren Daishonin's "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the act of devotion has two implications: One is to devote oneself to, or fuse one's life with, the eternal and unchanging truth; the other is that, through this fusion of one's life with the ultimate truth, one simultaneously draws forth inexhaustible wisdom, which functions in accordance with changing circumstances. This explanation means that within our own selves, we already possess the limitless potential to create tremendous value and happiness in any environment.

The key to tapping that wisdom is continuous self-improvement based on correct Buddhist practice — faith, practice and study. This process of continuously elevating our lives expresses itself nowhere but through our own behavior and conduct, making it possible to bring forth the wisdom necessary to move our lives in any direction we choose. It is here that we find the principle of the fusion of reality and wisdom in action. **WT**

PEACE MONUMENTS UNVEILED

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 17, a peace monument engraved with words of peace from SGI President Ikeda was unveiled on the island of Tinian. Located near Guam, Tinian was where the atomic bombs were loaded onto planes headed for Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. The peace monument is located in Leadership Park.

Engraved on the monument is the following quote from President Ikeda: "Each person who has died in war was irreplaceable and precious — someone's parent, child or friend. That is why we must always oppose war. All rivalries and conflicts should be resolved, not with power, but with wisdom and sustained dialogue."

Another peace monument was unveiled on Nov. 18 in the city of Santa Rita on the island of Guam, where thousands of soldiers died in the battle between the Allied Forces and Japan. The monument is located at the Friendship Pavilion, where a dedication was held in January in honor of the friendship between President Ikeda and the late governor of Guam, Ricardo Bordallo, and in celebration of their meeting in 1975 at the inauguration of the SGI.

The Guam monument's inscription, also written by Presi-



A peace monument bearing an inscription from SGI President Ikeda is unveiled on the island of Tinian, Nov. 17.



Members applaud the unveiling of a peace monument on Nov. 18 in Santa Rita, Guam.

dent Ikeda, reads: "People must be wise and take action themselves to create peace. We must unite across borders: unite in our rejection of the idea of war itself." **WT**

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

Subscribe yourself or share it with a friend.

To subscribe, send in the order form below with your payment enclosed. No cash, please. Call 1-800-835-4558 if you have questions. Please check the appropriate boxes.

WORLD TRIBUNE		LIVING BUDDHISM	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 months \$15 (13 issues) Save \$11	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 months \$15 (3 issues) Save \$3
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months \$28 (26 issues) Save \$24	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months \$28 (6 issues) Save \$8
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 year \$50 (52 issues) Save \$54	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 year \$50 (12 issues) Save \$22
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years \$85 (104 issues) Save \$123	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years \$90 (24 issues) Save \$54
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 years \$110 (156 issues) Save \$202	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 years \$125 (36 issues) Save \$91

Are you a new subscriber? Yes No

Charge my VISA or Master Card

Card # _____

Expiration date _____

Signature _____ All credit card orders are subject to bank approval

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver)

SEND TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

Corrections:

In the Dec. 1 issue, the photo on page 6 is of the members of Sunrise District in San Antonio, Texas.

In the Dec. 1 issue, the photo on page 2 was taken by Peter Nellhaus of Denver. It was incorrectly attributed to Gregory Nakasuji. We apologize for any misunderstanding this caused.

World Tribune
The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org SGIsubs@aol.com

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper
Copyright © 2000 by SGI-USA.
All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

Florida Nature and Culture Center Schedule of Conferences for 2001



Photos by CHERYL UTLEY



January 18–21
 February 8–11
 February 15–18
 February 22–25
 March 8–11
 March 15–18
 March 22–25
 April 5–8
 April 12–15
 April 19–22
 May 3–6
 May 10–13
 May 17–20
 May 31–June 3
 June 7–10
 June 14–17
 June 28–July 1
 July 5–8
 July 12–15
 July 19–22
 August 2–5
 August 9–12
 August 16–19
 August 23–26
 September 6–9
 September 13–16
 September 20–23
 October 4–7
 October 11–14
 October 18–21
 November 1–4
 November 8–11
 November 15–18
 November 29–Dec. 2
 December 6–9
 December 13–16

Golden Stage Group Conference #1 (Japanese Language)
 Enhancing Our Relationships Conference
 Courageous Heart Group Conference (Soka Spirit)
 Interpreters–Translators/Food Service
 Mission as Buddhists with Alternative Lifestyles
 Theme: Mentor and Disciple Relationship Conference #1
 Young Women’s and Women’s Division Conference
 Spanish and Portuguese Language Conference #1
 Golden Stage Group Conference #2 (Japanese Language)
 Chinese Language Conference #1
 Korean Language Conference #1
 Women’s Division Conference #1
 Arts Division Conference
 District Leadership Training Conference
 Men’s Division #1
 Study Conference #1
 Educators Division Conference
 YMD Conference
 YWD Conference
 Youth Performing Groups Conference
 Student Division Conference
 Jr. High & High School Division Conference
 Raising Our Children Conference
 Men’s Division Conference #2
 Japanese Language Conference
 Thai/Cambodian/Vietnamese Language Conference
 Theme: Mentor and Disciple Relationship Conference #2
 Spanish/Portuguese Language Conference #2
 Chinese Language Conference #2
 Youth Peace Committee Conference
 Women’s Division Conference #2
 Culture Department Conference
 Youth Division Support Groups Conference
 Korean Language Conference #2
 Study Conference #2
 Golden Stage Group Conference #3
 (English & Japanese Language)

Before signing up for a conference, please contact your respective local Zone office for more information:

Los Angeles Friendship Center
Tel: (323) 965-0025

Hawaii Culture Center
Tel: (808) 595-6324

Seattle Culture Center
Tel: (206) 244-0268

Miami Community Center
Tel: (954) 349-5200

Denver Culture Center
Tel: (303) 893-0430

San Francisco Culture Center
Tel: (415) 255-6007

Chicago Culture Center
Tel: (312) 913-1211

New York Culture Center
Tel: (212) 727-7715

Washington, D.C., Community Center
Tel: (301) 779-4954



Photo by LISA KIRK

SGI-USA Boys & Girls Group FOCUS FOR 2001

BY PALMA ODANO AND
CASS WILSON
SGI-USA BOYS & GIRLS GROUP
COORDINATORS

For the Boys & Girls Group Representatives

2001 — Year of Total Victory
for the New Century

1. Let's continue to develop fun and informative activities for the children.

Using our study curriculum as a guide, let's help the children understand the basics of faith, practice and study. Let's nurture the children in every way possible, and support them in building lasting friendships!

2. Let's involve our Boys & Girls Group members in their district activities.

The focus of activities in many areas of the SGI-USA is solidifying the district organization and establishing a family atmosphere where everyone can come together to be encouraged and where we can bring our families and friends. SGI President Ikeda encourages us about children at the district discussion meeting: "And there are children in the Boys and Girls Group who are delightful, even if sometimes they may make a commotion" (Oct. 1996 *Seikyo Times*, p.17).



For the Boys & Girls Group Members

During the year 2000, many of you as Boys & Girls Group members made giant steps in your growth and development, and contributed greatly to the SGI-USA organization, to your school, your community and your family. Your bright, shining smiles and your enthusiasm encouraged many people. We applaud your determination and your efforts to win in your daily life—whether you are struggling in your school studies or in your relationships with family or friends. Please remember to continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon and never, never give up!

The SGI theme for the year 2001 is Year of Total Victory for the New Century. This year as you try your best in everything you do, please keep the spirit of the lion king in your heart so you will have the courage to face every day and win!

