

SECOND ANNUAL NEW YORK WOMEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE

One's Heart Can Transform Everything

By YUKO K. GROVER, HELEN YOUNG and DEBRA KANTER
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

On the morning of Feb. 3, approximately 1,500 members and guests all bundled up with scarves, hats and earmuffs hurried through the door of the SGI-USA New York Culture Center, where they found not only heat, but a warm welcome and beaming smiles. Here they arrived at the 2nd annual Women's Health Conference sponsored by the SGI-USA New York women's division. The conference's theme was "Creating Emotional and Mental Well-being From a Buddhist Perspective."

The conference offered a full day of lectures and workshops. The morning session started

with a presentation titled "The Buddhist Perspective on the Fundamental Cause of Illness." The extensive discussion ranged from the historical Western view of the relationship between women and mental health to Buddhist concepts of the six causes of illness and the nine consciousnesses.

The informative studies were then highlighted by two faith experiences by SGI-USA members, both of whom overcame mental illness. The presentation constantly emphasized the balance between attaining spiritual strength and obtaining correct information based on common sense and a never-give-up spirit. As one of the presenters, Dr. Brenda Aiken-Thompson, asserted: "Being healthy is our responsi-

bility. You cannot afford to flirt with illness. We all have a mission. We may occasionally become ill; but we should never allow illness to defeat us."

In the special lecture titled "Depression, Nichiren Buddhism and Empowerment," Kathleen Olesky used the Buddhist concept of the nine consciousnesses to provide an in-depth explanation of the relationship between one's mind and depression. Specifically, she stressed that becoming a bodhisattva and helping others are crucial to one's mental health. She explained that bodhisattva practice helps one transform the causes of one's suffering into acts of self-lib-

Photo by GINGER NEWBY



A mother and daughter decide which workshop to attend at the 2nd annual Women's Health Conference, held Feb. 3 at the New York Culture Center.

PLEASE SEE CONFERENCE, 11

MESSAGE FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA

Two Months Until May 3

Congratulations to all of you on the splendid success of the women's commemorative meetings held across the country in February!

The long-awaited May 3, 2001, is now fast approaching. On this significant day, we will celebrate the dedication of the Aliso Viejo campus of Soka University of America.

At a New Year's Gongyo Meeting, SGI President Ikeda said, "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" (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 11).



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima greets members at the Northeastern Zone Kickoff in New York, Jan. 28.

Taking his words to heart, we have begun to raise the curtain of the new century together

with our mentor, launching our remarkable advancement.

Now the excitement of

sharing Buddhism with friends is spreading, and we are seeing steady growth because of the relentless efforts of the youth, the sincere prayers of the women's division members for their friends to become absolutely happy and the warm encouragement of the men's division.

With the goal of welcoming one new member into each district by the end of May, I am determined to put my entire being into taking action and striving together with all of you.

We will also soon hold our May commemorative contribution activity, which will help further advance our kosen-rufu movement in the United States. The May contributions have become a

wonderful tradition in the SGI-USA, which many of you look forward to each year. I hope that you will encourage your fellow members to participate in making contributions and enable as many people as possible to gain limitless fortune in their lives by engaging in dialogue about the significance of making sincere offerings.

Most important, let us unite and work together with the members in our groups, districts, areas and regions, and continue to build a model organization of the world, alongside our women's leader, Matilda Buck, men's leader, Tariq Hasan, and youth leader, James Herrmann.

Toward this May, let's experience many victories and ring in the next series of Seven Bells starting from America, with the happiness of each member as our foundation so that we can welcome President Ikeda and Mrs. Ikeda to the United States sometime this year! **WT**

The Oneness of Mind and Body

Back to the Basics

By MARK KORAL
LOS ANGELES

The field of psychosomatic medicine today is continuing to shed new light on the profound interrelationship of mind and body. Studies have proven that emotional factors give rise to physical changes in the body. At the same time, physical stresses can greatly affect a person's emotional state.

The philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism goes further to reveal this relationship as the oneness of mind and

body. The word *oneness* here is translated from the Japanese Buddhist term *funi*, meaning two but not two. The idea is that mind and body are two in their phenomenal aspect but one in their essential aspect or essence.

Perhaps we can understand this inseparable unity of matter and spirit more deeply through the analogy of an iceberg floating in the ocean. We could think of the tip of the iceberg showing above the water's surface and the invisible large mass below the water as two separate phenomena, each being part of the same iceberg and functioning in a different way.

The unseen mass below, responding to undercurrents and exerting a constant influence on the ice above, would correspond to the mind. The ice

sticking out from the water would correspond to the body, its physical appearance revealing continuous changes affected by whatever is happening below. Part of the iceberg is below the water, and part is above it, but they are in fact the same iceberg.

It is the same thing with human beings. Our mind is invisible. But behind our physical appearance, our mind is generating various forces both conscious and unconscious that are reflected in continuous physical changes. Our mind and body are really different expressions of the same individual self.

Moreover, just as the iceberg's surface above the water and mass below are inseparable from the sea itself, our mind and body is an individual ex-

pression of and inseparable from the greater life of the entire universe.

Through our practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism, we can harmonize our mind and body with the boundless sea of our total environment. We are able to connect with the underlying, all-inclusive essence of the universe, the Mystic Law, and express it in our daily lives as an awesome fighting spirit to win happiness for ourselves and others. "This fighting spirit, this unswerving commitment," SGI President Ikeda explains, "makes a person's body and mind, a person's life, healthy" (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 10).

