



EXPERIENCE

Beth LaMure transforms her life through learning to trust.

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Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
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No. 3333

\$2.00

FEBRUARY 16, 2001

Northeastern Zone Kickoff Held *With Youthful Flare*

Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD

By BOB TALIAFERRO
NEW YORK BUREAU CHIEF

Youthful energy, good cheer and jubilation greeted the 5,000 SGI-USA members and guests who attended the Northeastern Zone Kickoff on Jan. 28. A Brazilian samba band beat out a hearty, spirited welcome. A jazz band sparked enthusiasm and smiles. A Chinese lion dancer flourished his golden mane. Greeters, including SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, cheered, shook the members' hands and embraced them as they entered the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan.

This festive occasion was the largest gathering since 1986 of members from throughout the zone, which encompasses New Jersey, New York and the New England states. Many members

traveled up to eight hours by bus to participate in this joyful reunion, where they saw many old friends in faith for the first time in years. The auditorium was filled to overflowing, while some 700 members graciously agreed to enjoy the proceedings through video display in the lobby.

It felt as though SGI President Ikeda himself was there. Early in the meeting, there was a video presentation of the 52nd Headquarters Leaders Meeting, which included a stirring chorus of "Soka Song Of Joy" (to the tune of "Ode to Joy") and President Ikeda's guidance on the Century of Women and the second Seven Bells (see the Jan. 19 and Feb. 2 *World Tribune*).

James Herrmann, SGI-USA youth leader, shared his experience with introducing people to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, emphasizing the importance of making every effort



Youth from throughout Northeastern Zone take a commemorative photo after their zone kickoff, Jan. 28.

and having patience. He reported that when he was in the Navy 16 years ago, having a place designated for Buddhist meetings on his base was un-

heard of and unacceptable.

Today, at that same base, weekly introduction meetings are being held and are strongly supported by the base comman-

der. Mr. Herrmann was surprised and elated to find out that he had first introduced the Navy person

PLEASE SEE NEW YORK, 6

TOWARD THE YOUTH-SPONSORED MARCH INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS

Let's Fully Entrust the Youth

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

By TARIQ HASAN
SGI-USA MEN'S LEADER

Hello everyone! The year 2001 is here, and I am so optimistic about the events about to unfold this year. I want to talk specifically about the role the youth will play in our successes this year.

As the men's leader, of course, I want to see more men stand up for the sake of kosen-rufu. But I also know that many men, as with myself, want to see as many young people as possible emerge from our organization and take responsibility for kosen-rufu.

Last year, my three daughters each established her own Buddhist practice and were no

longer practicing their "parents'" religion. Although they have been practicing since they were teenagers, they each decided to receive the Gohonzon. One of them said to me for the first time, "This Gohonzon really works," although she's been chanting and doing gongyo regularly for 10 years.

Two of them, with support from the men's and women's leaders, had taken some responsibility in their districts and chapters and, from fulfilling that responsibility, decided to stand up. I sincerely thank their local organizations for helping them to grow in their practice.

PLEASE SEE HASAN, 8

By MATILDA BUCK
SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER

March 16, 1958: What a scene that must have been, when thousands of young people met with Joseki Toda. SGI President Daisaku Ikeda described those participants: "Their sights on the future, these young heroes had stood up like true seekers of the Way, like the champions of truth that they were.... Smiling as they stood shoulder to shoulder, their hearts were one. Nothing could destroy their sense of unity with their mentor..." (April 14, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 8).

I believe he wasn't just describing a single group, he was describing every single one of

us who celebrates March 16, Kosen-Rufu Day. The youth in 1958 were given a great gift; namely, responsibility for the kosen-rufu movement, the same gift each of us has received. The passion, energy and freshness of youth perpetually embody that leadership. You might say that we give that gift to the youth, again and again, every March 16.

President Ikeda, in his message for our February women's meetings, reminds us to give our "utmost in loving, training, raising and protecting" our youth.



SGI-USA Men's Leader Tariq Hasan and Women's Leader Matilda Buck.

How fortunate for us that we can put this into action right away.

The SGI-USA youth are marking March 16 this year by making the March district meetings dynamic and lively introductions to Buddhism. Can you imagine the energizing

PLEASE SEE BUCK, 8

Buddhahood Vs. Negative Functions

Back to the Basics

By TED MORINO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Nichiren Daishonin teaches that in the Latter Day of the Law, the Buddha and the devil king oppose each other. The Daishonin states: "The devil king of the sixth heaven has raised ten armies against the

votary of the Lotus Sutra, struggling to keep hold of the *saha* world where the Buddha and ordinary beings dwell together. Though I, Nichiren, in the capacity of the votary, have been embattled for twenty some years, not a single time did I think of retreating. Nonetheless, most of those who are cowardly among my disciples and lay believers have already either fallen out or renounced faith in their hearts" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1224).

And in terms of our daily practice of faith, the Daishonin quotes T'ien-t'ai's *Great Con-*

centration and Insight: "'As practice progresses and understanding grows, the three obstacles and four devils emerge in confusing form, vying with one another to interfere....'... Of the four devils, the workings of the devil king of the sixth heaven are of this last kind" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 501).

How does the devil king try to interfere with our practice? By targeting our personal weaknesses. The Daishonin explains: "When an ordinary person of the latter age is ready to attain Buddhahood..., this devil is

greatly surprised. He says to himself, 'This is most vexing. If I allow this person to remain in my domain, he not only will free himself from the sufferings of birth and death, but will lead others to enlightenment as well. Moreover, he will take over my realm and change it into a pure land. What shall I do?' The devil king then summons all his underlings from the threefold world of desire, form, and formlessness and tells them: 'Each of you now go and harass that votary, according to your respective skills'" (WND, 894).

Nevertheless, our Buddhahood can overpower these devilish influences—the Daishonin promises that "those with the heart of a lion king are sure to attain Buddhahood" (WND, 302).

SGI President Ikeda recently put it this way: "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" (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 10). **W**

The Three Existences of Life

WORDS To WIN By

By GREG MARTIN
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

From 'A Sage Perceives the Three Existences of Life,' The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 641-43.

With such perception one can see the distant future by looking at what is close at hand. One can infer what will be from what exists in the present. This is the meaning of [the passage from the Lotus Sutra that says, 'This reality consists of] the appearance...and their consistency from beginning to end.' (WND, 641)

At the beginning of this letter, written to Toki Jonin in 1275, Nichiren Daishonin states, "A sage is one who fully understands the three existences of life—past, present and future" (WND, 641). By sage, he means a Buddha.

Shakyamuni's prophecy of the future flow of kosen-rufu and the Daishonin's variety of prophecies, including his prediction of the Mongol invasion, are not based on clairvoyance or the occult. In fact, the Daishonin specifically warns us to "not rely on another's sharp senses or occult powers" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 16).

