

# World TRIBUNE

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### WOMEN'S MEETINGS

The SGI-USA's women's meetings in February are all about empowering each individual. page 3

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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

# Let's Make 2001 a Great Year!

**'Together let us make this a truly meaningful year, free of any regrets,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'and create a foundation for momentous victory for the next 100 years.'**

**M**y dear fellow members of the SGI in 163 countries and territories around the world! I extend to you my most heartfelt congratulations on the magnificent start of the 21st century!

On this blue planet traveling through space carrying 6 billion passengers, how brilliant is the hope, how deep the life-philosophy, how solid the bonds of unity found in the humanistic network of the SGI as we joyously begin this auspicious new year!

The SGI at last has begun to illuminate the new century with the brilliance of the morning sun — as a "pillar" of peace for humankind, a "great ship" of culture linking people around the world, and the "eyes" of education for global citizenship. [In "The Opening of the Eyes," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "I will be the pillar of Japan, I will be the eyes of Japan. I will be the great ship of Japan. This is my vow, and I will never forsake it!" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 280).] The global spread of our kosen-rufu movement is an unprecedented achievement in the history of Buddhism.

All of you are working together for the sake of the Law, for the happiness and welfare of others, and for kosen-rufu as part of this great organization. In doing so, you are accumulating immeasurable good fortune in your lives. This accords with the causal workings of life wherein "unseen virtue gives rise to visible reward" (WND, 907).

In light of the Daishonin's teachings and the Lotus Sutra, there is absolutely no doubt that you will lead lives of unsurpassed

fulfillment and bring eternal glory to shine on your families, friends and all with whom you have a close connection.

The Daishonin writes: "Think of a small tree under a large one, or grass by a great river. Though they do not receive rain or water directly, they nonetheless thrive, partaking of dew from the large tree or drawing moisture from the river" (WND, 848).

Here, the Daishonin teaches that the presence of individuals who practice the Mystic Law can greatly enrich the lives of those around them, transcending religious differences, and benefit the land in which they dwell, leading the way to happiness, peace and prosperity for all. This is just as a large tree or a great river nourishes the life around it.

Please ring in our new series of Seven Bells, working sincerely to spread friendship and trust in society based on vibrant, living wisdom. For it is through such efforts that you will be able to show concrete actual proof of the principle that Buddhism is manifested in society. Together let us make this a truly meaningful year, free of any regrets, and create a foundation for momentous victory for the next 100 years.

I pray with all my heart for the good health, longevity and happiness of you, my beloved fellow members, as well as of your families and loved ones, and that you will all make great and joyous strides forward in this Century of Soka.

*Daisaku Ikeda  
January 1, 2001*



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima (center) encourages members at the Seattle Culture Center, Jan. 6.



San Francisco members celebrate the start of the 'Year of Total Victory for the New Century' on Jan. 7 at the San Francisco Ikeda Auditorium.

# SGI-USA Study Department Guidelines for 2001

By EUGENE HIRAHARA  
SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER



*Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* and President Ikeda's guidance every day

In an essay titled "Making the Goshu Part of Our Lives," SGI President Ikeda writes: "As we stand on the threshold of a new century, I want to reconfirm the basic path of the Soka Gakkai. That is, the Soka Gakkai will always advance in complete accord with the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin's writings. It has been the Soka Gakkai's firm, unchanging position, since the time of its first and second presidents, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, to practice in accord with the Buddha's teaching, just as the Daishonin instructs."

And he writes of his own experience with study: "The harder the times I faced, the more eagerly I sought the Daishonin's words. And each time that I did, I found new courage. An inextinguishable sun arose in my heart, breaking through the darkness. During the great campaigns that I waged in Osaka—the golden struggle of my youth—I always based myself on the Daishonin's writings while earnestly fighting on the front lines" (May 5, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 8).

At the end of the essay, President Ikeda strongly encourages us to make serious efforts in study. He concludes: "Leaders who are genuinely committed to realizing kosen-rufu will read the Daishonin's writings every day, even if only a line or a paragraph, and make it a living part of themselves. I also hope that the youth, in particular, will study the Daishonin's writings thoroughly, as they strive to achieve their goals. Those who do not, I have found, tend to be shallow and frivolous. Study is the marrow of the SGI. Unless we are armed with compassion and an understanding of the principles of Buddhism, we cannot carry out kosen-rufu. My dear, courageous comrades! Let's do our best! Let's stride with energy and enthusiasm on the vast open road leading into the 21st century."

SGI-USA Study Department members will take the spirit of this essay as our own determination and strive to accomplish the following goals in 2001:

1) Study and promote *The*

to deepen our faith and further improve our lives.

2) Make study the basis of promoting Soka Care on the front lines of our kosen-rufu movement—the district.

3) Take the lead in the Soka Spirit campaign to refute erroneous teachings and provide a clear and correct understanding of Buddhist principles for the peace and prosperity of humankind.

### Study Activity Guidelines:

#### 1) Individual Study Activity

We will challenge ourselves to read the Daishonin's writings every day, even if only a line or a paragraph, as President Ikeda encourages us. Many members have *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, which was published a little more than a year ago. We want to encourage each member of the Study Department to have his or her own copy. Scheduled to be available later this year are a CD-ROM version of *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, a compilation of daily passages of the Daishonin's writings, a compilation of passages by subject, and more to support our individual study efforts.

#### 2) District Study Activity

District or group discussion meetings are the foundation of kosen-rufu activities and a place where people can learn of the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism. The Study Department recommends dedicating a 10- to 15-minute portion of discussion meetings to studying Buddhist principles. Study articles will be published in the *World Tribune* or *Living Buddhism* as supporting materials.

#### 3) Chapter Study Activity

A) Bimonthly study of the Daishonin's writings in even numbered months.

It is recommended that bimonthly study meetings of the Daishonin's writings be

held by chapter and led by chapter, area or region leaders. Each area, region or zone should hold preparation meetings led by area, region or zone leaders, supported by the study committee the month before the meetings. The materials will be selected from *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune*; the February study material from "On Repaying Debts of Gratitude" will be in the January issue of *Living Buddhism*), and a study guide will be published in odd-numbered months in *Living Buddhism*.

B) Other study meetings in odd-numbered months

It is recommended that smaller meetings be held at the chapter or district level in every odd-numbered month, so that there is at least one study meeting for members to attend every month. *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra* is recommended as material and preferably will be studied in dialogue format rather than in lecture format. (Volumes 1 and 2 are now available, and more volumes are scheduled to be published this year.)

#### 4) Area, Region and Zone Study Activity

A) Curriculum Study and Examination

The current study curriculum will be completed at the end of this year, and it will be revised for 2002 and beyond. It is recommended that meetings for curriculum study be held at the area and region level every month toward the Entrance and Advanced examinations to be held this year. The schedule of exams is as follows (see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune* for more details):

- April 22 (Sunday): 2001 Entrance-Level Examination
- Oct. 21 (Sunday): 2001 Advanced-Level Examination

B) Kosen-rufu Prayer Meetings

Mini study presentations (10–15 minutes of encouragement based on a passage of the Daishonin's writings) are recommended to be a part of the program for monthly kosen-rufu prayer meetings.

C) Introductory Meetings

The Study Department in each area and region should take the initiative to hold large-scale introductory meetings to share Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and the humanistic philosophy of the SGI with people in society.

D) Study Conference

It is recommended that an extensive study conference (day-long or weekend-long conference to study various subjects and materials) be held

at the area, region or zone level for promoting study throughout the organization. Through such an event, the importance of the Soka Spirit campaign can be shared.