Let's remember our five points for the SGI-USA Boys & Girls Group:

1. Study hard at school.
2. Try your best at gongyo and daimoku every day.
3. Cherish your friends!
4. Respect everyone in your family.
5. Believe in yourself! No matter what, never, never give up on anything!

Thank you so much for all your efforts every day! Please enjoy yourself as you take steps to accomplish your dreams during 2001!

3. Let's make further progress in our study curriculum.

Study is an important element in our practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Each month we are printing study information for the children in the "Friends for Peace" newsletter in the *World Tribune*. The information for each study topic (see attached study topic list) is included in the preceding month's issue of "Friends for Peace," i.e., February's topic information will appear in the January issue. Let's use this material as a guide to help teach the basics of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings and the importance of the SGI's activities based on peace, culture and education. Our goal is to enhance the children's confidence in themselves and in their practice within the SGI. Please continue to send in any ideas you may have regarding any of the study topics so that we may share them with all Boys & Girls Groups around the SGI-USA.

4. Let's encourage the parents of our "champions of the future" to support and participate in our monthly Boys & Girls Group activities and study efforts.

By doing so, we hope to encourage all members of the family to study together at home.

5. Let's focus on "family-to-family" encouragement through home visits.

One of the five points for the

Guidelines for 2001

The new year is just around the corner, and SGI-USA is ready! Beginning in this issue, we will be running guidelines and news about plans for the organization in 2001. This week, we have the Boys & Girls Group's and women's guidelines. Next week, we will have full coverage of the December Central Executive Conference, at which leaders from around the country discussed SGI-USA's goals for 2001.

Boys & Girls Group members is "to respect everyone in their family." SGI President Ikeda has encouraged us to take action. By taking action together with our children to encourage another family, we can teach our children the importance of one-to-one human dialogue.

6. Let's continue to use the "Friends for Peace" newsletter within the *World Tribune* as a source of encouragement for the Boys & Girls Group members.

The "Friends for Peace" newsletter is the children's newsletter and we want to encourage the children's participation, i.e., experiences, games, puzzles, cartoons, stories, reports on activities, pictures, etc. Please send any material to:

SGI-USA
Attn: Friends for Peace
606 Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica, CA 90401

7. Let's support our Raising Our Children Conference to be held at the Florida Nature and Culture Center from Aug. 16-19, 2001.

Let's promote this most valuable conference to all mothers, fathers, teachers, youth leaders



and all members engaged in raising our children who will develop into the future leaders of our kosen-rufu movement. SGI President Ikeda encouraged us in his message to this conference last year: "I sincerely appreciate and honor you who struggle daily to raise and educate our precious children. Each one of you is a precious pioneer of the great new century." Sign up for this conference by contacting your region leaders as soon as possible. **WT**

BOYS & GIRLS GROUP STUDY CURRICULUM TOPICS for 2001

Units of Study—12 (at least 1 per month/may vary topics according to your area)

January: Conviction and Determination: Believe in yourself; self-confidence, never give up.

February: Courage

March: Diversity: Different types of religions and their respective beliefs; appreciate one another.

April: Three Basic Practices of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism

- Faith, Practice and Study
- Gongyo; why we do gongyo; silent prayers
- Gohonzon; what is the Gohonzon; what's on the Gohonzon; why do we focus on it
- Christian concept of God; Ten Worlds
- Concept of birth and death
- Explanation of symbolism in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism: bells, candles, incense, etc.

May: Cause and Effect: Explain the concept of karma; concept of benefit.

June: Seeking Spirit: Include the importance of education; wisdom.

July: Concept of Mentor and Disciple: July 3 — SGI Day of Mentor and Disciple.

August: The SGI: Concept of global citizenship; SGI activities based on peace, culture and education.

September: Sense of Responsibility: Concept of *esho funi*— oneness of person and environment.

October: History and Important People: Historical outline of Buddhism; important people — Nichiren Daishonin, Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda, Daisaku Ikeda, etc.

November: Appreciation

December: Friendship; respect

SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER MATILDA BUCK

Creating a Spiritual Civilization as Women of the SGI

The event was the 1st SGI Women's Conference in Tokyo a month ago. Picture this: The soft lines of Indian saris and regal African dress, the hum of countless languages, women of different cultures — some familiar, some exotic — but all with the same feeling for Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. It wasn't like looking at a picture of kosen-rufu — it was kosen-rufu.

The variety of personalities — some shy and soft-spoken, others taking the lead in society and their careers — was remarkable. But all of them stood up at some point and declared, "I will be responsible in my area." That's what Atsuko Yamabe and the women of Spain did, when the general director deserted the SGI for the Nikken sect and shook the foundation of the organization there; and Dr. Solange Kouo Epa in Benin, caring for four stalwart members; and gutsy Loren Braithwaite, who came to South Africa from America and declared "This is my home."

When I heard Naveena Reddi's lilting Indian accent talk about "our beloved" President Ikeda, I realized I knew these women. I was, well, *at home*, even halfway around the world from the United States.

And there were so many others I met on this trip: Scotland's Joan Anderson, who worked with the Save the Children organization in Cambodia for several years, and Mrs. Takimoto, who defied cancer and now, in her seventh decade of life, is taking responsibility in the Philippines. Heroes all.

A day or so later, I watched Kaneko Ikeda escort the stately queen of Tonga, holding her hand as they walked along a red ceremonial

carpet. That simple gesture bridged culture and diplomacy and said so much more than words could convey. What humanness; what a profoundly "womanly" thing to do.

As I thought about these heroic women, I realized: "This is our 'spiritual civilization' in action. This is our 'solidarity as women of the SGI.'"

During the November Training Course in Japan (along with 330 members from 55 countries and regions), President Ikeda said that the 21st century will be the age of women, and that women have the power to bring peace to the world. He quoted Nichiren Daishonin: "Among all the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, the Lotus Sutra is first, and . . . among the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, that of women attaining Buddhahood is first" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 930).

"In other words," President Ikeda said, "ensuring the happiness of women is the very essence of Mahayana Buddhism."

Nichiren Daishonin constantly taught women that their lives are precious, that they could be victorious. Among these international women, I saw with my own eyes that President Ikeda has been raising women all over the world to become self-reliant and to be world citizens who devote themselves to humanity. Who else on this planet is empowering common women as he does? Who is urging us to bring forth our unique potential, to become wise philosophers, to live a contributive life? Through his own example and his confidence in us, he is saying: "You need never be defeated. You will definitely become happy."

How can we, like those heroic women I met, bring forth the hope



Matilda Buck speaks with Loren Braithwaite of South Africa (left) and Dr. Solange Kouo Epa of Benin at the 1st SGI Women's Conference in Tokyo.

and the energy to realize victory for ourselves and for humanity in the 21st century? How do we reveal our true selves, live contributive lives, fight for justice?

We can tap the great resource of the Mystic Law every day by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Nichiren Daishonin often wrote about three significant meanings of the character *myo* (see pages 145-49 of "The Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra" in *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*). The first meaning is "to open," in the sense that it enables a person to develop his or her full potential as a human being. Every time we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, we can open our lives; we are not passively accepting our situation, we are taking initiative to find solutions. We are proactive.

Another meaning of the character *myo* is "to revive." When its name is chanted, the Mystic Law has the power to revitalize or renew one's life. When we chant *myo*, we tap our

creative energies. As President Ikeda has said, "At the depth of life are the restorative resources of wisdom, perseverance and courage to sustain reform and development."

