



### EXPERIENCE

Sarah Bretz  
survives near-  
fatal car  
accident

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### SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 2 SPEECH

# Win Through Your Own Efforts

'The key is for you to develop a lofty state of life based on the Mystic Law through your own efforts—to find inspiring hope and to savor, create and construct your own wonderful life-state of happiness,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'This is the purpose of faith.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a New Year's Gongyo Meeting held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 2.

Happy New Year at the start of the New Century! The brilliant sun of the Century of Soka has risen. Yesterday, on New Year's Day, and again today, the majestic sunlit form of Mount Fuji was visible from the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall. The sight inspired me to compose the following poems. [In these poems, SGI President Ikeda uses the image of Mount Fuji (Jpn *Fuji no yama*) in association with the concept of the oneness of mentor and disciple (Jpn *shitei funi*). The Chinese characters for the word *oneness* can be read both as *funi* and *fuji*, and can also be used to refer to Mount Fuji.]

*The snow-cloaked King  
Reveals his presence  
The mountain of Fuji*

*In gleaming  
Snow-white armor  
You and Fuji*

*Mount Fuji  
World's foremost symbol  
Of oneness of mentor and  
disciple*

*Resolutely  
Watching over us  
Mountain of Buddhas  
And heavenly deities*

*The mountain of Fuji  
Is our friend  
Our fortress*

**A new era will be created by the passion and energy of youth.**

In 163 countries and territories around the globe, lively, exuberant New Year's gongyo meetings are being held with attendance far surpassing anything

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 10



The New Year's Gongyo Meeting is held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 2.

### SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE SGI-USA WOMEN'S COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS

## Like the Sun of the SGI

'Each of you is like the sun of the SGI,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'With the brightness, liveliness and cheerfulness of the sun, I hope that you will advance through your struggles with great vitality.'

To my dear women's division members of America, who are at the forefront of the kosen-rufu movement: My sincere congratulations on ushering in the Century of Women with your commemorative meetings. I can envision all of your emerging victorious in all your struggles, joyfully gathering with bright smiles on your faces. I truly appreciate your day-to-day efforts, and hope

that this will be a most enjoyable day for you.

Each of you is like the sun of the SGI. With the brightness, liveliness and cheerfulness of the sun, I hope that you will advance through your struggles with great vitality. The great conviction of each women's division member is "I am not afraid of anything!"

Nichiren Daishonin states, "If Nichiren's compassion is truly great and encompassing,

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will spread for ten thousand years and more, for all eternity, for it has the beneficial power to open the blind eyes of every living being in the country of Japan, and it blocks off the road that leads to the hell of incessant suffering" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 736).

Through our activities, directly facing the challenges of the Latter Day of the Law, we are taking on the noble task of relieving the people's suffering on a fundamental level. What wonderful opportunities we have been given to put our faith into practice! What a great place to be at this moment in time!

The great writer Victor

Hugo exclaimed: "What is the challenge for today? It is to fight. What is the challenge for tomorrow? It is to win." All of you who have gathered in America have an important mission. My wish is that all of you will uphold the ideals engrained in this profound Buddhism while becoming examples of splendid courage for the whole world to see.

Also, please give your utmost in loving, training, raising and protecting the youth. I have determined to work harder than ever to put my entire being into fostering capable successors who will construct the 21st century.

Each of you is precious. I am sincerely praying for each of you to lead healthy lives overflowing with great fortune.

Please send my regards to all those who could not attend today's meeting.

February 2001  
Daisaku Ikeda

# Gosho Study Material for 2001

In 2001, the SGI-USA Study Department recommends that bimonthly study meetings on *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* be held in even-numbered months by chapter, the same as last year. A study guide will be published in odd-numbered months (one month prior to the study meeting months) in *Living Buddhism*.

The following study material is for these meetings throughout 2001:

1) The February study material will be in the January 2001 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

## “On Repaying Debts of Gratitude”

WND, p. 736: from 3rd paragraph, “If Nichiren’s compassion is...,” to end of 4th paragraph, “...does it not?”

“Ho’ on Sho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 329: 3rd line to 7th line in January 2000 *Daibyakurenge*).

## Points of Study:

- Three virtues
- Benefit of daimoku
- Time of kosen-rufu
- Spirit of *shakubuku*

2) The April study material will be in the March 2001 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

## “Letter to Niike”

WND, p. 1027: from 2nd paragraph, “How swiftly...,” to end of 3rd paragraph, “...evil by the foot.”

“Niike Gosho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1440: 8th line to 18th line in September 2000 *Daibyakurenge*).

## Points of Study:

- Life and death
- Sustaining faith
- Benefit of offerings to the three treasures
- Defeating evil in our lives

3) The June study material will be in the May 2001 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

## “Letter to Jakunichi-bo”

WND, p. 993: from 3rd paragraph, “In accordance with...,” to end of the writing.

“Jakunichi-bo Gosho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 903: 5th line to 17th line in May 2000 *Daibyakurenge*).

## Points of Study:

- Bodhisattva Superior Practices/Bodhisattvas of the Earth
- Mentor-and-disciple relationship/The heart of the mentor
- Spirit to never backslide in faith/Faith to surmount obstacles
- Benefit of the practice throughout eternity

4) The August study material in the July 2001 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

## “The Selection of the Time”

WND, p. 579: from 2nd paragraph, “In the secular texts...,” to p. 580, end of 1st paragraph,

“...to attain Buddhahood.”

“Senji Sho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 287, 8th line, to p. 288, 7th line, in February 1999 *Daibyakurenge*).

## Points of Study:

- Three important pronouncements
- Meaning of “the selection of the time”
- Spirit to fight against authoritarianism
- Stand-alone spirit

5) The October study material will be in the September 2001 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

## “The Treatment of Illness”

WND, p. 1113: from 2nd paragraph, “Questions: If, as you...,” to end of 3rd paragraph, “...our faith is strong.”

“Chibyou Daishou Gonjitsu Imoku” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 997: 4th line to 11th line in February 2000 *Daibyakurenge*).

## Points of Study:

- Good and evil
- The fundamental nature of enlightenment/Buddhist gods
- The fundamental darkness/the devil king of the sixth heaven
- Lessening karmic retribution

6) The December study material will be in the Nov. 2001 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

## “The Kalpa of Decrease”

WND, p. 1121: from 5th paragraph, “This is explained...,” to p. 1122, end of 1st paragraph, “...the wisdom of Buddhism.”

“Genko Gosho” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1466: 10th line to 18th line in August 2000 *Daibyakurenge*).

## Points of Study:

- The spirit to refute wrong and establish justice
- The humanism of Buddhism/Standing on the side of the people
- Buddhism equals sociology/Actual proof in society
- Great evil portends the arrival of great good

# Entrance- and Advanced-Level Examinations in 2001

Study examinations of the entrance and advanced levels will be held this year. This will conclude the current study curriculum that began in 1994.

## Entrance Examination

1) Date of the Exam: Sunday, April 22, 2001.

2) Eligibility of Candidates:

Those who are currently SGI-USA members. Anyone who is currently not an SGI-USA member but wishes to take the exam may do so but will not be able to receive a Study Department certificate until they become a member of SGI-USA, even if they pass the exam.

3) Study Materials:

The study material for the exam is the same as last year. All of the study material has been

published in a single booklet titled *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, which is available at SGI-USA bookstores and from the SGI-USA Mail Order Center. The materials are collected from four different sources:

**Source No. 1: SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook.**

- “On Attaining Buddhahood” (pp. 6–12, 20–29).
- “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon” (pp. 32–43, 47–52).

**Source No. 2: Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.**

- “Happiness in This World” (pp. 233–46; these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*).

**Source No. 3: The Life of Nichiren Daishonin.**

- Nichiren Daishonin’s life (pp. 11–18, 56–78, 83–115; these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*).

**Source No. 4: Questions**

**and Answers on the Temple Issue (pamphlet).**

- Introduction, Question No. 2, Question No. 4 (pp. 4–6, 9–10, 13–16; these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*).

4) Sample Questions:

The sample questions, which are same as last year’s, will be published in the Feb. 16 *World Tribune*.

## Advanced Examination

1) Date of the Exam: Sunday, Oct. 21, 2001.

2) Eligibility of Candidates:

Those who are currently SGI-USA members and who have passed the SGI-USA Study Department Intermediate-level or Senior-level examination previously.

3) Study Materials:

The study materials are the same as announced at the end of 1998. The materials are from three different sources. *Selected Lectures on the Gosho*, vol. 1,

and *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 1, are available at SGI-USA bookstores and from the SGI-USA Mail Order Center.

**Source No. 1: Selected Lectures on the Gosho, vol. 1, published by NSIC (1993 edition).**

- “The True Entity of Life” (pp. 3–24, 30–38, 58–70, 87–89).
- “Heritage of the Ultimate Law” (pp. 95–109, 121–23, 150–55, 169–72, 192–95).
- “The True Object of Worship” (pp. 203–23, 240–81).