#### 5) Nationwide Study Activity

A) FNCC Study Conference

At the Florida Nature and Culture Center, the Study Department will sponsor a "Study Conference" twice in 2001. These conferences will be open for all members who are interested in the intense study of Buddhist concepts and philosophy. The schedule of the conferences is as follows:

- FNCC Study Conference No. 1: June 14–17
- FNCC Study Conference No. 2: Dec. 6–9

B) Study Department Planning Committee Meetings

Nationwide Study Department leaders and staff will hold planning committee meetings with the representatives from throughout the nation to discuss and plan the future direction of our study activities. **WT**

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TOWARD THE FEBRUARY WOMEN'S MEETING

# 'Spiritual Civilization': Empowering Ourselves, Empowering Others

By THERESA HAUBER, LINDA JOHNSON AND YOSHIKO KADIN  
LOS ANGELES

The Century of Women has arrived! Our first women's meetings of the century to commemorate SGI-USA Women's Day (Feb. 27) are just around the corner. As SGI President Daisaku Ikeda said in celebration of the new year, "This year will determine the future of kosen-rufu for thousands of years to come."

This isn't something that happens "out there" or through someone else's actions — it happens because we choose to take responsibility in our communities, because we choose to make a difference among our friends, families, co-workers, neighbors. Make no mistake: We are each heroes of kosen-rufu, creating history in our precious areas.

We have been presented with a richly worded theme (see box at right) that will stay with us for a number of years, one that will provide fuel for many goals and hurdles to come, and one that we ourselves must explore to find the meaning it holds for each of us. (Matilda Buck will discuss the women's theme in more detail in a future issue.)

One thing is for sure: We will

best find the meaning of these words from among ourselves, from our own efforts to encourage and cherish others, to construct a network—a team—of caring, self-motivated individuals. President Ikeda, in his New Year's poem (Jan. 1 *World Tribune*), describes what may be the kernel of the "spiritual civilization":

*From one individual to another,  
Starting in our immediate environment,*

*From small, modest efforts,*

*Let us steadily carry on our movement.*

*A commitment to treasure each person—*

*In that daily, unceasing practice*

*Lies the dynamism*

*To transform the entire planet.*

*And there, too, shines a life*

*Of unparalleled value creation.*

That means, as we strive to cherish others, we must also, equally, cherish ourselves. As SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck has said, "Absolute happiness is found in striving to honor our own lives and the lives of others, regardless of circumstances."

We must own the fact that we, too, are Buddhas. Thus, we deserve to accomplish our

hopes and dreams. By continually challenging ourselves to grow, we reveal to others the greatness of this practice and inspire them to do the same.

As we move toward our February women's meetings, we can use this time to strengthen our relationships and empower those around us, building a sense of true teamwork, where every individual is cherished.

Our February meetings may be as simple or complex as we wish. In some areas, women are including all four divisions. In others, they are planning community events to include women of all backgrounds. In some places, the activity is focusing on the entire theme; in others, on a small part.

The most important part is empowering each individual. As the renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Let's create history! **WT**

*Theresa Hauber and Linda Johnson are SGI-USA vice women's leaders. Yoshiko Kadin is SGI-USA women's secretariat leader. Lisa Kirk also contributed to this article.*

Photo by EDWARD CLARK



SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck (center) enjoys a February 2000 women's meeting at the Los Angeles Friendship Center.

*The theme of the women of the SGI:*

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

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

**2) As a world citizen, contribute to society.**

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

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AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# Singapore — Transcending Barriers of Languages and Ethnicity

**In this essay in praise of the Singapore Soka Association, SGI President Ikeda explains that ‘kosen-rufu is the name we give to our undertaking to transcend barriers of language and ethnicity and all other differences to bring people together, forge harmony, and create peace and happiness for all humanity.’**

It was truly a journey into the 21st century. On the evening of Nov. 22, 2000, I arrived at Changi International Airport in Singapore, the beautiful Lion City.

When we arrived at our lodgings, we were welcomed by the lively, joyous rhythm of the silver rain playing a divine melody.

The next morning, the city was fresh and green after the rain. The palm fronds swayed in the breeze, and bougainvillea and myriad other flowers bloomed brightly everywhere. Skyscrapers, symbols of economic development, towered in the sky, and the city pulsed with dynamic energy. The winds of the future always blew here.

It was my third trip to Singapore, and my first in five years. And with this visit, our celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding behind us, I launched my 70th journey for peace—a journey to finally raise the curtain on the Century of Soka.

On Nov. 23, the day after my arrival, I paid a courtesy call on Singaporean President S. R. Nathan at the Istana, the president's official residence. The next day, Nov. 24, I received, as a representative of all SGI members, the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Sydney, Australia's oldest institute of higher education, at a graduation ceremony conducted here in Singapore.

I am overjoyed at being able to create another new golden page of history together with all of my fellow members of this nation of lions, and I hope we will continue to do so in the future.

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This year marks the 40th anniversary of the start of my travels for world peace. It therefore seems appropriate for me to share with you a little of the history of the early days of our kosen-rufu movement in Singapore.

Although it was not an official

visit, I set foot on Singaporean soil for the first time on Jan. 29, 1961. It was during a stopover on my way to India, a journey embarked on with the determination to realize the westward transmission of Buddhism that was predicted by Nichiren Dai-shonin and was also the dearest wish of my mentor, Josei Toda.

Darkness began to fall over the airport as we landed for refueling. Waiting inside the airport, I gazed up at the stars in the sky, visible through the windows. They were beautiful. But when I recalled Singapore's painful history, its invasion by Japan, the countless innocent people who were killed, and the cruel suffering that had been inflicted on so many, my heart ached as if it were being ripped apart.

I decided right then and there that, as a Japanese, I would devote my life to bringing peace and happiness to the people of Singapore. I prayed, deeply and strongly, “Emerge, Bodhisattvas of the Earth! Assemble, my comrades of profound mission!”—so that a new glorious dawn might be ushered in for Singapore.

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In August 1963, approximately two-and-a-half years later, our first district was formed in Singapore.

On Aug. 9, 1965, Singapore became an independent nation.

In June 1967, Mr. Koh Kian Boon—who later went on to become general director of the Singapore Soka Association—was appointed district leader.

In August 1969, four years after the country gained independence, Singapore Chapter was established.

The first chapter leader and chapter women's division leader were Toshio and Haruko Oshiro, who had moved to Singapore from Japan due to Toshio's work. Cooperating closely with Mr. Koh, they persevered tenaciously and steadily in Soka Gakkai activities.



Singapore Soka Association members celebrate the 40th anniversary of the start of SGI President Ikeda's travels for world peace last year.

Our records show that in January 1970, there were 324 member households in Singapore. Later that year, the Oshiros returned to Japan to live. I am happy to share with you that they continue to be active on the front lines of our movement in Hachioji, Tokyo, as vice headquarters leader and vice chapter women's leader, respectively.

Mr. Koh, meanwhile, went on to become chapter chief of Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur Chapter and worked hard for kosen-rufu in that country. After laying a solid foundation for the Soka Gakkai organization in Malaysia, Mr. Koh returned to Singapore, Lion City, where he once again assumed a central leadership position (first as headquarters leader and then as general director) and exerted himself tirelessly for the happiness of his fellow members.

In January 1972, SSA was incorporated.

Mr. Koh was succeeded as general director by Mr. Ong Bon Chai, who has continued to inspire the youth—the young lions—of SSA to stand up resolutely and fill the land with their resounding song of truth, justice and victory.

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Today, the network of people striving for peace and humanism based on the spirit of Buddhism has spread widely throughout Singaporean society, and the SSA is looked upon as a source of hope and a pillar of trust.

How did this come about?

Mr. Koh, who is now honorary general director of SSA, explains: “We all pledged to sincerely practice the teaching

of the Lotus Sutra that says ‘You should rise and greet him from afar, showing him the same respect as you would a Buddha’ (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 324). And we have done just that. This is the spirit shared by all our members in Singapore.”

Buddhism teaches that we are all endowed with the supremely noble life-state of Buddhahood. As such, we should treat every person with the utmost respect, recognizing that they possess a profound mission and diamond-like brilliance within. This is the path of Buddhist humanism, the path Buddhism teaches we should follow as human beings.

This spirit of respecting every individual has made it possible for SSA to build the harmonious and indestructible unity of many people joining together, one in heart and mind. It is this spirit which has allowed SSA to produce an uninterrupted stream of confident, youthful successors, who are able to advance freely and give full play to their abilities.