The Daishonin's teaching of the oneness of mind and body is, then, a most profound teaching of human health. In his

"Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," the Daishonin explains that in Buddhist practice, "devotion of one's life means both the physical law of life and the spiritual law of life. The ultimate principle reveals that these two laws are an inseparable aspect of every single life" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708).

This supreme principle was actualized by the Daishonin in the form of the Gohonzon, which he inscribed for all people's happiness. By chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the Gohonzon, we are able to draw on the infinite Mystic Law that underlies the microcosm of our being and the entire universe, thereby infusing our mind and body with Buddhahood, the most powerful harmony and joy. **WT**

Putting Respect Into Action

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.

My disciples, know this! I am the votary of the Lotus Sutra. Since I follow in the footsteps of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, those who despise and slander me will have their heads broken into seven pieces, while those who believe in me will amass good fortune as high as Mount Calm and Bright. (WND, pp. 641-42)

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging appears in the 20th chapter of the Lotus Sutra to propagate Buddhism through bowing in deepest respect toward all people, toward their innate Buddhahood. However, in spite of his altruistic practice, people ridicule and attack him. Although they fall into hell for this slander, after expiating the negative effects they have made, they are again reborn with him and attain Buddhahood by practicing the correct Law.

This story and the above quotation illustrate the two principles of benefit and punishment in Buddhism. In fact, both the ideas of benefit and punishment are written on either side of the Gohonzon. Based on the law of causality, the good cause of embracing the Gohonzon will be rewarded with benefit, while the bad cause of slandering it will generate negative reward or punishment.

We need not be overly anxious about punishment, since the very act of carrying out our Buddhist practice is the greatest good cause we can make. At the same time, though, if we discontinue this practice we neglect the seed of Buddhahood in our lives. Neglecting our true selves in this way ultimately leads to negative effects.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The heart of the Buddha's lifetime of teachings is the Lotus Sutra, and the heart of the practice of the Lotus Sutra is found in the 'Never Disparaging' chapter. What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being" (WND, 851-52). As this passage indicates, Buddhism teaches people how to conduct themselves as human beings, how to accumulate lasting happiness. The sure path to do so is found in the behavior of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, in making his intent our own. That intent is expressed in our respect for others.

But this respect is not simply based on emotion. We must take action through dialogue. SGI President Ikeda explains: "We tell others about Buddhism because, fundamentally, we generate their lives. If, on the other hand, we had the attitude 'Even if I tell this person about Buddhism, it couldn't possibly do them any good,' then we simply would not bother talking to them. ... Because we trust the person, we can conduct tenacious dialogue" (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and*

"Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, p. 85).

The Daishonin's declaration "I am the votary of the Lotus Sutra" is a call from the depths of his life to each of us. "I know the ultimate path for living as a human being," he is saying. He is challenging us, his disciples, to dedicate our lives, too, to this ultimate path. **WT**

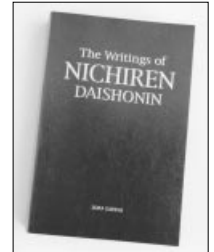


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EXPERIENCE—VALERIE KURITA, NEW YORK

'NOT MY SON, NO WAY'

Valerie Kurita determined that mental illness would not dictate her son's future—no matter what the doctors said.

A few years ago, my youngest son, Julian, went off to college. I had the normal concerns of seeing my son off, but was confident that this was an important step in his life. Although Julian didn't practice much while he lived at home, he became so unhappy during his freshman year that he began to practice Buddhism with extreme desperation. I later learned that in his case, this was a symptom of something more serious.

Julian had always been a well-liked, easygoing person. Yet at one point, we became concerned. He was becoming very angry and critical of everyone in our family. I was on the receiving end of hourlong, long-distance telephone harangues. At times, though he insisted otherwise, I thought he was taking drugs because he seemed so unlike the boy we knew. Finally, Julian's roommate (also his young men's leader) and his women's chapter leader told me about the seriousness of his condition. Julian was acting strangely at discussion meetings.

I flew to Madison, Wisc., and brought Julian home to New York. Concerned that he might be a danger to himself and others, we took him to the hospital. Once there, we were horrified to learn that his diagnosis was schizo-affective disorder. To my dismay and disbelief, my son would have to be admitted to the psychiatric ward.

Julian was released from the hospital after about three weeks. There was very little instruction from the doctors about the care of my newly diagnosed mentally ill son. For about one year from the time I brought him home, I was on 24-hour-a-day suicide watch. We live on the 31st floor of a high-rise apartment building with a balcony. Julian was tortured by voices telling him to jump.

I started to read every book



Valerie Kurita with her son Julian, who is triumphing over mental illness.

I could get my hands on about mental illness. Based on the standard practices of psychiatry in the United States, the outlook was grim. It seemed that Julian would be condemned to a life of revolving medications, underemployment and low expectations. Speaking with many health care professionals, the consensus seemed to be that, other than learning to live with the disease, there was little that could be done.

Members and friends offered support and encouragement for which I was very grateful. However, other than chanting, I knew that they didn't know what to do any more than I did. After recovering from the first shock, I remembered some words from Kaneko Ikeda, wife of SGI President Ikeda, "No matter what happens, never be defeated." I grabbed these words like a lifeline at a time when nothing else made any sense. I also created my own phrase, a little less elegant: "Not my son, no way." I didn't know what to do, so I just

prayed to be pointed in the right direction.

I never chanted for any specific treatment to work. I employed what I call "bottom-line prayer." What did I really want in the most basic terms? Once I decided what my "bottom-line" was, I included it every morning in the fourth prayer, without fail. My bottom-line prayer was, and is, for Julian's complete recovery, for him to become absolutely happy and do everything he wants to in life.