**Source No. 2: The Wisdom of Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, published by World Tribune Press.**

- The entire book (1st through 9th installments of “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra” series that began in the April 1995 *Seikyo Times* and continued in *Living Buddhism*).

**Source No. 3: Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue.**

- The entire pamphlet.

4) Sample Questions:

The sample questions will be published in June in the *World Tribune*.

Note: English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish will be the official languages for both examinations. Study materials in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish will be available at local SGI-USA bookstores or from the SGI-USA Mail Order Center at 1-800-626-1313; e-mail: SGIUSAMOC@aol.com.



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## THOUGHTS ON THE SGI WOMEN'S THEME

# The Emergence of My True Self

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

I started 2001 with a bang. Literally. Two days before Christmas, I took my grandchildren ice-skating. Just as I made a particularly graceful turn, my skates went out from under me and — *crack!* I spent the next 10 days in the hospital with a broken pelvis.

During that horrible time, I never thought I could say what I am saying now: I do not regret this. I would not change this experience. I have received profound gifts of faith, of hope, of compassion. My life and my faith have been fortified and profoundly deepened.

For the first four days, I was in excruciating pain, especially when I was moved even slightly. I desperately chanted Nam-myoho-enge-kyo — sometimes silently, sometimes softly, sometimes screaming it in pain. I bargained with the Gohonzon, I pleaded, I pledged and, guess what? The pain continued. In fact, it got worse. All I could do was keep my eye on the horizon and tell myself, "I will come through this, and I will not doubt the Gohonzon, no matter what happens."

Finally, on the fourth day, the pain became bearable, and I could look around me. I could even encourage my 86-year-old roommate, who moaned incessantly in pain from her broken hip — I knew what she was going through.

Two realizations hit me: One was tremendous appreciation for my Buddhist practice. I was cradled by bodhisattvas from the moment of my fall: my loving family, five of the sweetest paramedics who carried me out of the ice-skating rink, my doctor's reassuring midnight visit and the hospital staff's constant care.

I looked to the horizon and persevered in pain because of the fortitude I have built through chanting and through my relationship with President Ikeda. His guidance was there in my life 100 percent at this crucial moment. Through desperate pain and fear, I held on to his conviction when mine was weak.

Though thousands of miles away, his remembered spirit and words — like "stand alone," "persevere" and "you will definitely win" — traveled in my mind. He was my coach all the way. I know now that we must continue to chant and believe we will win, even when we feel the guillotine at our neck.

My second realization as I took in my surroundings in the hospital was that there is such great suffering, especially among the elderly. So many in their final years are afraid, in pain, disoriented and often with

no family or friends. "They have endured many things to live this long," I thought indignantly. "It isn't fair that they should have to end their lives in fear and isolation."



Photo by LISA KIRK

And from some very deep place came an even greater indignation about High Priest Nikken Abe. How precious are human beings, how hard they try. When they finally encounter Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, to have it profoundly distorted and counterfeited by High Priest Nikken, to join him in actually destroying what is correct — that is the greatest evil. I cannot bear to

see these precious people on a path of no fortune, of eventual suffering. It is my deep conviction that we must challenge Nichiren Shoshu's influence without hesitation. In that challenge is the greatest act of compassion for humanity.

Now I am at home convalescing. Each day, I am stronger and can do more. I probably will not be able to attend the February women's meetings, but it seems my experience has put me at the epicenter of the SGI women's theme:

"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."

First, I feel it was my "true self" that sustained me. This true self is our finest, deepest self — the self that feels rooted to the compassionate force of the universe. This strong human self, which emerged in my crisis, had been there all along, quietly growing with each prayer, each positive act. It was brave and persevering.

Although I persevered alone, it was only because of the tremendous care of so many people that I could continue. This awareness leads me to the second point, about being world citizens. The hospital staff was a miniature United Nations: Scotland, India, Africa — they represented every continent. I watched each person's full attention on caring for another human being. Whether taking

vital signs or just patting the hand of a disoriented elder, saying, "It's going to be OK, sweetie," these people have put aside likes and dislikes and cut through to caring for each human being. What world citizens they are!

I feel my interpretation of the last point, the one about a dialogue based on justice, was superficial before my accident. I saw it more in terms of righteous reaction to that which would hurt or degrade humanity. Now, I believe we have true power to act for justice only when we cultivate our true selves. These true selves are neither reactive nor self-serving, but proactive and dedicated to radiating hope and developing the highest ideals in ourselves, no matter what happens.

This entails reaching out to others, sharing the conviction of our connectedness, believing in and empowering others. When we sincerely work to polish our true selves and to live contributive lives, then when we speak out for justice, it will be with wisdom and compassion.

That is what will enable us to affect change. President Ikeda has said about Mahatma Gandhi: "Gandhi always strode in the front of protest marches. He always went to where the greatest crisis or suffering was. This is, in fact, the essence of nonviolence. In other words, it is to change oneself first and, through that transformation, change others' hearts" (July 23, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 5).

I am so grateful that this experience has made this significant SGI women's theme penetrate my life. I would not trade this for anything. Surely, this must be what changing poison into medicine means. SGI Vice Women's Leader Yumiko Hachiya sent me a message from Japan, telling me that when we are working hard for kosen-rufu, everything that happens — even an accident — has profound meaning. Certainly, my appreciation for the SGI has deepened. Everyone rallied to support me; it was a team effort and beyond. I especially appreciate everyone's prayer. I know it has propelled me on to my crutches.

I am proud and grateful to be a part of the most respectful and dynamic women's group in the world: the SGI-USA women. **WT**

## MESSAGE FOR COMMEMORATIVE WOMEN'S MEETINGS FROM SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER MATILDA BUCK

### Hope Is Real Power

Warmest greetings to all the women who have gathered to celebrate SGI-USA Women's Day!

It is so inspiring that thousands of women all over America are meeting to affirm one great truth: We are here on this earth to become happy. It is every woman's right and within every woman's power. And there is nothing selfish in this proclamation. That's because women are so closely connected to others that our happiness enriches the lives of all.

An important key to real happiness is to live with hope, with optimism. Mahatma Gandhi once said that he was an optimist not because of any evidence that he saw, but because

it was how he wished to live his life. He saw optimism as a cause rather than an effect. Cynics might call it denial, but a posture of creating hope, no matter what the circumstance, has real power.

Our SGI President Daisaku Ikeda explains: "Hope draws forth our inner potential and strength. It is a magic weapon that enables us to make our dreams come true" (Aug. 13, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 1).

I think hope is magical because it is invisible, yet it can move mountains. It costs nothing, yet it makes us rich. It is a renewable resource that never runs out. No one can steal it from us. To chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is to bring forth hope.

For the newcomers who have joined us, I hope you experiment with this practice, and see what it will do for you. You have the right to become supremely happy.

I send my most profound respect and affection to you all. Because you make efforts to polish your lives and because you work to support the lives of others, you are the most respectable women in America. This is the solidarity of women who are creating a spiritual civilization.

President Ikeda describes this movement in his New Year's poem:

*A commitment to treasure each person —  
In that daily, unceasing practice  
Lies the dynamism  
To transform the entire planet.  
(Jan. 1 World Tribune, p. 2)*

I salute you all. **WT**

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NEWEST POEM

## THE ETERNAL TRIUMPH OF MENTOR AND DISCIPLE

*Commemorating the  
70th Anniversary  
Of the Soka Gakkai's Founding*

The morning sun!  
O the morning sun shining in  
the eastern sky!

The light illuminating  
The great stage  
Of the 21st century  
Beckons us  
To stride out exuberantly  
Into the new age ahead of us.

His gaze on the fresh horizons  
Of the vast future,  
Bathed in the newborn light  
Of the still beyond,  
Our great mentor  
Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi  
Left this world.

Above the abject darkness,  
The cruel dawn  
Appeared once again.  
When will the day  
For which our peaceful  
hearts yearn  
Arrive?  
All hope seemed lost.

But beyond the deepening  
darkness,  
A bright new dawn  
Of unending victory  
Was definitely waiting.

The memories  
Of Mr. Makiguchi's noble life  
Were deeply engraved  
Into my own heart  
By my mentor Josei Toda,  
Again and again  
Uncountable times,  
Striking my life  
With the force of  
crashing waves  
So that I might withstand  
the pain  
Of any wound, however deep.

Mr. Toda told me,  
"My greatest pride in life  
Is having been with  
Mr. Makiguchi  
During each of his four  
persecutions."

Through the machinations  
Of arrogant government  
officials,  
The dedicated educator,  
Principal Makiguchi,  
Met his first persecution  
When he was removed  
from his post  
At Nishimachi Elementary  
School;  
And his second,  
When he was ousted  
From Mikasa Elementary  
School.

The passionate young disciple  
Josei Toda,  
Filled with anger,  
Staunchly defended  
His just and upright mentor.