The third meaning, "to be endowed," refers not only to our own potential, but to the fact that every aspect of our environment, every situation we encounter, is perfectly "endowed" with what we need for our self-development. It means that every moment has great possible value. Nothing must be rejected; every circumstance can be transformed to support our growth. And we will be endowed with good fortune and great abilities.

It has to be the power of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo that these women, some of whom will go home to comfortable situations and some to very difficult, can return to their lives and never be defeated; can reveal their true selves and think as world citizens, continuing to expand because they have this resource of Buddhahood

At the 1st SGI Women's Conference in Tokyo on Nov. 8, women representing every continent on the planet approved a theme that will be ours to explore for the next several years:

Create a spiritual civilization in the 21st century based on our solidarity as women of the SGI.

❖ *With strong faith, reveal one's true self.*

❖ *As a world citizen, contribute to society.*

❖ *With dialogue based on justice, expand the force for peace.*

that is indicated by the character *myo* of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

The ultimate point of *myo* is hope — and that's why none of us ever have to feel discouraged or defeated!

Every woman reading this article is a world leader: We are all in orbit, constantly speaking, touching, hearing the world around us. Have no doubt that every action you take, however mundane you may think it is, ripples out into society and ultimately changes the world. Yes, you have that much power.

Together in America, let's hold hands — as Mrs. Ikeda showed us — with one another and with our sisters all over the world. **WT**

WOMEN'S ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR 2001

The following guidelines are just that: guidelines. Each zone is encouraged to discuss thoroughly how best to carry out these activities.

Commemorative Meetings (February)

Our February women's meetings have become a tradition of which we can be very proud. To say they are diverse is an understatement. In every zone, the variety of meetings is exceeded only by their warmth, by the joyous building of relationships, and by the sense of victory. In fact, it is that sense of victory — in particular, the hope and energy that comes from women empowering other women in faith — that gives our commemorative meetings real life.

See the accompanying box on

this page for the SGI women's theme recently adopted. Each zone is free to use all or part of this theme, which will be ours for the next several years.

Planning Committee

The women's planning committee is intended in general to support regional activities and specifically the region women's leader. It can serve as a conduit for the collective voice of women, communicating needs, concerns and ideas in the advancement of peace. Planning committees in the past have been the source of creative solutions and proposals and have been instrumental in communicating these to the women's leadership, as well as helping to carry them out.

Although each planning com-

mittee operates according to the needs and resources of the region, following are some points to consider:

- Establish diverse representative participation — for example, include members from a range of life experiences, ages, lengths of practice, organizational positions, etc.
- Set a term limit. In many areas, this is two years.

Sophia Group

The Sophia Group, established by SGI President Ikeda in 1990, provides the impetus for personal development as well as a supportive environment for in-depth study. Its goal is to enable its participants to take what they learn and infuse their districts, communities, workplaces and

homes with the Soka Spirit.

Sophia Groups across the nation reflect the diversity of our organization, and this is to be commended. It is hoped that participants will continue to take the initiative in creating opportunities as appropriate in their locales.

Some points to consider include:

- In-depth study of *The Human Revolution* or *The New Human Revolution* is recommended.
- Group size should be intimate enough to allow everyone to share in dialogue. There is no limit on the number of groups.
- A one-year term is recommended.
- The zone is encouraged to create a support system for facilitators as may be beneficial.

Mothers/Parents of Young Children Group

Acknowledging that families, especially in the United States, come in all shapes and sizes, each zone is free to choose whether to have a Mothers Group, a Parents of Young Children Group, or perhaps both. This group provides support and encouragement in faith for parents of young children (ages birth through 5), especially new parents.

Some points to consider:

- Seek encouragement from seniors in faith with long-term perspectives on parenting.

- If interested in child development topics, participants are encouraged to invite input from a child development professional.

- A regular study curriculum is encouraged. As a suggestion, the *Living Buddhism* is planning to publish monthly installments of a dialogue with President Ikeda on the parent/child relationship. **WT**

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



University of Sydney Chancellor Dame Leonie Kramer presents SGI President Ikeda with an honorary degree at a special graduation ceremony held in Singapore, Nov. 24.

FROM SINGAPORE, 1

which we strive to fulfill our mission, a way of life that makes our existence shine with purpose and value.

The Gohonzon enables all people to become happy.

Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon to enable us to transform a life bound by the “impermanence of all phenomena” into one “permanent, joyful, endowed with self, and pure.”

The Gohonzon is a “device” that enables all people to become happy. It is also the embodiment of the life of the original Buddha, the Daishonin. It contains all of the benefits of all the sutras taught by Shakyamuni, which are often referred to as “the eighty thousand teachings.”

The Daishonin tells us, “The seven characters of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo alone are the seeds for attaining Buddhahood” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1553). When we have faith in the Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the state of Buddhahood wells forth in our lives, and we attain a state of immense good fortune and benefit. The Mystic Law is the fundamental law of the universe.

Just as we can instantly connect to people around the world, anywhere, anytime, through the Internet, we can instantly access the life-state of Buddhahood by chanting to the Gohonzon. We can move in an orbit in rhythm with the law of the universe.

And through the power of faith and the power of practice, we can freely tap our inner potential—we can draw out our ability to obtain financial security, our wisdom and intellect, our character and humanity, and

the ability to direct our lives toward happiness. It depends on our determination, on our actions and on the strength of our faith.

A Buddha is not a superhuman being.

Buddhism teaches that the state of Buddhahood resides within us. A Buddha is not some superhuman being. We practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism to live wonderful, fulfilled lives, both as individuals and as members of society.

Grand temples and ornate priestly robes—outward trappings of this kind and a preoccupation with ritual and formality were not originally part of Buddhism. Over the centuries, the true spirit of Buddhism was perverted, and its priests came to think that people existed for the sake of religion, instead of the other way around. Nichiren Shoshu is the epitome of such thinking.

In such an environment, the SGI has been advancing on the correct path taught by the Daishonin—the path of a humanistic religion that exists for people’s happiness and welfare. That is why we have achieved such tremendous growth and development.

I hope you will all resolutely continue to practice this Buddhism toward the realization of kosen-rufu, always striving together with the SGI.

The distinction between good and evil in Buddhism is strict. Only by thoroughly fighting against evil can we establish a life of genuine virtue and goodness, and bring forth great benefit. Please engrave this in your hearts.

Whatever happens, continue chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. Think of the Gohonzon as a

loving parent with whom you can share all your joys and sorrows. You can take everything to the Gohonzon. All is communicated.

Please continue to practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism—the way to unsurpassed happiness—upholding faith that flows unceasingly like water, advancing with composure and in joyful unity with your fellow members.

From the depths of my heart, I pray for your health and longevity, and that you will enjoy lives filled with boundless good fortune. Thank you so much!

◆◆◆◆

SGI President Ikeda’s speech at a joint meeting with SGI representatives from Singapore and Australia in Singapore, Nov. 26.

That which continues to grow, to develop, is beautiful. In the five years since I last visited Singapore, this Jewel of Southeast Asia has grown even more stunning, graced with impressive new landmarks everywhere I look. Most beautiful of all, however, are the hearts of all of you, the Singapore members. Nothing is more noble than your vibrant, energetic endeavors to contribute to people’s happiness and the welfare of society as a whole.

The Singapore Soka Association has become an indispensable pillar of hope, a pillar of trust, in society. You have achieved wonderful growth, and I am overjoyed to see this. It is all the fruit of your enormous efforts. Please rest as-

sured that you will enjoy boundless and everlasting benefit as a result.