I convinced myself that each setback we experienced meant we were getting closer to our eventual goal. Trusting that my prayer would be answered, I became very intrigued when, in my research, I repeatedly came across the names of Dr. Linus Pauling and Dr. Abram Hoffer, and the term orthomolecular psychiatry. In most books, orthomolecular psychiatry appears on lists of things that don't work. But because President Ikeda has praised the work of Dr. Pauling so frequently, I researched it further.

Briefly, Dr. Hoffer's theory

proposes that, in the body of someone with the tendency, there is an overproduction of adrenaline, which then oxidizes into a mescaline-like substance called adrenochrome. This is the chemical that causes the hallucinations, delusions and paranoia that are the hallmarks of schizophrenia. Unfortunately, every doctor that I questioned about orthomolecular psychiatry stated adamantly that it doesn't work and that there is absolutely no clinical evidence to suggest that it does.

However, I recalled that President Ikeda has suggested that orthomolecular medicine is the medicine for the 21st century. Also, President Ikeda has encouraged us to think independently and not be intimidated by authoritarianism, so I decided to find out for myself. In January 2000, Julian and I traveled to Victoria, British Columbia, to see Dr. Hoffer.

The moment we arrived, I knew we were in the right place. Pictures of Dr. Pauling hung in Dr. Hoffer's reception area. When we met him, I sensed he was a very wonderful human being. Dr. Hoffer asked Julian what he would be doing if he hadn't become ill. Julian, sleeping and drooling, roused himself long enough to say, "I'd be finishing college and starting my career." Dr. Hoffer, calmly and confidently stated: "Julian, keep making your plans. You're going to be able to do everything you want to do in life." He offered the first hopeful words we had heard and were nearly identical to my bottom-line prayer.

Dr. Hoffer explained that megadoses of vitamin C, niacinamide and salmon oil would slowly bring Julian's body chemistry back into balance. As the illness is brought under control, the psychiatric medicine can gradually be reduced to nothing, or to so little that the side effects are insignificant. The most important ingredients would be consistency and patience.

Julian's improvement has progressed exactly as Dr. Hoffer predicted. Dr. Hoffer was not surprised in the least. I am so proud of Julian and the heroic struggle he has waged. He scrupulously followed every treatment program I put him

through, including the one that is finally working. Whenever he was able, he challenged himself to do gongyo and chant. Even if Julian never gets any better than he is right now, I know that he can live a productive and fulfilling life. However, I have complete confidence that he will put the final touches on his recovery and accomplish everything that he wishes, including his mission for world peace. I'm very appreciative of my husband and oldest son, Andy, who supported us 100 percent, and I offer my respect and apologize to my daughter, Lizzie, for all the turmoil she's endured during her sensitive teenage years.

I am especially grateful to President Ikeda. I recently purchased the book *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*, which is a dialogue between Dr. Pauling and President Ikeda, published in 1992. I was stunned to find that, on pages 48 and 53, Dr. Pauling mentions Dr. Abram Hoffer, the doctor we tracked down after more than a year of chanting and research. Dr. Pauling mentions here that it was actually Dr. Hoffer's use of megadoses of vitamins in the treatment of schizophrenia that was his inspiration to start his vitamin C research. This book serves as additional evidence to me of the effort that President Ikeda has long been making to educate us to become people who can help ourselves and many others in the process. **WT**

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 7 SPEECH — PART 3

True Joy From the Mystic Law

SGI President Ikeda says, 'True joy is an expression of our faith — of our desire to help others and guide them to happiness, to introduce them to faith in the Mystic Law.'

The conclusion 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 members from 21 countries attend the 1st Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Jan. 7.

This May 3, Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo in Orange County, Calif., will at last be officially dedicated. It is my wish that the university will produce outstanding students of world-class caliber, leaders of the new century.

SUA, Aliso Viejo will be a noble seat of learning — the crystallization of the shared wish of ordinary people around the globe for peace. I am devoting my utmost energies to the university's development. I ask all of you for your warm support as well.

Recently, appointments for the new university's Board of Trustees have been decided, and I want to take this opportunity to introduce them. As you know, I am the school's founder. Soka Gakkai President and SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya will be senior advisor. Hiroshi Okayasu, who is chairman of the Board of Trustees of Soka University, Japan will take on the responsibility of board chairman of SUA, Aliso Viejo. Board vice chairman will be attorney Stephen Dunham, a partner and former chairman of a leading American law firm, who is renowned as an outstanding legal advisor in the field of education.

For trustees, we will have Harvard University professor emeritus Dr. John Montgomery and Claremont McKenna College professor Dr. Alfred Balitzer. Dr. Montgomery is also the director of SUA's Pacific Basin Research Center and one of the key scholars of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where I delivered

a lecture in 1991. I also spoke at Claremont McKenna College in 1993. Incidentally, the eminent scientist Dr. Linus Pauling, who was 91 at the time, kindly attended the lecture at Claremont.

Other trustees include SGI-USA General Director Daniel Nagashima and SGI Women's Leader Eiko Akiyama. I understand that several other trustees are still to be appointed.

Dr. Daniel Habuki, a graduate of the 1st class of Soka Junior and Senior High School and of Soka University, Japan is SUA's first president. In the future, a second and a third and an unending line of presidents of profound mission will follow in his footsteps, carrying on the university's founding spirit.

Next year, Soka Junior and Senior High School will celebrate its 35th anniversary. And this year, Soka University, Japan celebrates its milestone 30th anniversary. I deeply thank all of you for making this possible.