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Buddhism teaches the principles that faith reveals itself in daily life and that Buddhism is manifested in society. This means that the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism, as the shared legacy of all humanity, must be put into action in our lives and contribute to our respective societies. Indeed, Buddhism teaches that true faith lies only in such an active and engaged practice.

And kosen-rufu is the name we give to our undertaking to transcend barriers of language and ethnicity and all other dif-

ferences to bring people together, forge harmony, and create peace and happiness for all humanity.

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Our members in Singapore, a citadel of global citizenship, have always been in the forefront of these activities.

Since 1981, SSA has participated in the National Day Parade—held annually on Aug. 9—a total of fifteen times. And it is particularly noteworthy that since 1988, it has played a major role in the grand finale of this event.

And this year, on the occasion of the National Day celebrations, commemorating the thirty-fifth anniversary of Singapore's independence, the spectacular performance of a thousand spirited SSA youth captivated the crowd.

During our recent meeting, President Nathan also had high praise for SSA's annual performances in the National Day Parade.

Furthermore, SSA has continually striven to contribute to the local community in many areas. Its activities have included promoting education and activity programs for senior citizens in cooperation with local community service bodies, visiting nursing homes, holding concerts in collaboration with cultural organizations, and organizing various charity events.

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Singapore is a land of youth. It is a country filled with energy, harmony, unceasing development and construction.

My mentor Josei Toda once said, “It is the passion and power of youth that creates a new era.” At the dawning of a new century, I present these words to the youth of SSA, who are the pillar of Singapore.

The new century belongs to the youth. As long as the youth remain vital and energetic, their eyes shining brightly with hope, a country will continue to grow and prosper.

Young lions! Comrades of shared mission! Let us set forth!

With pride, confidence and composure, let us loudly signal our departure and set sail toward the vast open sea of the third millennium that sparkles with dancing waves of hope.

Glory to Singapore!

*Majulah Singapura!* (Onward, Singapore!)

This essay was published in the “Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*” series in the Nov. 27, 2000, *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# Malaysia — Extending the Circle of Friendship

**‘Our Soka Gakkai Malaysia members have extended the circle of friendship in a multiethnic culture...without any friction or conflict,’ writes SGI President Ikeda. They have used ‘dialogue to faithfully communicate their sincerity and the truth, and to win people’s hearts.’**

In the morning, my wife and I sat before the Gohonzon, which we had set up in our hotel room, and prayed earnestly for the health, longevity and good fortune of our SGI members in Malaysia. We also prayed for the health and well being of all SGI members around the world, that they would be happy and enjoy good fortune.

After we finished gongyo, I picked up the folder containing the diploma of the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters I received from the Universiti Putra Malaysia and placed it before a framed photograph of my mentor Josei Toda, humbly presenting the award to him. I then opened it and looked at the diploma with my wife. As I did so, I fondly recalled the many discussions Mr. Toda and I had on educational issues.

The great French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau said: “Men, be humane. This is your first duty. Be humane with every station, every age.... What wisdom is there for you save humanity?” We must always be humane and serve humanity. This is the SGI spirit.

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The stunning sight of the Petronas Twin Towers, the world’s tallest building. Rows of new skyscrapers under construction, vying with one another to reach the heavens. An abundance of green that seemed to grow more lush with each rainfall. Malaysia shining with ever more hope, glowing with an indestructible golden brilliance. These were some of my impressions during my short stay in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia’s capital, after my arrival on Nov. 27. It was my first trip to the golden peninsula of Malaysia in 12 years.

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Soka Gakkai Malaysia has

also made astonishing progress. Next year, the much-anticipated SGM Grand Culture Center will be completed in Bukit Bintang (meaning Star Hill), a short distance from the Kuala Lumpur central city area. I am filled with deep emotion when I think of the galaxy of talented champions of culture and social contribution that this new “citadel of culture” will produce in the 21st century.

I am prompted to recall one of our pioneer members of the early days of our movement in Malaysia: Mr. Koe Teng Leng. He was the older brother of present SGM General Director Koe Teng Hong. As the first Malaysia Headquarters leader, he worked tirelessly for the happiness and welfare of others. Unfortunately, he passed away suddenly in 1982 due to illness. He was only 58 at the time.

Teng Leng was more than just an older brother to Teng Hong; he was also, in many ways, a father. For when their father died, Teng Leng went to work to support the family. Teng Hong was still an infant at the time.

Eventually, Teng Leng decided to emigrate from China to Penang on the Malay Peninsula, because he believed he could earn better money there to provide for his family. He sent all of his wages back home, allowing Teng Hong to attend school. At 16, thanks again to his brother’s support, Teng Hong was able to join Teng Leng in Malaysia. He also learned about Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism from him. Theirs is truly a beautiful story of brotherly love.

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When Teng Hong lost his beloved brother, who had been a central pillar of his being, he was tremendously saddened, but he rose up with firm determination from the depths of his grief to carry on his brother’s mission. He became the second Malaysia Headquarters leader.

Then in June 1984, SGM was incorporated and Teng Hong became its first general director. A man of integrity and purpose, he has continued to work energetically for kosen-rufu to this day.

Nov. 28, the day after I had arrived in Kuala Lumpur, my wife and I performed memorial gongyo for Koe Teng Leng, his wife, Teh Goik Dee, who passed away after him, and other deceased members who had worked so hard in the early days of our movement in Malaysia.

Teng Hong remains deeply grateful to his brother, who

raised him and cared for him. As general director, he has striven, in turn, to be like an older brother and father to the younger members, doing his best to support and nurture them.

The future rests in the hands of the youth. When we carefully nurture the youth as our greatest treasure, the sun of hope will shine brightly.

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Raising aloft the banner of peace, education and culture, SGM has been striving actively to contribute to society and to play a positive role in shaping the 21st century.

The *soka* of Soka Gakkai means value creation. War, which destroys everything in its path and robs people of their precious lives, is the most barbarous of acts and is an activity of the greatest anti-value. That is why first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi fought against Japan’s militarist government, was imprisoned, and died in jail for his beliefs. We, his successors, have inherited this spirit and aspire to create lasting peace.

Education that fosters humane individuals is the foundation of value creation. This was one of the reasons why the Soka Gakkai originally started out as the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Education Society) and its membership was comprised mainly of educators. When value is created it comes to bloom as culture, which in turn nourishes and enriches society. In this respect, promoting activities for peace, education and culture is the social mission of the Soka Gakkai, which bases itself on the humanistic philosophy of Buddhism.

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During this visit, I met with Malaysia’s Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad for the first time in 12 years. On that occasion, he spoke of his belief in the importance of living a socially contributive life.

The SGM has brought beautiful flowers of humanistic culture to bloom in Malaysian society, and as a result has earned widespread trust and praise.

Especially, the participation of SGM members in the opening ceremony of the 16th Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in September 1998 won the organization great accolades. Athletes from seventy countries and regions gathered to take part in the games, and 5,000 SGM mem-

bers performed a magnificent card stunt during the opening ceremony in the National Stadium — a celebration of the ideal of peace. In the audience were then Malaysian King Tuanku Ja’afar, Prime Minister Mahathir, and some 100,000 spectators. Sending the message “*Malaysia Boleh!*” (“Malaysia Can Do It!”), their performance of beautifully seamless unity gave courage, confidence and joy, not only to their fellow SGM members, but all Malaysians people. The Minister for Youth and Sports, who was in charge of the Games, praised the performance, saying that the SGM members possessed the noble spirit of Malaysia.

The opening ceremony was broadcast by satellite to some 500 million viewers around the world. What enormous encouragement and inspiration it must have given to SGI members all around the globe!

SGM has become a light illuminating the world!

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An old Malaysian proverb says, “The sea embraces all rivers that flow into it, the forest accepts every leaf that falls.” What a generous, accepting wisdom this expresses!