The third persecution  
Was Mr. Makiguchi's  
forced removal  
From Shirokane Elementary  
School.  
In the midst of that ordeal,  
His great work,  
*The System of Value-Creating  
Pedagogy*,  
Was published.

On Nov. 18, 1930—  
A Tuesday—  
As the harsh winds of the  
Great Depression  
Buffeted the world,  
And as Japan was being rocked  
By an assassination attempt  
On its prime minister—  
The rays of a great spiritual  
struggle  
Flashed like lightning  
Through the darkness and  
confusion.

At the time,  
The mentor was 59,  
The disciple, 30.  
These two alone  
Rang the bell,  
Sounding the dawn of Soka  
For the world!  
For the future!

The fourth persecution  
Was oppression by the  
militarist authorities.  
Treachery betrayed by the  
priesthood,  
Twenty-one Soka Gakkai  
leaders were arrested.  
And cowardly disciples did an  
abrupt about-face—  
With flagrant ingratitude,  
They disparaged and cursed  
their mentor  
And abandoned him.

"Although I and my disciples  
May encounter various  
difficulties,  
If we do not harbor doubts in  
our hearts,  
We will as a matter of course  
Attain Buddhahood.  
Do not have doubts  
simply because  
Heaven does not lend you  
protection.  
Do not be discouraged  
Because you do not enjoy  
An easy and secure existence  
in this life.  
This is what I have taught  
my disciples  
Morning and evening,  
And yet they begin

to harbor doubts  
And abandon their faith.  
Foolish men  
Are likely to forget  
The promises they have made  
When the crucial  
moment comes."  
(*The Writings of Nichiren  
Daishonin*, p. 283)

When the crucial  
moment came,  
Only Mr. Toda joined  
his mentor  
In living this passage  
From "The Opening of  
the Eyes."

In prison,  
The disciple prayed fervently.  
He prayed to the Buddha  
And heavenly deities  
Throughout the universe:  
"I am still young,  
But my mentor is old.  
Let all the responsibility  
For the charges against us  
Fall on me alone,  
And allow my mentor to  
be released  
As soon as possible!"

Here  
Unsurpassed beauty  
And unconquerable strength  
Blazed  
As the Soka spirit of mentor  
and disciple.

Up to the moment of  
his death,  
Mr. Makiguchi  
Led by example.  
He always energetically set out  
For discussion meetings,  
No matter how far  
he had to travel,  
And was sure to arrive  
ahead of time.  
He expressed his sincerest  
appreciation  
To the families  
Who offered their homes  
As meeting places,  
And he welcomed  
each participant  
With the respect  
He would accord a Buddha.  
When someone arrived,  
He immediately engaged  
that person  
In openhearted conversation.

To a young man  
Struggling with his job,  
He said:  
"It is not the Lotus Sutra  
If it cannot change poison into  
medicine.  
Now is the time  
For you to put this into practice  
In your own life.  
A Gakkai youth must have the

strength  
To work as hard as three!"

The Daishonin declares:  
"Buddhism primarily  
concerns itself  
With victory or defeat"  
(WND, 835).  
In Mr. Makiguchi's copy  
of the Goshō,  
These words  
Were underlined  
Heavily and boldly in red.

Authoritarian leaders  
Exploit the youth,  
Look down on them  
as inferiors;  
They oppress their juniors.  
But true leaders  
Love and nurture the youth;  
They constantly strive  
To help their juniors grow  
and develop  
Into people more able,  
More accomplished than  
themselves.

To a young woman,  
Mr. Makiguchi said:  
"Convince people  
Of the greatness of this  
Buddhism  
Through your own behavior.  
Be especially kind  
To those younger than yourself."  
He taught a philosophy of hu-  
manism  
Based on the deepest sincerity.

Kosen-rufu  
Is human beings engaging  
in discussion,  
Forming ties of friendship,  
And spreading trust  
In the most natural  
and human way.

Though the ominous sound  
Of military boots grew louder,  
Though agents of the Special  
Higher Police  
Were always on his trail,  
Mr. Makiguchi continued his  
efforts for peace.  
Each day, each night,  
Undeterred by the authorities'  
angry shouts  
To cease and desist,  
Boldly and with dignity,  
He proclaimed with  
a lion's roar  
The noble philosophy of  
justice and truth.

Mr. Makiguchi said:  
"To be people of great good,  
We must be strong.  
The unshakable strength  
To take a determined stand  
against evil  
Will brighten  
Both the lives of individuals

And society as a whole."

Mr. Makiguchi entrusted  
The jeweled sword  
Of this most powerful  
conviction  
To the next generation.  
"Kosen-rufu must be achieved  
Through the leadership of  
the youth!"  
Until just before his arrest,  
He continued giving lectures  
to students  
On the Daishonin's treatise  
"On Establishing the Correct  
Teaching  
For the Peace of the Land."

Mr. Makiguchi  
Passionately rebuked  
The priesthood  
That trampled on the  
instructions  
Of the Daishonin and  
Nikko Shonin  
And that bowed to the  
demands  
Of the militarist authorities.

He said:  
"Buddhism  
Is not an intellectual game.  
Its purpose is to save the land  
And the people from suffering.  
To stand by with folded arms  
And fail to do so  
When that time arises  
Is to betray the Buddha's intent."

A full 600 years  
After the Daishonin's exile to  
Sado,  
Mr. Makiguchi was born  
In Niigata,  
The same province as that  
historic isle.  
And  
At the age of 72,  
For the sake of kosen-rufu,  
Well aware of the risks involved,  
He traveled resolutely to Izu,  
Another site of the  
Daishonin's exile,  
And there met with  
persecution for the Law,  
His arrest coming early in  
the morning  
Of July 6, 1943.

At the last discussion meeting  
he attended  
In the town of Shimoda in Izu,  
He left behind a declaration  
Of his great conviction:  
"The Lotus Sutra  
Is like the sun."

His struggle in prison  
Lasted more than 16  
months—  
Five hundred days.  
His cramped cell,  
With its bare wooden floor,

Was sweltering in summer,  
And bitterly cold in winter,  
The chill cutting to the bone  
like a knife.  
The food was sparse  
And the clothing inadequate.

Yet  
Mr. Makiguchi's face  
Was a rosy pink,  
His eyes  
Shone ever brighter,  
And with a clear resounding  
voice,  
He continued his Buddhist  
dialogue,  
Strictly refuting the erroneous  
And revealing the true  
Even in prison.

In his letters to his family,  
he wrote:  
"I have no worries,"  
"I have no fear,"  
"I have no wants."  
A Buddha is invincible!  
Whatever happens,  
A Buddha is never defeated!  
To the very end  
Mr. Makiguchi demonstrated  
The quintessence  
Of that supreme  
human strength.

He wrote in his last letter,  
One month before he died:  
"When I reflect on how  
I was able to produce  
The 'Theory of Value' —  
A theory that scholars  
For the past 100 years  
Had sought in vain —  
And, moreover,  
To connect it  
To faith in the Lotus Sutra  
And enable several  
thousand people  
To realize actual proof,  
I am surprised in spite of myself.  
Therefore,  
It is only natural  
That the three obstacles and  
four devils  
Should have assailed me;  
It is just as the sutra states."

On Nov. 18, 1944,  
Just after six o'clock  
On a Saturday morning,  
As the sun rose majestically  
over the horizon,  
The founder of Soka  
Died with noble dignity,  
A martyr to his cause.

The bonds of mentor and  
disciple are eternal.  
The bonds of mentor and  
disciple are indestructible.  
The bonds of mentor and  
disciple are boundless.

His disciple Josei Toda cried out:  
"I will be like the Count of  
Monte Cristo!  
Should I ever leave this prison,  
I will avenge the death  
of Mr. Makiguchi.  
Striking a blow for justice

Against those who  
persecuted him,  
I will prove to all the world  
His greatness!"

It was many years later,  
On a bright autumn day,  
Nov. 16, 1950 —  
Just ahead of  
The 20th anniversary  
Of the Soka Gakkai's founding  
And the seventh memorial  
[sixth anniversary]  
Of Mr. Makiguchi's death,  
At a time when Mr. Toda's  
business  
Was in the direst straits.  
On that day,  
My mentor and I  
Went to the Nihon University  
cafeteria  
And talked together  
Over lunch,  
Amid the boisterous clamor  
of students.

"Daisaku,  
Let's build a Soka University.  
This was Mr. Makiguchi's  
Fervent wish.  
It may not be possible  
In my lifetime,  
But I ask you, Daisaku,  
To realize this dream.  
Let's make it  
the best university  
In the world!"

In the five decades since then,  
I have fulfilled  
All of my promises to  
my mentor.  
And  
On May 3, 2001,  
Soka University of America  
Will open its doors  
In California's Orange County  
As a full-fledged liberal arts  
college.  
The curtain will rise  
with majesty  
On a brilliant  
Century of Soka Education.