First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, in his work *The Geography of Human Life*, identified early on that Singapore would serve as a global economic center, and he watched its future with great interest.

As a vital hub of Asia and the world, Singapore is the grand stage upon which you, the SSA members, will play a leading role in promoting the kosen-rufu movement in the 21st century.

I declare that the curtain on a new century of hope has risen here from our beloved Singapore.

Having a mentor means having a model to live by.

It is well known that the name *Singapore* means Lion City. On this fresh departure, I want to reconfirm the significance of the lion symbolism that appears in Buddhism.

Incidentally, a Chinese-language translation of the *Gosho Zenshu* (The Collected Writings of Nichiren Daishonin) has recently been completed. Its publication is a historic achievement that crowns the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai’s founding. The SGI will always advance based on the Daishonin’s writings, always in exact accord with his teachings.

Returning to the lion, in Buddhism the Buddha is equated to a lion and his preaching of the Law to the lion’s roar. The term *lion* is written in the sutras with the two Chinese characters for *teacher* and *child*, which the Daishonin expounds as encompassing the meaning of mentor and disciple. And it is the Lotus Sutra that teaches that the Buddha’s disciples, when they live out their lives with their mentor, the Buddha, can attain the same lofty state of life as he.

Speaking of mentor and disciple—which is consonant with the bond that exists between teacher and student—I found the graduation ceremony of the University of Sydney held Nov. 24 inspiring and heartwarming. On that occasion, Australia’s oldest and most respected university conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters upon me, which I humbly accepted as your representative. Chancellor Dame Leonie Kramer, who, with a motherly affection and concern, took time to speak with each graduating student as she handed them their diplomas, particularly moved me. The exchange between educator and student, their gaze firmly set upon the future, was as uplifting as a beautiful painting.

The mentor–disciple, or teacher–student, relationship is a unique prerogative of human beings, given our high spiritual capacity. This relationship is found in all fields of human endeavor where people strive for excellence and higher achievement—be it in the arts, education or craftsmanship.

Having a mentor in life means having a model or standard by which we can live our lives. And, of all such bonds, none is more wonderful than the relationship where mentor and disciple work together for the lofty ideal of world peace and the happiness of all humanity.

The mentor–disciple relationship is the lifeline upon which kosen-rufu depends.

No epic undertaking can be accomplished in a single generation. Only when the mentor’s spirit is inherited by the disciples and passed on continuously to successive generations can such an undertaking be achieved.

The humanistic movement of the SGI that now encompasses the entire world comes from the mentor’s spirit being passed down over three generations—from Tsunesaburo Makiguchi to Josei Toda, from Josei Toda to myself. This struggle, in which mentor and disciple are engaged together and indivisibly united, is the lifeline upon which the eternal flow of kosen-rufu depends.

The task now falls to us to expand this movement into a huge river whose waters will continue to nourish and benefit humanity throughout the next century, the next millennium and throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law.

Everything hinges on the disciples who inherit this mission. President Toda often said: “I have no reason to worry as long as Daisaku is here!” “So long as you are here, my mind is at ease!”

I, too, am confident that we have nothing to worry about, and that the future of worldwide kosen-rufu will be secure as long as you, the SSA members, are here walking the lion’s path.

To live as a lion king means challenging each problem with all your might.

The Daishonin writes, “The lion king is said to advance three steps, then gather himself to spring, unleashing the same power whether he traps a tiny ant or attacks a fierce animal” (WND, 412). Here, the literal translation of the Japanese phrase “to advance three steps, then gather himself to spring” means a position in which the

lion's front legs and one hind leg are cast forward, while the fourth leg is drawn slightly behind. It is a crouching position that lions are said to take when preparing to attack prey with full force.

To live like a lion king, therefore, means to challenge each problem or task at hand with all one's might and resolutely triumph over each one. Great progress and resounding victory can only come from the steady accumulation of such daily effort. Only by winning today, here and now, can we enjoy a bright, successful future and ultimate victory in life.

The Daishonin also writes: "Each of you should summon up the courage of a lion king and never succumb to threats from anyone. The lion king fears no other beast, nor do its cubs" (WND, 997).

What is the heart of a lion king? In a word, it is courage. And courage is not found outside us. It exists within. Nor is it something that only special people possess. Everyone has it.

However, far too many people keep this inexhaustible treasure locked inside them and spend their lives adrift on a sea of cowardice, timidity and delusion. What a terrible waste! We must "summon up" courage, as the Daishonin urges, and break through our cowardice.

In the courage to stand alone, we find victory in life.

Lim Bo Seng, the young Singaporean hero whose life and spirit I have spoken of in the past, was a true lion. He fought in the resistance movement against Japan's treacherous invasion of Malaysia and Singapore during World War II. He endured imprisonment and cruel torture by the Japanese military, yet continued to encourage his comrades to remain strong and resolute.

Knowing that it was likely he would be executed, Lim wrote from prison to his beloved wife, Choo Neo: "You must not grieve for me. On the other hand, you should take pride in my sacrifice and devote yourself to the upbringing of the children. Tell them what has happened to me and direct them along my footsteps."

The resistance leader further instructed his wife about their children's education, asking that she have them learn both Chinese and English, and, if possible, send them to university.

Lim died in prison at 35, heroically laying down his life for his beliefs. His wife followed his wishes and raised their seven children into fine adults. All

three daughters became schoolteachers and contributed to the field of education, while all four sons graduated from university and went on to play active roles in their respective fields. Choo Neo, like her husband, was a lion.

Today, the women's and young women's division members of Singapore are outstanding models of courage for the rest of the world.

Mr. Makiguchi, who gave his life for his beliefs, was fond of exclaiming, "Rather a single lion than a thousand sheep!" A lion is another name for a person who is brave enough to stand alone. It is within this courage to stand alone that we find the essence of faith and the key to victory in life.

The Daishonin writes, "I pray that my followers will be scions of the lion king, above the mocking taunts of packs of foxes" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1589). This was his dearest wish. Let us deeply recognize that we of the SGI are a gathering of lions who have inherited this royal legacy of courage.

Being youthful has nothing to do with your age.

Thirty-five years ago, on Aug. 9, 1965, Singapore proclaimed its independence. It was a start fraught with uncertainty, as many huge challenges still remained to be surmounted.

I was in Japan at a summer training course, devoting my energies to training the youth, the future leaders of our movement, when I heard the news.

The newly independent Singapore faced many harsh trials. I prayed that it would safely navigate the rough waters ahead and sail serenely into the vast open seas of prosperity.

In the years since its independence, I am sure that Singapore has experienced many, many arduous struggles, but the people of Singapore have united and advanced bravely to create a vibrant, prosperous country. This spirit of challenge, the spirit to boldly take on the daunting waves of difficulty, is the spiritual pillar that has supported this small, but great, nation of lions.

The SSA has seen tremendous growth. There are now seven SSA community centers, with an eighth soon to be built in the northern part of Singapore.

There is a saying that starting an undertaking is easy, but maintaining it is difficult. Human beings tend to lose the robust spirit to keep challenging themselves once a solid foundation has been established.

Instead, they move into the defensive, growing conserva-



SGI President Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko, meet with Singapore's President S. R. Nathan and his wife, at the president's official residence, Nov. 23.

tive and self-protective. But it is precisely when the foundation has been laid that the real struggle, the real challenge, begins.

No matter how ideal or comfortable the circumstances we may find ourselves in, we must never lose our vibrant, pioneering spirit and passion for challenging new horizons. We must stay on the offensive, always striving to take fresh initiative and to keep advancing.

