



EXPERIENCE

David Tempest creates financial fortune through his Buddhist practice.

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE 50TH CEC

SGI-USA: An Ideal Gathering of People

'With your general director at the helm, I hope that SGI-USA will create an ideal, harmonious gathering of people, where each member is cherished,' SGI President Ikeda says.

My heartfelt congratulations on the 50th Central Executive Conference. I understand that this CEC is very important in that you will evaluate all you have done this year for our movement in the United States and envision your activities for next year. I sincerely thank you for all your efforts this year. Please refresh yourselves though this conference and make a fresh start toward the opening of 2001.

SGI-USA has done a superb job centering on General Director Danny Nagashima and Women's Leader Matilda Buck. I extend my greatest respect to the devoted efforts that each of you made this year. With your general director at the helm, I hope that SGI-USA will create an ideal, harmonious gathering

of people, where each member is cherished.

Toward this end, I must emphasize that leaders should be united. I hope that you as leaders are always sincere, basing yourselves upon faith and respecting and cherishing every member.

Nichiren Daishonin states, "The bodhisattvas Superior Practices, Boundless Practices, Pure Practices, and Firmly Established Practices represent the world of the bodhisattva within ourselves" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 366). The utmost qualities that are necessary as human beings and leaders are definitely inherent in each of our lives. Therefore, you, as kosen-rufu leaders, should feel deeply responsible, be dependable and pray strongly.

Please give a sense of secu-

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



The 50th Central Executive Conference is held Dec. 1-3 in Santa Monica, Calif.

rity to your members. I also hope that you will inspire them to the point where they can display their capabilities without reservation. The Daishonin says, "If you light the path for others, you will have a clear path before you as well" (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1598). All you do for

the happiness of others will benefit yourselves. Convinced that the essence of the Buddhist teachings exists in the spirit described in this passage, please commence a new phase of your great journey.

I am counting on you for the future of America and the fu-

ture of world kosen-rufu. I pray for your glory, victory and good health with all my heart. Please convey my best regards to all the members in your respective areas.

Daisaku Ikeda
December 2, 2000

50th CEC Meets Toward 2001

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER

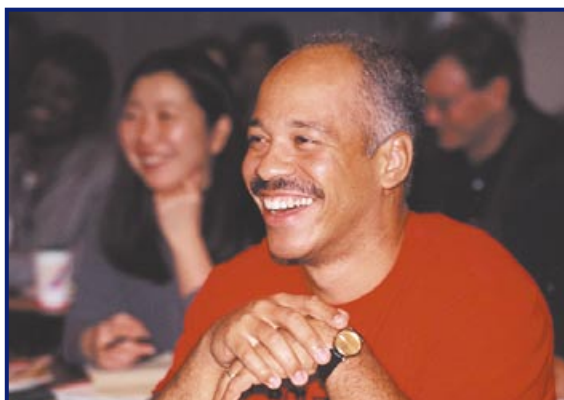
The 50th Central Executive Conference was held Dec. 1-3 at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif. In addition to reviewing this year's activities and discussing plans for next year, the CEC welcomed SGI Women's Leader Yumiko Hachiya and SGI North America Bureau Chief Norimasa Saito.

The SGI-USA Council, whose members are responsible for approving any change in the organization's bylaws, also met

to discuss administrative issues.

A new team of national youth leaders was appointed, including new Young Women's Leader Wendy DeSouza and Young Men's Leader Steve Mortan (please see page 5 for all new leadership appointments).

In her comments to the conference, Mrs. Hachiya said: "SGI President Ikeda recently commented that in the SGI, there is no higher or lower ranking. Everyone is equal. The fact that each one of us is practicing this Buddhism to become happy is what makes our organization



Dave Goodman of Philadelphia participates in the 50th Central Executive Conference held at the SGI Plaza.

great. The SGI exists solely for the sake of each individual's happiness. I hope that you can all come together and

create a beautiful, harmonious kosen-rufu movement in America based on equality and humanism."

Mr. Saito shared that throughout this year, a great source of encouragement for the Soka Gakkai members in Japan has been the members of the SGI-USA. "Whenever the Soka Gakkai discusses how to introduce the SGI," he said, "the first thing they mention is the SGI-USA's youth-led Victory Over Violence project. SGI members all over the world are talking about this VOV movement. This example is further proof that America is the center of worldwide kosen-rufu. So if America is healthy, the world is healthy."

Please see pages 4-5 for speeches from the Dec. 3 teleconference, including General Director Nagashima, Women's Leader Matilda Buck, Men's Leader Tariq Hasan, and the young men's and young women's leaders. **WT**

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NOV. 9 SPEECH — PART 2

SOMETHING SO STRONG

‘Something so strong that nothing can destroy it—that is faith,’ says SGI President Ikeda. ‘Such is the faith of those who uphold Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. Such is the faith of the SGI members.’

The conclusion 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.

Today, since we have members from around the world with us, I want to share, with deepest respect, the words of great men and women from various nations.

Let us start with Thomas Paine, noted pioneer of the American Revolution. Paine says, “Vigor and determination will do any thing and every thing.” “Vigor and determination”—this describes the Soka Gakkai spirit.

The Swiss philosopher Carl Hilty writes that once you begin an undertaking, you must never

look back. We should set our sights on our future success and keep advancing steadily toward that goal. Not advancing is regressing. Please keep moving forward—and win.

I am also reminded of Winston Churchill, the British prime minister during World War II. I remember once purchasing a figurine of him when visiting London.

During the war, when Nazi Germany was heavily bombing London, Churchill, casually tossing a ball in one hand, walked through the rubble-strewn streets to lift the spirits and morale of his countrymen. Without words, his relaxed, confident attitude said to them: “Do not worry. Everything is all right. I am here. We will win!” He was a great prime minister.



Ukrainian Ensemble General Director Myroslav Vantukh presents Kaneko Ikeda with a tapestry designed with sunflowers, a symbol of Ukraine, at the Soka International Friendship Hall, Tokyo, Nov. 7.

No matter how adverse the circumstances, it is crucial for a leader to give people hope and confidence, to lighten their hearts. A leader’s invincible spirit gives people courage and becomes a driving force that paves the way to victory.

Without a mentor, we cannot be fully human.

The day before yesterday, I received an honor from the country of Ukraine. [On Nov. 7, SGI President Ikeda received an award of honor from the cab-

inet of the Ukrainian government for his contributions to the development of global cultural exchange.] In my acceptance speech, I mentioned the novella *Taras Bulba*, written by one of the most famous names in Russian literature, Nikolay Gogol. Born in Ukraine, Gogol in his youth met the renowned Russian poet Aleksandr Pushkin. [Gogol was 22 and Pushkin 32 at the time.] Gogol regarded Pushkin as a staunch friend and lifelong mentor. A great life is always marked by an encounter with another great person, a great mentor.

The relationship of mentor and disciple, of teacher and student, is unique to human beings. Without mentors or teachers, we cannot be fully human, remaining little more than animals. The mentor-disciple relationship is a noble path of human growth and development. And this is something that will never change, now or in the future. The Daishonin clearly states that the path of mentor and disciple is the foundation of life, and many eminent Western thinkers have said the same thing.

In contrast, those who turn their backs on this path grow arrogant. They lose their direction and stop growing.

The story *Taras Bulba* holds many fond memories for me. It was one of the books that Mr. Toda insisted I read. On Feb. 16, 1955, I wrote in my diary: “I began reading *Taras Bulba*. I cannot stop thinking about it.” I later asked Mr. Toda if we could use the book as study material for the Suiko-kai [the young men’s division training group that studied directly under Mr. Toda], and we did.

True faith means being ready to die for one’s beliefs.

Taras Bulba is set in 16th-century Ukraine and tells the story of the unyielding struggle of the Cossacks against the foreign invaders of their land. *Cossack* means free man. Taras Bulba is a commanding officer of the Cossack forces and a symbol of true Cossack virtues. He is stubborn and strong-willed, forthright and honest, daring and resolute, with an abundance of passion and determination.

He has two sons, Ostap and Andrii. Both have just returned home after graduating from school, and Tara Bulba is very proud of them.

The father, a veteran of many battles, contemplates how best to help his sons grow strong. He does not want to spoil them. Wishing to thoroughly forge and train them, so that they will develop inner fortitude and strength, he takes them to the front lines with him.

He wants to teach them “living lessons” in the school of real-life struggles. He hopes that in the course of these trials, they will acquire the courageous strength of lions.

Mr. Toda also believed that young people must be trained through actual struggle. Using the fierce struggle of the Cossacks as a metaphor, he taught us that we must triumph over every difficulty. There may be attacks by the three powerful enemies, onslaughts of the three obstacles and four devils, or persecutions that befall us, he said, but we must overcome them.

That is why he trained us so

The Ceremony in the Air

Back to the Basics

By GEOFF RONDE

SACRAMENTO REGION LEADER

Where are you when you do gongyo?

Maybe at home or at an SGI facility. OK, but where are you, mentally or spiritually? This is not a trick question. After years of effort and struggle, Josei Toda while chanting daimoku during imprisonment for his beliefs during the war, suddenly found himself floating above the saha world (this world in which people must endure suffering), at the Ceremony in the Air, shoulder-to-shoulder with countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth chanting to the Gohonzon. That experience—a profound, transformational realization—was

nothing less than Toda’s discovery of his true, eternal self.