Nichiren Daishonin said:  
"In the 700 or more years  
Since the teachings of  
the Buddha  
Were first introduced to Japan,  
There has never been anyone  
Who was hated to such a degree  
Because of the Lotus Sutra"  
(WND, 519)

How wondrous the rhythm  
of time,  
In accord with the Buddha's  
intent and decree,  
By which the Soka Gakkai  
Should have appeared  
Seven hundred years  
After the Daishonin's birth!

The Lotus Sutra says  
That its practitioners  
Will be "cursed and  
spoken ill of"  
(*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 193)  
And "Since hatred

and jealousy  
Toward this sutra abound  
Even when the Thus Come One  
Is in the world,  
How much more will this be so  
After his passing" (*The Lotus  
Sutra*, p. 164).  
In these more than 700 years,  
No follower of  
Nichiren Daishonin  
Has endured persecutions  
of the kind  
That have befallen  
the first three presidents  
Of the Soka Gakkai.  
This is clearly borne out  
By history.

Yet  
The selfless heroes  
Who have dedicated their  
lives for their beliefs  
Smile undaunted....  
O corrupt, arrogant  
authorities,  
Your very arrogance  
will become a heavy weight  
Wearing you down  
Until you collapse!

Our wings of truth,  
Growing ever more luminous  
With the dazzling light of  
honor and glory,  
Will receive  
Countless enthusiastic  
accolades,  
Applauding our victory,  
Outshining you millions  
of times.

You are slaves to base power.  
No matter how hard you try  
To close our veracious eyes,  
The pulse of truth  
Will continue to beat strongly  
In our veins.

All that surely lies in wait  
For you, the corrupt and malign,  
Is dark misery.  
But we  
Will be greeted  
By true and eternal happiness.

Your actions  
Will lead you to despair.  
Some day  
You will sigh despondently  
At our courage.

Your journey  
Is that of a frozen,  
Setting sun.  
We, however,  
Make our way  
Cloaked in life's joy  
Surging forth vibrantly  
Like a powerful wave  
Far beyond winter:  
Spring is near.

We can see  
The jubilant morning sun,  
Shining and clear.  
Throughout eternity,  
Concrete proof of triumph  
Of the great life-philosophy  
Of the oneness of

body and mind  
Awaits us.

Our age  
Marks a new era!  
We will create a magnificent  
new world —  
Looking from the past to the  
present,  
From the present to the future.

With you, dear friends!  
With friends throughout  
the world!  
I will fight,  
Conveying the profound  
teaching  
Of Buddhism  
With its soaring spirit  
To Asia,  
To Africa,  
To Europe,  
To North and South America,  
To Oceania.

We will let nothing defeat us!  
Uniting together solidly  
And maintaining strong  
communication,  
Our organization of the heart,  
A close community of people  
Of many nations,  
Will throw into disarray  
The vacuous, arrogant ones.  
The organization will  
support us —  
As noble individuals  
Who walk the correct path  
On which the sun of truth  
Always shines.

Distilling 700 years  
Into 70,  
We of the Soka Gakkai  
Have vanquished  
The three powerful enemies  
That have appeared in all  
shapes and sizes,  
And achieved the widespread  
propagation  
Of the Law  
Throughout the entire world.

Ah!  
The Soka Gakkai's 70th  
anniversary!  
We have triumphed!  
The bonds of mentor and  
disciple of Soka  
Have secured a resounding  
victory  
On the vast stage of the world!

Mr. Toda said:  
"It is the Soka Gakkai's  
mission  
To repay our debt of gratitude  
To Nichiren Daishonin  
And to pave the way  
For the lasting happiness of  
humanity,  
By drawing up a grand plan  
for peace  
Encompassing several  
millennia."  
He declared  
That all of us  
Would be clearly recorded  
And honored

In the scriptures of the future  
As noble emissaries of the  
Thus Come One.

The golden words of the  
Daishonin state,  
"Those who become  
Nichiren's disciples and  
lay believers  
Should realize the profound  
karmic relationship  
They share with him  
And spread the Lotus Sutra  
As he does" (WND, 994)

The Day of the Founding!  
This is a day  
Shining with brilliant splendor  
On which we return  
To our prime point  
Of time without beginning.

Forever, from this day,  
Blazing brightly with hope,  
Brimming with an  
inexhaustible  
Sense of mission and  
conviction,  
We will rise,  
Proud and tall.

We will set forth  
Bravely and joyously,  
Keeping the eternal flame  
Of justice and truth  
Burning bright.

Into the boundless blue expanse,  
Let us fly —  
At times with daring!  
At times with patience!  
At times with laughter!  
Like immortals,  
Filled with energy  
And a sense of mission,  
We will spread the wings  
Of eternal being  
Without beginning or end,  
And soar throughout the three  
existences  
Of past, present and future.

Nov. 18, 2000

—Dedicated to first Soka  
Gakkai president Tsunesaburo  
Makiguchi and second presi-  
dent Josei Toda on the 70th  
anniversary of the Soka  
Gakkai's founding.

With profound respect for the  
noble pioneer members who  
made lasting contributions to  
our movement, and with sin-  
cerest prayers for the ever-  
greater good health of my  
praiseworthy fellow members  
in Japan and in all 163 coun-  
tries and territories around  
the world.

My palms pressed together in  
reverence.

Daisaku Ikeda

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S DEC. 14 SPEECH—PART 2

# The People Are Waiting

**'People around the world are waiting for the vibrant sound of the bell of peace that will signal the dawn of a new century, a new millennium,' SGI President Ikeda says.**

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

The German poet Schiller wrote the poem "The Song of the Bell," which contains these lines:

*Come in, come in!  
All comrades close your  
ranks,  
We will christen and dedi-  
cate the bell,  
Concordia shall be her  
name,  
To gather the gentle com-  
munity together  
In harmony, in heartfelt  
unity.*

*And this henceforth shall be  
her calling,  
Peace shall be her first  
sound.*

People around the world are waiting for the vibrant sound of the bell of peace that will signal the dawn of a new century, a new millennium. A weak, doleful sound will not rouse people. What we need are the clarion tones of the bell of philosophy, which will awaken all

people to the supremely noble entity of life that lies dormant within them.

Where are the bells that will gather people together in harmony and unity, and lead them in the direction of peace, hope, happiness and prosperity? Where are the powerful, dynamic, thrilling reverberations of joy? Thinking men and women around the world have begun to seek them in the SGI's resonant bells of humanism.

As you know, we have advanced over the years in the rhythm of the Seven Bells, ringing a new bell every seven years. The number seven corresponds to the seven characters of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The first Seven Bells started in 1930—the year the Soka Gakkai was founded—and continued through 1979. And from next year, 2001, having passed the milestone of the Soka Gakkai's 70th anniversary, we begin the second Seven Bells, which will continue

through 2050.

At a representatives conference on May 17, 1997, in Kansai, I shared the following grand vision for our movement in the 21st, 22nd and even 23rd centuries:

- That, during the second Seven Bells in the first half of the 21st century, we will secure the foundation for peace in Asia and throughout the world.

I have prayed and continued to make steady, patient efforts to achieve this. My recent trip to Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong was another step toward realizing this vision for the 21st century.

- That, during the third Seven Bells in the second half of the 21st century, we will see the philosophy of the sanctity of life established as the spirit of the age and the world.

- That, during the fourth Seven Bells in the first half of the 22nd century, an indestructible foundation for world peace will be laid.

- That, based on that foundation, during the fifth Seven Bells in the second half of the 22nd century, we will see the brilliant flowering of an age of humanism.

When that happens, we can move on to the sixth and sev-



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the 52nd Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Kansai Toda Memorial Auditorium in Osaka, Japan, Dec. 14, 2000.

enth Seven Bells. From the middle of the 23rd century, when in 2253 we celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's teaching, a new phase in our movement will begin.

This is the great vision for the future that I shared—my heart filled with deep resolve, aspiration and conviction—with you, my Kansai friends.

## The year 2001 will be a decisive one in SGI history.

The first seven years of the 21st century will be extremely important in determining the direction of the far distant future. In particular, 2001 will be a decisive year for the Soka Gakkai.

In 2001, we will celebrate the 130th anniversary of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's birth and see the long-awaited opening of the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus in Orange County, Calif.

Other anniversaries next year include the 50th anniversary of my mentor's inauguration as second Soka Gakkai president and the 50th anniversary of starting the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. In addition, the world's foremost gathering of women, the women's division, as well as the young men's and young women's divisions, heirs to the future, will celebrate their 50th anniversaries.

In 2002, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the start of the kosen-rufu movement in Kansai. Aiming toward that milestone, Kansai has announced a new goal of expanding the number of its districts to 15,000 by that time. I applaud your resolute determination.

And in 2005, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the SGI's founding. Our international organization started

out with members in 51 countries and territories. In 1990, when the temple issue arose, this figure stood at 115. Today, our organization has seen further phenomenal development with SGI members now practicing in 163 countries and territories around the globe.

This is all due to your tireless efforts. Let us continue to steadily expand this network of peace, culture and education even more in the years to come.