Even when Mr. Makiguchi was in his 70s, he would punctuate his encouragement to young people with the words "We, youth..." including himself as one of them. In terms of his inner state, Mr. Makiguchi was a youth all his life. Being youthful has nothing to do with age. It is a matter of attitude, of how you live your life.

Youthful are those who stay true to the vows of their youth. Youthful are those who devote their entire lives to realizing the ideal of kosen-rufu alongside their mentor. Youthful are those who strive to break through present circumstances and chal-

lenge themselves to move forward, even one or two steps. Youthful are those who refuse to be idle spectators and are constantly active participants in things around them.

As long as this youthful spirit stays alive inside you, your growth and development will know no bounds.

I hope all of our Singapore members will stay forever young and live out their lives with vigor and passion.

The famous British author Somerset Maugham says with admiration that Singapore is an island where hundreds of different races intermingle. In our recent meeting Nov. 23, President S. R. Nathan characterized Singapore as a small nation but one that embraces a vast diversity of ethnic groups, religions and languages.

Singapore is a crossroads where East meets West. It is a microcosm of the world and a picture of the world's future. To be a citizen of Singapore is to be a global citizen. I hold the highest expectations for this

country. I see the future of humankind here.

The development of SSA is synonymous with the development of the kosen-rufu movement worldwide. SSA's triumph is the triumph of the SGI movement in 163 countries and territories around the world. I wholeheartedly commend you.

Praise to Singapore, beacon of global harmony!

Praise to Singapore, standard-bearer of the 21st century!

Many thanks to the Australian members with us today for traveling all the way to Singapore.

It is my deepest prayer that both Singapore and Australia will achieve outstanding development in the coming century.

I am praying with all of my heart for your good health and happiness. Please convey my best regards to all the members I was unable to meet today.

The World Tribune will have full coverage of President Ikeda's activities in Singapore and other Asian countries in upcoming issues.

Subscribe to the Justice Chronicle

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

The Justice Chronicle will feature the latest Soka Spirit movement news, SGI President Ikeda's recent guidance about it and study articles explaining the difference between Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and what the temple is teaching.

To subscribe to the Justice Chronicle, just follow these three easy steps:

- 1) Open a new e-mail message
- 2) Enter to: ListManager@sgi-usa.org
- 3) Enter message text (first line): SUBSCRIBE chronicle

You'll receive a confirmation message and then a new issue every week!

FROM SPEECH, 1

on what I had read. "How was the book? What did it teach you?" he would ask. And *Emile* was no exception. He was very strict. As a result, I read each book so thoroughly that I could almost recite passages from it by heart.

Rousseau stated in *Emile* that life's true pleasures are those one shares with the people. This aptly describes the realm of the SGI and the spirit of Buddhism. Sharing with our friends, sharing with the people, is real happiness.

Contemplating the absurdities of history, Rousseau noted that all too often it is the wicked who gain fame in the pages of history, while the good are forgotten or ridiculed. Rousseau had penetrating insight. This is just the perverse situation we see in Japan today. People who are making beneficial contributions to the world are attacked and persecuted. The same thing is happening to the Soka Gakkai.

A warm welcome to my beloved fellow SGI members, precious Bodhisattvas of the Earth from 55 countries and territories, who are with us today! I welcome you with my deepest thanks and appreciation.

Each of you has an important mission — each of you in your respective land will serve as a starting point and a model for our movement for worldwide kosen-rufu in the 21st century. I greet you with the same respect and reverence I would accord a Buddha. I am praying wholeheartedly for your happiness and successful endeavors. And I am determined to support and protect you with all of my strength.

Nichiren Daishonin kept a close eye on the trends of the times.

Nichiren Daishonin always observed the turbulent world around him with a keen eye. He watched the trends of the times and constantly asked himself how he could help others, how he could bring stability to society. He paid attention to everything and pondered deeply on all that he saw.

His writings also contain detailed information about conditions in China and other parts of Asia. The Daishonin gathered accurate data on a wide variety of social spheres, including economics and government. He was an astute, genuine leader of the people. He knew how many districts and villages there were in Japan, the total acreage of land under cultiva-

tion and how many shrines and temples there were. He knew the country's population. All this and much more — in precise numbers. In his writings, for example, he gives the population of Japan as 4,989,658, of whom 1,994,828 were men and 2,994,830 were women (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1015).

These figures correlate closely with those appearing in other historical sources, making them data of the first rank in understanding the conditions in Japan at that time.

It is interesting to note that there were about a million more women — or 1.5 times more — than men. It is thought that one of the reasons for this huge disparity is the incessant warfare of the period, which claimed many men's lives. Some have also suggested that the relatively large population of women may have contributed to the unprecedented flourishing of Buddhism in Japan at the time.

Ensuring the happiness of women is the essence of Buddhism.

In those days of chaos and upheaval, women suffered terribly. They were bound by "the three obediences," spending their entire lives subservient to someone else: obeying their parents in childhood, their husbands after marriage and their sons in old age.

Yet against that social background, the Daishonin vowed to save all women: "I have made a vow to save all the women in Japan, and that sincerity cannot be ignored" (WND, 932). He also referred to various scriptural commentaries and summed up their intent, saying: "Among all the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime, the Lotus Sutra is first, and...among the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, that of women attaining Buddhahood is first" (WND, 930). In other words, ensuring the happiness of women is the essence of Mahayana Buddhism.

The Daishonin had many women followers. Lamentably, however, people cast aspersions on his character, spuriously charging him with immoral conduct as a priest. Their attacks were fueled by jealousy toward the Daishonin, a towering champion of truth and justice.

The Daishonin also wrote many letters to his female disciples. Historians have noted this point with great interest. In fact, historians rank the Daishonin in a class of his own when it comes to the volume of letters he wrote to believers, male or female. No other



SGI Training Course participants from 55 countries and regions attend the 51st Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Soka International Friendship Hall, Tokyo, Nov. 9.

founder of a religious school compares in this regard.

A true leader sincerely supports the members above all.

Among the Daishonin's female disciples were those who were widowed at a young age or who had lost a beloved child. There were women who were suffering from illness or whose children were sick. They suffered problems that are universal, problems that women can relate to even today.

Some of these followers were troubled because they could not have children. Some were caring for elderly mothers-in-law. Japan today is a rapidly graying society, and people will more and more find themselves in similar situations, having to care for the aged in the future.

The Daishonin offered constant encouragement to these women struggling amid all manner of suffering and hardship, setting forth clear, practical and detailed guidance appropriate to the circumstances of each person.

The SGI's goal is kosen-rufu. So those working to widely propagate the Daishonin's teachings are the most precious and praiseworthy of all. To show such dedicated members the highest respect and appreciation and to sincerely support and encourage them — this is the behavior of a genuine leader of kosen-rufu, a true leader in faith.

In contrast, to treat the members with contempt and to be arrogant and abusive toward them are the actions of oppressive, authoritarian leaders whose presence serves only to under-

mine and destroy kosen-rufu.

The Daishonin repeatedly appealed to his female followers to awaken to the correct teaching of Buddhism and to base their lives on this valid philosophy and correct view of life and the world. If they did so, he said, they would be unbeatable, no matter what challenges they encountered — they would become victors in life and champions of happiness.

The Daishonin wrote: "Only in the Lotus Sutra do we read that a woman who embraces this sutra not only excels all other women, but also surpasses all men" (WND, 464). There is no discrimination in the Daishonin's Buddhism. Every woman who devotes her life to kosen-rufu is a person with the noblest of missions. Moreover, the 21st century will be an age of women. That is why it is crucial for men to respect women and treat them with the highest regard.