The Buddha's ability to see the future and understand the past is based on a profound grasp of and confidence in the law of cause and effect. "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past," the Daishonin teaches, "look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (WND, 279).

Understanding the conditions of Japanese society in his time, the Daishonin could foresee that unless a fundamental change took place within the

lives of human beings, the rampancy of the three poisons (greed, anger and foolishness) would inevitably lead to conflict and strife both internally and with other nations. He thus predicted with full confidence both internal strife and foreign invasion in "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" (WND, 6-32).

We, too, predict the future. We do it all the time. For instance, we can easily predict what will happen tomorrow in the early morning: The sun will rise. This is because we know and have confidence in the laws of gravity and such. We do

not have to be astronomers or psychics to know that the sun will rise tomorrow.

We also predict less obvious things on a daily basis. That an arrogant person has relationship problems, for example, does not really surprise us. We do not have to be Oprah to figure that one out.

The point is that cause and effect is a matter of simple common sense. And with our Buddhist practice, we are able to apply the profound insight that we tap from within to this causal law of life. As our practice develops, we, too, can clearly see many causes and ef-

fects in the present as links to our future. We can see that the present moment encompasses both our past causes and, most importantly, the opportunity to make the greatest causes for our future happiness.

Perceiving the three existences of life is not a matter of speculation or fortunetelling, then. It is a natural ability that we all have as human beings that is strengthened and sustained by abundant chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. When we fully awaken it, this becomes a wellspring of hope and one of the greatest benefits of our faith. **W**

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The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: w t @ s g i - u s a . o r g SGIsubs@aol.com

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

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

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EXPERIENCE — BETH LA MURE, HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

Transforming My Life

Beth La Mure says her Buddhist practice was crucial in helping her learn to trust and 'finally have a healthy, happy marriage, in addition to a great career, financial success and a happy family.'

I moved to Los Angeles when I was 20 in search of fame and fortune. Instead, I found Buddhism, and my real journey toward true happiness began.

I grew up one of seven children in Roswell, New Mexico. My father was a doctor and my mother a housewife. On the surface, we were the perfect family — wealthy, healthy and fun. However, that was a complete façade. My father was an alcoholic and mentally, physically and sexually abusive to his children. My mother was emotionally unavailable to us and always stood behind my father and his authority. Being very religious, she thought that her prayers could change the family.

Most of my older siblings ran away from home. At 16, after a failed attempt at suicide, I had had enough and left home, too, and still graduated high school with honors. However, I had developed eating disorders — anorexia and bulimia. I went on to college but dropped out and moved around for a while before ending up in Los Angeles.

In 1986, determined to make a new start in L.A., I immediately got a job as a receptionist at a TV production company. However, when yet another boyfriend dumped me because I was too unstable, I ended up depressed and in the depths of my eating disorder. Seeing my suffering, a girl at work introduced me to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Buddhism was very strange to me since I was raised in a very conservative Catholic home. The possibility of becoming happy sounded too good to be true, but I tried chanting anyway, never expecting it would help.

Within two weeks of chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, I overcame my eating disorder. At first I didn't believe it be-

cause I had struggled with it since age 15. I had gone to therapy, had friends intervene and prayed and prayed to overcome it but to no avail. But, through chanting, I never suffered from bulimia or anorexia again.

I continued to chant and was amazed at how much better I felt day to day, since I had been depressed with thoughts of suicide for the previous six months. Insomnia and panic attacks went away, too. Within two months, my best friend who had been worried about me becoming a Buddhist began chanting herself because of the changes she saw in my life.

My understanding of the profundity of this religion grew over time. I talked with someone who had more experience in the practice about my desire to develop a relationship. She asked me about my family and when I told her that I no longer spoke to my parents, she advised me to chant for their happiness. She said if I wanted a healthy relationship, I needed to resolve my feelings about my parents, in particular, my father. I wanted a boyfriend so badly that I began chanting for my father's happiness. Quite honestly it made me sick. I hated this man. But slowly I began to feel compassion for him and my mother.

After a tremendous amount of planning and chanting, with the help of my six siblings, mother and a counselor, we all confronted my father about his alcoholism and abuse. He agreed to receive treatment at a hospital for six weeks.

The process of rebuilding our family was just beginning when a young man filed a lawsuit against my father for sexual abuse.

I prayed for my father's happiness and protection because I felt he was truly changing, but the result of the trial was a 20-year sentence in a maximum-security prison with no parole. This did not seem like the answer to my prayers and I was extremely discouraged. I was sure he would be killed or at least badly hurt because he was a rich, older white man going to a hard-core prison, but I chanted for his protection anyway. I never thought that prison would be where my father would find happiness, but I persevered in my prayers and ultimately, this turned out to be the best thing for his life.

While in prison, my father helped revitalize an AA program and helped many people in the system. He went from being an arrogant, close-minded tyrant to a compassionate, concerned man. After seven-and-a-half-years, his sentence was overturned and he was released.

My father's change was remarkable to me and I have developed a new relationship with him.

After seven years of Buddhist practice, I felt that I had seen tremendous change, but I still wanted a healthy, happy relationship, financial success and the career of my dreams. I was chanting a lot, studying *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, introducing people to the practice and attending SGI activities; however, certain aspects of my life weren't changing. A senior in faith encouraged me to study SGI President Ikeda's guidance and about the mentor-disciple relationship. To say this was difficult for me was a huge understatement. I could not comprehend how understanding the mentor-disciple relationship or President Ikeda could help me achieve my goals, but I decided to chant about it.

Based on the following passage from President Ikeda, the importance of the mentor-disciple relationship became more clear to me: "Those who have a mentor in life are truly fortunate. The path of mentor and disciple is one that leads to personal development and growth. Those without a mentor may appear free and un beholden to anyone, but without a solid standard or model on which to base themselves, their lives become aimless and wandering" (*Faith into Action*, p. 234).

As I studied more, I could see what an amazing human being President Ikeda was, and how, since age 19, he had dedicated his whole life toward cre-



Photo by DAN BUTTS

Beth La Mure with her husband, Peyton.

ating world peace. I realized that it was my own insecurities and trust issues that had made appreciating President Ikeda's greatness so difficult for me.

During this time, I began working for a music video production company as a representative. This was the kind of job I had always wanted. I was there for three short months, really enjoying my work, when the 1994 earthquake hit.

My place was ruined and I had to move out. Less than a month later, I was hit in a head-on collision by a guy who had no money or insurance. Because I was new to my job, I had no health insurance.

I was in the hospital for two weeks with multiple injuries and feeling completely defeated, but my seniors in faith insisted that I could absolutely win in this situation. It seemed impossible.