Graduates of the 1st class of Soka Junior and Senior High School total 500. Today, the combined number of graduates from the Soka high schools and Soka University is more than 50,000. Some 4,000 graduates have gone on to become educators, 130 have obtained doctorates, and 23 have become Soka Gakkai vice presidents. Around Japan and throughout the world, Soka alumni are making wonderful contributions in various spheres of society and in the realm of kosen-rufu. I am confident that

the arena of their activities will expand even further in the future.

July 17, 2001 — a date that has been an important target since the founding days of Soka Junior and Senior High School — is fast approaching. Later this year, after achieving total victory in all their challenges ahead, the high school alumni are planning to hold a grand commemorative meeting. [On July 17, 1969, on the occasion of the Soka Junior and Senior High School's 2nd student festival, President Ikeda, as the school's founder, proposed to students that they assemble again on July 17, 2001.]

The great stream of promising, talented people for the 21st century that is being produced by Soka education will grow even more rich and abundant when it is conjoined by the flow of outstanding talent from SUA, Aliso Viejo.

Today, we have with us representatives of successful early applicants for the 1st historic class of SUA, Aliso Viejo, students of highest excellence. As the school's founder, I offer my deepest appreciation to them for choosing to study at SUA. Thank you.

We can turn all our sufferings and problems into enlightenment.

Now I want to share with you some immortal words that shed light on life and society.

The English writer Jane Austen, famous for her novel *Pride and Prejudice*, said that the roots of patience may be

bitter, but the fruit will be sweet. This is so true. Buddhism teaches that we can turn our sufferings and problems into a source of enlightenment.

The French writer François de La Mothe Fénelon writes in his epic novel *The Adventures of Telemachus*, "When thou shalt have dominion over others, forget not that thou hast been like

them, weak, destitute, and afflicted." Political leaders would do well to engrave these words in their hearts.

The French philosopher René Descartes writes, "To be possessed of a vigorous mind is not enough; the prime requisite is rightly to apply it." For us, the most important thing is following the path of faith, practice and study.

The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy writes, "One of the most startling misconceptions is that human happiness is not having to do anything." Here Tolstoy asserts that the misguided belief that doing nothing or living in idleness constitutes happiness is in fact the greatest delusion and source of unhappiness. We who are earnestly striving in our SGI activities are advancing directly on the path to absolute happiness.

At a plenary session of China's Communist Party Central Committee last October, Chinese President Jiang Zemin, whom I have met, referred to corruption and bureaucracy in the party: "As history and reality clearly demonstrate, the future and the fate of an administration or a political party are ultimately determined by whether public sentiment supports it or goes against it. Unless it wins the widest possible support of the public, ruin will inevitably follow." These are important words that all leaders should bear in mind. The people are the true protagonists of history.

The Swiss philosopher Carl

Hilty writes: "The basis of all friendship is sincerity. Without it, friendship has no worth whatsoever." It does not matter what others may do — we ourselves must act with the greatest sincerity. We cannot win people's hearts by scheming or by ordering them about.

The French thinker Simone Weil writes: "Pleasure, entertainment, diversions, and gratification of the senses and vanity are not joy. Joy is not something derived from outside of the human being or the group, but from within them." Joy wells forth from our hearts. Gongyo also enables us to tap joy from within. True joy is an expression of our faith — of our desire to help others and guide them to happiness, to introduce them to faith in the Mystic Law.

Buddhism is a struggle to win happiness.

The English writer Charlotte Brontë writes, "But the task that is without difficulty is almost without merit; there is great interest in triumphing over obstacles." Let's make this spirit our credo for the coming year! Buddhism is a struggle to win. So is life. Defeat is sad. If we triumph, our lives will brim with joy, and we will accumulate good fortune and benefit. The times, too, will move in a positive direction. Victory gives rise to confidence. And that confidence gives rise to further victories. Let us surmount all difficulties and obstacles, and advance with a sense of exhilaration.

Finally, I want to quote Hilty again: "Victory is the greatest pleasure in life to be found on this earth." Let's challenge ourselves this year in a way that allows us to savor that truth.

With that, let's close the first leaders meeting of 2001 and the new century for the Soka Gakkai — the world's foremost organization dedicated to peace, culture and the realization of kosen-rufu, a great religious organization directly linked to Nichiren Daishonin.

Thank you for all your efforts. **WT**

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 29 SPEECH—PART 1

Capture the People's Hearts

'The key is, like the star in a grand drama, to strive to capture people's hearts and respect your noble fellow members,' says SGI President Ikeda.

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 2nd Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Soka International Friendship Center in Sendagaya, Tokyo, Jan. 29.

Today, I want to talk with you informally, so please relax and make yourselves comfortable.

In March last year, the Tokyo Soka High School baseball team made its seventh appearance in the National Invitational High School Baseball Tournament, which is held each spring at the Koshien Stadium in Osaka. This March, according to newspaper reports, prospects look good for our Kansai Soka High School baseball team to make its Koshien debut—in the 73rd National Invitational High School Baseball Tournament. [The team's selection was formally announced two days after this meeting.]

The Kansai Soka High School rugby team has also won its way into the national finals with a terrific victory in the Osaka divisional finals at the Kinki Region High School Rugby Championship held yesterday.

In addition, one of our Kansai Soka High School graduates, Akiyo Onishi, yesterday placed an admirable seventh in the Osaka International Women's Marathon. As a member of the Sekisui Chemical track team, Ms. Onishi trains with many fine athletes, including Sydney Olympic women's marathon gold medalist Naoko Takahashi.

Every day, I receive letters and reports from alumni of the Soka Schools and Soka University. Just the other day, a Soka High School graduate who is an airline pilot shared the wonderful news that he has been promoted to the rank of captain. He is now the second airline captain among our graduates, and I am sure that many

others will follow in the future.