The Daishonin writes: "Everything depends upon the country and the time. Those who practice Buddhism should understand this principle" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1579). The SGI has always followed this teaching. In whatever country and whatever age, we will always find a way forward, as long as we draw on the inexhaustible wisdom of Buddhism that functions in accord with changing circumstances. We will be able to blend harmoniously amid diverse cultures and societies, and make great contributions to people's happiness, social prosperity and world peace. This is the power of our faith as practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

In the year 2006, we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the men's division, whose members blaze with fighting spirit, and in 2007, the 50th anniversary of the student division, a gathering of intellect and wisdom.

I especially congratulate the student division members today on the formation of several new university groups in Kansai.

## Compassion means encouraging and inspiring others.

Albert Einstein had these words for his generation: "May this generation take the most important step that is known in the history of

## THE FIRST SEVEN BELLS

*Seven Bells* is a term used to describe cycles of seven seven-year periods in the Soka Gakkai's development. On May 3, 1958, shortly after President Toda's death (on April 2), SGI President Ikeda, then Soka Gakkai chief of staff, introduced the concept of Seven Bells and announced development targets for subsequent seven-year periods.

The first Seven Bells comprise the following periods:

1) **1930–37:** The period from the founding of the Soka Kyoiu Gakkai (forerunner of the Soka Gakkai) in 1930 through to its formal organizational inaugural ceremony held in 1937.

2) **1937–44:** The period

through President Makiguchi's death in prison in 1944.

3) **1944–51:** The period through Josei Toda's inauguration as second president in 1951.

4) **1951–58:** The period through Josei Toda's death in 1958.

5) **1958–65:** The period of great advance on all fronts under the leadership of President Ikeda.

6) **1965–72:** The period leading to the completion of the Sho-Hondo (Grand Main Temple), during which time a membership of 7.5 million households was achieved.

7) **1972–79:** The start of the second phase of kosen-rufu, and the seven years leading up

to President Ikeda's becoming honorary president of the Soka Gakkai.

On May 3, 1966, President Ikeda announced guidelines for the second Seven Bells, to begin from the year 2001. Also, in 1978, he announced a series of four five-year plans for the organization's development during the period from 1980 through 2000.

He later reconfirmed this rhythm of development at a 1984 leaders meeting in Shimane Prefecture, Japan. In so doing, he noted the mysterious correlation between the development of the Soka Gakkai in five- and seven-year periods and the five or seven characters of the Mystic Law.

mankind. May it leave to those who come after, the invaluable heritage of a world from which the barbarity of war has been banished. We can do so, if all those who hate war have the courage to say that they will have no more war.”

Einstein also spoke in Kansai — his Osaka lecture was held at the Chuo Civic Hall in Nakanoshima. [This is the same venue where the famous Osaka Rally took place on July 17, 1957, to protest President Ikeda’s unjust detention by the Osaka District Prosecutor’s Office.]

I hope that next year all of you, my Kansai friends, as you ring in the second Seven Bells, will continue to speak out vigorously with courage and hope. Compassion ultimately means encouraging and inspiring others. Showing the world that nothing can ever defeat Kansai, please lead the way in uniting people in the cause of peace and humanism. I have the highest expectations for Kansai! I have faith in Kansai!

What are the greatest contributions to humanity? Based on his belief in the importance of focusing on worthwhile goals and elevating the people, Ein-

stein said, “It is not the fruits of scientific research that elevate a man and enrich his nature, but the urge to understand, the intellectual work, creative or receptive.” This is the insight of a world-famous scientist.

The SGI is following such a spiritually creative path. You are all standing in the vanguard of the supreme spiritual undertaking that is kosen-rufu. The Daishonin is surely praising your efforts, while the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout time and space are without question protecting you.

Our SGI activities, our activities to promote friendship and our activities to uplift and enrich the human spirit anticipate the direction that the 21st cen-



The audience joins the Kansai Men’s Chorus and the Akebono Women’s Chorus in singing ‘Soka Song of Joy’ to the tune of Beethoven’s ‘Ode to Joy,’ which is performed by the Kansai Brass Band, Dec. 14, 2000.

tury will move in. Please know that the ideals sought by leaders the world over are to be found in the very activities we are undertaking.

**Your legacy will be the invincible fighting spirit that you leave behind.**

I now want to share with you the words of some wise men and women in the hope that they may serve as a source of sustenance and inspiration for your efforts.

The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore says, “It is the mission of civilization to bring unity among people and establish peace and harmony.” I believe that it will be the “third civilization,” an ideal we are striving to realize, that will achieve these goals. Neither spiritualism nor materialism alone is the answer. We have entered an age in which the world is seeking a third way, based on the philosophy of the nonduality of the spiritual and material, or the oneness of body and mind.

The French literary giant Victor Hugo writes, “You must remember / That a traitor always gets caught in his own trap.” This is the perfect description of the fate of those who betray others.

And the great French thinker and writer André Malraux declares, “Hope is the strongest force of a revolution.” Faith is eternal hope. I hope you will all possess great hope.

I was fortunate to meet twice with Dr. Malraux — once in Tokyo in 1974 and once at his home in the suburbs of Paris in 1975. He had an extremely sharp mind. He was also, by the way, a good friend of John F. Kennedy.

Finally, let me share some words that the German com-

poser Beethoven wrote in his diary: “There is much to be done on earth; do it soon!” This was Beethoven’s credo.

It is crucial that we immediately put our determinations into action. The speed with which we do can decide the difference between victory or defeat.

I also want to cite some passages from the Daishonin’s writings.

In the “Letter of Petition from Yorimoto,” which he wrote on behalf of Shijo Kingo, the Daishonin says, “He [the priest Ryokan] made endless false accusations against me in an attempt to have me executed” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 809). The pattern of persecution remains unchanged over the centuries — those who are envious of the just and righteous try to depict them as villains by hatching plots and making false accusations.

The Daishonin also warns his followers, “In general when Nichiren’s followers go to the imperial capital, Kyoto, though at first they seem to remember their original aspirations, they eventually become afflicted by demons and lose their minds” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1268). At the time, Kyoto was the center of the imperial court and the nobility, and certain disciples of the Daishonin who went there began to labor under the delusion that they had become important people just because they were in the capital. In other words, they gave in to self-conceit and snobbery.

We can see the same thing today in people who foolishly think they are great simply because they graduated from a good university or have high social position. Please do not

live vain, shallow lives where you succumb to arrogance, lose your faith, and finally end up falling into a state of hellish suffering.

The Daishonin also says, “If any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within” (WND, 217).

I hope that we of the Soka Gakkai, with even stronger unity of “many in body, one in mind,” will continue to expand our victorious network of humanism and accomplish great things in next 100 years of the 21st century. Not all of you may be alive 100 years from now, but the invincible fighting spirit that you leave behind as your legacy will live forever. And there will be the youth, including your children and grandchildren, who will follow in your footsteps.

Eternally attesting to the truth of the Daishonin’s Buddhism, eternally achieving victory, may you continue to accumulate the most brilliant good fortune.

I offer these poems to you, my Kansai friends, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the SGI’s founding.

*Great Kansai!  
The great shining citadel  
Of eternal victory  
That you have solidly built  
Will be indestructible for all  
time.*

◆◆◆◆

*Acclaimed as unsurpassed in  
Japan,  
No, unsurpassed in all the  
world,  
In the realm of kosen-rufu  
Is Great Kansai.*

◆◆◆◆

*Since we are comrades  
Who together made a vow  
In the remote past,  
We can achieve victory after  
victory,  
Fearing nothing.*

I close my speech today with the fervent wish that you may all enjoy good health and long lives, and be strong in body and in faith. And I pray that you will demonstrate the great power of champions of life and champions of humanity, writing your own history of resounding victory, striving with determination and commitment each day.

Please give my kindest regards to those I could not meet today. Thank you for everything in 2000, and please have a wonderful New Year. **WT**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

# The Country and the Time

From This Speech:

**Nichiren Daishonin writes: “Everything depends upon the country and the time. Those who practice Buddhism should understand this principle” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1579). The SGI has always followed this teaching. In whatever country and whatever age, we will always find a way forward, as long as we draw on the inexhaustible wisdom of Buddhism that functions in accord with changing circumstances. We will be able to blend harmoniously amid diverse cultures and societies, and make great contributions to people’s happiness, social prosperity and world peace. This is the power of our faith as practitioners of the Daishonin’s Buddhism.**

1) What does Nichiren Daishonin mean when he says, “Everything depends upon the country and the time”? How do you think this passage applies to America in 2001?

2) When SGI President Ikeda speaks of “the inexhaustible wisdom of Buddhism that functions in accord with changing circumstances,” what does he mean by “inexhaustible wisdom”? What does he mean by “changing circumstances”? How do you think this point is important for the SGI-USA? Can you apply it to your own efforts to share this Buddhism with your friends?