However, when I got out of the hospital, I made a strong determination to transform my life. I was living at my friend's house on her couch. I had no money, was \$60,000 in debt with medical bills and had lost my job. I felt hopeless, but I realized that this was another opportunity to grow and challenge myself and to chant to find an answer. I couldn't see how there could be a solution but I had no other option. I prayed for hours on end.

After a few weeks and amazing support from people I had worked with in the past, I decided to start my own music video production company. Though I had no money, I had

the contacts and directors needed to do this. It was a tremendous struggle at first, but over the past six years I have built a successful business and made many music videos for some of the biggest bands on MTV. I have paid all my debts and built a solid financial base.

A year after starting my company, I met a director through my work. I normally would not have been interested in him, but through challenging myself I had learned to recognize a person of quality. This was the man I wanted to marry.

On Oct. 3, 1997, Peyton, now my husband, proposed to me and we also closed on our home. I feel that once I really took on the challenge of understanding the mentor-disciple relationship, I made a fundamental step in my inner transformation. I broke through my ego and accepted that I could have a mentor in my life — someone I could trust and learn from. For me, given my upbringing, especially with issues related to men, learning to trust someone about how to live was crucial in being able to finally have a healthy, happy marriage, in addition to a great career, financial success, a lovely home and a happy family. I know that I built this fortune through my Buddhist practice, however, the most important thing I have in my life is a deep joy in living and the realization that in order to grow and receive benefit, I have to be willing to self-reflect and challenge my weaknesses. **WT**

Sample Questions

for the Entrance-level Exam To Be Held April 22

This year's SGI-USA Study Department Entrance-level Examination will be held Sunday, April 22, throughout the country. Actual questions for the exam will be based on the sample questions that follow. The page numbers that appear in parentheses at the end of each question will direct you to where the answer can be found. The actual exam questions will be in multiple-choice format, so this sample test is more difficult than the actual test will be. Also, of the following questions, only 40 to 50 percent will appear on the exam, which is expected to consist of 25 to 35 questions. We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam. Good luck! (The study material for the Entrance-level Examination has been compiled into one booklet—the *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*—for those who don't have the original source materials cited. The booklet is now available at SGI-USA bookstores nationwide. Please see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune* for the study material for the upcoming exam.)

— *The SGI-USA Study Department*

Questions 1–17 are based on *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 13–35 (published by NSIC, 1993 edition; also reprinted in the December 1997 *Living Buddhism*; also in the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 25–49).

Q1: What was the practice that Nichiren Daishonin proclaimed on April 28, 1253? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 15; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 2, pp. 13–14; booklet, p. 26)

Q2: Describe the significance of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution in terms of Nichiren Daishonin's identity. (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 17–18; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 7, pp. 56–59; booklet, pp. 28–29)

Q3: After the attempt to execute Nichiren Daishonin at Tatsunokuchi proved unsuccessful, he was exiled to a cold and forbidding place that he was not expected to return from. What was this place? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19 and *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 8, p. 61; booklet, pp. 29–30)

Q4: What did the Daishonin teach his disciples in response to their discouragement over his exile? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 8, pp. 61–62; booklet, pp. 29–30)

Q5: During the Sado Exile, the Daishonin completed the theoretical foundation of his teachings. What two works written during this period established the theoretical framework for his inscription of the object of devotion? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 21; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 8, pp. 68–69; booklet, p. 35)

Q6: Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly stated in his writings that a Buddha is what? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 18; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 7, p. 58; booklet, p. 29)

Q7: After what event did Nichiren Daishonin start inscribing the Gohonzon? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 94; booklet, p. 34)

Q8: The inscription of "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" and "Nichiren" on the Gohonzon indicates what principle? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 95; booklet, p. 35)

Q9: Following a Chinese proverb that says if one's warnings go unheeded three times by the sovereign, one should leave the country, the Daishonin retired to Mount Minobu and prepared for the great task of eternalizing his Buddhism. Retirement did not mean a life of leisure for the Dai-

shonin. What three things did he do at this time? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 25; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 10, pp. 84–85; booklet, p. 38)

Q10: To foster the faith of the disciples he was training at Mount Minobu, the Daishonin gave an important series of lectures. What were these lectures on, and under what name did Nikko Shonin set them down in writing? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 24–27; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 10, p. 89; booklet, p. 38)

Q11: In what way did the behavior of the Daishonin's followers after the persecutions surrounding Tatsunokuchi and the Sado Exile differ from their behavior following the Atsuhara Persecution? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 29; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 94; booklet, p. 40)

Q12: What activity by Nichiren Daishonin's followers caused the authorities to persecute them? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 27; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 11, p. 90; booklet, p. 39)

Q13: Who did Nichiren Daishonin name as his legitimate successor? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 32; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 12, p. 106; booklet, p. 45)

Q14: Why did five of the six senior priests abandon the Daishonin's teachings after he died? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 112; booklet, p. 47)

Q15: What slanderous acts did the five senior priests commit? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 112; booklet, p. 47)

Q16: Why did Nikko Shonin leave Mount Minobu and establish Taiseki-ji temple near the foot of Mount Fuji? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34) and (*The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 113; booklet, p. 47)

Q17: What was Nikko Shonin's purpose in writing "The Twenty-six Admonitions"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 35; *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, Chapter 13, p. 114; booklet, pp. 47–48)

Questions 18–32 are based on 'On Attaining Buddhahood'; *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-level Textbook*, pp. 6–31; the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 3–9.

Q18: How do the Daishonin's teachings about the Mystic Law differ from the views of most other religions? (Textbook, p. 10; booklet, p. 4)

Q19: What does it mean to "perceive the nature of your own life"? (Textbook, p. 21; booklet, p. 6)

Q20: What is the Daishonin trying to illustrate by using the analogy of a poor man counting his neighbor's wealth day and night? (Textbook, p. 21; booklet, p. 6)

Q21: What attitude will lead us to feel that our practice is an "endless, painful austerity"? (Textbook, p. 23; booklet, p. 6–7)

Q22: What constitutes the attitudes of non-Buddhists according to this letter? (Textbook, pp. 22–23; booklet, pp. 6)

Q23: What does this letter emphasize as a key element in our Buddhist practice? (Textbook, p. 23; booklet, p. 7)

Q24: What attitude prevents us from experiencing "great joy" in our practice? (Textbook, p. 22; booklet, p. 6)

Questions 25–26 are based on the following passage:

It [the Jomyo Sutra] further states that if the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. (MW-1, 4; WND, 4)

Q25: What Buddhist principle is illustrated by this passage? (Textbook, pp. 26–27; booklet, p. 7)

Q26: What does "the good and evil of our minds" mean? (Textbook, p. 25; booklet, pp. 7–8)

Q27: Where is the Buddha land? (Textbook, p. 25; booklet, p. 7)

Q28: According to Nichiren Daishonin, what beliefs constitute inferior teachings? (Textbook, p. 21; booklet, pp. 5–6)

Q29: When would chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo still be considered practicing provisional teachings? (Textbook, p. 20; booklet, p. 5)

Q30: The Daishonin teaches us that when chanting to the Gohonzon we should "summon up deep conviction that _____." (Textbook, p. 23; booklet, p. 7)

Q31: What action of Buddhist practice does the Daishonin compare to polishing a mirror? (Textbook, p. 29; booklet, p. 4)

Q32: According to this letter, what is "the direct path to enlightenment"? (Textbook, p. 9; booklet, p. 4)

Questions 33–41 are based on 'The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon'; *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-level Textbook*, pp. 32–53; the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 10–16.