Also, approximately 160 Soka University graduates have passed this year's prefectural teacher employment examination. I understand that this is around 30 more than last year. Each year, our graduates distinguish themselves in these exams.

The 21st century is the century of education. We have entered an era when Soka education will come into its own.

The world is coming to recognize the greatness of Soka Gakkai presidents Makiguchi and Toda.

The other day, I was informed that a street in the central Italian province of Perugia has been named after first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. [The Passignano sul Trasimeno City Council unanimously passed a resolution to name one of its streets after the Soka Gakkai founder, in recognition of his struggles against fascism during World War II.]

This most recent honor brings to 20 the number of public streets, parks, gardens—and even a beach—that have been named after the first three Soka Gakkai presidents. This is an amazing achievement. It is a hopeful sign of the progress we are making in our global kosen-rufu movement.

This year, by the way, is the 130th anniversary of Mr. Makiguchi's birth, and Feb. 11 is Mr. Toda's birthday. The world is gradually coming to accord these two great mentors lasting recognition and a rightful place in history.

Today, for the record, I want to introduce each of the 20 landmarks I have just mentioned. I do so humbly, sharing them with you as an example of the global recognition we are receiving for our movement for peace, culture and education.

Incidentally, many representatives of SGI-Brazil are here with us today.

First, in the State of São Paulo, Brazil:

- A resolution to establish a Josei Toda Park has recently been passed by the city of São Paulo, the largest metropolis in South America.

- There is a Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Road and a Josei

Toda Park in São José dos Campos, which, located near São Paulo, is a leading center of industry and home to several noted educational institutes. [In addition, an education facility in São José dos Campos, the Hélio Augusto de Souza Professional Education Center, has a Daisaku Ikeda Garden.]

- There is a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Boulevard and a Josei Toda Avenue in Pindamonhangaba, a city famous for its lush scenic beauty.

- The city of Monte Alto, which this year celebrates its 120th anniversary, has a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Garden, a Josei Toda Garden and—I am humbled to say—a Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Garden, to honor the first three Soka Gakkai presidents.

- There is a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Street and Josei Toda Street in the burgeoning city of Guaratinguetá.

- There is a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Park in Ribeirão Preto, a city with a strong commitment to education.

- The city of Itapevi, where the SGI-Brazil Nature Culture Center is located, has a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Street.

In the State of Paraná, Brazil:

- There is a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Park in Curitiba, a city renowned for its cultural richness and many fine educational institutions.

- The cosmopolitan city of Londrina has a Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Ecological Park, which encompasses a vast 302 acres.

Moving on to the United States:

- In Denver, the mile-high city with its breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains, there is the Ikeda Cherry Tree Garden.

Next, in the Kingdom of Tonga, in the South Pacific:

- There is a Daisaku Ikeda Beach on Tongatapu Island. I



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the 2nd Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, Jan. 29.

understand that it is a lovely white-sand beach.

I have also had the privilege of meeting Tonga's great monarch His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV last November. On that occasion, I was honored to receive some sand from that beach in Tonga, along with a name plaque.

In New Zealand:

- There is an Ikeda-Hall Peace Garden in Rotorua, a city dedicated to peace. [The garden is named after President Ikeda and Rotorua Mayor Grahame Hall.]

Also, in Italy:

- There is a Tsunesaburo Makiguchi Street in the city of Stia, which is located in the central Italian province of Arezzo, in Tuscany.

Meanwhile, in Ghana:

- The district of Kwabre, known for its verdant green, has announced its decision to build a Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Garden.

And there's one more piece of good news that I want to share. A Soka Kindergarten will be built in the city of São Paulo. [A nursery school will be attached to the new kindergarten.]

The light of humanistic education is beginning to spread more and more throughout the world.

People love a leader who casts aside all pretension.

At the start of this new century, our members in each region are bubbling with fresh energy

and vitality. This is true nowhere more than Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands, where members achieved the top propagation results nationwide for the first six months of last year. Also, 180,000 people, a record number, attended this year's New Year's gongyo meetings in Hokkaido. I hear that this is an astonishing 30,000 more than last year.

The Hokkaido youth, meanwhile, extended their network of friends to more than 400,000 in the last six months of 2000. The young women, in particular, achieved a new propagation record last year. They are setting a shining example for the rest of the country. I want to commend all the Hokkaido members for their admirable efforts.

I ask our leaders to show wise leadership in promoting our movement to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, so that everyone can advance harmoniously and joyously. The key is, like the star in a grand drama, to strive to capture people's hearts and respect your noble fellow members. Members will be inspired to stand up and fight alongside a leader who casts aside all pretension, conceit and vanity—a leader who laughs and cries with them while sharing their struggles. When leaders devote themselves to activities in this way, they can bring forth great wisdom, create hope and open the way to victory.

To be continued in the March 9 issue

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JAN. 2 POEM

THE WINGS OF YOUTH, THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE

About This Poem

This poem is the first of this length from SGI President Ikeda this year. Last year alone, he wrote some 50 poems, in which he described his dreams for the kosen-rufu movement of the SGI and the happiness of all people.

The Soka Gakkai, which has been engaged in propagating Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to secure human happiness and world peace for 70 years, has been frequently maligned by certain segments of Japanese society. The Japanese tabloid media, for instance, often carries outlandish reports of fabricated scandals involving the Soka Gakkai, which invariably originate from people who, out of fear or jealousy, criticize President Ikeda and publicly seeking to disband the organization.