EXPERIENCE — SARAH BRETZ, SAN DIEGO

# Living Proof: After the Crash

**Sarah Bretz says, 'I have had to start my life completely over.'**

It is truly the wondrous power of the Mystic Law that enables me to tell you my story, told to me by other people, because I remember nothing of what happened on the day that changed my life.

I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for 12 years. I practiced in Santa Barbara, Berkeley, Calif., and Washington, D.C., before I moved to San Diego in February 1997. I moved there to be with my fiancée and began working out of my home as a researcher, in the field of energy efficiency in climate change prevention, for my employer in Berkeley. It was a benefit of my practice to bring my job with me.

My fiancée worked on Shelter Island, and we sailed a lot together. We were fortunate enough to buy a condo right in the Shelter Island area where housing was limited. At the time we bought the condo, he helped with the down payment but would not be on the title, something that later turned out to be a benefit.

During this time, I participated in SGI-USA activities as a young women's chapter leader. My fiancée supported my Buddhist practice and activities, but had no interest in practicing Buddhism or attending a meeting. But because I was committed to my practice and knew that the law of cause and effect is tremendously strong, I put my practice ahead of other demands. I was fairly happy and my life was going well, but I continued struggling to make causes for my future.

My fiancée liked old cars. He

had a 1950 Ford sedan and a 1956 Mercedes convertible. After I sold my own car, I usually drove his Ford to meetings. However, on a Saturday morning in May 1999, it was having mechanical difficulties, so I decided to drive the Mercedes, which had been rebuilt recently, but hadn't been driven in many years.

That Saturday I volunteered during the May contribution campaign to be a receptionist at the San Diego Community Center and was on the way there when the Mercedes suddenly stopped in the fourth lane of the 163 Freeway for an unknown reason. A driver, who did not see me, hit me from behind at full speed. As a result of the impact, I was thrown from the convertible and hit my head on the pavement. The crash happened right in front of Sharp Memorial Hospital, so I received immediate medical attention.

My brain injury was critical, and surgery needed to be performed immediately. It so happened one of the best surgeons in the field was at the hospital that day, although he was not scheduled to be there. The hospital contacted my fiancée about my accident, but said I might not be alive when he arrived at the hospital. My father was also contacted. When he arrived at the hospital, he had to make the life-and-death decision about the surgery that risked leaving me in a vegetative state. However, if he did not give permission, he was told I would probably not survive for more than half an hour.

At the time of my surgery, several districts in my chapter were having their discussion meetings when they heard about my accident. They were told my surgery might take nine hours. A



Sarah Bretz sailing with her uncle, Peter. Sarah, 32, survivor of a near-fatal car accident, says: 'From one day to the next, we never know our destiny. To make good causes whenever possible is so important.'

leader at one meeting encouraged the members to chant for me. She asked them to offer this prayer to the Gohonzon, "Sarah, fight for your life, fight for your life," with every daimoku. Everyone started chanting for me, and by the time the meeting was over, the surgery was finished. It lasted less than three hours. Everyone found out that my surgery was a success.

But I was still in danger. They needed to keep me in an induced coma to keep the pressure down in my brain. I was in a coma for about three weeks. SGI-USA members, especially the youth, immediately started a 24-hour chanting session. Youth in other cities and states were contacted and were also chanting for me. Their prayers were penetrating my life. The members refused to let me die.

During the following month, members continued to chant and pray for me. When I came out of my coma, friends visited me in the hospital and chanted with me, which was very

thoughtful and did me a lot of good. My family and fiancée, although they did not practice Buddhism, were very impressed by the sincerity and support of the members. They welcomed their visits. They seemed to understand that somehow chanting was working for me.

Within two months, I was out of the hospital, and my recovery was coming along better than expected for someone suffering from such a severe injury.

I am presently in school in the Acquired Brain Injury Program at Mesa College, one of the best in the nation. I take different classes in memory strategy, redevelopment of self-identity and vocational training. The students really encourage me, and they are amazed I am doing so well.

However, recovering from my injury has been very difficult. Although my practice makes it easier, I am still disabled in ways that others may not recognize. I have problems with memory and staying focused and am still not able to drive. These are just a few of my daily challenges now, which are symptoms of a frontal lobe injury. However, considering the doctors had to remove part of my brain, I am extremely fortunate to be alive with no physical injury — just a small scar covered by my hair.

In the last year and a half since my accident, I have had to start my life completely over. I have had to rebuild my self-identity. The strain this had on my relationship was more than my fiancée could handle, and we are no longer together. Our breakup was very difficult for me to cope

with, but because of my practice, I know it was for the best.

There have been many difficulties involving finances and lawsuits regarding the accident, but I keep having victories with the Gohonzon. I thought for sure I would lose my condo, but I've been able to hold on to it. After chanting for victory in legal matters, the hospital, which had a \$200,000 lien on me, settled for just \$200.

One thing I have learned from this is if it hadn't been for all the efforts I made in my Buddhist practice before the accident, things would not be as good as they are now. I would not be recovering as quickly, but most importantly, I would not even be alive. I hope that through my experience, others will realize that from one day to the next, we never know our destiny. To make good causes whenever possible is so important.

In "The Three Kinds of Treasure," Nichiren Daishonin says: "Buddhism teaches that when the Buddha nature manifests itself from within, it will obtain protection from without. This is one of its fundamental principles" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 848).

I am so appreciative of all the support I have received from my SGI family. I also received some gifts from SGI President Ikeda when I was in the hospital, which I will always cherish. I will also cherish the scrapbook members put together to encourage me. I have a card from the members I keep on my altar, and I am returning prayers to those who chanted for me.

I cannot express how grateful I am to be an SGI member and have found the Gohonzon in this lifetime. I owe my life to this practice.

I am thankful for the opportunity to rehabilitate through the Acquired Brain Injury Program because I want to develop my endurance for working and making sure that I do it thoroughly. In the future, I am looking forward to working in the field of energy efficiency in climate change prevention once again. I am currently working with an adjustment counselor who has helped place me for a volunteer position in the medical library at Sharp Hospital and will eventually help me find a job.

By the way, I have a new boyfriend who loves and cares for me.

I thank everyone so much, including those I don't even know, who have prayed for me and continue to support me. I will always stick with the SGI organization and do my utmost for world peace. **WT**

## Do You Have 'Way of Youth' Stories?

People are sharing all kinds of stories with us about *The Way of Youth*. The book is turning out to be a great way for teens to get encouragement about personal problems themselves and to share SGI President Ikeda's philosophy with their friends. And the book isn't just for teens — leaders have found it invaluable resource when giving

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Thanks for your support!

# 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 21-22

*'Realizing genuine happiness begins with challenging and winning over our own cowardice and laziness,' explains Shin'ichi Yamamoto. 'Human revolution means to overcome the negative aspects of the self, and our Soka Gakkai activities are the arena in which we can do so.'*

The Tokyo No. 1 Headquarters Leaders Meeting took place on June 3 in the Taito Gymnasium, kicking off a string of such meetings in the Tokyo and Kanto regions. The newly appointed headquarters leader of Tokyo No. 1 Headquarters was General Director Koichi Harayama.

Members attended despite the rain, and many vice general directors came to congratulate them and offer a few words. Since each had also been appointed the leader of another headquarters, their speeches reflected a spirit of healthy competition.

Katsu Kiyohara, leader of Tokyo No. 5 Headquarters, declared: "Please be aware that your biggest rival from now on will be Tokyo No. 5. We don't intend to lose!" Eisuke Akizuki, the newly appointed head of Tokyo No. 4 Headquarters, said, "I have come here to challenge Tokyo No. 1 to a contest of propagation." And Kiyoshi Jujo, head of Tokyo No. 2 Headquarters, remarked, "I hope that Tokyo No. 1 will al-

ways be the best in the Soka Gakkai, but I want you to understand that we of Tokyo No. 2 intend to be even better!"

Each of these challenges was greeted by a wave of applause and smiles that were fueled by the members' fighting spirit. Healthy and enjoyable competition is an important factor in activities for kosen-rufu. A friendly rivalry motivates the individual as well as the organization as a whole.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto was happy to see that these new headquarters leaders each wanted to make their headquarters the best. He felt that Mr. Toda was without a doubt looking warmly on this "contest of goodwill" that his disciples were engaging in while aiming for his seventh memorial service (the sixth anniversary of his death).