Questions 33–34 are based on the following passage:

Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions.... The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, "Only with faith can one

enter Buddhahood.” (MW-1, 213; WND, 832)

Q33:
What is Nichiren Daishonin urging us to seek within our own lives? (Textbook, p. 39; booklet, pp. 12–13)

Q34:
What is the meaning of the passage “The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life’s functions”? (Textbook, p. 42; booklet, p. 14)

Q35:
No one has unwavering faith from the outset. How can we define faith at the beginning of our practice? (Textbook, p. 49; booklet, p. 15)

Q36:
When we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon we experience the interaction of the four powers. Two of the four powers are 1) the power of the Buddha and 2) the power of the Law. How can we activate the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law in our own lives? (Textbook, p. 41; booklet, p. 13)

Q37:
Shakyamuni’s disciple Shariputra was considered to be the “foremost in wisdom,” yet even he could not attain enlightenment through his wisdom. How did he attain enlightenment? (Textbook, p. 46)

Q38:
Even though doubts are natural and unavoidable, it is important to strive for doubt-free faith. Instead of worrying or tormenting ourselves, what should we do when we have feelings of doubt or insincerity in our practice? (Textbook, p. 51; booklet, p. 15)

Q39:
What two actions express faith in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism? (Textbook, pp. 51–52; booklet, pp. 15–16)

Q40:
What point is the Daishonin trying to teach us in this writing through the examples of the Emperor of Han and Li Kuang? (Textbook, pp. 51–52; booklet, p. 16)

Q41:
Down the center of the Gohonzon, inscribed in Chinese characters, are the words “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren.” What Buddhist principle does this indicate (include the component parts of that principle)? (Textbook, p. 38; booklet, p. 11)



Members take the Entrance-level Examination at the Seattle Culture Center, April 30, 2000.

Questions 42–54 are based on ‘Happiness in This World’; December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*, pp. 7–13; *Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 233–246; the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, p. 12).

Q42:
How can we elevate our inner life-condition? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 235–236; booklet, pp. 17–18)

Q43:
Why does Nichiren Daishonin state that “There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 7–8; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 235–237; booklet, p. 17–18).

Q44:
What enables us to experience the “joy derived from the Law”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8–9; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 237–238; booklet, p. 18)

Q45:
How is “joy derived from the Law” different from the “joy derived from desires”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8–9; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 237; booklet, p. 18)

Q46:
Why is attributing the cause of our happiness or unhappiness to someone else contradictory to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 237; booklet, p. 18)

Q47:
Practicing with what determination in our Buddhist practice contributes to the develop-

ment of our state of life? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8–9; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 237–238; booklet, pp. 18–19)

Q48:
How does the phrase “Happy and at ease” relate to our lives? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 236; booklet, p. 19)

Q49:
What does it mean to be a Buddha of absolute freedom? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 10; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 239–240; booklet, pp. 19–20)

Q50:
What does achieving “peace and security” mean? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 11; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 241; booklet, p. 20)

Q51:
What is the Buddhist understanding of “life’s hardships”? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 12–13; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 244; booklet, pp. 20–21)

Q52:
Why does Nichiren Daishonin tell Shijo Kingo to “strengthen your faith more than ever”? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 13; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 246; booklet, p. 22)

Q53:
What is the meaning of Nichiren Daishonin’s advice to Shijo Kingo to “just chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, and when you drink sake, stay at home with your wife”? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 12; *Learning From the Gosho*, pp. 243–244; booklet, p. 21)

Q54:
What is the purpose of our

practice of faith? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7; *Learning From the Gosho*, p. 233; booklet, p. 17)

Questions 55–66 are based on ‘Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue’ — Questions 55–59 are based on the “Introduction” from the temple issue pamphlet and from the December 1997 *Living Buddhism*, pp. 36–41; the booklet *SGI-USA Study Department Entrance Exam Study Material*, pp. 53–60.

Q55:
What is it about the nature of Buddhism that challenges those interested in passivity and unquestioning obedience from believers? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36; booklet, p. 53)

Q56:
What passage from the Lotus Sutra regarding persecutions applies directly to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36; booklet, p. 53)

Q57:
How does Buddhism characterize opposition by authority? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 37; booklet, p. 54)

Q58:
What is the meaning of obstacles to our Buddhist movement? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 36–37; booklet, p. 54)

Q59:
What does opposition from the priesthood mean to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 37–38; booklet, p. 55)

Questions 60–62 are based on question 2 in the temple issue pamphlet: “Why is it important to know about the temple issue?”

Q60:
How can we benefit by understanding the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38; booklet, p. 55)

Q61:
What is meant by “correct faith”? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38; booklet, p. 56)

Q62:
In terms of the future, why is it important to understand the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38; booklet, p. 55)

Questions 63–66 are based on question 4 in the temple issue pamphlet:

Q63:
What is Nichiren Shoshu’s position on the equality between lay members and priests? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 39; booklet, pp. 57–58)

Q64:
How does Nichiren Shoshu’s view of the Gohonzon contradict Nichiren Daishonin’s view? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 40; booklet, p. 58)

Q65:
Nichiren Daishonin clearly states what it means to receive the heritage or lifeblood of faith. How is Nichiren Shoshu’s view different from the view of the Daishonin? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 40–41; booklet, pp. 58–59)

Q66:
How does Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI differ in action and commitment to kosen-rufu? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 41; booklet, pp. 59–60)

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SGI-USA Study Department guidelines, materials and information for 2001 exams are now available online at www.sgi-usa.org, in the SGI-USA Activities section.
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FROM NEW YORK, 1

behind these efforts, Chief Petty Officer Rene Geysler, to the practice 16 years ago.

Throughout the meeting, spirited youth division members performed, beginning with 75 Boys and Girls Group members fearlessly singing "Climb Every Mountain." The New Jersey Youth Band with dancers vigorously performed "Ichinen." And the New England youth division enthusiastically jammed on "Victory Over Violence."