Soka Gakkai members are forced to confront these stories every day in their workplaces and among their friends and families. That practitioners of this Buddhism will encounter such opposition is predicted in the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin's writings, as President Ikeda expresses in this poem.

A prime focus of the Soka Gakkai's detractors in Japan has been the membership's support of the Komeito political party, which is participating in a major Upper House election this summer. This poem, written within such a context, addresses the challenges facing the Soka Gakkai members from the fundamental standpoint of faith. While recognizing that the situation in Japan is entirely different from that in the United States — where there is absolutely no organizational involvement in the electoral process — this poem can be very encouraging to SGI-USA members. President Ikeda's words of conviction focus on the ultimate spirit of faith and give us a fresh awareness that Buddhism is concerned with winning in all endeavors for the happiness of all.

I will win.
I am determined to win!
I will not lose.
I am determined not to lose!
I will win for my own sake
And for the sake of truth and justice.

Never be defeated
By contemptible evil!
Justice
Brings people happiness.
Evil
Enslaves them
And brings them misery.

True justice
Exists in the human heart.
And Buddhism
Of course
Is a teaching of truth and justice.
Our enemies
Have this Buddhism
Yet they exploit it.
We, too,
Have this Buddhism,
The same teaching and scriptures.

But it all comes down to
How that Buddhism is practiced,
Whether, in accord with
the great compassion
Of the Buddha,
The teachings are propagated and
put into action
And its followers work
For the welfare of human society.

They
Are robbers of the Law,

Exploiters of the Law.
They do not work
For the sake of Buddhism;
They misuse Buddhism
For their own ends.
Thus we see
A stark difference between us
and them,
Thus we see
That it all comes down
To faith.

The ultimate purpose of faith
Is becoming heroes of life.
Giving our lives unsparingly
To spread the Law
Makes us champions of humanity.

Do not fear
Envious attacks!
Laugh away
Malicious insults!

Plotting despicably
To bring down
Through vicious lies
Those who are devoted to truth
and justice
Is an ancient formula seen the world over.

Towering sage Nichiren Daishonin said,
"Let others hate you if they will."
(*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 464)

That great pioneer of the kosen-rufu
movement,
First Soka Gakkai president
Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi said,
"To be despised by fools is



Photo by JEFF VANUGA/CORBIS

the greatest honor."
Josei Toda, our second president, said,
"To be praised by fools is
the greatest disgrace."
(See WND, 287)

To participate in elections
Is the right of the people,
Protected by our constitution.
All have absolute freedom
To cast their votes as they wish.
In Japan today,
Charges that the Soka Gakkai
Is violating the principle
Of separation of church and state
Are completely unfounded.
They amount to nothing but envy
At the stunning
Advance of the forces for peace.

A true force for peace
Will advance with determination
And overcome all such ridiculous attacks!

The Swiss philosopher
Carl Hilty said
That the ambitious
Are always envious.

Those who concoct
Base, foolish slander
Must know that
They themselves
Are madly lost
In a mind and a world of
hideous darkness.

In Buddhism,
The treacherous Devadatta is cited

As the epitome of a man's envy,
While a poisonous snake,
As that of a woman's envy.
Every traitor who turned on Shakyamuni,
Jealous of the one they owed so much,
Fell, without exception,
Into the state of Hell.

Even during the Daishonin's lifetime,
This phenomena was seen,
As the Daishonin himself says:
"Among those who believed at first,
Many later discarded their faith,
Fearing that society would reject them.
Among these are some
Who oppose me more furiously
Than those who slandered
From the beginning."
(WND, 502)

In the same way
We who are in complete accord
With the Buddha's intent and decree
Know full and well
That those who curse and speak ill of us
Are ultimately headed only toward
The wretched misery of a life of defeat.

"We must never forget the kindness
That others have done us."
These are the words
Of the famous Chinese work,
Intrigues of the Warring States,
Warning against ingratitude.
They are also words
That Mr. Toda
Spoke with special force
When teaching me Chinese literature
In my studies

At "Toda University."

And there is also
A passage from another Chinese classic,
Book of Songs,
"A wise man builds a fortress,"
Meaning that every wise and
strong person
Builds and fortifies himself.

Do not fear!
Never, ever fear!

There is a difference
Between being popular
And being right.
A person dedicated to right
Is a humanistic philosopher
Who strides
The great path of truth and justice,
Though showered with abuse
And lashed by storms of criticism
and insult.
A person who is popular
Only floats
On the bobbing waves of
Public estimation.

We,
With the swift eye of the Buddha
And lightning action,
Advance unerringly
On the road to the future.

As we dream of
A new century,
A new year,
A new community,
A new human harmony,
A new age of our own,
Our hearts dance
At the prospect of making them
A reality.

Shakyamuni
Sharply observed that
This human realm
In which we live
Is ruled by devil kings.

Devils are robbers of life.
They are demons who obstruct
Those who practice the correct teaching
And strive for truth and justice.
Such demons
Eat their way into the lives
Of the powerful
And the envious.
They work to thoroughly confound
the efforts
Of the practitioners
Of the correct teaching and doctrines.

It is this scenario,
Described in the Lotus Sutra,
That we find ourselves in.
Waging an eternal battle
Against those devil kings,
We have heartily confronted
The persecutions that have beset us.

That is why
The Buddhas and bodhisattvas
Of the ten directions
Cannot fail to praise
Our noble deeds and actions,
Which accord with the Buddha's teaching.

That the demons
Of jealousy and slander

Should attack
A respected individual
Dedicated to truth and justice
Is an unchanging law of life —
It is also a principle of Buddhism.

All around
A rain of heartlessness
Poured down.
And
Not a single person
Had strong enough conviction
To try to stop injustice.