Indicative of the broad-minded spirit found in Malaysia, our SGM members extended their circle of trust and friendship in the multiethnic culture of this country without any friction or conflict. I am deeply moved by the wisdom our Malaysian members have shown, using dialogue to faithfully communicate their sincerity and the truth, and to win people’s hearts.

Sincere and earnest dialogue is the key to forging understanding and heart-to-heart bonds between people. I am reminded again of Rousseau’s words: “Talent at speaking holds first place in the art of pleasing.”

—From *Malaysia*

Five thousand Soka Gakkai Malaysia members performed a magnificent card stunt during the 16th Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in September 1998.

This essay was published in the “Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*” series in the Dec. 4, 2000, *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper.

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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S DEC. 14 SPEECH—PART 1

# Wise Women Will Change the World

**‘Women possess the wisdom to somehow find a way to resolve differences of opinion and conflicts through dialogue and to move forward together in harmony,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Wherever there are wise women, one finds a steady tide toward peace and harmony being created.’**

*Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 52nd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Kansai Toda Memorial Auditorium in Osaka, Dec. 14, 2000.*

**C**ongratulations on this final Headquarters Leaders Meeting of the 20th century! I am thrilled to greet this day amid great jubilation and celebration together with all of you, the members of Kansai and representatives from throughout Japan.

Congratulations on the Soka Gakkai's wonderful triumph in the 20th century! It is the result of your unity and your prayers, and I express my most sincere gratitude to you all. Let us continue to advance and achieve further momentous victories in the 21st century.

I want Kansai to take the lead. Kansai is the heart of the kosen-rufu movement. Kansai is a prime mover of Japan and indeed the entire world. This is Kansai's mission.

It was here in Kansai that I was placed under arrest and confined in prison. [In the Osaka Incident of July 1957, President Ikeda was arrested on false charges of election law violations in an Osaka district by-election for the upper house. The subsequent court case dragged on for almost five years, ending with President Ikeda's full exoneration in January 1962.] The Soka Gakkai spirit is alive in Kansai. The fact that this historic last Headquarters Leaders Meeting of the 20th century is being held here is deeply significant.

Next month, we will enter the 21st century. I want to propose, so that we can make a fresh start in the new century, that from January we begin renumbering our Headquarters Leaders Meetings from No. 1. What do you think? Let us set off joyfully once again, with a fresh rhythm and fresh resolve.

I want our leaders to be caring and sensitive to others' needs. When holding a meeting, for instance, I hope you will

pay attention right down to the smallest detail, remembering to bear in mind such points as "Will the participants be hungry?" "Will we have sufficient restroom facilities?"

Please do your utmost to ensure everyone's comfort, being quick to notice if anyone is feeling unwell or experiencing some problem. It is also important that you warmly recognize and applaud the efforts of those who have traveled long distances to attend a meeting.

What matters is not empty formality but our heart, our sincerity.

Everything is determined by the wisdom and warm concern for the members demonstrated by those in leadership positions. An organization that has such leaders will flourish.

**We experience great joy precisely because we face various problems.**

We sang a magnificent chorus of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" together earlier!

Nichiren Daishonin says, "[Chanting] Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is the greatest of all joys" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 788). I declare that our choral performance was a rousing song of joy celebrating the Soka Gakkai's decisive victory over all obstacles in the past decade and indeed in this century.

The Soka Gakkai has won! Through your valiant efforts, we have rebuffed the many insults and attacks of jealous, envious individuals, and we have emerged triumphant on all fronts!

The famous composer Beethoven was born on Dec. 16, 1770. This year marks the 230th anniversary of his birth.

Beethoven writes, "We finite creatures with infinite spirits are born only to suffer and to rejoice and one could almost say that the most excellent among



SGI President Ikeda talks with Hong Kong's Chief Secretary for Administration Anson Chan at her official residence, Dec. 5, 2000. She voiced her belief that women excel in areas where human relations are important.

us derive joy from suffering." We can experience great joy precisely because we suffer and go through various problems. Beethoven's profound insight has much in common with such Buddhist teachings as earthly desires are enlightenment, the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana, and the *saha* world is a place of happiness and ease.

We have fought our way through many bitter challenges and won. No one can now interfere with our joyous song. With "Ode to Joy" on our lips, let us advance even more spiritedly toward the future.

Beethoven observes, "Hatred recoils upon those who harbor it." How true that is! Buddhism also teaches us that the offense returns to its originator. [*The Lotus Sutra* states, "The injury will rebound upon the originator" (p. 304). When someone persecutes a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra, the offense will return to the perpetrator.]

What kind of negative effects are being manifested in the lives of those who 10 years ago, out of envy and hatred, attacked and tormented us of the Soka Gakkai, who jubilantly sang Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"? You have seen with your own eyes positive proof of the uncompromising strictness of the workings of the

Buddhist law of cause and effect. [Nichiren Shoshu's scheme to destroy the Soka Gakkai was set in motion 10 years ago with the summary dismissal of SGI President Ikeda from the position of the chief lay representative of all Nichiren Shoshu lay organizations on Dec. 27, 1990. High Priest Nikken Abe's 2000 court defeat in the Seattle Incident Trial can be considered an example of the uncompromising strictness of the workings of the Buddhist law of cause and effect.]

**Countries and organizations that value women will flourish.**

In all the places I visited recently—Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong—our fellow members are making wonderful efforts. The SGI organizations there have achieved splendid growth with their members contributing dynamically to society.

The activities of the young women's and women's divisions shone with special brilliance. My stay in each place reinforced my feeling that the bright dawn of the Century of Women has arrived. Not only in the SGI, but in society as a whole, women are extremely active and serving as an invigorating force.

I met many outstanding

women during my recent trip. There was the renowned Australian educator Dame Leonie Kramer, who is chancellor of the University of Sydney—which presented me with an honorary doctorate as your representative during my stay in Singapore—as well as the university's Deputy Vice Chancellor Judith Kinnear, who delivered the citation at the ceremony. There was also Professor Madya Kamariah, dean of the Faculty of Educational Studies of the Universiti Putra Malaysia, who delivered the citation for the honorary degree that I received from that Malaysian university at a special convocation ceremony.

And there was Hong Kong's Chief Secretary for Administration Anson Chan, who invited me to her official residence and with whom I spoke at length. She is an outstanding leader who holds the second highest-ranking post in the Hong Kong government next to Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa. At our meeting, she voiced her belief that women tend to excel in areas where human relations are important.

The times are changing. Countries and organizations that recognize and value women and their contributions will flourish.

If women take a more active role and give full play to their abilities in the Soka Gakkai and Japanese society, I am certain that our organization and Japan as a whole will be revitalized and move in a more positive direction.

The illustrious German poet Schiller writes of men:

*The striving of men is hostile  
With crushing violence  
The wild one goes through life  
Without resting or stopping.  
He destroys what he has made.  
Competing wishes never rest.*

And of women, he writes:

*But with soft persuasive prayer  
Women wield the scepter of  
manners,  
Extinguish the raging flames of  
discord,  
Teach the forces that fiercely  
hate each other  
To embrace each other in a  
friendly form,  
And unite those forever fleeing.*

The poet praises women, saying that, in contrast to men, they possess the wisdom to somehow find a way to resolve differences of opinion and conflicts through dialogue and to move forward together in harmony. Wherever there are wise women, one finds a steady tide toward peace and harmony being created. The Daishonin says, "Women will open the gateway" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1566). In the unending advance of our kosen-rufu movement, it will be women — and especially young women — who will open the gateway of good fortune and benefit, of hope, of eternal victory.

In their families as well, the young women possess an unfathomable ability to positively influence and motivate their parents and siblings in a natural way. Their activities and conduct have also contributed to many prominent individuals in society deepening their understanding of the SGI movement.

A case in point is the late Japanese writer Sawako Ariyoshi, whom I once had a chance to talk with. Though she was a Christian, she apparently developed a profound appreciation of our activities through seeing the bright, confident attitude of our young women.