And that discovery was to be a source of power, endurance, wisdom, and compassion that truly changed the course of human history. We can all find this same place, however, if we know where to look. Scholar David Chappell wrote in the June 1999 *Living Buddhism* that the Lotus Sutra of Shakyamuni and the Gohonzon and mantra of the Daishonin all point to *myo*, or the “mysterious nature of our lives from moment to moment, which the mind cannot comprehend nor words express” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 2). We discover our true self by performing gongyo, our ritual prayer service.

Here is a great definition of ritual: the dramatic reenactment of a myth. By performing a ritual, one participates in an explanation of the origins of some natural phenomena. For us, that origin (or mystic truth) is that Buddhahood exists

within; that nirvana and enlightenment is here and now.

Knowing the names and arrangement of characters on the Gohonzon has really helped me grasp the mythic, symbolic aspects of gongyo. Representatives of the Ten Worlds, the gods of the sun, moon, stars, as well as many other Buddhist gods are all present. So many of these “characters” appear in the Daishonin’s writings as well as other forms of Buddhism and even in Hindu traditions. They all appear, with each of us, as we pray every morning and evening.

To paraphrase the “Reply to Sairen-bo,” when we overflow with joy through our correct practice of the single vehicle (the Mystic Law), we see Eagle Peak in India and visit the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light that has existed for all time. Something to think about the next time you partake of gongyo in front of the Gohonzon in your home. **WT**

FROM SPEECH, 2

hard and tried to forge in each of us a faith as strong as iron. And it is thanks to that strict training that I am who I am today.

Taras Bulba scolds his sons, telling them that a true Cossack is prepared to endure anything and, no matter how he is tormented, bravely defends his position to the death. Earlier in the novel, crowds of Cossacks cry out that they would willingly give their lives for their faith.

This is the attitude, the determination that is required—the readiness to die for one's beliefs, to give one's life for one's faith, if need be. This is faith.

I was 19 when I met Mr. Toda and first began walking the path of faith. I served Mr. Toda from early in the morning until late at night.

After he died, I inherited his vision and tirelessly devoted myself to its realization. I have never had a moment's rest or respite, having endured an endless succession of life-or-death struggles to protect my beloved fellow members—so many that I have no more tears left to shed.

I want to adorn the epic drama of my human revolution by setting an example with my life that says: "If the need arises, I will give my life for my faith! This is the Soka Gakkai spirit!"

Through the power of humanity, we must bring an end to war.

In one scene in *Taras Bulba*, the elderly mother of Ostap and Andrii weeps, worried what will happen to her sons when their father takes them to fight on the battlefield. Not only her husband but also her two children will go off to war. How

painful life is!

Similar scenes were played out everywhere during World War II. This was another reason why Mr. Toda had young people read this book.

I remember him saying: "In this novel, Gogol describes life in a barbaric age. And by portraying the love and affection that a mother and father have for their children, he tries to awaken our humanity."

We must bring an end to the age of war—through the power of culture and humanity, through the united efforts of the Soka Gakkai! This was Mr. Toda's wish.

He also said: "This novel depicts the strict love of a father for his children. A mother can get away with scolding her children all year round, because they can feel her underlying love and affection for them.

"But a father can be intimidating without even opening his mouth, so he should be like a friend to his children. He should never join in with the mother in scolding them. That said, I hope that parents will love their children and make it their goal to raise them into people who can contribute to society."

The task Mr. Toda entrusted to us was "Love and nurture the youth so that they might contribute to the world and kosen-rufu!" This is my spirit as well.

I wanted to share this with you today for the sake of the future.

Betrayal is one of the worst offenses a human being can commit.

Taras Bulba shifts to the tumultuous battlefield. Taras Bulba's two sons account for themselves just as their father had hoped, fighting bravely. The Cossack forces appear ready to win a string of victories.

But an unexpected betrayal takes place. Taras Bulba's younger son, Andrii, switches

to the enemy side. He has fallen in love with the daughter of an enemy nobleman.

For a Cossack, betrayal is the most despicable of acts. Eventually, when Taras Bulba encounters Andrii on the battlefield, the latter wearing the enemy uniform, he takes his son's life. As a Cossack commander, such was his uncompromising stance toward betrayal.

Deploring treachery and cowardice, Taras Bulba cries out, "I ask you all, what sort of a Cossack is he who would desert his comrade in misfortune, and let him perish like a dog in a foreign land?" He burns with pride in being a Cossack. There is a sacred solidarity, he says, forged by spiritual bonds, a solidarity unprecedented anywhere.

Let us of the SGI, too, advance in unshakable unity!

Taras Bulba laments his son's betrayal, saying that he is "fallen without glory, like a vile dog." Betrayal is one of the worst offenses a human being can commit.

Mr. Toda consistently warned young people: "In every age, there will be traitors. You must move past these pitiful wretches, empty shells of ruin and defeat, and as comrades who share a true commitment to the Soka Gakkai's goal, keep pushing bravely onward."

The bonds of SGI members are indomitable.

The Cossacks find themselves in dire straits. The enemy forces, hard pressed, resort to trickery. They pretend that they are willing to seek peace, hoping to lull the Cossacks into a false sense of security and make a surprise attack on them.

Completely taken in, the Cossack general and other commanders prepare to accept the enemy's offer of peace. But one commander—Taras

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

MENTOR AND DISCIPLE

From This Speech:

The relationship of mentor and disciple, of teacher and student, is unique to human beings. Without mentors or teachers, we cannot be fully human, remaining little more than animals. The mentor-disciple relationship is a noble path of human growth and development. And this is something that will never change, now or in the future. Nichiren Daishonin clearly states that the path of mentor and disciple is the foundation of life, and many eminent Western thinkers have said the same thing.

- 1) In what ways is the relationship of mentor and disciple or teacher and student unique to human beings?
- 2) Do you feel that you have grown through the influence of mentors or teachers? Who was the best teacher you ever had in school? Why was he or she the best?
- 3) Nichiren Daishonin says that the mentor-disciple relationship is the foundation of life. Why do you think he believes this? In what sense can we call it the foundation?
- 4) Do you think that the mentor-disciple relationship, the way that President Ikeda explains it here, is stronger in some cultures than others? With some people more than others?
- 5) Do you ever see yourself as a mentor?

Bulba—sees through the ruse. "It is a plot!" he warns. He urges his comrades not to trust them, saying that if they abandon the fight and compromise too easily with the enemy, they will be ruthlessly slaughtered.

Taras Bulba's call stirs not only his soldiers but also those under other commanders. "We will follow you!" they cry. "We will follow you to the end!"

He is filled with a passionate fighting spirit and an unwavering commitment to his cause. That is why other brave soldiers follow Taras Bulba.

I am reminded of Mr. Toda's

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

intrepid figure. The bonds of Soka Gakkai members are forged with the same indomitable spirit and conviction. What happens to the Cossack soldiers who compromise with the enemy? Just as Taras Bulba pre-

dicts, they are deceived and destroyed. But—as Gogol alludes to at the end of his story—Taras Bulba, a hero who fights against the enemy to the end and ultimately lays down his life for the struggle, will long be remembered as the pride of the Cossacks.

In closing, I want to share another passage from *Taras Bulba* that states to the effect: There is no power stronger than faith—it is awesome and invincible like a rock standing firm amid the stormy, ever-changing sea.

Something so strong that nothing can destroy it—that is faith. Such is the faith of those who uphold Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Such is the faith of the SGI members.

Next year, at last, we greet the start of the 21st century. As great actors in the drama of life, let us advance with joy and confidence, and make the year ahead one of wonderful personal achievement! Let us energetically construct a magnificent alliance of peace and humanism!

The days are growing colder, so please take care not to catch cold. Each of you is precious, and I am praying for your health and happiness with all my heart.

Thank you for your long attention. Thank you for everything! **WT**



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

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SPEECHES GIVEN AT THE CEC TELECONFERENCE

Each Person Is Precious

By **DANNY NAGASHIMA**
SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR

This Central Executive Conference was a new departure for the SGI-USA, with the appointment of our new youth leaders and the attendance of SGI Women's Leader Yumiko Hachiya and SGI North American Bureau Chief Norimasa Saito. On top of that, from Singapore and Malaysia — wherever he was — SGI President Ikeda sent us continuous messages of encouragement.

It has been one year since I was appointed general director. Together with Matilda Buck, Tariq Hasan, our courageous youth leaders and all of you, we have created a tremendous victory in the year 2000. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all of your effort.

Upon my appointment, I determined to visit 1,000 SGI-USA members within one year. I want to report to you that just last week, while I was in Hawaii, I accomplished my goal. Across the nation, you are the ones who did all the work organizing my

visits. Thank you very much!

Through these 1,000 encounters, I received a tremendous education. Day after day, I learned from all of you what life is about. I saw 1,000 dramas, each greater than a Broadway show or any movie. I would like to share with you the story of my 1,000th visit.

While in Hawaii, I met with Kazuko Takayama, who left Japan for the island of Kauai in 1965. At that time, President Ikeda told her, "If you don't have a mission in Kauai, you will come back to Japan in two or three years." She didn't understand at the time what he meant.