He also told Nichigen-nyo that, as a woman with faith in the Lotus Sutra, she was "foremost among all of the 2,994,830 women of Japan" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1188). And he declared: "A woman who embraces the lioning of the Lotus Sutra never fears any of the beasts of hell or of the realms of hungry spirits and animals" (WND, 949).

I want all of our male leaders to engrave in their minds just how important and respectworthy are women who embrace the Mystic Law.

Happiness comes from character, good fortune and a sound philosophy.

The Daishonin also encouraged women to become self-re-

liant and realize their brilliant potential, teaching them that their lives were infinitely precious and noble.

Some women are obsessed by vanity and outward appearances. A certain philosopher has pointed out that commercial interests often promote vanity. Be that as it may, happiness is not determined by external appearances, by fancy outward trappings. Popularity and fame in and of themselves are illusory, and in most cases they fade and disappear all too quickly.

What is important for happiness is character, good fortune and a sound philosophy. And the ultimate philosophy is faith. Faith is the true foundation for happiness.

The Daishonin wrote: "Let others hate you if they will. What have you to complain of, if you are cherished by Shakyamuni Buddha, Many Treasures Buddha, and the Buddhas of the ten directions, as well as by Brahma, Shakra, and the gods of the sun and moon? As long as you are praised by the Lotus Sutra, what cause have you for discontent?" (WND, 464).

He also said: "Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality that reigns over all of life's functions" (WND, 832). The Gohonzon exists within the lives of all of us who exert ourselves in faith. Within us we possess the eternal state of life of Buddhahood. The Daishonin ex-

pressed his own enlightened state of life in the form of the mandala that is the Gohonzon, so that we might summon forth and manifest the Gohonzon within us.

From the perspective of the Mystic Law, our biggest problems are tiny things.

The Daishonin encouraged women who embrace the Mystic Law, assuring them that "misfortune will change into fortune" (WND, 412), and "you will grow younger, and your good fortune will accumulate" (WND, 464).

All we have to do is look around at the wonderful results experienced by countless fellow SGI members to appreciate the tremendous power of the Mystic Law. Faith is a golden rule for living a happy life. It is a source of energy and vitality. Faith enables us to transform difficulties into opportunities, turning poison into medicine, and to lead strong, confident lives brimming with good fortune.

No matter what happens, no matter how daunting the obstacles we encounter, when viewed from the vast perspective of the Mystic Law, which encompasses the entire uni-

verse, they are all tiny, trifling matters. The important thing is to look at things from a lofty state of life. Rising high above the clamorous din of the world, let us advance with courage and joy.

The Daishonin was considerate and compassionate. He took utmost pains to ensure that his women disciples could work together harmoniously as fellow practitioners of faith and support one another in their development and growth. For example, in some of his letters to his women followers, he instructed them to read the letter together: "Since you two are of the same mind, have someone read this letter to you [both] and listen to it together" (WND, 595). "I hope you will read this letter over and over again together" (WND, 315).

Here, we see why having an organization is so important. Today, the members of our women's and young women's divisions work together and support one another in a spirit of friendly cooperation. They are practicing just as the Daishonin teaches.

To be continued in the Dec. 22 issue



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

Question:
How do I apply for financial aid to Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo?

Answer:
U.S. students should fill out a 2001 Federal Aid Form (FAFSA) available from your high school or college counseling office or on the Internet. This form should be sent directly to the SUA Office of Admission and Financial Aid. If you are under 24, the form must be accompanied by a copy of your parents' or guardians' year 2000 federal tax return.

International students under 24 must also submit parental tax forms, which must be

translated, converted into U.S. dollars, and notarized.

Question:
I am an international student and I cannot get (or do not understand) the FAFSA form.

Answer:
International students may request an International Financial Aid form from SUA by contacting the enrollment services team at admission@soka.edu or (888) 600-SOKA. The FAFSA form is also acceptable.

Question:
My parents did not make enough money last year to be required to file a federal tax form. What should I do?

Answer:
Have your parents submit a statement indicating income earned during the year 2000 supported with copies of W-2 forms and/or check stubs. International students should submit translated documents verifying income.

Question:
When will I find out how much financial aid I will receive from SUA?

Answer:
Financial aid award information will be mailed approximately two to three weeks after admission announcements are made. Financial aid announcements cannot be sent until SUA has received copies of parental tax returns for the year 2000. Therefore, SUA encourages the families of financial aid applicants to file their taxes as early as possible.

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.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Seeking the Gohonzon Within

From This Speech:

Nichiren Daishonin said: "Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality that reigns over all of life's functions" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 832). The Gohonzon exists within the lives of all of us who exert ourselves in faith. Within us we possess the eternal state of life of Buddhahood. The Daishonin expressed his own enlightened state of life in the form of the mandala that is the Gohonzon, so that we might summon forth and manifest the Gohonzon within us.

- 1) How do you make sure that you are not seeking the Gohonzon outside yourself? Have you had the experience of seeking the Gohonzon outside yourself, of treating it like a god?
- 2) If "the Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people," as Nichiren Daishonin says, why do we chant to the mandala of the Gohonzon? Why did the Daishonin inscribe the Gohonzon for his followers?
- 3) Have you had the experience of chanting without the Gohonzon? How was it different (or not) from chanting to the Gohonzon?

This Season, Give the Gift of Encouragement!



Songs for America
Four major poems to America, including the most recent.

The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 2

The continuing conversation that brings the Lotus Sutra to life.

\$9.95, M/O#: 4282 Vol. 1, \$9.95,



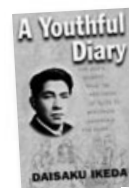
My Dear Friends in America
SGI President Ikeda's speeches to U.S. members, collected for the first time and fully indexed.



The Century of Life 2001 Datebook
Stunning photography. Encouraging words.
\$12.95, M/O#: 4112



FNCC 2001 Wall Calendar
The Florida Nature and Culture Center as you've never seen it.
\$9.95, M/O#: 4108



A Youthful Diary
Youthful inspiration for people of all ages.
\$23.95, M/O#: 4101

And don't forget . . .

The Way of Youth
"Wonderfully accessible . . . A superb contribution to Buddhist 'life style' literature."
— Midwest Book Review

"Readers of this book should emerge encouraged and with their confidence lifted."
— Youth Today

\$14.95, Available at your favorite neighborhood or



All books but The Way of Youth available at SGI-USA bookstores.
Or purchase your copy via mail order: 1-800-626-1313

EXPERIENCE — CHRISTINA ASHFORD, BURBANK, CALIF.

For the Eyes of a Child

Christina and Matt Ashford save their daughter Emma's eyesight and establish the Retinoblastoma Institute.

I am a professional singer/dancer. I met my husband, Matt, in 1985 at an SGI-USA culture festival in Hawaii; we were married two years later. Our lives were unfolding like a fairy tale. Matt got hired to work on the TV show "Days of Our Lives," we bought a beautiful home and had our first child, Grace, in 1992. Unfortunately, like most fairy tales, sooner or later, great loss and frightening challenges appear to test the mettle, faith and conviction of the "good guys."

Ours began with two devastating miscarriages. My heart became gripped with fear that I'd made some terrible cause to deserve this. But I kept that to myself, and we tried again. This time I miscarried one of the twins I was carrying. The other I was able to hold on to life and on July 23, 1997, we had a healthy baby girl. We chose the name Emma Cecily, which means "absolute faith illuminated" or "of the eyes."