One hundred members of the New York junior high and high school division dramatized the Lotus Sutra parable "The Gem in the Robe." The audience was on its feet during dance portions of the skit that included New York City-style breakdancing. Many of these performers were guests who had been invited to participate by their friends.

In his encouragement, Mr. Na-

gashima shared President Ikeda's recent guidance that "now is the time that the SGI-USA can grow, can develop, without limit. I am really counting on America. Never forget, America is the center of the worldwide propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism."

Mr. Nagashima emphasized that this process starts with "each of us expanding our lives, achieving our dreams and becoming happier and happier."

He shared that when he became general director about one year ago, he received guidance from President Ikeda to always treasure the members working on the frontlines. To reply, he decided to home visit as many members as possible. From the more than 1,000 visits he made last year, he said that he clearly saw the power of the Gohonzon. "Our members have tremendous conviction toward the Gohonzon," he said. "They have

achieved many, many impossible things. They are the true heroes of our movement."

Mr. Nagashima closed by encouraging each district to determine to introduce one new member to the practice by May 3, 2001, as a positive step toward the beginning of this new era in kosen-rufu history. "Please remember that your victory in your own life is a victory for America," he concluded. "Let's enjoy our benefits. Let's become as happy as we can be."

With this spirit, the Northeastern Zone members are now beginning preparations for their Family Youth Festival, which will mark the 20th anniversary of President Ikeda's poem written in New York, "To My Young American Friends." The festival will be held July 14 at the Madison Square Garden Theater, with 10,000 members and guests from throughout the Northeast participating. **WT**



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima speaks.



New York students enact 'The Gem in the Robe' through storytelling and dance.



The Northeastern Zone Kickoff, held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center, was the largest SGI gathering in New York City since 1986.



Dazzling New York City-style breakdancing gets the crowd on its feet.



Boys and Girls Group members sing 'Climb Every Mountain.'



THANKS TO THE NORTHEASTERN ZONE PHOTOGRAPHERS! Michael Anton, Carol Barnstead, ToniAnn Callwood, Kirk Condyles, Michael Goodman, Hosea Johnson, Debbie Kon and Ramon Rodriguez.



When the auditorium full of members agree to enter through video display.



s enact 'The through dance.

A spirited jazz band greets members and guests.



A Broadway welcome for the arriving members and guests.

Boston members board a bus for New York City early the morning of Jan. 28.



auditorium fills up, hundreds agree to enjoy the meeting video display in the lobby.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE NORTHEASTERN ZONE KICKOFF

A New Era Begins

SGI President Ikeda calls the Northeastern Zone Kickoff 'the beginning of a new era for the United States.... Your passionate spirit and courageous efforts to contribute to your respective areas are, without fail, the impetus for opening a new page for our kosen-rufu movement.'

My sincere congratulations on holding your Northeastern Zone Kickoff! This meeting symbolizes the beginning of a new era for the United States. I understand that there are representatives from five regions gathered today—thank you for traveling such long distances.

I am full of confidence that your passionate spirit and courageous efforts to contribute to your respective areas are, without fail, the impetus for opening a new page for our kosen-rufu movement. My deepest respect to all of you, the Northeastern Zone members, who are walking the path of unlimited happiness.

In "Repaying Debts of Gratitude," Nichiren Daishonin states, "A hundred years of practice in the Land of Perfect Bliss cannot compare to the benefit gained from one day's practice in the impure world" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 736). The fact that we are living our day-to-day existence based on

the Mystic Law in itself proves the great value and happiness of our lives.

The essence of this Buddhism is found in devoting our entire energies to persevere through each day, always looking toward the future. We are setting ourselves on a steady course for accumulating great fortune by vibrantly chanting daimoku filled with joy and appreciation, and by advancing step by step in our lives—no matter what.

In "Letter to Niike," the Daishonin says, "What a joy it is for us to have been born in the Latter Day of the Law and to have shared in the propagation of the Lotus Sutra!" (WND, 1026). Please make the spirit of propagation your firm foundation and enjoy participating in SGI activities with the conviction that your prayers and efforts for the sake of the Law, your friends and your communities will become unlimited, everlasting treasures in your own lives. I hope that you will today begin anew to advance gallantly.

Let's continue helping our many friends establish their own foundation of happiness with this Buddhism. We can see our own lives expand beyond measure through tenacious encouragement of our friends.

When the Northeastern Zone members take action, I believe, the other regions in the United States will follow suit. You will bring about the expansion of happiness throughout the nation with your immense fighting spirit.

I am sending my wholehearted prayers to each and every one of you, who are following the correct path for American kosen-rufu, so that you will overcome every obstacle and establish a new history in this new century.

I am always praying from the depths of my heart for your continued success, victories and good health. Please convey my best regards to your family members. Please take care not to catch cold!

*Daisaku Ikeda
January 28, 2001*



Five thousand members from throughout Northeastern Zone attend their zone kickoff, Jan. 28.

Becoming Happy, Not Perfect

PERSPECTIVE

By **SUSAN McDONOUGH**
OAKLAND, CALIF.

Susan McDonough shares her challenge to believe in herself and become happy — not perfect.

Until recently, I never paid much attention to the idea of valuing myself. I've experimented. I've chanted on occasion to love myself and silently repeated positive affirmations, but when it came to revolutionizing my chronic self-doubt, it always felt too difficult or unnecessary. Besides, I was attached to my self-deprecating ways.

Like anything, not believing in myself had its up sides, too. I always thought it made me sensitive, affable and funny. Undermining myself was my way of getting along with people, and the thought of changing was scary.

Recently, however, various

Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD



things have forced me to reexamine the way I view myself. And through chanting Nichiren

Daishonin, I've had profound insights that I don't think I'd be capable of without my Buddhist practice.

At the end of last year, I began noticing that I sometimes dreaded interacting individually with people, especially people that I didn't know very well. This was particularly evident at SGI-USA meetings. While everybody else seemed to enjoy engaging in casual conversations after the meetings, I had to fight the urge to bolt. I could be friendly and engaging on the surface, but inside I was often in anguish. I realized it was because I felt consumed by whomever was speaking to me. My need for approval took precedence over just being myself. As a result, talking with people was not enjoyable.

Further evidence that something was amiss in the depths of my life came in December. After

14 years of Buddhist practice, I'd changed some of the deepest sources of frustration in my life: I work as a journalist, something that until a few years ago felt impossible. I have an amazing boyfriend whom I managed to meet despite the fact that we lived in cities 3,000 miles apart. And I moved from Buffalo, N.Y., to the San Francisco Bay Area — another lifelong dream. Yet, despite my victories, I still felt plagued by a low-grade unhappiness. No longer able to blame it on my environment, I realized I needed to dig in deeply and get to the source of my feelings.