Back then, Kauai was very isolated and undeveloped, like a remote village. She was so lonely and homesick, not knowing anyone. She chanted to understand President Ikeda's guidance to find her mission, and she began to speak with people one by one about this Buddhism, creating her own kosen-rufu movement in Kauai.

At the opening of SGI-USA's first activity center in Kauai last week, every speaker at the

opening spoke of Mrs. Takayama, calling her the mother of the island. I could clearly see the fulfillment of her mission — creating a beautiful SGI family on the island.

I asked her if she felt lonely and if she might be more comfortable living with her very successful son in Honolulu. She said: "No way! Even if I am alone here, I have my family in the SGI!"

From all of my visits, I learned five key things:

- 1) The heroes of kosen-rufu are the members.
- 2) We must always deepen our conviction in the Gohonzon. When we chant, nothing is impossible.
- 3) When we strive to understand President Ikeda's guidance, we will naturally practice Buddhism exactly as Nichiren Daishonin intended.
- 4) The SGI family is precious and beautiful.
- 5) Each member is invaluable.

President Ikeda has said: "A mighty tree is held upright by its roots. If the roots are strong and



Danny Nagashima addresses the 50th CEC.

continue growing, the tree will grow too, and produce flourishing, green leaves. But if the roots rot and die, even the greatest tree will fall. The great tree is the SGI. The individual roots are each of you, protecting our frontline organization. You cannot see the roots buried deep in the earth. In the same way, your daily SGI activities may seem modest, but it is precisely those practical, down-to-earth efforts that constitute the lifeline of kosen-rufu and become the driving force for your personal growth and development."

Next year we are going to have many exciting cultural and peace activities. But our real SGI identity is found in our care toward just one indi-

vidual. This is what it means to awaken to our mission as a Bodhisattva of the Earth.

Please remember that everything is contained in your efforts to challenge your own growth. Let's make our goals toward next year a little bit more than this year. Let's continue to develop with the conviction that all our efforts to make sure that every member is happy and full of appreciation will become the best cause to welcome President Ikeda and Mrs. Ikeda back to the United States.

As the general director, I pledge to do my best with all of you to make the coming year truly historic. Please have a safe holiday season and happy new year! **WT**

Empowering More People

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

My warmest greetings to all of you! I know all of you are tirelessly working for others. But even the brightest light can burn out. So I want to share some very practical guidance that SGI Women's Leader Yumiko Hachiya shared at the CEC about staying refreshed.

First of all, she reminded us that we practice faith to improve our life, not to burn it out. She emphasized that the times are rapidly changing and there are great demands on all our busy lives. We need to find new ways of leadership, so that no one feels they have to do it all.

Team leadership may be the best way. Try to give each person one specific thing to focus on. This way, no one becomes overwhelmed. Instead of dual positions, we should utilize more and more people.

Ask for help — it's amazing how many of us won't do that,



thinking this person is too busy, doesn't want to or isn't ready yet. But when given reasonable responsibility, most people want to respond to our trust.

We should set real leadership terms. Many people would take responsibility for a set time.

These were just some of the ideas Mrs. Hachiya shared, encouraging us to be creative and work together to find the best way for our local organization.

We should empower more people — let's take a chance in 2001. **WT**

THIS IS OUR TIME

By **STEVE MORTAN**
SGI-USA YOUNG MEN'S LEADER

First, on behalf of all the young men in their 20s, I want to thank our seniors in the young men's division for inspiring us to seek out SGI President Ikeda.

Today we have an unprecedented mission. Our generation has emerged. This is our time to take the lead in the young men's organization and create our own history. This is our time to create the type of SGI-USA that we want.

Our initial step to secure a total victory in 2001 will be to fully support the February Women's General Meetings. Let's do anything they ask us, making sure they have the greatest meetings ever.

To celebrate March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, in 2001, we will hold introductory meetings in the district, spearheaded by the youth. While we will take full responsibility for sponsoring these introductory meetings, we ask that the men's and women's



division members please promote them to their friends as well. The youth will work together with the district leaders to hold these meetings.

This year, we surpassed our goal and had 16,000 participants in our March 16 celebrations. For 2001, the national and zone youth leaders have decided to challenge a goal of 20,000. Let's generate an unprecedented wave of propagation together.

In America, young men face many struggles in our confusing modern society. The key to completely chang-

ing our situation exists in the basics of Buddhist practice and engaging in the mentor-disciple relationship. So many young men are strengthening their own connection to President Ikeda. To make our mentor's heart our own, to understand his intent and to fight to realize his vision for kosen-rufu — this is what it means to walk the path of mentor-disciple. It is through seeking this path that we are able to bring forth our greatest potential.

Together with all of you, I am determined to find and help raise many capable people. How many great leaders can we develop to shoulder the responsibility for kosen-rufu in the 21st century? I am looking forward to fighting side by side with you and our mentor, President Ikeda, developing the greatest young men's organization in the world. Let's welcome President Ikeda back to the United States with "Total Victory for the New Century." **WT**

SPEECHES GIVEN AT THE CEC TELECONFERENCE

Great Strides in 2000

By **TARIQ HASAN**
SGI-USA MEN'S LEADER

This 50th Central Executive Conference was a great milestone for our movement in the United States. I clearly remember the first one, which was held with SGI President Ikeda in attendance in February 1990.

We've certainly come a long way in these past 10 years. Especially this year, we have made great strides in our development. Let me share a few examples.

In terms of new facilities, we just opened our first activity center on the paradise island of Kauai in Hawaii. Our second activity center is opening in Austin, Texas, on Dec. 7. Five more activity centers will open soon in Fresno, Calif., Milwaukee, Wis., South Jersey, N.J., Pensacola, Fla., the island of St. Maarten and the New Haven/Hartford, Conn., area.

In addition, a new community center in Orlando, Fla., just opened. Two more community

centers are already under way in Queens, N.Y., and Southeastern Virginia. Two new community centers were also announced at this CEC: Santa Rosa, Calif., and Brooklyn, N.Y. Congratulations!

Also, for the first time in 10 years, the number of new members joining our organization exceeded 2,000, reaching 2,097 people.

Participation in conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture Center exceeded 5,000 for the first time.

Financial contributions were up by more than 20 percent over last year.

More than 50,000 members and guests participated in the 40th anniversary celebrations of the worldwide kosen-rufu movement.

While 1,900 members took the Entrance Exam, 1,800 members took the Elementary Exam.

Thank you very much for all your efforts in these areas. It's not the numbers themselves that are important. Rather, they



indicate that the members must be receiving benefits, because without their efforts, this great advancement could never have been possible.

But the best is yet to come. If I could summarize the essence of what I felt at this CEC, it was "What great fortune to be alive at this time, together with President Ikeda, at the brink of creating a new era." SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima captured this essence by saying, "I can't fathom what causes we made to have such good fortune."

I'd now like to share some key points from the CEC. First and foremost, the SGI-USA Council approved the function of the zone as a new level of the organization. Until now, the zone has functioned as an administrative branch of the national headquarters. What does this mean and why is this important?

First, as with any other level of the organization, the zone exists to support the members, carry out communication and administer personnel appointments.

As you know, we have been continuously expanding the number of regions, doubling in the past few years to the current 30 regions, with new ones being created every year. Communication for the national headquarters with so many entities is virtually impossible.

But more importantly, the official formation of the zone is an extremely important step in the decentralization of our organization. The eight zones of SGI-USA—Central, Mid-Atlantic, Northeastern, Northwestern, Pacific, Southern, Southern California and Western—will allow each area of

the country to consider its own realities, capturing the creativity of its membership and moving forward with the feeling that "We are the SGI-USA."

As you also know, we will be holding SGI-USA Family Youth Culture Festivals next summer in each zone. Through these festivals, I hope the men's, women's and youth divisions can unite to raise thousands of youth—this is the key point, not just singing "Ode to Joy." As a step toward this, we'd like to ask that the youth be given the responsibility to plan, execute and lead the March discussion meetings, which they want to make into four-divisional introductory meetings. This will take the place of their March 16 activities and will become a steppingstone toward the summer festivals.

In the coming year, as we did in 2000, let's advance together with the confidence that SGI-USA is an organization that can unite this country and help it move forward. We are it! Let's be proud that we are members of SGI-USA, which is on the verge of revealing its true mission to society. **WT**

Youth of America—Unite!

By **WENDY DE SOUZA**
SGI-USA YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADER

Over the past 10 years, the youth of America have been progressing steadily based on SGI President Ikeda's guidance. I am one of these young people whose lives have opened up.

Like many young women in the SGI-USA, I have been praying to understand President Ikeda's heart. I have practiced in Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco—even Ghana and Iran—writing to President Ikeda and sharing my dreams with him. In the most difficult times when I felt I had nothing, I had his guidance to make it to the next day.

One year has passed since I first took leadership in the student division together with Daisaku Leslie, Maggie Eisenberg, and Boston Snowden. They are heroes of the youth division and my cherished friends. Together with newly appointed leader, Myeong Chung, I am confident that the Student Division will soar to



new heights with these wonderful leaders.