People's hearts can be frightening.
They can be ugly,
They can be difficult to believe.

People of evil intent
Who happily tar the good name
Of the honest and upright;
The mentality of casting poisonous filth
Into the world of truth;
Fabrications overflowing with
contradictions;
And the attitude of a venomous serpent,
Without reason or principle,
Consumed only by envy.

The Chinese philosophical treatise,
Penetrating the Classic of Change,
Tells us,
"The purpose of writing
Is to record the Way."
Writing is meant
To transmit the correct path
To future generations.

Again and again,
With spiteful, mechanical behavior,
They create and spread
A false and misleading impression.
Willfully twisting the meaning
Of freedom of speech,
They perpetrate their reckless violence
With impunity.

Yet
The Daishonin writes:
"If I do not call forth
These three enemies of the Lotus Sutra,
Then I will not be
The votary of the Lotus Sutra.
Only by making them appear
Can I be the votary." (see WND, 53)

That we will have enemies
Is to be expected.
That they will attack us
Is to be expected.

Do not lament!
Do not grieve!
You whose lives
Are replete beyond measure
Possess faith.
Nothing surpasses faith.
Nothing can beat it.
That is the mark of true faith.

As individuals who cherish
Our vow from time without beginning,
Our journey through life
Goes on to the ends of the earth —
No, it continues eternally
Across the three existences of life.

Abandoning fragile courage,
We advance
Filled with the spirit of the new century,



Northeastern Zone youth

On the great ship of true faith
Of eternal life,
With our brave-hearted
And wondrous comrades.

Hilty commented
That when your head fills
With problems and worries,
And when on sleepless nights
Anxious feelings assail you,
The only possible answer is
"Onward!"

In the new dawn,
When the stage of the old, dark age
Has been destroyed
And the ugly battle
Of cold-hearted individuals is over,
We, fellow members in faith,
Praising and encouraging
Each other,
Will build a regal stage,
Pristine and majestic,
For the joyous champions of humanity.

As the Daishonin says:
"The more gold is heated in the flames,
The brighter will be its color;
The more a sword is whetted,
The sharper it will become.
And the more one praises
The blessings of the Lotus Sutra,
The more one's own blessings
will increase."
(WND, 673)

A great thinker has said:
"I will fill each year
Of this precious life

With the content of 10.
I will leave my mark.
I will fight to leave a record
Of truth and justice."

He also observed:
"The quality of our years
Is determined by
The profound substance
Of how we live our lives
And by the accomplishments
We achieve.
How empty
Is an uneventful life
Lived longing only for idle dreams."

We must live our lives in earnest.
In that earnestness
Exist philosophy,
Thought,
Compassion.
There is purpose —
People's happiness,
The welfare of society,
And peace.
A life that is frivolous and vain
Is not for us!

The sea
Has its shallows.
It also has the depths.
True faith
Is the measure that determines
The depth of each person's life.

We —
Conscious of our responsibility
As foremost champions of the spirit,
Advancing on the great path of truth

Of past, present, and future,
Never forgetting to smile,
Casting aside
Cowardice and anxiety —
Fight on eternally
With the blazing sun at our side!

Toward a life
That knows no destruction,
Toward victory,
We will advance,
Overcoming ignominious
Human conflicts,
Winning over all.

The famous writer Goethe said
That in order to avoid stagnation
We must constantly undertake
To change,
Reform,
And rejuvenate ourselves.

Our struggle
Is proof that
We are acting in rhythm
With the Daishonin.
It is a paean
Extolling the true teachings of Buddhism,
Which are respectable beyond compare.

We are the possessors
Of the highest honor and achievement,
Heirs to life's jeweled crown
Across eternity.

I can hear the heavenly deities call to us:
"Rise up with ever greater courage!
In even greater health
Begin the struggle!
Advance with determination
To victory!"

Still more
The praise and encouragement
Of the Daishonin himself
Echo always in my ears.

And I hear the rousing voices
Of my predecessor Mr. Makiguchi
And my mentor Mr. Toda,
Broad smiles lighting their faces,
Applauding us:
"You have done well!
You have fought well!
This is the real Soka!"

Make your way joyously through life,
With a buoyant, vaulting spirit!
Do not be defeated!
You must not allow yourself to
be defeated, ever.
Never forget your hopes for victory!
Therein
Lies true human happiness.
Therein
Lies the great, eternal river
Of truth and justice
That flows in the depths of your lives.

Your present state of being
Is a foundation shining
With the brightest golden splendor.
And it is the departure point
From which you will soar
On wings of victory
To the loftiest heights.

You must never let go
Of your vibrant spirit.

For that spirit
Will lead you to total victory.

Establish a state of life,
Communicate a state of life,
Worthy of one who upholds the great Law
That sets an imperfect future
On the course to eternal victory.

The German philosopher Fichte declared
That the ability to win
Each time brings
Inevitable victory.
He also remarked
That by repeating this process
Of victory after victory,
Our unique abilities
Are forged and strengthened.

Defeat brings misery:
Only by triumphing
Can we become happy.

With indestructible happiness
As our goal,
Let us live our lives
As champions of humanity,
Wise and fearless,
Urging ourselves forward
On rainy days,
Stormy days,
And sunny days.

We will speak out
For the sake of truth.
We will continue to speak out undauntedly
For the sake of our cause.

To protect our comrades,
To protect our freedom,
From deplorably cowardly onslaughts,
We will endure, pray,
And fight,
Fearlessly and resolutely.

The harsh persecutions
That beset the Daishonin
Were all based
On slanderous accusations.