While chanting with other youth at the East Bay Community Center, I had another significant realization: When I'm in front of the Gohonzon, my underlying prayer is often to be someone else, usually a conglomerate of all the women — real, fictional or imagined — that I've ever admired.

There's a subtle difference between being inspired by others to develop certain areas of your life, and praying unrealistically to be like someone you perceive as perfect or better. One leaves me feeling restored and joyful while the other

leaves me vaguely frustrated.

In *Faith into Action*, SGI President Ikeda writes: "While controlling your mind, which is at once both extremely subtle and solemnly profound, you should strive to elevate your faith with freshness and vigor. When you do so, both your life and surroundings will open wide before you, and every action you take will become a source of benefit. Understanding the subtle workings of one's mind is the key to faith and to attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime" (p. 96).

The idea of controlling the subtle workings of my mind used to scare me. It seemed too difficult to change the way I thought. It was as if I had to "rewire" myself. What's so encouraging is that my Buddhist practice naturally led me to a place where I could consciously work on valuing myself. To me this is proof that through our strong practice, each of us possesses the innate wisdom to become happy. In spite of the subtle distortions of our minds, if we practice consistently our lives lead us to happiness — even if you're a chronic self-doubter, like me. I also realized

that understanding the "subtle workings of one's mind" means refining aspects of our lives, not changing ourselves entirely. The idea of valuing myself these days seems less intimidating because it's coming from my life and not because it's the "right thing" to do.

President Ikeda also says: "Those who advance together with this organization dedicated to kosen-rufu will evolve the correct mind of faith that matches the time. With this mind of faith, you can fill the canvas of your lives with portraits of happiness in which all your wishes are fulfilled" (*Faith into Action*, p. 138).

It's a new century, a new era, and I'm so encouraged that my life is responding naturally to my mentor President Ikeda's wish for the success and happiness of the SGI-USA members. He's called this the Century of Women and I'm determined to greet it unburdened with outdated and ineffective ways of viewing myself. My life must be in perfect rhythm.

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

FROM BUCK, 1

power of hundreds of meetings spearheaded by the youth?

I hope the men and women in each district will support and spotlight the youth at these meetings. Let's team up with them, exploring what will best contribute to these events. What kind of meeting would they plan for their friends? What appeals to them? Let's implement their fresh, new ideas and help

them to take the lead.

We can also reach out directly to young people whose parents practice, or the children of our co-workers and neighbors, and invite them to these youth-sponsored meetings. In districts where there are no young members, we can invite young people from other districts to participate. Remind them how special they are.

After all, no matter how you look at it, the youth around you

are the leaders of your future. You can make a difference now. President Ikeda voices his expectation: "Youth, my life's treasure, who will shoulder the full responsibility for the twenty-first century! Stand up with me! Even if it's just one of you, stand up and be a lion!" (April 14, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 8).

I hope the youth can look back on March 2001 as their turning point. Let's do all we can to support this moment. **WT**

FROM HASAN, 1

I believe this is the key: When we entrust the youth, they will respond and vibrantly practice based on their own convictions. We can all contribute to this great cause for raising future generations. SGI President Ikeda is already thinking about the third set of seven bells to start in 2051, and the youth of today will be passing the baton on to the next generation at that time.

For this reason, the SGI-USA national leaders have asked the men's and women's leaders across the country to fully entrust the youth to plan

and lead the monthly discussion meetings in March as introductory meetings for guests.

Entrusting does not mean to stand back and watch, but rather to support from behind and ensure that the meetings will be a success while giving the youth great latitude and responsibility. They may have many creative ideas that we think are not right, but as long as they do not go against the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, then let's support them.

It can be hard to let someone else take responsibility when we can do it ourselves because of our experience. But now is the time to let thousands of youth

blossom in our country. I feel this is the best way we can reply to President Ikeda's dreams for the United States. **WT**

SGI-USA On The Web!

For information about SGI-USA, please visit our official Web site at www.sgi-usa.org. The site includes information on the organization's activities, history and publications, as well as an introduction to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

JOIN THE CLASS OF 2002 AT SUA, CALABASAS

Now in its seventh year, Soka University of America's graduate school in Calabasas, Calif., is accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education for the 2001-02 academic year.

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.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 25-26

'Japan is still a male-dominated society — but Japan, too, will have to change eventually,' says Shin'ichi Yamamoto at a young women's meeting. 'It will be up to women to make that happen by refusing to accept the traditional role that Japanese society has assigned to them.'

Immediate difficulties often severely diminish a person's dreams. But Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova refused to give up. She spent even her free time studying, staying up late night after night. She would persistently question her instructors and seniors in the program about points she did not understand until she grasped them to her satisfaction. Without uttering a complaint, she tenaciously kept pace with the strict cosmonaut training. Even Major Gagarin, who had made that first historic flight into space aboard *Vostok 1*, was impressed and moved by her diligence.

Valentina was a thoughtful and loving person who, despite her demanding routine, managed to send money and letters to her mother on a regular basis. Her kindness and flexibility were accompanied by an iron will.

Just as a flower blossoms after enduring the bitter cold of winter, a dream can only be realized if one is willing to endure the accompanying trials and put forth the necessary effort. The bright smile that Valentina showed the world from inside the cabin of *Vostok 6* surely expressed her genuine satisfaction at having given her all to achieving her chosen goal.

Valentina was a subject of great interest among the young women's division members of the Soka Gakkai. At a meeting between Shin'ichi Yamamoto and leaders of the young women's division at the Seikyo Shimbun offices, the conversation turned to the first female cosmonaut.

"Ms. Tereshkova has shown the women of the world that a woman is capable of piloting a spacecraft," said Shin'ichi. "She has helped usher in a new age in which women will play

the leading roles in society.

"Japan is still a male-dominated society — but Japan, too, will have to change eventually. It will be up to women to make that happen by refusing to accept the traditional role that Japanese society has assigned to them.

"Indeed, there are many problems with the way men treat women, but I believe that if women wish to improve their status in society, they must be prepared to do their absolute best at any given job, working even harder than the men.

"Toward this end, it is crucial to have a solid perspective on life, a firm philosophy about how to live."

To this, Michiyo Watari, leader of the young women's division, responded: "Sensei, I hope you will consider establishing a set of guidelines for the YWD in this regard. Until now, we have used the youth division guidelines set forth by President Toda, 'Precepts for Youth' and 'Youth, Be Patriotic!' Of course, the fundamental spirit of these is the same for both men and women, but I think guidelines that specifically address the way young women should live would be very useful."

"I see," Shin'ichi said. "I agree; such guidelines are needed. Let me think about it. I will introduce something new when the time is right."

Two months later, the September *Daibyakurenge* magazine carried an editorial Shin'ichi had written titled "To the Young Women's Division," outlining the sort of guidelines that Watari had suggested.