With the new responsibilities that lie ahead, I wish to offer three pledges together with my fellow young women:

- 1) Let's put the mentor-disciple relationship first.
- 2) Let's put home visitation first.
- 3) Let's put the Goshu first.

With faith in the Gohonzon, the prayer to unite with President Ikeda, the practice of one-to-one dialogue and study

of Nichiren Daishonin's writings, I will work to support each young woman with every fiber of my being. I thank all the young women of SGI-USA from the bottom of my heart for your courage and commitment.

To the youth I say: "Youth of America and the world, unite! We have nothing to lose but a life of misery and regret!" Uniting together with President Ikeda, we will live lives where we can say: "I have the greatest mentor. I have become so happy."

President Ikeda writes in the poem, "Youth Scale the Mountain of the 21st Century," "May 3, 2001 / Let us make that the glorious day / That we together reach the summit!"

I'm looking forward to welcoming President Ikeda back to the United States together with all of you. **WT**

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New Leaders Appointed

SGI-USA Leaders



Cory Taylor
Vice Youth Leader



Renu Jiandani
Vice Youth Leader



Wendy DeSouza
Young Women's Leader



Steve Mortan
Young Men's Leader



Daisaku Leslie
Vice Young Men's Leader



Myeong Chung
Student Division Leader



Jomo Thorne
High School Division Leader



Shan Serafin
Jr. High School Division Leader

Zone-Level Appointments

Shiela Mier
Pacific Zone Vice Women's Leader

Joe Baykun
Western Zone Youth Leader

EXPERIENCE — DAVID TEMPEST, LOS ANGELES

OVERFLOWING WITH FORTUNE

‘I no longer have financial worries,’ says Dave Tempest. ‘I can clearly see how my financial situation has changed due to my Buddhist practice.’

I came to America from England in 1987, when I was 20. Unlike most people who emigrate to the United States, I didn’t come here with any dreams or burning ambition to accomplish something great with my life. I had come to Los Angeles a year earlier for vacation and was somehow drawn to this city.

All I had when I moved here was a suitcase of clothes and a few hundred dollars. I had no family, no friends — no one to turn to for help. I had been in Los Angeles for two months when I was invited to a Buddhist discussion meeting. Because I was in a foreign country and facing hardships, I was more open-minded than if I’d still been in England, so I decided to go and check it out. I was so impressed with the experiences and joy of the SGI-USA members that I decided to try chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

I was a very shy, self-conscious person and had difficulty making friends. I also had a very angry nature and spent a lot of time just feeling mad for no apparent reason. However, the biggest challenge that I faced was my finances. Growing up, my family never had much money and I can remember being teased at school for not having new shoes or clothes because my parents couldn’t afford them. Here I was, an adult, carrying on the same karma. People encouraged me to make a list of things to chant for. On every list I made was a desire to overcome my lack of financial fortune.

I worked in a variety of telemarketing jobs because I didn’t have a green card and the employers didn’t seem to care. All of these jobs paid commission and there were times when I completely ran out of money. Many months I fell behind in rent and had no money for food. I received guidance from a senior in faith, who encouraged



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

me by saying my life is like a bucket with a hole in the bottom and right now, everything is falling through the bottom. He told me that as I continue to chant and do SGI activities, the hole would get smaller and smaller and would eventually close. The bucket would then quickly fill up and overflow with fortune. What he told me about the hole in the bucket was true. Even when I would have a good week at work and make a lot of sales, some unexpected emergency would come up that would wipe out my savings.

I was desperate, so I decided to throw myself into activities; I participated in Soka Group and Gajokai almost every week. These young men’s activities were invaluable in helping me challenge my weaknesses and build fortune in my life. Every time I faced a dire situation, I would chant six to eight hours on weekends. Slowly but surely, my life began to change course and head in a positive direction. I realized that my financial problems were a combination of having bad luck, or being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and not having self-control when it came to money. Furthermore, I was lazy by nature and afraid of hard work. And I had a very negative and pessimistic attitude, which is the kiss of death in any sales job.

In 1993, SGI President Ikeda came to the United States to give a speech at Harvard University and spent several days in Los Angeles. I volunteered to be part of the motor pool group.

I would work from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., then would be part of the motor pool from 2 p.m. to 9 or 10 p.m. Through participating in this activity, I had a couple of breakthroughs. First, I challenged my lazy nature and actually came to enjoy working hard.

Second, I realized that I am capable and that I could do anything if I set my mind to it. This became a major turning point in my life and my practice.

For several years, I had been interested in the stock market and had read the *Wall Street Journal* regularly. I also knew a young men’s district leader who was very successful as a stock broker. I had always been afraid to pursue a career in this profession, as I doubted my own abilities and knew I’d have to work hard to be successful. Also, I still didn’t have my green card.

However, I made a strong determination to do anything I could to get a job in the financial services industry. Even though I did not have a green card, I began working for a firm part time that allowed me to get the licenses required by the industry and educate myself about different investments — I even got a few clients. All this time, I continued to work in telemarketing, selling computer supplies, but was frustrated because I hated it and couldn’t pursue my dream without a green card.

I continued to strengthen my Buddhist practice, doing as many activities as possible and chanting an hour or more every day.

Finally in 1996, having been in the U.S. for nine years, I received my green card. I determined that I wanted to work for the best possible firm so that I could get the best training. My prayer became based on the following passage from Nichiren Daishonin: “Nam-myoho-

enge-kyo is like the roar of a lion. What sickness can therefore be an obstacle?” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412). I substituted the word *anything* for sickness. In other words, I really began to have confidence that by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo with faith, anything is possible.

A friend of mine helped me to get an interview with Merrill Lynch — a company that was at the top of my list to work for. Strangely, out of all the interviews I went on, they were the only company to offer me a job. Now the real struggle began.

I had a two-year trial period with the firm, during which time I would be paid a small salary and I had several seemingly impossible goals that I had to accomplish. I had just gotten married a few months earlier and was embarking on a new career — with a pay cut! I knew I’d have to build a client base from scratch, so I did the only thing I knew how to do — “cold call.” I had spent the last eight years in telemarketing and now all of that experience and training became invaluable. I would call business owners at work and simply ask to send them information. After that I’d follow up and try to schedule a meeting with them. It was a very painstaking process. There wasn’t a single week that I didn’t feel like quitting. I put my wife through hell, but she always encouraged me not to give up.

During that two-year training period, I made more than 10,000 cold calls. Probably fewer than 100 of those people became my clients. It was only through strong prayer that I was able to make it.

Now, instead of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, I found myself being in rhythm. Sometimes people would walk into our office wanting to open an account and I was the only person in the office. Sometimes people would move from another state and want to transfer their account and I’d be the one the receptionist transferred the call to. I was now finding myself in the right place at the right time.

During this trial period, I became friendly with another man in my office who’d been with Merrill Lynch for 36 years. I went to him for advice, and we’d go to meetings at the chamber of commerce together. Ben is a quiet man who keeps to himself

and doesn’t come out of his office much. But I knew there was a lot I could learn from him, so I continued to befriend him and seek his advice.

In June of 1998, after two years at Merrill Lynch, I received the most amazing benefit of my life. Just before graduating from the training program, Ben asked me to become his partner. He then confided in me that he was planning to retire in a couple of years and asked me to take over a book of clients that would take me decades to build. I was very honored that Ben placed his trust in me, especially as I was one of the newest people in my office. I could clearly see how my financial situation had changed due to my Buddhist practice.

My partner, Ben, is retiring at the end of the year. My income has increased several times over in the last couple of years. I no longer have financial worries, just as my leader explained to me when I was a new member — the “bucket” of my life is overflowing with fortune. All of the hardships I went through seem no more than a dream.

Through this experience I came to realize that it is our shortcomings and weaknesses that cause us suffering, and sabotage us from accomplishing our goals if we succumb to them. I also changed from a person who used to complain “Why me? Why does nothing go my way?” to one who has a strong determination and prayer to overcome whatever the obstacle.

The greatest benefit of Buddhist practice is the internal change. When I chant, I feel tremendous courage and actually savor obstacles. Just as Nichiren Daishonin states: “The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra must be wielded by one courageous in faith. Then one will be as strong as a demon armed with an iron staff” (WND, 412). This, to me, is the greatest benefit — to feel courage and confidence to face all of life’s challenges. I am determined to continue to accumulate fortune so that I can support the SGI, Soka University of America and contribute to the betterment of society. I’m proud to be a member of the SGI-USA and am grateful to all my friends and fellow members who continue to help me grow and develop my faith. **W**

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PART 15-16

'You are all enjoying the golden age of perpetual youth, just as Nichiren Daishonin promises,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto tells elderly members at the Seniors Gathering.

It is a leader's duty to be considerate to those who work behind the scenes. Nichiren Daishonin always took care to express his appreciation to such people. Throughout his writings, the Daishonin offers kind words of gratitude to those followers he could not meet regularly, particularly the wives and elderly parents of his active followers.

His profound compassion toward the elderly is especially moving. For example, he once received a gift of an unlined summer robe from Toki Jonin, a leading follower in the Shimousa region. Jonin's 90-year old mother had apparently made it for her son, sewing each stitch with great love and care. Perhaps because he felt it inadequate to repay his mother's kindness and sincerity simply by using the robe himself, Jonin presented it as an offering to the Daishonin, thinking that would most please her.