By the way, I remember second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda once humorously remarked that he wanted to be reborn as a beautiful woman and work in that capacity to further worldwide kosen-rufu. [At the 2nd Young Women's General Meeting,

held Dec. 19, 1954, President Toda said: "In 'The Teacher of the Law' chapter of the Lotus Sutra, it says that practitioners of the Lotus Sutra 'freely choose where they will be born' (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 163). So I want to be born as a woman next time. But not just any woman — I want to be born as a great beauty.... I want to be born as a woman who is intelligent...and who is acclaimed for her beauty around the world. Of course, since I will be such a striking beauty, people will want to buy photographs of me. When they ask me to autograph them, I will refuse unless they take up faith! ... I aim to make great contributions to kosen-rufu!"]

The young women's division is the flower and the treasure of kosen-rufu. As such, we must thoroughly support and encourage the young women. The brighter the young women shine, the brighter the Soka Gakkai shines.

**Today's young women will determine the course of the 21st century.**

George Sand, a famous French writer, was a social activist who worked hard to realize her dream of a "republic of friendship." In connection with that ideal, she writes, "The most respected in this society will not be the most learned but those with the highest degree of wisdom and honesty."

I agree with her completely. I, too, have always placed the utmost value on wisdom and honesty.

The French author also says: "It is their goodness that makes the people so strong. And that makes them the greatest of friends."

Elsewhere she says: "Go ahead and defame us if you will. The wise and good-hearted people can tell who their true friends are now and in the future."

A beautiful realm of friendship woven by good, honest people — this is the Soka Gakkai. Important are not the famous or powerful. We must make friends and allies of wise, ordinary people.

Since the early days of the Soka Gakkai, vibrant young women have been the driving force of kosen-rufu. I hope that our young women here in Kansai will be a model for all Japan and advance in the vanguard of our movement, like their pioneering predecessors before them. This is not a difficult thing. All it requires is working together in harmony

and close cooperation.

I hope our young women will strive to be good daughters to their parents and to become people well liked and trusted at their places of work.

You, the present generation of young women, will ring in the second series of Seven Bells. You have a mission to write a glorious history — a mission that you will share with your children's generation.

Today's young women will determine the course of the 21st century, of the next 100 years. It is no exaggeration to say that whether the Soka Gakkai develops or declines hinges on the young women.

That is why I want our men's and young men's division members to value and support the young women.

I ask for your sincere cooperation in creating an environment where the young women can advance with confidence, hope and joy.

**We have entered an age of opportunity, in which every-thing can be improved.**

In October 1930, just one short month before the Soka Gakkai's founding, India's future prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru — who also, incidentally, once visited Kansai — wrote from prison: "But a time comes when a whole people become full of faith for a great cause, and then even simple, ordinary men and women become heroes, and history becomes stirring and epoch-making. Great leaders have something in them which inspires a whole people and makes them do great deeds."

When the people move into action, history is set in motion — this was Nehru's view after long consideration of world history, past and present, East and West. It was also the firm conviction of my mentor, Mr. Toda.

This truth has been borne out by the Soka Gakkai itself. Countless humble ordinary men and women stood up together with the great leaders Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda and went on to become heroes who changed history.

And now we approach the 21st century. The time is upon us. We have entered an age of seismic changes, where established forces are collapsing and new forces are emerging. It is an age of opportunity, when the new and old will be evenly matched. At the same time, it is an age fraught with danger.

Let us seize the present as a golden opportunity to usher in

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

# THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN KOSEN-RUFU

From This Speech:

**The German poet Schiller praises women, saying that, in contrast to men, they possess the wisdom to somehow find a way to resolve differences of opinion and conflicts through dialogue and to move forward together in harmony. Wherever there are wise women, one finds a steady tide toward peace and harmony being created. Nichiren Daishonin says, "Women will open the gateway" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1566). In the unending advance of our kosen-rufu movement, it will be women — and especially young women — who will open the gateway of good fortune and benefit, of hope, of eternal victory.**

- 1) Why do you think women have a natural ability to resolve conflicts and bring people together?
- 2) Who are some examples of women in history who have made outstanding progress for world peace?
- 3) Who are some of the heroic women you have met in the SGI organization? How have they changed your life?
- 4) Why do you think SGI President Ikeda is emphasizing the importance of young women in this speech? At this time in history?
- 5) What are ways that all of us — whether men or women — can support the growth of women?

an age of peace and humanity. Through an alliance of awakened people, let us create a history of towering achievement.

When I arrived at the Kansai Toda Memorial Auditorium today, a brilliant ray of light broke through the cloud cover. Like that bright burst of sunshine, let us send the light of hope to a clouded, chaotic world. This is the mission of the Soka Gakkai.

It is time for every single one of our members in Kansai, in the rest of Japan and across the globe to leave behind a legacy of indestructible achievement as champions of kosen-rufu. It is our chance to build selves that shine with tremendous good fortune.

There is no true joy or fulfillment in a life without aim or focus, a life passed in empty pleasures. The final days of one who lives this way will be sad and forlorn.

The eminent physicist Albert Einstein writes: "Our time is

distinguished by wonderful achievements in the fields of scientific understanding and the technical application of those insights. Who would not be cheered by this? But let us not forget that knowledge and skills alone cannot lead humanity to a happy and dignified life. Humanity has every reason to place the proclaimers of high moral standards and values above the discoverers of objective truth."

To proclaim lofty spiritual values — this exemplifies our SGI activities. All of you therefore are the most respectable people in the world. You are walking the most elevated path there is in life.

None are more noble than those who uphold the Mystic Law. The Daishonin tells us this repeatedly. I hope you will proudly advance with this conviction.

*To be continued in an upcoming issue*

## DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

# Everything We Are Results From What We Do

**‘All our actions—what we think, what we say, and what we actually do—are engraved in our life,’ SGI President Ikeda explains. ‘When our actions are good, we will receive positive effects that make us happy. When our actions are bad, we will receive negative effects that make us unhappy.’**

*Part three of a discussion on life and death among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Teruhiko Yumitani (young men’s leader) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women’s leader).*

**Yoshiko Ueda:** We have more questions about life and death. One member writes: “My grandmother, whom I loved very much, has died. Will I ever be able to meet her again, after I am dead?”

**SGI President Ikeda:** Nichiren Daishonin says that you can. And this is the gentle comfort he gave to a mother who had lost her child: “There is a way to meet him [your deceased son] readily. With Shakyamuni Buddha as your guide, you can go to meet him in the pure land of Eagle Peak.... [The Lotus Sutra teaches that] it could never happen that a woman who chants Nam-myoho-enge-kyo would fail to be reunited with her beloved child” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1092).

By saying that mother and child will “meet in the pure land of Eagle Peak,” the Daishonin is telling the bereaved mother that her deceased child has attained Buddhahood. And he assures her that since she, too, is destined to attain Buddhahood, she will be able to join her son in the same world of Buddhahood.

The word *meet*, we could say, is used here in the sense that when our lives after death are fused with the universal life, we can sense our unity or oneness with the lives of our deceased loved ones. Or, in the sense that we can meet again with our deceased loved ones in the future in some other Buddha land in the universe.

It is quite possible, in this vast universe of ours, that there are many ideal Buddha lands where kosen-rufu has already been achieved. Recently, astronomers announced that there may be approximately 125 billion galaxies in the universe. [This estimate of the number of galaxies in the universe is based

on observations made by NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope and was announced at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society.]

**Teruhiko Yumitani:** What an enormous number! Not 125 billion *planets*, but 125 billion *galaxies*. That’s mind-blowing.

**Ikeda:** But from the Buddhist perspective of the universe, even that is still far from large. An even vaster view of the universe is taught in the “Life Span” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, which we recite as part of morning and evening gongyo. The scale of the universe described in that chapter is so immense that we can really only take it as an attempt to express infinity.

**Yumitani:** Does that mean that the scientific view of the universe is beginning to approach the Buddhist view?

**Ikeda:** Yes, I think you can say that. At any rate, the earth is certainly not the only planet on which life exists—there are an infinite number of such planets in the universe.