At Emma's four-month well baby checkup, I expressed concern that one of her eyes was turning in. The doctor referred us to a pediatric ophthalmologist. My visiting sister, a nurse, was going to come with me to the appointment.

The ophthalmologist told us that Emma had malignant tumors in one and possibly both eyes, a condition called retinoblastoma. Most children worldwide die from this disease because at the point its symptoms are noticed, the fatal cancer has already spread to their brain. The first step in treatment is eye removal, followed with chemotherapy and radiation.

I couldn't move or speak. I just sat there, paralyzed with silent tears.

My sister called Matt. By the time we got home, Matt was chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in between contacting our SGI-USA leaders and friends in faith to ask for their prayers.

Our oldest daughter, Grace, who was 5, made a sign for the altar, which read: "Emma's left and right eye will totally heal

(with a smiley face).

Emotionally, I was in a dark place. I spoke with a senior in faith that night. With her encouragement, a deep resolve rose in my life: I would not accept this. I would not let my daughter die! I put that spirit into my prayer.

At the follow-up exam, the doctors discovered Emma had six tumors in each eye. They would attempt shrinking them with chemotherapy and simultaneous laser treatment. All I could think was, "She's just 4 months old!" In my prayers for her life, I tried to infuse her body with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and send her my strength, health and love.

Many members encouraged us with their individual faith experiences of making the impossible possible. We recognized it was our turn. And the outcome would be entirely up to my and Matt's Buddhist practice.

Daily, Matt and I took Emma in for brain scans, tests and other treatments. While we waited, we saw bald, terrified, screaming children in pain being restrained to get medication, accompanied by parents sitting silently in their own pain and hopeless resignation. This was a world that we never knew existed. Living in it was our foreseeable future. Nichiren Daishonin, the founder of this Buddhism, wrote that Hell exists in our own bodies in this life. Seeing this place, I now knew what he meant.

Consumed with hospital appointments and specialists, days could go by that we wouldn't see our precious oldest daughter, Grace. But she seldom complained.

We were isolated by illness. Because Emma's immune system was weakened, we were confined to the hospital, so we found it hard to participate in faith activities. Most of our chanting took place in hospital rooms and into Emma's ears as they took her from us for another test or surgery.

The head of pediatric surgery performed Emma's first operation. Then a doctor who was one of eight ocular oncologists in the world trained in state-of-the-art procedures for this disease performed her next surgery. The doctor's expertise, combined with the early diagnosis, made them hopeful Emma's eyes could be saved—but there was

still a long road ahead.

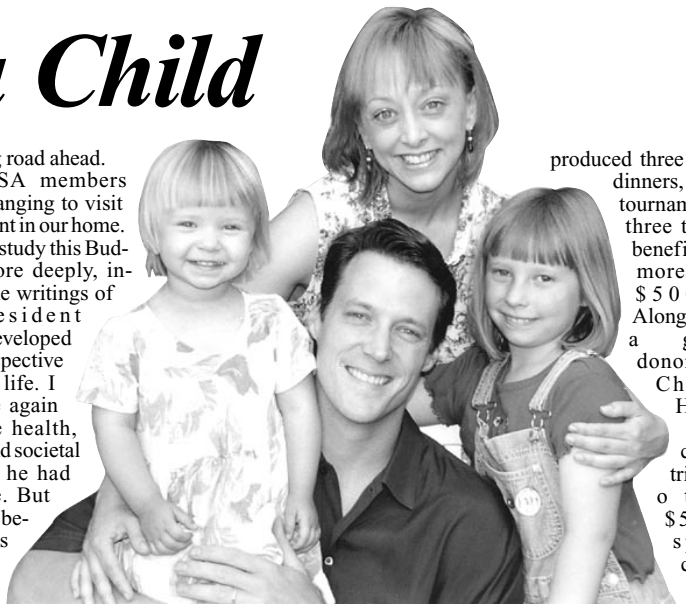
SGI-USA members began arranging to visit us and chant in our home. I began to study this Buddhism more deeply, including the writings of SGI President Ikeda. I developed a new perspective about his life. I read once again about the health, poverty and societal struggles he had overcome. But this time, because I was seeking from a deeper level, my life

responded differently. I began to feel a deeper bond with him. Not starry-eyed hero worship, but as my living example of a true human being of incredible conviction, compassion and strength that has consistently applied this practice to achieving victory.

Not long after, we received a message from President Ikeda: "I am chanting every day for the health of your daughter." I was deeply touched by his consideration. I realized that each SGI member is precious to him. I felt he understood the fears and struggles we all go through and is trying to give us all courage.

My oldest daughter, fighting so hard to be strong for us, was having nightmares. As for me, I wish I could say that I was this strong iron maiden—filled with the determination of faith that my family would definitely win and Emma would be fine. The truth is, every day was a battle between having faith and feeling overwhelmed by fear and doubt. Some nights, screaming, I would wake up in cold-sweat panic attacks. Matt and I had to chant deeply not to allow our fears, or differences in handling crisis, let us lose each other.

After completing chemotherapy, 11 of the 12 tumors were flat scars. The 12th had shrunk by 50 percent. The doctor felt it was in a regressive state. She warned if it grew again, her eye would have to be removed. That's why she wanted us to consider one more cycle of a different chemotherapy. The possible side effects were hearing loss, sterility and leukemia



Christina and Matt Ashford with their two daughters, Emma, 3, and Grace, 5.

produced three black tie dinners, two golf tournaments and three theatrical benefits raising more than \$500,000. Along with this, a generous donor from Children's Hospital has just contributed another \$500,000 specifically earmarked for genetic re-

search. We've started the first Website on this disease, www.eyecareforkids.com, that is reaching out to families in six different languages.

Recently, with the help of local Assemblyman Martin Gallegos, our non-profit organization sponsored state legislation that insures mandatory pupil dilation for infants at the eight-week well baby visit. Because of this, retinoblastoma, infant cataracts and many other ocular diseases leading to blindness will be diagnosed much sooner—hopefully saving vision and lives. This inexpensive procedure, costing \$.02 per child, will also save the State of California millions of dollars. I am pleased to share with you this bill was recently signed into law by Governor Gray Davis.

I first confronted this challenge thinking I was receiving punishment and there was something deeply wrong with me that created this suffering. I now realize how significant this experience was to fulfilling my purpose in life. I now embrace every moment of my struggle as a graduation ceremony in faith.

When I began practicing Buddhism, I frequently heard that each person has a mission that only he or she can fulfill. At that time, I was convinced my mission was singing and dancing to give people joy. Now I understand fulfilling your mission may not be that obvious, but it will naturally unfold in the course of life. On behalf of my family, I want to thank the everyday, yet extraordinary people who make up this beautiful SGI organization for all their support. **W**

When I began practicing Buddhism, I frequently heard that each person has a mission that only he or she can fulfill. At that time, I was convinced my mission was singing and dancing to give people joy. Now I understand fulfilling your mission may not be that obvious, but it will naturally unfold in the course of life. On behalf of my family, I want to thank the everyday, yet extraordinary people who make up this beautiful SGI organization for all their support. **W**

Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PART 13-14

'Every day, I study and self-reflect,' says Shin'ichi Yamamoto. 'I challenge myself and strive for personal growth. All of the Soka Gakkai's affairs are my responsibility. They are my concern. It is because of this firm awareness that I absolutely cannot sit idly by and make careless remarks like an uninvolved critic or spectator.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued speaking to the Soka Gakkai directors: "On Feb. 11 the year he died, Mr. Toda expressed his concern that organizational guidance had not been producing the expected results. He said that this was not the fault of the members but a lack of faith and personal growth on the part of the leadership, who were the core of the organization.