Jonin's mother was advanced in age. No doubt she put tremendous effort into sewing the kimono, struggling with failing eyesight and unsteady fingers. The Daishonin makes a special point of mentioning this in his reply to Jonin, saying, "She must have strained her eyes and expended her very life to make it" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 968).

The Daishonin goes on to say

that he, too, would find it difficult to repay his debt of gratitude to her, but since it would not be proper to return the robe, he would wear it and report about it in detail to the god of the sun.

He cherished the noble spirit of such elderly mothers and fathers, crying with them, rejoicing with them and offering them comfort and hope. The Daishonin assured them that he would always be with them, so they had nothing to worry about. Warmly embraced by the Daishonin's compassion, they must have put the finishing touches on their lives without any fear.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto always reminded himself that he must take action with the Daishonin's spirit.

On May 14, Shin'ichi attended a Seniors Gathering at the Kyoritsu Auditorium in Kanda, Tokyo. The festivities began at 1:00 p.m. with a rendition of "The Spring Sea" by the members of the young women's fife and drum corps. This was followed by various other performances, including songs by the young women's chorus, a skit by young women from the student division, songs and dances by arts division members, and a performance by the young men's brass band.

It was often the case that the



older Soka Gakkai members would stay at home to look after the house, while their family members went to participate in kosen-rufu activities. So for many, it was the first time to hear the fife and drum corps and brass band perform. This only added to their joy, and when a song was played that they knew, they sat forward in their seats, swaying and clapping their hands in time, and even singing along.

At the end of the meeting, Shin'ichi shared his feelings: "I am very happy to see all of you looking so well and thoroughly enjoying today's event. Thank you very much for coming. I know that I am from the same generation as many of your children. However, having inherited Mr. Toda's legacy and become the Soka Gakkai president, I am determined to do my best to serve all of you, my fellow members, with utmost sincerity.

"While living in this defiled, corrupt world of ours, you have embraced the Gohonzon and practiced your faith diligently, enduring all manner of obstacles along the way. No matter how you were attacked or ridiculed, you have persisted in spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism to help those who are suffering. You have also supported and protected your practicing family members from behind the scenes, as they have gone out to participate in Soka Gakkai activities.

"I pledge to fulfill my mission to support and protect all of you, whom I deeply respect, so that you may practice faith with great pride, living out your lives with dignity and savoring boundless happiness and joy."

Hearing Shin'ichi's declaration, many of the members' eyes filled with tears.

"By the way," Shin'ichi went

on, "there is something I must apologize for. At first, I proposed calling this event the Golden-Agers Gathering, but one of our elderly members scolded me, saying: 'There are no golden-agers among those of us who have faith in the Daishonin's teachings! We practice with a spirit as vibrant as the young women and men!'

"That is certainly true. Realizing that my initial suggestion was inappropriate, I immediately had the sign for the meeting changed to 'Seniors Gathering.'

"In my defense, however, what I had meant was that you are all enjoying the golden age of perpetual youth, just as the Daishonin promises when he says, 'We will find perpetual youth and eternal life before our eyes!' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 413). I hope you will accept my apology!"

Laughter and applause filled the venue.

Shin'ichi continued with great conviction: "The Daishonin declares: 'There is no doubt, however, that in my present life I am the votary of the Lotus Sutra, and that in the future I will therefore reach the seat of enlightenment without fail. Judging the past from this point of view, I must have been at the Ceremony in the Air. There can be no discontinuity between the three existences of past, present, and future' (WND, 386).

"The fact that all of you are enjoying lives filled with happiness as a result of your daily efforts to chant daimoku and promote worldwide kosen-rufu is clear proof that you will absolutely attain Buddhahood again in the future."

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



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 SGI's 25th Anniversary is Celebrated in Guam, Jan. 21-23 Feb. 4
 We Signed It! The New Pacific Peace Resolution Feb. 4
 Eight Youth Culture Festivals To Be Held in 2001 Feb. 11
 SGI President Ikeda Receives Three Honorary Doctorates from U.S. Universities Feb. 11
 Early Resolution of Conflict Stressed in 2000 Peace Proposal Feb. 11
 Introducing Roanoke—Blacksburg District Feb. 11
 SGI's 25th Anniversary Recognized Feb. 18
 Chinese New Year's Festival Celebrates Diversity Feb. 18
 Reunion Marks 10th Anniversary of SGI President's Historic 1990 Visit Feb. 25
 Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, Seeks Assistant Dean of Students Feb. 25
 Victory Over Violence Campaign Continues Feb. 25
 Young Peace Keepers PeaceGame 2000 Held Feb. 25
 Ten Years Later, How Has Your Life Changed Feb. 25
 Report from Gen. Director Danny Nagashima, Reaching Out in the Pacific March 3
 Florida and Caribbean Leaders Discuss "The Power of One" March 3
 Women's Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center March 3
 Buddhist Scholars Launch Books at New England Culture Center March 3
 Dr. David Krieger Speaks at USC Victory Over Violence Seminar March 3
 SGI-USA Members Chant 100 Million Nam-myoho-enge-kyo March 10
 West Hollywood Gathering Celebrates the Power of Women March 10
 Julian Bond Discusses "Race and Rights in the New Millennium" at SUA, Calabasas March 17
 General Director Travels to Southwest and FNCC March 17
 YPC Opens New "Closing the Gaps" Exhibition in New York March 17
 New Tools for VOV 2000 March 17
 Julian Bond Discusses Three Things We Each Can Do To Further Civil Rights at SUA March 17
 Puerto Rico Rocks March 24
 Copper Dome Completed at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo March 24
 CEC Members Look Toward May 3, 2001 April 7
 Akron District Women Meet April 7
 Joy in the Caribbean April 7
 Millennium Sunday: A Gathering of Spiritual Awareness April 14
 New York Holds Golden Stage Group Meeting April 14
 Toward the Next 20 Years: Stage Crew Conference at FNCC, March 16-19 April 14
 Spanish Language Conference at the FNCC—Viva the Americas! April 21
 Orange Chapter Honored by City of Garden Grove April 21
 "Z-Wave" Living Museum Makes Big Splash at Santa Monica Community Center April 21
 Santa Monica, CA, Persian New Year Celebrated April 28
 The History of the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century April 28
 The Florida Nature and Culture Center April 28
 SGI-USA Publications Win Awards at International Religion Communicators Convention April 28
 Earth Charter Activity Held at the University of Florida April 28
 Soka Schools Alumni Gather at SUA, Calabasas May 12
 Reorganized Detroit Area Holds Kickoff May 12
 FNCC To Host Reunion of 1990 Groups May 12
 Denver Cherry Trees—Messages of Hope May 12
 Choruses Count Down to "Ode to Joy"—Conference at the FNCC, June 1-4 May 19
 "Dialogue With Nature" Exhibit of SGI President Ikeda's Photographs Comes to Denver May 19
 Northwest Leaders Build Unity May 19
 Los Angeles, French-Speaking Members Meet May 26
 Earth Charter Update May 26
 Portland, Ore., Members Hold Conflict Resolution Workshop May 26
 Sound of Victory Over Violence, May 14, Arts Division Performance at FNCC June 2
 Members Donate Books in Waukegan, Ill. June 2
 San Francisco Youth Participate in Cherry Blossom Festival, April 15 June 2
 Thai New Year's Day Celebrated, Panorama City, Calif. June 2
 Denver Welcomes "Dialogue with Nature" Exhibit June 9
 Impressions of SGI Spring Training Course in Japan June 9
 Great Lakes Region Gathers, May 7, Lansing, Mich. June 9
 Texas, Oklahoma Region Leaders Meeting, May 21 June 16
 Alaska Members Celebrate 17th Anniversary of SGI President's Visit w/Picnic, Culture Festival June 16
 New York Youth Hold Introductory Lecture, April 18 June 16
 Victory Over Violence in the Caribbean June 23
 SUA Dedicates Millennium Trail June 23
 SGI-USA Memorial Held at Rose Hills June 23
 Victory Over Violence in the Caribbean—Impressions June 23
 Activists Join Victory Over Violence Effort June 23