Sometimes we may be reborn with our deceased loved ones in the Buddha lands among those planets. Sometimes we may be reborn together on earth or other planets on which kosen-rufu has not yet been accomplished, and there work together to help those who are suffering. The Lotus Sutra teaches that each of us can freely decide all these things.

Life is eternal. Though we say we have “lost” someone when they die, actually we could just as well say that they have just gone somewhere far away for a while, as when a friend goes overseas, and we can’t see him or her for a while.



SGI President Ikeda encourages youth at the Soka Gakkai Malaysia Culture Center, Kuala Lumpur, Dec. 1, 2000.

**Ueda:** So it would also be possible for our member’s deceased grandmother to be reborn here on earth, and for the two of them to meet again?

**Ikeda:** Of course. But they might not recognize each other! After all, the grandmother would be younger than her granddaughter!

#### Our suffering helps us understand others more.

**Ikeda:** When Mr. Toda was a young man, he lost one of his children. He once said: “When I was 23, I lost my daughter Yasuyo. I held my dead child in my arms all through the night. At the time, I had not yet taken faith in the Gohonzon, and I was so grief-stricken that I slept with her in my embrace.

“And so we parted, and now I am 58 years old. When she died she was three, so if she were alive now I imagine she would be a fine woman in the prime of her life. Have I or have I not met my deceased daughter again in this life? This is a matter of one’s own perception through faith. I believe that I have met her. Whether one is united with a deceased relative in this life or the next is all a matter of one’s perception through faith.”

Mr. Toda shared this experience to encourage a member who had lost a young child. He was replying in response to the member’s question, “Is it possible to reestablish a parent-child relationship with my deceased child again in this lifetime?”

After losing his daughter, Mr. Toda also lost his wife. He

suffered enormous grief and heartache, but he said it was that very suffering which allowed him now to encourage and comfort others and, as the leader of many people, become the sort of person who understood others’ feelings.

Everything that happens to us has a meaning. Even if you’re sad and filled with pain and feel like you can’t go on, as long as you keep going and keep pressing forward bravely, living your life without being defeated, you will come to see the meaning of that suffering and pain. This is the power of faith. It is also the essence of life.

**Ueda:** Yes, I understand.

**Yumitani:** Mr. Toda said it’s “a matter of perception.” By “perception,” does he mean the personal feeling or awareness we have in the depths of our life?

**Ikeda:** Yes. Life, when you get right down to it, is ultimately a question of your own inner feeling or awareness. It is not just a matter of theories or words. You can talk about how joyful and happy you are, but if what you actually feel inside is depression and despair, all your talk of happiness is meaningless.

Likewise, while you may believe on an intellectual level that life is eternal, that too is empty and meaningless if you fail to challenge yourself and make efforts in your Buddhist practice so that your life will shine with everlasting brilliance. In fact, you can’t be said to have a real understanding of the eternity of life, either.

#### We cannot blame anyone else for our problems.

**Yumitani:** You have explained to us that everything has a meaning, but what about people who die young in accidents or from illness? Is there a meaning to such deaths as well?

**Ikeda:** We must give them meaning. The law of life and death is universal, applying across the cosmos. But it always manifests itself uniquely, differently for each and every individual. Life is tremendously complex, with many causes and conditions at work therein.

For instance, our lives are governed to a large extent by our karma—formed by our actions in past lifetimes. We are subject to the effects of immutable or fixed karma, which determines the basic path our life will take, such as how long we will live. We are also subject to the effects of mutable or unfixed karma, the results of which we may or may not reap in this lifetime. If we compare these two types of karma to sickness, immutable karma is like a serious or even fatal disease, while mutable karma is a slight illness, like a cold.

**Yumitani:** Both are the results of our past actions, though, right?

**Ikeda:** Yes, so we can’t blame anyone else for our problems. Everything we are is the result of our own actions. Some people fret about why they were born into a certain family, or why they weren’t born more beautiful or more handsome, but everything is determined by their own past actions.

The word *karma* is Sanskrit for action. All of our actions—what we think, what we say, and what we actually do—are engraved in our life. When our actions are good, we will receive positive effects that make us happy. When our actions are bad, we will receive negative effects that make us unhappy. It all eventually comes back to us.

It is even quite likely sometimes that people who commit acts of terrible cruelty and inhumanity may not be reborn as human beings in their next lifetime.

*To be continued in an upcoming issue*

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

## 'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 19-20

*After attending a Kyoto Headquarters leaders meeting, Shin'ichi Yamamoto invites several leaders to join him for a public bath. He explains that encouraging and inspiring others to stand up in faith does not have to happen only at meetings.*

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's speech at the May Headquarters Leaders Meeting in Tokyo was brief and to the point. First he announced that the number of leaders at the chapter level and above—those who comprised the organization's core leadership—now numbered about three thousand, and that a strong foundation was thus in place for the widespread propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

"When Mr. Toda died," he said, "only about two hundred people held the positions of chapter leader and higher. When I became president, I determined to increase that number to three thousand toward expanding and strengthening the organization. Now we have reached that goal, and I am confident that with this many leaders taking responsibility as central figures on the chapter level, we have secured a solid foundation that nothing can disturb.

"I assure you that, if these

leaders advance together in iron unity, an eternal current of kosen-rufu will definitely be set in motion. As our first step in that direction, let us set as our targets Mr. Toda's seventh memorial on April 2 and the Headquarters general meeting on May 3 next year, and begin to move toward victory with dignity, joy, and the courage of a lion."

Along with the organizational expansion announced at the Headquarters leaders meeting, major personnel changes were also made in the young men's and young women's divisions. After speaking at a women's division leaders meeting on the afternoon of May 27, Shin'ichi attended a young men's division leaders meeting that evening and then one for the young women's division the following day. Together with these young people, he celebrated the fresh start they were making.

On May 30, Shin'ichi moved on to Kansai, attending leaders meetings for each headquarters in the region. The Kyoto Headquarters

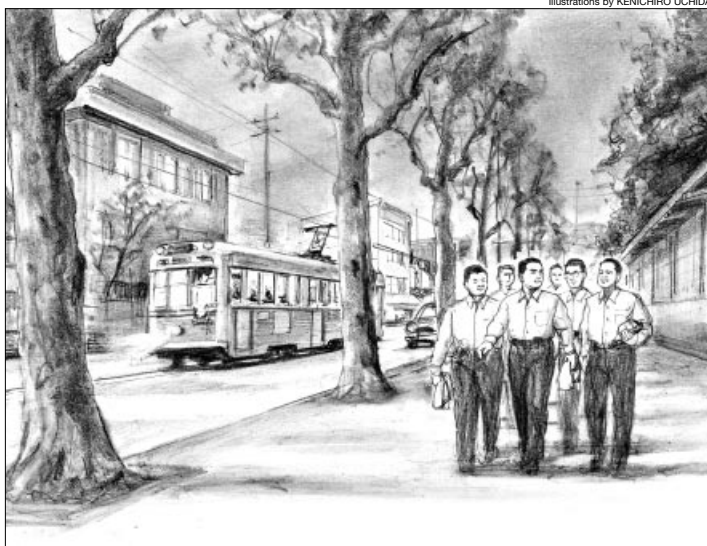
leaders meeting took place in the Ojiyama Gymnasium of Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture, on May 30. Until then, Goro Watari, who was also the nationwide student division leader, had been the leader of Kyoto Headquarters. With the formation of the new Hyogo Headquarters, Watari had been made Hyogo Headquarters

leader. To replace him, Tatsuzo Oyama, a dentist, was appointed as the new Kyoto Headquarters leader.

Shin'ichi had wanted to attend the Kyoto Headquarters leaders meeting because he felt it was his responsibility as a top leader to ensure that the members understood and were comfortable with the new personnel changes and were prepared to work together. He therefore introduced Oyama at the meeting and spoke about his character, and clearly explained the reasons behind the latest changes.