"He also said: 'I, as president, must first be diligent on this point myself if the Soka Gakkai is to develop. I realize that I must educate and refine myself.' He advised us that leaders on every level of the organization should similarly be vigilant in their efforts to improve themselves.

"Mr. Toda was stressing the importance of self-improvement for himself as well as other leaders. This is his legacy to us. One cannot be called a true leader unless one continuously strives for self-improvement. I feel the same way as Mr. Toda and share the same determination.

"Every day, I study and self-reflect. I challenge myself and strive for personal growth. All of the Soka Gakkai's affairs are my responsibility. They are my concern. It is because of this firm awareness that I absolutely cannot sit idly by and make careless remarks like an uninvolved critic or spectator.

"I hope that each of you, as directors and vice general directors, will have the same commitment I do. Otherwise, kosen-rufu will never progress, no matter how many directors we have. In fact, our movement will only be slowed down."

Shin'ichi feared the degeneration of the true spirit of lead-

ership more than anything. This was because, as the Soka Gakkai grew and developed, he could see that there were leaders who, rather than trying to contribute to the Soka Gakkai, were instead becoming dependent on it, almost as if they were living off it.

"When Mr. Toda became president," Shin'ichi continued, "the Soka Gakkai consisted of 12 chapters, and all 12 chapter leaders were resolved to give their very lives to carrying out the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism together with Mr. Toda. None of them cared the least for social status, recognition or wealth. Their only thought was advancing kosen-rufu and carrying out their missions in this lifetime. This is the Soka Gakkai spirit, the spirit that kept us going in the beginning.

"The determination of these pioneers became the driving force for kosen-rufu. Some of you here today were the very leaders I am talking about, and all of you have been leaders from the outset. I therefore hope that you will revive and reawaken that firm resolve within you.

"I hope all of us in this room will start by going back to the original Soka Gakkai spirit, to the spirit of those early days."

Determination shone in everyone's eyes.

Shin'ichi looked intently at each leader as he continued: "With the seventh memorial service for Mr. Toda as our goal, I want all of the vice general directors, including General Director Harayama, to take responsibility for each local organization as headquarters



leaders. In doing so, I hope that each of you will come to embody as a leader of this organization the spirit that was prevalent in the pioneering days of our movement.

"Without a clear outline of one's responsibilities, it is easy to lose touch with the organization, which gives rise to a careless attitude. I wish to completely eliminate this tendency from the Soka Gakkai. Your new leadership appointments will be announced at this month's Headquarters Leaders Meeting.

"Of course, what I am saying does not only apply to you. As president, I myself will also work much harder than I have until now. I will exert myself fully in serving our members, the children of the Buddha. Just watch me."

In fact, Shin'ichi was always on the lookout for those working hard for kosen-rufu behind the scenes, doing whatever he could to encourage them. That is why, prior to the Headquarters General Meeting earlier that day, he had proposed that "Seniors Gatherings" be held for the Soka Gakkai's elderly members. It had thus been planned that on May 12 and 14, every regional organization would put on events where these members could gather and enjoy performances of music, song, dance or theater. Shin'ichi wanted to take the opportunity of the Soka Gakkai's fresh start to recognize and show appreciation to the pioneer members.

When Shin'ichi saw a Soka Gakkai leader taking action on all fronts, he always thought

about those who were supporting that leader in the shadows. He knew that, just as the tip of an iceberg is all one sees above the surface of the water, there is always a multitude of people supporting a leader working in the limelight.

Inevitably, whenever Shin'ichi looked for those supporters, he would find elderly members. Some of them were experts at giving personal guidance, striving to enable their juniors to joyfully participate in Soka Gakkai activities. Paying close attention to the needs of those younger members, the elderly members would visit them in their homes regularly and listen to their troubles, encouraging them based on their rich experiences in faith. Many would also look after their grandchildren and help with household chores, while their daughters-in-law, with whom they usually lived, were out fighting on the frontlines of the organization.

The Buddhist law of cause and effect applies equally to all people. The Buddha will absolutely praise and protect those doing their best to advance kosen-rufu, even if no one else takes notice. The efforts of such people will turn without fail into great fortune and benefit.

Nevertheless, as Soka Gakkai president, Shin'ichi wanted to do something extra to recognize and reward those hardworking members.

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

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

General Director
Daniel Nagashima

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

Managing Editor
Margie Hall
mhall@sgi-usa.org

Associate Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

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

Staff Photographer
Gregory Nakasuji

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

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers

Beverly Alerta
Connie Gutelius
Isao Ishizuka
Lisa Kirk
Jean Pritchard
Cheryl Utley

Photo Editor
Lisa Hollis
marvillisa@cs.com

Bureau Chiefs

Phil Simpson, Atlanta
Fletcher Dalton, Boston
Veronica Evans, Chicago
Jim Dreisbach, Florida
Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii
Kathleen Slattery, Los Angeles
Cheryl Utley, Midwest
Robert Taliaferro, New York
Dave Shadovitz, Philadelphia
Irene Owada, Rocky Mountain
Liz Anderson, San Diego
Ron Baird, San Francisco
Bill Lawrence, Seattle
Troy Murrain, Texas
Robin Meader, Washington, D.C.

Foreign Language Pages

Chinese: Ingrid Yeh
Korean: Charles Lee
Spanish: Greg Martin

READERS COMMENTS

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

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

FRIENDS FOR PEACE
ffp@sgi-usa.org

SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

FINE PRINT
fine.print@sgi-usa.org

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

SGI-USA CENTRAL ZONE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

'Championing Human Rights'

By **BILL ENDSLEY**
CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT

On Nov. 4, more than 3,300 people from SGI-USA's Central Zone gathered at Chicago's Arie Crown Theatre to celebrate 40 years of the kosen-rufu movement in the United States. The origin of the members' fight for human rights was when SGI President Ikeda witnessed an act of prejudice in Chicago's Lincoln Park in 1960, as depicted in *The New Human Revolution*.

Dr. Quentin Young, national coordinator of Physicians for a National Health Program, the event's keynote speaker, remarked that Chicago was much more racially divided than the American South, where he accompanied Dr. Martin Luther King as his personal physician in the 1960s. Dr. Young urged the audience that the fight goes

on and cautioned that access to basic human rights is still denied to millions of Americans.

The event—titled "Championing Human Rights"—included a dramatic look at the pioneering Japanese members who took the first steps of American kosen-rufu, unsure of the area's language or customs. An homage to the cape dances of past culture shows and a spoken-word performance fresh from today distilled into art the spirit of ordinary people fighting for human rights.

Riding buses back across the heartland or on the way back to homes in the city, a renewed determination filled the hearts of a diverse SGI-USA family. The event capped a monthlong celebration that include SGI President Ikeda's "Dialogue with Nature" exhibit and the proclamation by Governor George Ryan of "SGI Day" on Oct. 8.



(Above) Dr. Quentin Young, the event's keynote speaker. (Below) John Sellers gives a rousing spoken word performance.



The exuberance of youth highlights a dance titled 'Era of Humanity.'



Chicago's African Drum group gives a rousing performance.



The Youth Music Corps, assembled from throughout the Central Zone, showcases its talents.



In tribute to past SGI culture shows, the 'Era of Humanity' group performs an elaborate cape dance.



More than 3,300 SGI-USA members and friends gather at Chicago's Arie Crown Theatre on Nov. 4.