St. Maarten Makes New Start June 23
 So. California Zone Sets Goals for 2001 July 7
 Charlottesville, N.C., Members Hold Prelude to May 3, 2001 July 7
 Washington, D.C., Sponsors Spring Family Festival July 7
 June CEC Focuses on Soka Care July 14
 Summer 2000 Publications Promotions Begins July 14
 Princeton District Joins Community Festival July 14
 Boise Members Welcome Matilda Buck July 14
 Youth Festival Electrifies New York July 21
 Midwest Youth Hold Summer Festival July 21
 General Director Visits Phoenix July 21
 Gulf Coast Members Gather July 21
 New York Marks "Beijing + 5" July 28
 Plaque Unveiled at Gandhi Institute July 28
 New England Celebrates Earth Day July 28
 Working Toward a Culture of Peace in Washington, D.C. Aug. 4
 Pride Celebration Parades Aug. 4
 Spirited Study in Northern California Aug. 4
 New England Throws Dance Party Aug. 11
 Message of Joy and Nonviolence in Alameda Mayor's Fourth of July Parade Aug. 18
 Reno Golden Stage Group Blossoms Aug. 18
 Boston Research Center Seeking Writer/Editor Aug. 18
 Mississippi Celebrates Religious Freedom Aug. 25
 Creating Community Vision in Chicago Aug. 25
 SGI-USA Hawaii Hosts Congressional Forum Aug. 25
 Human Rights Lecture Series Commences Ninth Year Aug. 25
 Celebrating the "People's Music" Min-On Concert Association Aug. 25
 Building Bridges of Peace in Minnesota Sept. 1
 Spreading Peace Through Culture in Trinidad & Tobago Sept. 1
 Florida Youth Ignite "Beacon of Hope" Sept. 8
 Florida Youth Culture Festival Sept. 8
 Raising Our Children Conference Expands Its Scope Sept. 8
 10,000 Men Gather for August Meetings Sept. 15
 San Francisco Leaders Meet With General Director Sept. 15
 The 8th Men's Division Conference at the FNCC Sept. 15
 Illinois Area Men "Save the Man in the Mirror" Sept. 15
 San Antonio Welcomes Children's Rights Exhibit Sept. 22
 Virginia/Carolina Families Enjoy Campout Sept. 22
 Sixth International Conference of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Sept. 29
 108th Conference of the American Psychological Association Sept. 29
 Southeastern Region Golden Stage Group Meets Oct. 6
 Campout Reveals Physical, Spiritual Courage, Washington, D.C. Oct. 13
 Albany Chapter Shares VOV Project Oct. 13
 SGI-USA Members Support Los Angeles Korean Festival Oct. 13
 Wisconsin Conference Big Hit With Members Oct. 20
 40th Anniversary Celebration in Hawaii Oct. 20
 Children's Rights Exhibition Celebrates Fourth Year Oct. 20
 "United for Peace" in Dallas Oct. 20
 Morehouse College Honors SGI President Ikeda Oct. 27
 Linus Pauling Exhibition in Atlanta Oct. 27
 SGI-USA Participates in Religious Summit Oct. 27
 Aging Healthfully in New York—Golden Stage Group Meeting Oct. 27
 New Year's Theme Announced, "Year of Total Victory for the New Century" Nov. 3
 JOY2K—Los Angeles Celebrates 40th Anniversary Nov. 3
 "Global Ambassadors" Ignite Seattle Nov. 3
 San Francisco "We Can Shape the Future" Nov. 3
 VOV Week at University of Michigan Nov. 3
 Philadelphia Unleashes "Power of the Human Spirit" Nov. 3
 SGI-USA History Celebrated in Arizona Nov. 10
 Rock Against Racism in Pittsburgh Nov. 10
 Redwood Coast Members Spread Friendship Nov. 10
 Kansas City Members Discuss Soka Care Nov. 10
 New England Campaigns Against Violence Nov. 10
 New Look for SGI-USA Web Site Nov. 17
 "Way of Youth" Garnering Praise Nationwide Nov. 17
 Gang Symposium Held at New York Culture Center Nov. 17
 Children's Rights Exhibit Visits Northern Florida Nov. 24
 Santa Barbara Supports Nuclear Abolition Nov. 24
 Championing Human Rights in Southern Ohio Nov. 24
 World Peace Festival Lights Up Indiana Dec. 1
 Pride and Prejudice, Celebrating and Standing Up, Los Angeles Dec. 1
 Kentucky Area Celebrates Dec. 1
 SGI-USA Celebrates November 18 Dec. 8
 Toward a Violence-Free Hawaii Dec. 8
 Pasadena District Commemorates November 18 Dec. 8
 Kansas City Project Promotes Cultural Exchange Dec. 8
 New England Youth Emphasize Nonviolence Dec. 8
 Peace Monuments Unveiled—Tinian and Guam Dec. 15
 Florida Nature and Culture Center Conference Schedule for 2001 Dec. 15
 SGI-USA Central Zone's 40th Anniversary Celebration Dec. 15
 50th CEC Meets Toward 2001 Dec. 22
 Channel Islands Welcomes Exhibit Dec. 29
 Celebrating SGI-USA's Advancement in 2000 Dec. 29

Interviews

Marc Kielburger, director of Free the Children (Jeff Farr) May 26
 Gregory Thomson, treasurer of the St. Maarten Victory Over Violence Foundation (Farr/Liptan) July 28

Perspectives

Bridget Borer, Minneapolis, Having Faith While Parenting Alone Jan. 21
 Ed Horan, San Francisco, Disciples Are Successors Jan. 21
 Lori McDaniel, Chicago, Using Common Sense in Facing Depression Jan. 28
 Veronica Evans, Chicago, Learning From Loss Jan. 28
 Michael Lisagor, Vienna, Va., Praying for a Good Explanation, Five Prayers Feb. 4
 Patricia Woolman, Alhambra, Calif., Civility: Concern for Others Feb. 11
 Amy Taliaferro, New York City, A Radiant Sunflower of Warmth and Courage, Amelia Moran Feb. 25
 Dave McNeill, Los Angeles, The Human Being Must Always Come First March 3
 Dianne Moody, Albuquerque, All Things Are Interconnected March 3
 Donna Frecheley, San Diego, Hanging On to My Faith March 3
 Noriko Adcock, San Diego, My Memory of Hiroe Clow March 10
 Laura McFarland, Los Angeles, Soka Spirit Is the Struggle To Define Who We Are March 10
 Dave Baldschun, La Tuna Canyon, Calif., Advocating the Universality of Buddhism March 17
 Kathy Ruby, Washington, D.C., The Bodhisattva Spirit Refreshes March 24
 Wendy Desouza, Santa Monica, Calif., The Issue of Language, the Spirit of Reform April 7
 Jay Heffron, Aliso Viejo, Calif., Toward an American Organization April 14
 Ross Dreisblatt, Los Angeles, Making Buddhism Accessible to Everyone April 21
 Mark Koral, Los Angeles, Defending the True Law May 5
 Lavora Perry, East Cleveland, Ohio, Learning What It Means To Be Human May 5
 Fay Hovey, Maui, Hawaii, The Bodhisattva in All of Us May 19
 Steve Sapperstein, Boston, Developing an Attitude of Trust May 19
 Amy Brownfield, Burbank, Calif., Sincere Offerings Become Prayers June 2
 Jason Henninger, Seattle, Changing High School Into Medicine June 16
 Jamie Liptan, Santa Monica, Calif., Redefining the Role of Men in Today's Society June 23
 Shavawn M. Berry, West Hollywood, Calif., Spiritual Awakening About Mission, Have No Regrets July 7
 Amy Brownfield, Burbank, Calif., My Responsibility As a Parent Sept. 8
 Dave Baldschun, La Tuna Canyon, Calif., Journey of Self-Discovery, Mentor-Disciple Sept. 15
 Edward Marashian, Hollywood, Calif., A View of Enlightenment Sept. 22
 Lee K. Wolfson, Pittsburgh, A Tribute to My Nemesis Oct. 20
 Jamie Liptan, Santa Monica, Calif., Let Us All Live Like Kings, Anthony Lee Nov. 17
 Mitch Hale, Los Angeles, A Man Named Justice, Anthony Lee Nov. 17
 Jacci Ybarra, West Hollywood, Calif., What Is Pride? Dec. 1
 Nancy Berger, Hollywood, Calif., The Best Dance Lesson Ever—Tribute to Alice Dec. 8
 M. J. Warrender, Pasadena, Calif., Homage to the Protective Forces of the Universe Dec. 8