Laying the groundwork for kosen-rufu is not simply a matter of forming new headquarters and chapters and appointing new leaders. The key is to foster awareness in new leaders of their mission and at the same time inspire each member, arousing in them a determination to start afresh.

It was a hot day, and many members were crowded into the gymnasium for the Kyoto Headquarters leaders meeting in Otsu City. Despite the heat, Shin'ichi Yamamoto had given his all to encouraging the members, and now he



was dripping with sweat. After the meeting, he returned to Kyoto where he invited several leaders to join him for a public bath.

Towels in hand, they went out in search of an open bathhouse. Finally, after walking around for some time, they found one.

As they sat soaking in the tub, one of the Kyoto leaders said, "You know, we have a bathtub at the community center. It wasn't necessary to walk all this way just to take a bath." Laughing, Shin'ichi replied, "I know that, but I thought going to a public bath together would help us get to know each other better. Sometimes leaders need to think of such things for the members' sake. It's important for leaders to do things with their members, rather than act as if they were above them.

"Also, offering guidance, encouraging and inspiring others to stand up in faith do not have to happen only at meetings—they can take place in the public bath, for example, or over dinner."

Shin'ichi then turned to Goro Watari and said, "Watari, your center of activities is going to move from Kyoto to Hyogo. Please become friends with the members there. You're young, so I hope you will always be careful to listen to and respect the opinions of your elders. I'm sure it will be easier to surround yourself with people of your own generation and work most

closely with them, but that will only upset the balance of the organization, and you'll end up alienated from everyone.

"At the same time, older leaders should surround themselves with youth and value their opinions. The Soka Gakkai's membership is made up of young and old alike. The true power of the Soka Gakkai can only be revealed when each member is able to utilize his or her full potential and all can work together in harmony and unity."

On the way back from the bath, Shin'ichi and the others ate ice cream cones and talked about the future prospects for kosen-rufu. Shin'ichi wanted to eliminate formalism from the Soka Gakkai as much as possible. He was completely himself at all times, and this had always been how he lived.

On May 31, the day after the Kyoto Headquarters leaders meeting, Shin'ichi attended the Kansai Headquarters leaders meeting, held that afternoon at the Osaka Prefectural Gymnasium. That night, he attended the Hyogo Headquarters leaders meeting at the Amagasaki City Municipal Gymnasium. In June, leaders meetings marking fresh beginnings for each headquarters in the Tokyo and Kanto regions awaited him.

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



# PMS, Kindergarten and Self-Reflection

## PERSPECTIVE

By **M. LAVORA PERRY**  
EAST CLEVELAND, OHIO

**Life lessons can come in any number of ways — even from a case of PMS, LaVora Perry shares.**

*Buddhism teaches the concept of using our negative tendencies and sufferings as a springboard to happiness.*

— SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, *The Way of Youth*

I never thought I could learn anything from PMS. That's the acronym for premenstrual syndrome, the fatigue, mood swings and other symptoms that can happen before a woman's menstrual period begins.

So what was my PMS lesson? It started one morning when my first-time kindergarten was doing what had become "the usual." She was whining and pouting to the tune of "I don't want to go to school."

Prior to that morning's episode, I had mixed feelings about the school that my daughter was attending. I had arranged to send her to what I believed to be the best primary



school in our district. It was a 10-minute drive from home. Unlike the school just blocks from us, it did not offer half-day kindergarten — which I would have preferred.

One reason I wanted my daughter to attend a public school was because I felt it would help her develop a positive attitude about our community. East Cleveland, the once loved home of philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, is an urban-like suburb on the serious comeback after years of decline. I wanted my daughter to take pride in being a resident of our historic and culturally rich city. On the other hand, I knew that there were private schools, and schools in more affluent neighborhoods, that could offer her a more academically challenging environment.

I chanted about my concerns with the determination that my daughter would have any enjoyable educational experience that would prepare her for a happy and contributive life.

However, the reality was that my daughter was extremely shy at school. Her teacher said my

daughter's shyness and refusal to speak up in class was keeping her from progressing as well as she could. When I asked my daughter why she behaved that way (she's plenty loud at home), she said, "Mom, I'm afraid to talk at school." I was surprised to hear her speak of fear, but grateful for her honesty. Her words reminded me of my lack of confidence as a child; so I chanted for both her and me to be courageous. I invited her to join me, and chanting together before she left for school became a morning routine for our whole family, including her 2- and 3-year-old sister and brother.

The day before the fateful PMS morning, I had explained to my daughter that my tiredness and moodiness may have been brought on by my upcoming monthly cycle. I told her that during this time, she might want to go easy on her mom. But I guess that by the next morning she had forgotten. So to my cranky daughter, I ended up blurting out without a tinge of sympathy: "Face it, you're in kindergarten. You have to go to school. That's life. Deal with it and stop crying to me about it, because I don't want to hear it this morning!"

Her reaction was amazing to me. The pouting stopped immediately. But even more than that,

when we arrived at school, for the first time since the school year began, she entered her classroom without weeping, wailing and clinging to me as though I was heartlessly leaving her alone in a room full of scary monsters.

Later, I chanted about her miraculous change, which seemed to be the result of my witchy, PMS-induced remarks. In one morning, she had morphed from a fearful preschooler who could not go to school without major drama, to a confident kid who could. "OK, what just happened?" I wondered while chanting.

SGI-USA's Vice Women's Leader Linda Johnson's words from a meeting last year came to mind. She said, "If you think your environment is saying that you cannot have it, it is merely reflecting the fact that you believe you cannot have it."

I realized my attitude was reflected in my daughter's hesitancy to go to school. For instance, all along while my mouth was saying, "Your school is great," my mind was saying: "I didn't know how to read in kindergarten. I had plenty of time to play and be creative, and I became a very good reader. Why doesn't this school offer more enrichment activities instead of focusing so much on teaching kindergartners to read?" And while I said, "You'll start lik-

ing school, just wait and see," inwardly I thought, "My baby's too young to be in school all day. I wish this school had half-day kindergarten."

But as I chanted, I realized that because of PMS, I was too whipped that morning to want anything else but for my daughter to go to school and give me a break. In my weeks of chanting for her happiness, I had determined that through prayer I would ensure that her school was the best one for both of our lives. When I deeply committed to creating this reality, my daughter's hallway crying stopped for good.

These days my daughter says that school is fun, participates in a pilot in-school violin lessons program, has two best friends in school and has been promoted to the most challenging learning group in her class.

So thank you, PMS, for being the catalyst that made me feel uncomfortable enough to move out of my daughter's way so that she could have more room to grow. And thank you, Linda Johnson, for some guidance that has been transforming my life. And mostly, I thank my daughter for, once again, leading me to chant so that could I see my own life clearly — for being one of my best teachers. **WT**

# BEWARE THE FIVE-MINUTE PRAYER

## PERSPECTIVE

By **MIKE LISAGOR**  
VIENNA, VA

**Chanting abundantly has developed tremendous fortune in Mike Lisagor's life.**

In "The New Human Revolution," Daisaku Ikeda writes: "I also hope you will chant abundantly daimoku, regarding the Gohonzon as your greatest treasure, thus experiencing the wonderful benefit of the Mystic Law with your own life. I want you to gain unshakable conviction that the Daishonin's Buddhism is absolute" (Sept. 1, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 10).

I believe the importance of a strong daily practice can't be overemphasized. Perhaps it's easy for members who've been practicing for awhile to take for granted that everyone realizes the real battle against our demons is fought



each day in front of the Gohonzon.

One of the factors that distinguishes Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is that the Daishonin revealed a daily practice that allows each of us to replenish our spirituality, like a lost child who finally finds his parents. We don't just study Buddhism so that we can exclaim: "That's it! I was the Buddha all along." More important is that our realization of the existence of our Buddha nature motivates us to chant more and to take action to help others become happy.

One of my favorite quotes by the CEO of Coca Cola, Bryan Dyson, is: "Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls — work, family, health, friends and spirit. Work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will never be the same."