On June 20, Shin'ichi Yamamoto flew to Kagoshima and Miyazaki Prefectures in



Kyushu to encourage the members there. That afternoon he attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the Kagoshima Community Center, to be built in the Kamoike-cho district of Kagoshima City. At 7:00 p.m., he attended the Kagoshima General Chapter Leaders Meeting held at the Municipal Central Public Hall. The next day, June 21, he headed for the island Amami Oshima. His main goal on this trip to Kyushu was to encourage the members living in the Amami group of islands.

Shin'ichi was very concerned for his fellow members who were striving to practice Buddhism in this isolated archipelago. Not only were their means of transportation limited but some of the islands were without medical care, or even electricity. Their livelihoods were also at the mercy of the weather; typhoons or other storms could cut them off from life's essentials. Long spells of dry heat would leave many of the islands without drinking water.

Old customs and traditions were also strongly rooted there. Trying to spread Nichiren Daisshonin's Buddhism under these circumstances proved to be quite a challenge.

Shin'ichi had wanted to visit and encourage members who

were living on remote islands since becoming president. He firmly believed that it was his mission to offer the most encouragement, support and praise to the members who had suffered the most. However, there were many things he had to take care of, and as the days and months passed he only became busier. Still, he managed to squeeze some time out of his schedule and plan a trip to Amami Oshima.

Outside of the large main Islands of the Japanese archipelago, Amami Oshima was the third largest Japanese island, after the islands of Okinawa and Sado. It was also the largest in the Amami island chain. In Japan's medieval period, the Amami Islands were part of the Ryukyu Kingdom, but at the beginning of the seventeenth century, after the defeat of the Ryukyus by Shimazu Iehisa, they fell under the control of the Satsuma domain.

Toward the end of the Edo Period, in particular, these islands were subject to severe oppression under feudal rule, and their inhabitants were forced to grow sugar cane and process sugar as tribute. The heavy taxes and hard labor caused them to suffer terribly.

During the Pacific War, Amami Oshima was the target

of intense bombings by U.S. forces, and some ninety percent of the island's capital of Naze was reduced to ashes. After Japan's defeat, Amami Oshima came under U.S. military rule. Okinawa, also under U.S. rule, had become a U.S. protectorate and military bases covering vast areas of land were built there because of its strategic location. Amami Oshima, however, was left on its own, lacking sufficient investment to aid in its post-war reconstruction.

With its trade severely stifled, the production of local products such as sugar and Oshima *tsumugi* (pongee, a soft thin cloth woven from raw silk) declined, and the island's economy fell into a severe recession. It was against this backdrop that a movement to aid in the islands to Japan began to grow among the residents.

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

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 7 SPEECH—PART 2

New Initiatives in New Places

'To undertake initiatives in new areas or in places that are out of the limelight,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'and there forge expanding centers of peace, is the wisdom and struggle of great commanders, of brilliant leaders. I want SGI leaders to be trailblazers who forge a new history.'

Part 2 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 1st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 7.



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the 1st Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 7.

Over the years, I have written proposals on many subjects. Now, in commemoration of SGI Day, Jan. 26, an English-language compilation of my thoughts from various peace proposals and addresses will be published by Middleway Press in the United States, making them widely available to readers around the world now and for the future.

The book's title is *For the Sake of Peace: Seven Paths to Global Harmony, A Buddhist Perspective*. The seven paths are the path of self-mastery, the path of dialogue and tolerance, the path of community and human solidarity, the path of culture, the path of building nations committed to peace, the path of global awareness and the path of disarmament.

Put your heart and soul into everything you do.

Dr. Glenn D. Paige, noted peace scholar and professor emeritus of political science of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, contributed a most gracious foreword to the book. He shares that he first encountered my pacifist ideals in a small English-language booklet of my addresses compiled by Soka University students back in the university's early days. [The booklet, titled *Toward the 21st Century: Addresses by Daisaku*

Ikeda, contained speeches related to the founding spirit of Soka University that were delivered between 1968 and 1977.]

This slim volume, the product of bright, enthusiastic students, touched and inspired many people, changing their thinking and outlook. My thanks again to all those who were involved in this project.

You never know what will move history or serve as a powerful driving force. Work into which you put your heart and soul is so important.

Dr. Paige says in the foreword that he was especially inspired to learn of the pacifist spirit and motto of Soka University through this booklet. As a scholar who was educated in world-class private institutions with religious roots, including Princeton and Harvard universities, he was struck by the principles of independence and intellectual freedom upheld by Soka University, an institution that refuses to be dominated by religious dogmas.

In the conclusion of his foreword, Dr. Paige writes: "Like all major peace figures in history, he [SGI President Ikeda] has encountered opposition as well as received support. The

path to peace has not been and will not be easy. But as he advises, 'Never be defeated!' ... The courage, clarity and informed nature of his call to follow 'The Path of Disarmament' contrasts greatly with the silence or contrary advocacy by political leaders of today's major military states. For this alone respectful readers may wish to award him a people's peace prize for the twenty-first century" (p. xiii).

I am humbled by this generous assessment. My unceasing efforts for peace have been driven by a passionate resolve to prove the greatness of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, who gave their lives for the cause of peace. Dr. Paige has shown profound empathy for this solemn spirit of mentor and disciple.

I am determined to continue making various proposals for the sake of the future, so that we can realize an age of peace and an age of education.

The SGI's great diversity cannot be found elsewhere.

Joyous SGI New Year's gongyo meetings were held at

the start of the year throughout Japan and the world. The members in Boston, too—world capital of intellect and birthplace of the American Renaissance—gathered together in high spirits on New Year's Day. And Dr. Elise Boulding, the world-renowned peace researcher and activist, joined the members. The 80-year-old Dr. Boulding is a pioneering scholar of peace studies and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990. She is also the recipient of the SGI-affiliated Boston Research Center for the 21st Century's first Global Citizen Award, in 1995.

Seeing the liveliness and joy of the SGI members, Dr. Boulding said that such a diverse group of people from different ethnic backgrounds gathering together to celebrate the new year could not be found anywhere else. This was another sign, she said, that the SGI was a peace organization.

Dr. Boulding has worked with the SGI for many years, giving early recognition to the peace activities of the Soka Gakkai's women's division. [As early as 1984, Dr. Boulding visited the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Japan and met with

women's representatives.]

In a recent interview in a Japanese women's magazine, Dr. Boulding said: "History until now has placed too much emphasis on the culture of war. From now on, we have to shed light on the hidden and forgotten culture of peace. The same can be said about religion. In that respect, the SGI is an outstanding example of a group in the faith community that has a very clear vision of how the teachings need to be interpreted and transmitted."