Experiences

Danielle Fath, Boulder, Colo., faces challenge of living/studying in Chile Jan. 1
 Arthur Congdon, Philadelphia, faces internal struggle against anger Jan. 1
 Gwyneth Congdon, Philadelphia, overcomes depression, hopelessness Jan. 1
 Makonnen Zerfu, Los Angeles, writes own declaration of independence Jan. 1
 Vinessa Shaw, Los Angeles, successful young actress lives her practice Jan. 1
 Jorge Silverio, Burbank, Calif., spreads hope and joy in Cuba Jan. 1
 Malina Moore, Santa Monica, Calif., makes friends in South Africa Jan. 1
 Sean Izumi, Arlington, Va., newly found self-reliance leads him to love Jan. 14
 Newell Fogelberg, Boulder, Colo., transcending differences at work Jan. 21
 Angie Lead, Seattle, being true to herself, coming out of her shell Jan. 21
 Valerian Ruminski, Philadelphia, a global citizen of opera Jan. 28
 Pat Keating and Lynda Martinez, Los Angeles, adopt baby daughters from China Feb. 11
 Noriko Adcock, San Diego, returns to SGI with renewed sense of purpose Feb. 11
 Joanna Jeczalik, London, England, animality determined her choice of career Feb. 18
 Celia and Margrette Francisco, Altadena, Calif., justice for their deceased sister Feb. 18
 Yoshie Yoshawa, Kyoto, Japan, wife of reformist priest, personal victory Feb. 18
 Barbara Jay, Orlando, Fla., revitalizes her life and discovers choices through overcoming cancer March 3
 Briah Anson, St. Paul, Minn., faces her greatest fear, dying in a plane crash March 3
 Yumi Schweizer, Kentfield, Calif., manifests harmony and stability in her family March 10
 Shoichi Shimazaki, Saitama, Japan, waking up to the reality of Nichiren Shoshu March 10
 Linda Colton, Indian Head, Mo., high school teacher becomes outstanding person at work March 17
 Fred Capel, Minneapolis, started a foundation to provide for children with Down syndrome March 24
 Markus Parillo, Toronto, Canada, falls in love with wife again after over 20 years of discord March 24
 Dennis Merimsky, Israel, previously estranged from family, mends relationship with son April 7
 July Weber, Brentwood, Calif., takes responsibility for her life, frees herself from victim mentality April 7
 Ian Ehrenreich, Stanford, Calif., finds a new appreciation for life after overcoming leg injury April 7
 Profiles: Ethel Corwin, Murray Soloman, New York April 14
 Frank Castanheira, San Francisco, introduces his parents and family to the practice in gratitude April 21
 Jarmil Maupin, Los Angeles, contributes to the development of new South Africa April 28
 Barbara Fox, Los Angeles, rediscovers the joy of financial contribution May 5
 Kevin Ono, Seattle, freedom from debt, pastry chef shares recipe for financial responsibility May 5
 Kay Rynerson, Seattle, challenges breast cancer with awareness "this moment is all we have." May 12
 Keith Washington, Bronx, N.Y., challenges HIV to the point it became undetectable May 12
 Gregory Pierson, San Diego, supports wife through life-threatening heart surgery May 12
 Kelly Yi, Westchester, Calif., starts support group for mothers in her community May 12
 Tarik Mitchem, Louisville, Ky., reading the *World Tribune* illuminates his life May 19
 Debbie Liptan, Portland, Ore., discovers the true meaning of "the purpose of life is to be happy" June 9
 Joelle Goncalves, Santa Rosa, Calif., overcomes her fear of confrontation at her workplace June 23
 Andrea Weissenberger, Santa Monica, Calif., challenges learning difficulty, becomes therapist July 7
 Bob Reel, Sacramento, Calif., grounds himself in Buddhist practice and develops financial fortune July 14
 Earnestine Harris, Norfolk, Va., gets off welfare and dares to pursue her dreams July 14
 Rafael Llado, Puerto Rico, changing dependent attitude at critical moment July 14
 Julie Glenn, Henderson, Nev., finds inner peace by giving back to her district members July 21
 Michael Choi, Riverside, Calif., gains courage to practice Buddhism in spite of parents opposition Aug. 4
 Helen Scoffin, United Kingdom, chanting for specific goals brings greater rewards than imagined Aug. 4
 Jerry Shubert, Antelope, Calif., helps his wife recover from kidney failure and peritonitis Aug. 11
 Kate Hungerford, Marina del Rey, Calif., now has "solid expectation of success" Aug. 18
 Nicole Falzone, Playa del Rey, Calif., artist, Parable of the Three Carts and the Burning House Aug. 18
 Ruth Thomas, Columbia, S.C., pioneer environmental advocate heightens awareness Aug. 25
 Craig DeRousse, Manhattan Beach, Calif., attributes his success to Soka Univ. education Sept. 1
 Carol DeRousse-Holladay, Del Mar, Calif., Soka University develops son's intellect and wisdom Sept. 1

Jim Johannsen, Arvada, Colo., Son's healthy premature birth a victory Sept. 8
 Raymond E. Foti, Tarzana, Calif., after nearly flattening on operating table, treasures life Sept. 15
 Curt Young, Los Angeles, never too late to make dreams come true Sept. 15
 Alan Wittert, Santa Monica, Calif., speech therapist contributes to others' happiness Sept. 15
 Michael Angelo, Los Angeles, shares what he's gained from 16 months' practice Sept. 22
 Ren Zarnesky, Alamogordo, N.M., brings happiness to her family through Buddhist practice Sept. 22
 Thea Matthews, Royal Oak, Mich., finds joy after the stillbirth of her daughter, Jovita Sept. 22
 Mark DiVincenzo, Buffalo, N.Y., confronts discrimination in community youth soccer league Sept. 22
 Dodie Cogswell, Seattle, overcomes addictions, becomes chemical dependency professional Oct. 6
 John Misiewicz, San Clemente, Calif., achieves a life of sobriety and becomes registered nurse Oct. 6
 Carol Ann West, Denver, liberates herself from 30-year addiction to alcohol and drugs Oct. 6
 Tomell de Silva, Orland Park, Ill., creates brilliant future through challenging himself at school Oct. 13
 Vanessa Preston, Overland Park, Kan., helps her friends through difficult times Oct. 20
 Ellen Taliaferro, Dallas, emergency physician founds Violence Prevention Center Oct. 27
 Kimberly Mitchell, Long Beach, Calif., realizes growth while studying in Italy Nov. 10
 Stacey Mitchell, Long Beach, Calif., develops hopeful dream for future by rekindling practice Nov. 10
 Karen Dennis, Las Vegas, Nev., Olympic track and field head coach, Sydney challenge Nov. 24
 Alessandra Maiolino, United Kingdom, Italian architect builds future in London Nov. 24
 Carol Leudemann, New York, challenges relationship with herself and gets married Dec. 1
 Penny Parker, Annandale, Va., SGI training helps her guide family in facing hardship Dec. 1
 Geoff Jordan, Omaha, Neb., winning in life after divorce, changing himself changes relationship Dec. 1
 Rick Serna, San Mateo, Calif., finds way back to SGI after working as temple administrator Dec. 8
 Christina Ashford, Burbank, Calif., saves daughter's vision and establishes Retinoblastoma Inst. Dec. 15
 David Tempest, Los Angeles, develops financial fortune through Buddhist practice Dec. 22
 Jason Hart, London, England, works toward peace in the Middle East Dec. 29

Study Department

New Year's Goshō: Purifying Our Lives Jan. 1
 Study Material for April 30 Entrance-level Exam Feb. 11
 Goshō Study Material for 2000 Feb. 11
 Sample Questions for the Entrance-level Exam April 30 Feb. 11
 Entrance Exam Held at 134 Locations May 19
 Entrance-Level Examination June 2
 Elementary Examination Sample Questions Aug. 11
 The Parable of the Three Carts and the Burning House Aug. 18

Divisional News

Tariq Hasan, SGI-USA Men's Leader—New Year's Message Jan. 1
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader—New Year's Message Jan. 1
 SGI-USA Youth Leaders—New Year's Message Jan. 1
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader, "The Power of One Woman to Make a Difference" Jan. 21
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader, Message to Feb. 27 WD Meetings Feb. 11
 SGI-USA Culture Department Year 2000 Guidelines March 3
 James Herrmann, SGI-USA Youth Leader, Toward July 3: Our Finest Hour May 5
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader, Spirit of Contributions May 5
 Renu Jandani, SGI-USA Young Women's Leader, shares what the *World Tribune* means to her May 19
 Tariq Hasan, SGI-USA Men's Leader, discusses the focus of the men's division for the year May 19
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader, "Prayer, A Real Force for Change" June 9
 Participants at the Student Division Conference at the FNCC Sept. 1
 Tariq Hasan, SGI-USA Men's Leader, Message to MD Mtgs—"Discover Joy and Strength in Your Life" Sept. 15
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader, Message to MD Mtgs—"To the Heroes of SGI-USA" Sept. 15
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader, CEC Teleconference, Sept. 24, "Toward Nov. 18 Mtgs" Oct. 6
 James Herrmann, CEC Teleconference, Sept. 24, "SGI Family Culture Festivals" Oct. 6
 SGI-USA Boys & Girls Group Focus for 2001 Dec. 15
 SGI-USA Boys & Girls Group Study Curriculum Topics for 2001 Dec. 15
 SGI-USA Women's Activity Guidelines for 2001 Dec. 15
 Matilda Buck, SGI-USA Women's Leader—50th CEC Message—"Empowering More People" Dec. 22
 Tariq Hasan, SGI-USA Men's Leader—50th CEC Message—"Great Strides in 2000" Dec. 22
 Wendy DeSouza, SGI-USA Young Women's Leader—50th CEC Message—"Youth of America Unite" Dec. 22
 Steve Mortan, SGI-USA Young Men's Leader—50th CEC Message—"This Is Our Time" Dec. 22

For Women

Andrea Locke, Los Angeles, The Key to My Determination Jan. 14
 Rebecca Jacobs, The Responsibility of True Freedom Jan. 14
 One Woman Who's Made a Difference: Hiroe Clow Jan. 21

Significant Dates

Jan. 26, the 25th Anniversary of the SGI's Founding Jan. 14
 Feb. 11, The 100th Anniversary of Josei Toda's Birth Jan. 28
 Feb. 16, The Birth of Nichiren Daishonin Feb. 4
 March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, Celebrating the Mission of Youth Feb. 25
 April 28, 1253, The Founding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism March 24
 May 3, Soka Gakkai Day April 2
 July 3, Day of Mentor and Disciple June 16
 July 16, Rishso Ankoku Ron Submitted June 23
 Aug. 24, SGI President Ikeda Begins Buddhist Practice Aug. 4