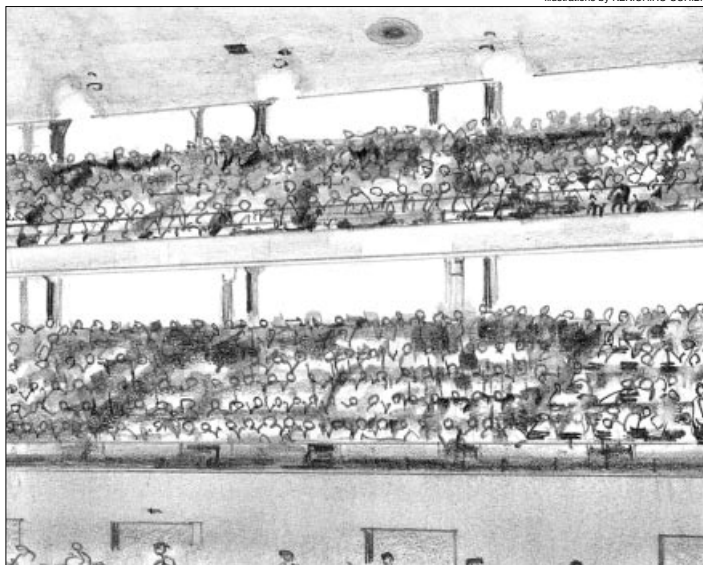
Shin'ichi spoke next, his tone humorous: "General Director Harayama has just been made leader of Tokyo No. 1 Headquarters, but it looks like

all the vice general directors now in charge of the other headquarters are plotting to bring his headquarters down!

"As president, it wouldn't be right for me to get behind any one headquarters, but today I am here as a member of Tokyo No. 1. Therefore, I'd like to declare just for today that Tokyo No. 1 will become the top runner in the race for kosen-rufu not only in Tokyo, not only in Japan, but in the entire world!

"Please build a tradition of winning every challenge you take on. In whatever struggle, coming out a winner makes you happy. When we succeed in our activities, we experience boundless vitality and joy, which becomes a great source of hope and energy. If we lose, however, that joy and energy does not well forth from our lives."

Shin'ichi next explained why it is important for the individual to win in activities for kosen-rufu: "Whether in our efforts to share Buddhism with others or to increase the number of members attending meetings, if we want to win, we need to first set a goal, muster our determination and chant daimoku in earnest. We must then bring forth our wisdom bravely face the challenge



while taking resolute action.

"Each obstacle that we overcome brings us wonderful benefit and good fortune. It is through this process that we learn the formula for triumphing in life. Moreover, the tremendous conviction in faith we gain by exerting ourselves in our activities endows us with the strength to surmount any difficulty or hardship we encounter in life.

"Nichiren Daishonin writes, 'Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 835). This is because kosen-rufu is a struggle against the devil king of the sixth heaven, the negative function that destroys life. In fact, human existence is itself a struggle. Realizing genuine happiness begins with challenging and winning over our own cowardice and laziness. Human revolution means to overcome the negative aspects of the self, and our Soka Gakkai activities are the arena in which we can do so.

"I am not really concerned with the short-term results of our propagation activities; what matters most is that each of you exerts yourself wholeheartedly in faith, enjoys great benefit and an enriched life, and attains a boundless state of life overflowing with joy. I hope you will always remember that this is the reason we share the Daishonin's Buddhism with others

and why we engage in Soka Gakkai activities."

After this, Shin'ichi attended headquarters leaders meetings held successively in the Tokyo and Kanto regions, giving his all to encouraging the members. With all of the new organizational changes and personnel assignments that had been made, Shin'ichi wished to secure a strong spiritual foundation for kosen-rufu in the heart of each member.

At almost every one of these meetings, Shin'ichi personally led the members in singing Soka Gakkai songs. His shoulders swelled from swinging his fan, and his exhaustion mounted, but he was determined to do anything necessary to encourage and inspire his precious fellow members and to serve them to the end. He was also trying to be an example of the essential attitude of a leader.

The series of headquarters leaders meetings that took place throughout the Tokyo and Kanto regions ended on June 14 with the Santama Headquarters Leaders Meeting in a suburb of Tokyo. Thus, the wheels of fresh advancement were set in motion.

Late that night, a big news story began to circulate around the globe.

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



## FROM SPEECH, 1

we have seen in the 20th century.

Yesterday, many dignitaries and top leaders from various fields of Japanese society visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, to convey their New Year's greetings. I received a report that many of them commented on how bright and hopeful the Soka Gakkai members seemed, saying that it was indeed rare to see such a wonderful, positive organization.

The student division, champions of intellect, held a high-spirited convention on New Year's Day. The young men's division, today, and the young women's division, tomorrow, will be holding similar lively conventions in the city of Kita-Kyushu, Japan. Our successors, the youth, who are full of shining promise for the future, are leading the ascent of the mountain of kosen-rufu of the 21st century.

Already looking toward the 21st century back in 1951, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said in his "Precepts for Youth," "A new era will be created by the passion and energy of the youth."

Individuals and organizations who strive for their goals with the vibrant, sunlike passion and energy of youth who are dedicated to the cause of justice will survive and triumph in the 21st century.

### The happiness of each person is the sole purpose of the SGI.

What is my wish? What is the wish of SGI leaders? It is that all SGI members may lead healthy, enjoyable and happy lives.

I want each and every person to achieve a life of joy and fulfillment. I am praying for this with all my heart. This is why we carry out our SGI activities and work for the sake of kosen-rufu. This is the purpose of the SGI.

Of course, because each of us has our respective karma, life may not always be smooth sailing. But when we steadfastly follow the path of faith, practice and study taught by Nichiren Daishonin, no matter what difficulties we may encounter, we will definitely attain Buddhahood, a life-state of eternally indestructible happiness.

In any event, SGI leaders must not be arrogant. I ask that leaders offer sincere, careful guidance to their fellow members and juniors in faith, so that each person can confidently advance on the correct path of faith and become truly happy. Genuine concern for the welfare and happiness of one's fellow mem-



SGI President Ikeda encourages members on Jan. 2 at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.

bers and juniors is the essence of giving guidance in faith.

In addition, no matter what happens, it is crucial that you never stray from the SGI, an organization that upholds faith committed to the realization of kosen-rufu exactly as taught by the Daishonin. This is the foundation for becoming happy. It represents an unsurpassed way of life. Ultimately, only in the Mystic Law do we find a source of light that can lead humanity and the world to happiness.

The 26th high priest, Nichikan, writes in his "Commentary on 'The Entity of the Mystic Law,'" "Through the power of the Mystic Law, we manifest the life of the Daishonin within ourselves." He states that we who believe, chant and spread the Mystic Law will have the unequalled good fortune of manifesting the noble life-state of Buddhahood.

However, if we slander the Law and bear hatred and jealousy toward our fellow members, we will receive no benefit. The Daishonin strictly warns of this in his writings.

Let us advance together on the path of attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime, creating a world in which unity, peace and happiness prevail.

### This world is dominated by the devil king of the sixth heaven.

In the "Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the task of widely propagating the sutra throughout the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day of the Law is entrusted to the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. A majestic ceremony of entrustment takes place—a solemn life-to-life transmission, in which the mentor entrusts the disciples with the mission of kosen-rufu. The core of the Lotus Sutra is the spirit of the oneness of mentor and disciple.

The "Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One" chapter states:

As the light of the sun and moon can banish all obscurity and gloom, so this person as he passes through the world can wipe out the darkness of living beings, causing immeasurable numbers of bodhisattvas in the end to dwell in the single vehicle. (The Lotus Sutra, p. 276)

Once, in response to a question by his interrogators in prison during World War II, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi spoke on this passage, stating his position firmly and with dignity. [Mr. Makiguchi was arrested by the militarist authorities on July 6, 1943, on charges of breaking the Peace Preservation Law and of lese majesty.]

Viewed from the perspective of Buddhism, this world is dominated by the devil king of the sixth heaven. The Soka Gakkai's presence is like that of a sun of supreme justice bursting through the deep darkness of negativity and destruction that shrouds the planet.

The official transcripts of his interrogation record Mr. Makiguchi as clearly asserting, "Unless you join this organization [the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, forerunner of the Soka Gakkai], not only will you fail to attain happiness and security in your lives, but also society as a whole will have no stability."

Just as he asserted, the Soka Gakkai today stands tall, in name and in reality, as a pillar of peace and stability in Japanese society.

Intellectual figures around the world perceive the true value and worth of the SGI.

Dr. Lokesh Chandra, director of the International Academy of Indian Culture and one of the most eminent thinkers of India, the birthplace of Buddhism, says that the illuminating spirit of altruism expounded in the Lotus Sutra has been inherited in to-

tal by the SGI.

One of Russia's leading historians, Dr. Yuri Petrosyan vice president of the St. Petersburg Scientific Center at the Russian Academy of Sciences, also praises our activities. He says, "Were it not for the positive presence of the SGI in the world working for the lofty ideal of creating spiritual value for the sake of humanity, the history of the human race might have been very different."

### Everything will be determined by our mind of faith.

This year, we will celebrate the 130th anniversary of Mr. Makiguchi's birth and the 50th anniversary of Mr. Toda's inauguration as second Soka Gakkai president.

Today, we have members of the Makiguchi and Toda families, as well close friends of our illustrious first two presidents, here with us.

The true heritage of the Daishonin's Buddhism—of faith that is dedicated to the realization of kosen-rufu—is found nowhere but in the SGI, which is carrying on in the footsteps of Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda.