"I deeply admire the contributions President Ikeda has made to world peace by making these teachings available through the establishment of various educational and peace research institutes. In particular, the Soka Gakkai's promotion of music and the arts shows great foresight."

With the teachings of Buddhism as its foundation, the SGI has spread a movement of education, peace and culture throughout the world. One of the world's leading intellectual lights sees our activities clearly, with great perception, saying that we are setting a good example in the faith community.

Talking face to face is very important.

Dr. Boulding also acknowledges the importance of small group discussions, such as our SGI discussion meetings, saying that they promote the culture of peace.

This is an important point. The key lies not in big meetings, not in public addresses before a vast audience, but in small groups, in discussions where everyone talks face to face and really communicates.

Even past the age of 70, Mr. Makiguchi attended discussion meetings. I am sure he would sternly rebuke any SGI leader who scorns or skips discussion meetings.

This January, marking the start of the Century of Women, the women are holding high-spirited general meetings throughout the country as small group discussions. I believe the women's vigorous efforts are symbolic of the animated development the Soka Gakkai will achieve in the 21st century.

Nichiren Daishonin cites this sutra passage: "If you want

to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 279). Our resolve and actions at this present moment determine everything in the future. Our present resolve and actions will decide the future of our kosen-rufu movement. They will decide all future victories. Therefore, I pray for the great success of the women's small group general meetings.

Women must be valued more in the world.

Who was the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize? The social activist Jane Addams. She received this prestigious award 70 years ago, in 1931—the year after the Soka Gakkai's founding.

Basing her activities in the local community, Addams took up the challenge of strengthening government welfare services for mothers and children. She was a

pioneer who advocated peace education and campaigned for women's suffrage. The life of this great woman serves as an outstanding model for us all. [In 1889, Addams established Hull House, a neighborhood social welfare center, or "settlement house," dedicated to serving the needs of working-class immigrants in a crowded Chicago neighborhood. It became a center of social and cultural exchange for the poor residents of the community. Similar welfare facilities were later opened in other cities across the United States. Addams also was involved in a drive to clean up political corruption. When the Spanish-American War of 1898 broke out, she announced her unwavering commitment to pacifism. She conducted peace activities on a global scale and called for women around the world to unite together for peace.]

Addams maintained that women's suffrage was an indispensable requirement for the realization of a peaceful society, asserting that war was unlikely to happen in a society where women share civic responsibility with men.

"When women stand up, war will disappear! True peace will arrive!" This was her belief. Addams' message has deep meaning for us today. Women must be valued more. I want the men to respect and cooperate with women and stand up together with them.

I ask the members of the women's and young women's divisions to pursue cheerfully and patiently the path of dialogue, talking to many people and fostering friendship in their local communities.

Again, small places, small gatherings are important. Big cities, big meetings may be more exciting and interesting—and leaders may find them easier to go to—but the far greater and more crucial challenge is cultivating solid ties of trust and friendship in places where there are few or no members. Making steady efforts in this sphere will open the way to a century of humanism.

To undertake initiatives in new areas or in places that are out of the limelight, and there forge expanding centers of peace, is the wisdom and struggle of great commanders, of brilliant leaders. I want SGI leaders to be trailblazers who forge a new history.

Let's bring the flowers of friendship to bloom.

The garden of the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall encompasses an area that has been known since olden times as Plum Fields and is famous for its plum blossoms. Plum blossoms, braving the harsh winter cold to bloom before all other flowers, are exceptionally lovely.

In commemoration of today's meeting, I dedicate the following poems to the women's division members:

*In the bitter winter
Already victorious
The plum blossoms*



*Having conquered
The bitter winter
Plum blossoms bloom*

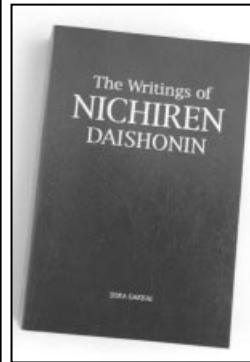


*Plum blossoms
Heralding the joy of spring
In the bitter winter*

I hope that all of you will bring fragrant flowers of hope, friendship and happiness to bloom beautifully in your local communities and regions through heart-to-heart dialogue.

To be continued in the March 2 issue

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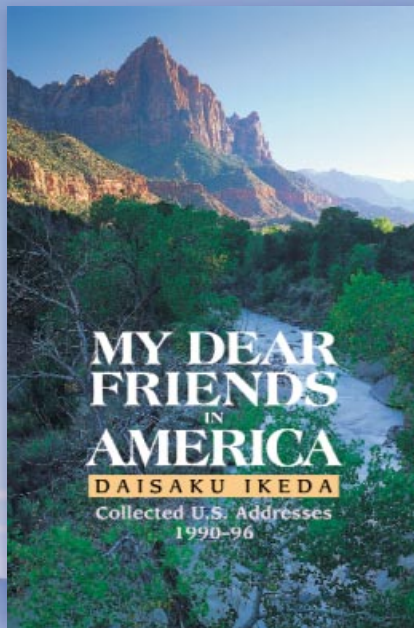
Creating the Future

From This Speech:

Nichiren Daishonin cites this sutra passage: "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 279). Everything in the future is determined by our resolve and actions at this present moment. Our present resolve and actions will decide the future of our kosen-rufu movement. They will decide all future victories.

- 1) What does "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present" mean? What is a good example of this in society? What is a good example of this in your own life?
- 2) What does "If you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" mean? What is a good example of this in society? What is a good example of this in your own life?
- 3) What kind of world do you want this to be in the future? What kind of country do you want America to be? What resolve and actions do you need to have now to make this happen?
- 4) What kind of life do you want to have in the future? What are the biggest dreams you are fighting for? What resolve and actions do you need to have now to make them happen?
- 5) How can we strengthen our resolve and actions for kosen-rufu today? What do you think the kosen-rufu movement will be like in the future if we do?

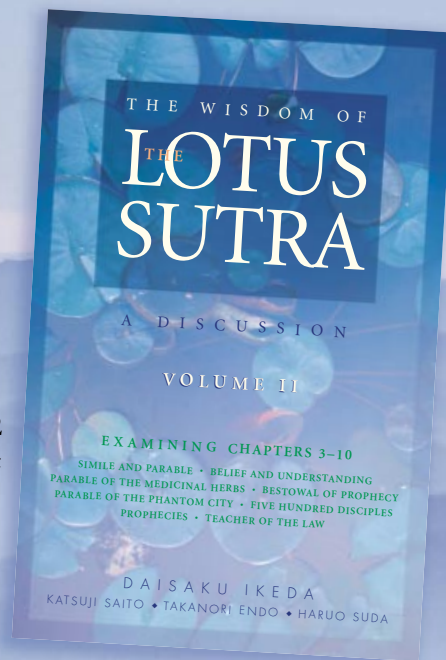
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