As a management consultant, I find that almost all my clients spend an inordinate amount of time juggling the work ball at the expense of the other four. They are chasing the elusive "empty" in-basket. I think how fortunate I am to have encountered Buddhism and how sad it would be if I were seduced by the hollow promise of material success or fame. I personally think it takes more than five minutes of chanting a day to keep the spirit ball in the air.

My wife, Trude, and I have always tried to chant abundantly. It doesn't usually take too long for us to notice when we need to reconfirm our commitment to this basic principle. Basically, I don't think the specific amount someone chants is worthy of sharing, but suffice it to say our daily average has remained well above five minutes a day — and for a very good reason.

Through 31 years of chanting abundantly and doing consistent prayers morning and evening, we have accumulated tremendous fortune in our lives. We have created a wonderfully close rela-

tionship and a warm and caring family in spite of our tumultuous beginnings. We have both continued to grow in our personal and professional lives and have found a balance in our lives that I believe would have continued to elude us if we had succumbed to the temptation to lessen our daily practice on a regular basis.

Surely, these are decisions each of us must make for ourselves. We learn, through gain and loss, what works and doesn't. I suppose if someone finds a way to establish an enriching Buddhist practice by chanting five minutes a day, then I'm glad for him or her. It's not that I am afraid to buck the system or miss an occasional late night gongyo to get some much-needed sleep, but on a regular basis, I think I'll err on the side of abundant practice.

Sometimes I catch myself rationalizing that I'm too tired to get up or there are other things I want to do rather than chant more this morning, or that, after all, Nichiren Daishonin himself said you could attain your enlighten-

ment by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo even once. It's during these moments that I ask myself where this decision is coming from — my mind or my heart? It's also at these times, when no one is around and no one is listening, that I make the really important decisions in my life. Olympic hopefuls face the same dilemma with their exercise regimen.

Like many of you, I made a decision years ago to follow a Buddhist path. I came to the conclusion that the Daishonin's teaching and SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's guidance was the most effective and powerful way for me to accomplish my goals in this lifetime and to be able to polish the Buddha nature within my own life. So, as long as I'm on this path, I'm going to beware of the five-minute prayer. **WT**

**PERSPECTIVES printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the World Tribune.**

## World Tribune MAILBOX

### Honest Dialogue is Key

Although I am not a member of the SGI, I am a regular reader of the *World Tribune*. In particular, I am edified and motivated by Daisaku Ikeda's guidance that appears in your pages. It was for this reason that I was drawn to the title of Jason Hart's article, "Standing Up For Justice" (Dec. 29, 2000, p. 5).

Jason's courage and commitment is a strong statement about how one person can make a difference in the Middle East conflict. His example is admirable. Most newspaper headlines focus on negotiations between governments. By contrast, the *World Tribune* focuses on dialogues among the peoples of the region, perhaps in the end the only genuinely human ap-

proach to ending ancient hatreds and mindless anger.

Dialogue, however, must be based on truth, even when it is painful. Jason's statement that "the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes in 1948, in order to create a Jewish state," I feel, is an expression drawn from the Middle East propaganda war rather than from historic truth. In 1948, leaders of the new Jewish state pleaded with the Arab population of Israel not to flee their homes. It was Arab leaders, notably the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who urged Palestinians to flee, promising them a quick return once the Jews were driven into the sea.

There are more than enough acts of injustice on all sides to go around in the Middle East. As a consequence, there is nothing more important than "Standing Up For Justice" by bringing together the peoples of the region through honest

and earnest dialogue. Such dialogue, in my opinion, must put people first and politics second, a prerequisite of which is to discuss differences openly, with special effort to identify the human factors that bind rather than separate Jews and Palestinians. Such a dialogue is impossible if people on either side base their participation on propaganda, an assault on the truth that stimulates intolerance, hate, anger and the desire for advantage — fuel for the ongoing conflict.

— ALFRED BALITZER  
Claremont, Calif.

### A Pioneer's Inspiration

I try to read the *World Tribune* as often as possible and am constantly amazed at the sheer number of good articles.

In particular, I would like to commend whoever wrote the article about [World Tribune

Staff Photographer] Gregory Nakasuji (Nov. 3, 2000, p. 3). Thirty years ago, as a member of the youth division, I had the great opportunity to meet him. Even then I could feel his passion for photography and *kosen-rufu*.

Please extend to him my best regards.

— STEVE JO, MD  
Sacramento, Calif.

*Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the SGI-USA or the World Tribune. Letters should be brief and are subject to condensation. Not all letters can be published or acknowledged, but they are all read. Please only send letters related to articles in the World Tribune. By mail: Mailbox, World Tribune, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907. By Fax: 310-260-8910. By email: wt@sgi-usa.org.*

# Japanese-Language 'World Tribune' Begins Next Month

The SGI-USA membership is a microcosm of the international community. And from its inception, the *World Tribune* has striven to be a truly international newspaper. To better serve our membership and fulfill its mission, the *World Tribune* has for several years been publishing editions in Spanish, Korean and Chinese. These are available free of charge to all active *World Tribune* subscribers upon request. (There is a limit of one language edition per *World Tribune* subscription.)

This year, we are pleased to

announce a further expansion of this service to include a Japanese-language edition. This monthly edition will have materials from recent issues of the *World Tribune* that are not available to *Seikyo Shimbum* subscribers, including SGI-USA organizational direction, divisional guidelines, U.S. experiences and news from across the country.

We will begin with the first issue in February. There are three ways to get this service:

1) All those currently subscribing to *World Tribune* and either *Seikyo Shimbum* or

*Daiyokurengue* will automatically receive the Japanese-language pages with their regular *World Tribune*. They do not need to sign up for the service.

2) All active *World Tribune* subscribers who are not current subscribers to either *Seikyo Shimbum* or *Daiyokurengue* and who wish to receive the Japanese-language edition *World Tribune* should notify the Subscriptions Office by either phone (1-800-835-4558), fax (1-310-260-8970), e-mail (SGISUBS@aol.com), or mail (SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA

90406-9907). Simply give us your name, current *World Tribune* ID number and a message saying, "Please sign me up for the Japanese-language *World Tribune*."

3) Anyone not currently subscribing to the *World Tribune* must subscribe to receive the Japanese-language service. Simply contact the Subscriptions Office to initiate your subscription. You can sign up for the free Japanese edition at that time.

Members can also get the Spanish, Korean and Chinese editions in the same ways. (Again, though, the limit is one language edition per *World Tribune* subscription.)

Thank you for your continuous support of the SGI-USA publications. **WT**

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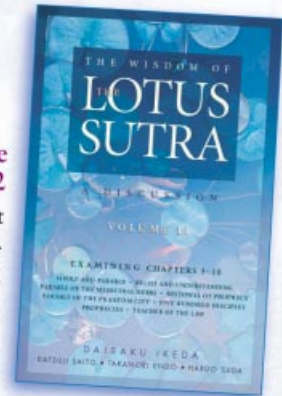
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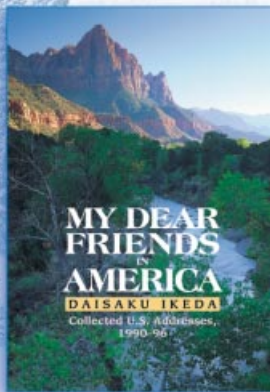
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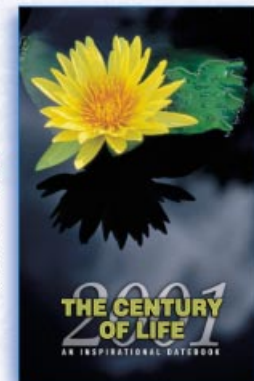
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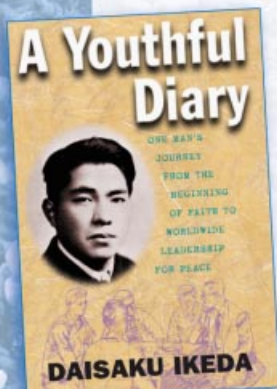
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