Nichiren Shoshu, although it may claim to base itself on the same Buddhism, has completely lost sight of faith that is devoted to kosen-rufu. Far worse, it has trampled on and utterly betrayed the Daishonin's spirit and intent.

The Daishonin writes, "If the mind of faith is perfect, then the water of wisdom, the great impartial wisdom, will never dry up" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 1015). Everything is determined by our "mind of faith."

Nothing attests more clearly to the absolute correctness of the faith practiced by the SGI members than the fact that we today have members in 163 countries and territories around the world.

### We must never ever forget the spirit of 'shakubuku.'

The *Yomiuri Shimbun*, one of Japan's leading daily newspapers, recently conducted a readers survey on which books or written works to pass on to the 21st century. The Daishonin's treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" ranked second place in the category "Great Works of Japan." [In another survey, published in the same paper, of annual best-sellers in Japan during the 20th century, President Ikeda's *The Human Revolution* and *The New Human Revolution* were ranked as No. 1 bestsellers in 1965 and 1998, respectively.]

"On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" contains the philosophy of peace and the philosophy of dialogue. My efforts to conduct dialogue bridging cultures and civilizations around the world have been based on this teaching.

This treatise also brims with the valiant spirit of refuting the erroneous and revealing the true. We must raise our voices loudly in protest against any scheme or design that tramples on human dignity, insults decent ordinary people and undermines humanity's concerted efforts for peace. We must courageously fight back, through dialogue and the written and spoken word, making ourselves heard like fearless lions. We must never ever forget the spirit of *shakubuku*, the spirit to refute erroneous teachings and ideas.

The most important thing is that you have courage. That you yourself speak out and fight against injustice.

Socrates, the great teacher of humankind, says, "If a man would move the world, he must first move himself." And the renowned French author Victor Hugo writes, "The devotion of one man had given strength and courage to all."

I turned 73 today. I have received birthday wishes from friends throughout the world. One was from Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Joseph Rotblat, president emeritus of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, who writes, "Please keep on with your remarkable efforts for a peaceful world."

The 92-year-old scientist and activist had said when we met in Okinawa in February 2000, "Let's continue working together for world peace."

"I can't afford to be tired"—this is Dr. Rotblat's creed. He talks and works and strives for peace unceasingly. This fighting spirit, this unswerving commitment, makes a person's body and mind, a person's life, healthy. I am looking forward to the day he and I can meet again.

### Another name for the Buddha is One Who Can Endure.

Material wealth does not necessarily make for happiness. Nor does fame. Happiness is determined by the philosophy we base our lives on.

That is why it is so important to possess hope. Hope is life's greatest treasure. A life without hope is bleak and gray. If you have no hope, create some!

We live in this strife-filled *saha* world, a world of endurance. Another name for the

Buddha is One Who Can Endure (see WND, 23). Happy are those who can endure. No matter what hardships may arise, they can transform everything into something positive, changing poison into medicine.

To always be full of dissatisfaction and complaint is itself a source of unhappiness. It is self-defeat. You are only making causes to experience unending suffering throughout your life.

The key is for you to develop a lofty state of life based on the Mystic Law through your own efforts—to find inspiring hope and to savor, create and construct your own wonderful life-state of happiness. This is the purpose of faith.

**With the power we have, what can possibly stop us?**

Today, we have with us representatives of the successful applicants who will join the historic first class of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo. I want to keep an eternal record of the names of all the participants gathered here today and at all New Year's gongyo meetings around Japan at SUA, AV.

Thomas Paine, one of the pioneering advocates of American independence, says: "Men of good will march together and know their own strength. With the power we have, what can stop us, or even slow us? What can't we achieve, what new worlds, what glories, what promises!"

Once again this year, as we further widen the Soka Gakkai's path into the future, let us realize magnificent expansion in our movement for kosen-rufu, so that we can win resounding victory and glory for countless generations to come.

I am earnestly praying for your good health, happiness and energetic endeavors.

Please take care. I look forward to your wonderful efforts in the year ahead. **WT**

# JOIN THE CLASS OF 2002 AT SUA, CALABASAS

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Individuals seeking admission to the MA program must hold a bachelor's degree with a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 2.7 or B- on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to

submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600 (on a paper-based test) or 250 (on a computer-based test) and a Test of Written English (TWE) with a minimum score of 5.0.

Applications for the 2001-02 academic year are due by April 30. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 West Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, CA 9102. Telephone (818) 878-8717, e-mail: grad\_admissions@soka.edu.

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SGI GENERAL DIRECTOR WADA VISITS DENVER

# Dialogue Is Our Nourishment

Photos by PETER NELLHAUS

By LEIGH KENNICOTT  
DENVER CORRESPONDENT

On Jan. 12, SGI General Director Eiichi Wada and SGI North America Bureau Director Norimasa Saito arrived in Denver for a whirlwind weekend of meetings with Western Zone members. Their Denver stop was part of a nine-day stay in the United States. Also visiting were SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima and newly appointed Young Women's Leader Wendy DeSouza and Young Men's Leader Steve Mortan.

The next morning, they participated in a leaders meeting. This was the first time the whole Western Zone, including leaders from the Texas/Oklahoma Region and the newly created Arizona Region, gathered together. They discussed the zone's goals toward propagation, publications promotion



SGI General Director Eiichi Wada speaks at the Denver Culture Center, Jan. 13.

and its vision for this year.

In the afternoon, a nationwide youth area leaders teleconference was held in which Mr. Wada shared excerpts from SGI President Ikeda's recent guidance on the importance of youth taking responsibility for the expansion of our organization.

Then in the evening, the Western Zone Kick-off Meeting commenced with more than 700 members in attendance. In his remarks, General Director Wada shared several analogies that brought home some key concepts with the audience. Recounting an earlier visit to Denver, during which local members planted cherry trees, he equated the care and nourishment of a cherry tree to the care of people we introduce to the SGI.

"To successfully grow a tree," he said, "the tree needs shelter, sunlight, earth and water. Some trees grow slowly, others at a rapid pace. So they all need individual attention.

"I visited a park where many of the trees had withered, and only one was left standing. You may plant 100 trees, and only one survives. But in 100 years, you'll have 100 healthy trees."

Stressing that we must believe in the power of faith and



The Western Zone Kick-off Meeting, held Jan. 13 at the Denver Culture Center, brings together 700 members from all over the zone.

chant to the Gohonzon no matter what happens, Mr. Wada joked, "Our faith is quicker and easier than the Internet to communicate with the universe.

"Sometimes, when we do not receive immediate conspicuous benefit, we may have doubts. However, we need to

have the conviction that we will ultimately win. Through our prayer, we can gain the wisdom to decisively take the correct action."

Recalling again the cherry tree analogy, Mr. Wada said, "Dialogue is our nourishment." **WT**



SGI-USA Young Women's Leader Wendy DeSouza (left) relates her experience in faith to Denver young women.



SGI-USA Young Men's Leader Steve Mortan (right) shares his vision for the future with Denver members.

## Alternative Lifestyles Conference Coming Soon

Upcoming conference will focus on applying Buddhism to the concerns of the SGI-USA's many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members.

By GREG MARTIN  
SGI-USA VICE GENERAL DIRECTOR

Since the Florida Nature and Culture Center conference on "Our Mission As Buddhists With Alternative Lifestyles" scheduled for March 8-11 was announced in the Dec. 15, 2000, *World Tribune*, there has been much interest and, unfortunately, confusion about what exactly this conference is about. We apologize for the confusion.

This conference was created in response to the many requests from members and leaders who share a common interest in participating in a conference focused on applying Buddhism to the concerns of our many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members — sometimes referred to in summary as those leading "alternative lifestyles."

Diversity in the SGI-USA is a great virtue. As SGI President Ikeda writes: "Nichiren

Daishonin's Buddhism deeply respects each person's individuality, situation and character, and shows the way to display one's particular abilities to the fullest. The 'Record of Orally Transmitted Teachings' says, 'Cherry, plum, peach and damson blossoms all have their own qualities, and they manifest the three properties of the life of the original Buddha without changing their character.' People, in other words, should give full play to their unique capabilities as they struggle toward kosen-rufu. Their struggle brings about their own human revolution, and the circle of unity they form is the Soka Gakkai" (*Selected Lectures on the Goshu*, vol. 1, p. 154).

In responding to members' diverse concerns by offering a solid foundation of faith, we use our diversity to strengthen our unity and common bonds as SGI-USA members.

In keeping with the current SGI-USA guidelines for spe-

cific interest meetings, this conference will focus on the discussion of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and its application to the specific challenges of these members in their daily lives. This conference will not be used to promote involvement in community activities or political and social issues.

The SGI-USA is proud to sponsor what, for our organization, is a historic conference. We anticipate that it will be a great opportunity for all involved to awaken to a deeper sense of mission in American society, fulfilling our role as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. The conference is open to all members, whether or not they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. In other words, everyone is encouraged to participate.

We hope that you will join Women's Leader Matilda Buck and vice general directors Gary Murie and myself at this exciting conference. **WT**