Special Features

A New Pacific Peace Resolution Feb. 4
 Developing a New Consciousness—Dialogue between D. Nagashima and Lawrence Carter, Sr. April 28
 The Joys of Parenting June 2
 Daisaku Ikeda—Forty Years of Leadership for World Peace June 30
 Daisaku Ikeda: A Profile June 30
 The Path of Mentor and Disciple June 30
 SGI President Ikeda in America June 30
 A Quest for Human Diplomacy June 30

A Global Ambassador of Peace	June 30
Building a Culture of Peace	June 30
Leadership in Cultural Exchange	June 30
Leadership in Education	June 30
Parable of the Three Carts and the Burning House	Aug. 18
Addressing A.A. and Buddhist Practice	Oct. 6
Dr. Lawrence Carter — Tribute to Daisaku Ikeda — Speech at Morehouse College	Oct. 27
Beginning the Journey of Faith, New Members Discussion	Nov. 17
Improving Gongyo	Nov. 17
Basic Buddhist Terms to Remember	Nov. 17

Soka Spirit

Why Has the SGI Focused on the High Priest So Much?	Jan. 21
Soka Spirit Conference Looks to Future	Feb. 11
Soka Gakkai Members Sue High Priest	Feb. 11
Head Temple Faces More Lawsuits Over Grand Main Temple Destruction	Feb. 18
Former Hokekko Chairperson's Wife Urges High Priest To Resign	June 16
Nichiren Shoshu Priest From Overseas Bureau Leaves the Priesthood	Aug. 4
Letter to High Priest Nikken Abe, Priest Endo Ishida, Administrator in Overseas Bureau	Aug. 18
Kyoto Priest Secedes From Nichiren Shoshu	Sept. 22
Another Nichiren Shoshu Priest Decides To Leave	Nov. 10

Friends for Peace

Jan. 14, Feb. 4, March 3, April 14, May 12, June 2, Aug. 11, Nov. 3, Dec. 1

Leadership Appointments

Central Zone and East Bay Region	June 2
SGI-USA, Pacific and Western Zone	Dec. 22

Seize the Day Pullout Section

Jan. 28, Feb. 25, May 19, June 16, July 7, July 21, Aug. 4, Aug. 18, Sept. 1, Sept. 15, Oct. 6, Oct. 13, Nov. 3, Nov. 17, Dec. 1, Dec. 22

Fine Print

Feb. 11, Feb. 18, March 17, April 7, June 9

In My Life

Lydia Fort, Lifetime Endurance July 7

Photo Essays — 'This Beautiful Earth'

A Hawaiian White Horse	Feb. 4
Paris Tricolors	March 17
Luminous Waves of Hong Kong	April 28
Moon Over Miyazaki	May 26
The Seoul Guest House	July 7
Cherry Blossoms on a Pond	July 28
The Strait at Istanbul	Aug. 25
A Rainbow of Victory in Germany	Sept. 29
May at Taplow Court	Oct. 27
A Mother and Her Children in Nepal	Nov. 24
The Castle of Osaka, The City of People	Dec. 29

Back to the Basics

The Source of Benefit	May 12
Activating the Three Virtues	May 19
The Object of Devotion	June 2
Dealing with Anger	June 9
Righteous Anger	June 16
Earthly Desires	June 23
Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo	July 7
The Meaning of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo	July 14
Striking the Bell	July 14
Compassion for Others	July 21
Bodhisattvas of the Earth	Aug. 4
The Importance of Study	Aug. 11
Practice for Oneself and Others	Aug. 11
Karma	Sept. 1
The Meaning of Shakubuku	Sept. 8
The Lotus Sutra	Sept. 15
The Three Obstacles and Four Devils	Sept. 22
The Oneness of Life and Its Environment	Oct. 6
Bodhisattva Never Disparaging	Oct. 13
Good Friends, Bad Friends	Oct. 20
The Eight Winds	Nov. 10
The "Saha" World	Nov. 17
Many in Body, One in Mind	Dec. 1
The Treasure Tower	Dec. 8
The Fusion of Reality and Wisdom	Dec. 15
The Ceremony in the Air	Dec. 22

Questions and Answers on Faith

How Does Buddhist Practice Change us?	Jan. 28
Some Thoughts on Depression	March 10

Mailbox

Jan. 21, Feb. 11, Feb. 18, March 3, March 10, March 17, March 24, April 7, April 14, April 21, May 5, June 9, June 23, July 21, Sept. 22,

Book Notices

Buddhism Is the Clear Mirror	Jan. 28
Entrance-level Exam Booklet	Feb. 25
A Youthful Diary, One Man's Journey from the beginning of Faith to Worldwide Leadership	March 10
"Buddhist Peacework" Published by BRC, Boston Research Center	April 28
The Untold History of the Fuji School	May 5
Pubs 99 CD Rom,	June 2
Middleway Press Launches First Book, "The Way of Youth"	June 9
"The Wisdom of Lotus Sutra, A Discussion"	July 21
"The Way of Youth" Now Available in Bookstores	July 28
"Songs of America"	Oct. 6
Calendars for 2001, "Century of Life, 2001" datebook and "FNCC 2001" wall calendar	Oct. 13

Editorials

Why "Soka Spirit?"	Jan. 28
What Is "the Same Mind As Nichiren?"	April 7
Unity Starts With Respect	April 21
"Soka" Means Victory for All	July 21
The Right Time	Sept. 8
Seventy Years of Soka Spirit	Nov. 10

FNCC Impressions

Craig Tachibana, Honolulu	March 24
Janet Vinograd, Aliso Viejo, Calif., "Listen to our Children"	Sept. 8
Chris Jaffe, Bloomington, Ind., "Being the Best Father to Our Children"	Sept. 8

Buddhism in Daily Life

Desires and Enlightenment	April 7
The Concept of Dependent Origination	April 7
Oneness of Body and Mind and Body	April 14
The Concept of the Ten Worlds	April 21
Who Is A Buddha?	April 28
The Concept of Karma	May 5
The Three Realms of Existence	July 28
Buddhism and Human Dignity	Aug. 25
The Simultaneity of Cause and Effect	Sept. 29
The Ten Factors	Nov. 24

Q & A With SUA

July 28, Aug. 25, Sept. 1, Sept. 22, Sept. 29, Oct. 6, Oct. 20, Oct. 27, Nov. 17, Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 15, Dec. 29

Around the SGI

Aug. 25, Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Nov. 24

Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo Campus

Family Days at SUA — You Are Invited	July 28
SUA Becomes Part of Orange County Community	July 28
SUA Construction Update	July 28
Introducing SUA, Aliso Viejo's New Enrollment Team	Aug. 25
Construction Update	Aug. 25
16 New Faculty Members Arriving Sept. 5	Aug. 25
Introducing Gail E. Thomas, Dean of Faculty and Professor of Sociology	Aug. 25
First SUA, Aliso Viejo Family Tour Held	Sept. 1
Introducing Michael D. Golden, D.M.A., Professor of Music Composition and Theory	Sept. 29
Introducing Linda Southwell, M.F.A., Professor of Art	Sept. 29
SUA at a Glance	Sept. 29
SUA, AV News	Sept. 29
Introducing SUA's Student Affairs Team	Oct. 27
Interested in Working at SUA?	Oct. 27
SUA Honors Gandhi and Pauling Families	Oct. 27
SUA at a Glance	Oct. 27
Soka University of America: Making It Happen, Matilda Buck	Nov. 3
Introducing SUA's Library Director John Sheridan and Librarian Carol Withers	Nov. 24
Soka University of America "Book Buy" Begins	Nov. 24
Students Name SUA Aliso Viejo's Streets	Nov. 24
SUA at a Glance	Nov. 24
SUA at a Glance	Dec. 29
Construction Update	Dec. 29
SUA "Book Buy" Project Thrives	Dec. 29
Introducing SUA's Information Technology Team	Dec. 29

Boston Research Center

Boston Research Center's Panel at PSA/COPRED Conference	May 26
Creating Peace with Self, Sister and Society, an Intergenerational Celebration	Aug. 25

Honoring Our Pioneers

Gregory Nakasuji: Photographer of Kosen-rufu Nov. 3

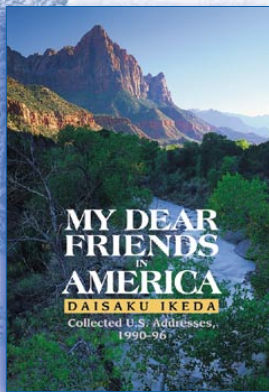
Dialogue of Hope

Problems and Anxieties Mean Growth Nov. 10

This Season, Give the Gift of Encouragement!



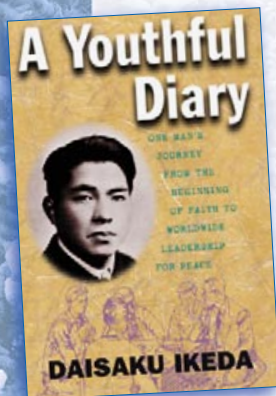
Songs for America
Four major poems to America, including the most recent.
\$3.00, M/O#: 4109



My Dear Friends in America
SGI President Ikeda's speeches to U.S. members, collected for the first time and fully indexed.
\$19.95, M/O#: 4104



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



The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 2
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