The Daishonin writes:
"Filled with ever greater
Wrath and hate,
Never attempting to examine
The validity of my assertions,
Concocting enormous falsehoods
To deceive and confuse
The ruler and the people of our nation,
They set out to destroy me.
Not only did I face many persecutions
But I was exiled twice,
To Izu and to Sado
Until finally
I reached Tatsunokuchi,
Where my head was to fall."

There is nothing wrong or evil
In our cause.
All of the abuse and criticism
Directed against us,
Against our faith,
Causes not the slightest
Tremor or fissure
In our hearts.

The Daishonin declared,
"If the priests of today
Did not slander me to the authorities
And have them condemn me to



banishment,
Then this passage in the sutra
Would have remained unfulfilled."
(WND, 242)

He also said:
"I think that perhaps
It is encountering such difficulties
As have already been explained in the
sutra —
Being cursed, vilified,
Attacked with swords and staves,
Shards and rubble,
And banished again and again —
That is reading the Lotus Sutra with
one's life.
My faith springs up all the more,
And I am confident about
my next existence."
(WND, 202)

True practitioners of faith
Possess a dignity
That cannot be shaken by power.
They have a dignity
That surpasses any authority.
This is the spirit
And the being
Of those who have faith.

Though our travails may be many,
Though the arrogant
May malign us,
We have no need
To take shelter
From these onslaughts
Because we are shielded
By the strong roof
Of eternal truth.

We wear the magnificent armor
Of fundamental good.
Our strong spirit
Always shines

With bright smiles
Fresh as a spring breeze.

We are not afraid;
We will not be defeated.

Even when it may seem
That we are isolated as never before,
We will continue
To build
A realm of true glory,
Infinite and vast,
To construct
A solid fortress
That nothing can destroy.

Let the shameless
Dance madly
Where they are.
Let the uncouth
Shriek wildly
Where they are.

Our ultimate watchwords —
"Forward, ever forward!"
"Victory upon victory!" —
What a sure,
What a rousing,
Triumph for truth!

I dream
Of the grand drama of the new century
Of millions of young disciples
Spreading the wings of youth
To take flight
And soar with freedom and joy.
Indeed —
I know
This drama is already taking place.

January 2, 2001
At the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall
Shin'ichi Yamamoto (pen name of
Daisaku Ikeda)

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 27-28

The Soka Gakkai members living on the Amami Islands had worked to increase their membership to more than 6,000 households in just seven or eight years. Shunned by the other villagers — yet gritting their teeth — they continued to devote themselves to kosen-rufu.

The Amami Islands were returned to Japan on December 25, 1953, eight years after the end of World War II. The seeds of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism were first planted there in 1955, and they sprouted with the appearance of new practitioners on the islands of Kikaijima, Kakeromajima, Amami Oshima, Okinoerabujima, Yoronjima and Tokunoshima. In July 1961, the Amami Oshima Chapter of the Soka Gakkai was established. By the time Shin'ichi Yamamoto visited in 1963, the membership had grown to more than 6,000 households.

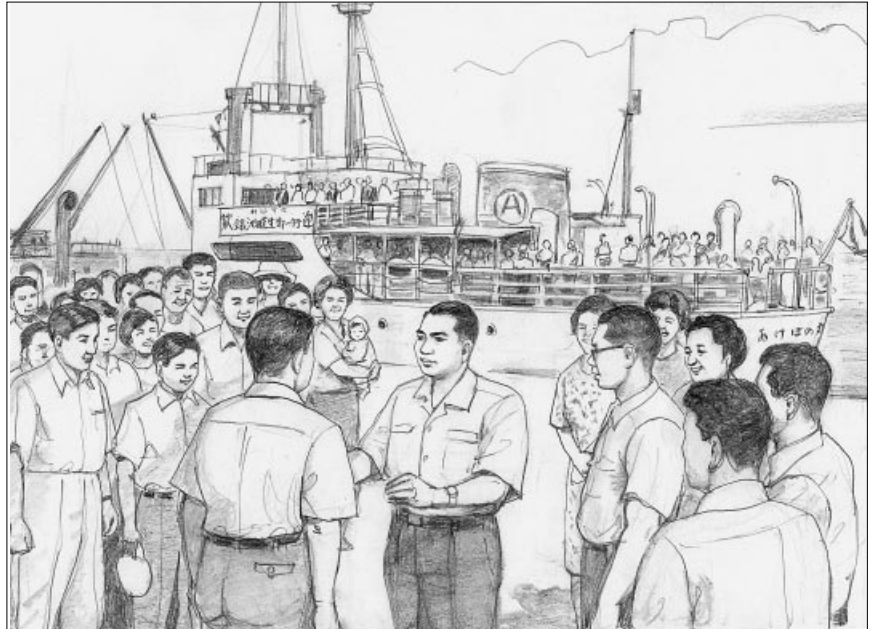
When Shin'ichi recalled the bitter history and perseverance of the people of the Amami archipelago, he was happy to see such progress toward kosen-rufu being made there. Though he intended to visit all of the remote islands throughout the country where members were living, he decided to start with Amami Oshima. He wanted to encourage and support the members of Amami Oshima Chapter, who had struggled so hard to get where they were.

Shin'ichi's plane departed from Kagoshima at 1:00 p.m. on June 21, heading first for Tokunoshima. The small propeller plane, a De Havilland Heron, could carry only about a dozen passengers. There was no airport yet in Amami Oshima, so it was decided he would fly to Tokunoshima and make the trip to Amami Oshima by boat.

He arrived at the Tokunoshima Airport, located on the north side of the island, at around 3:00 p.m. From there he was to travel to Kametoku Harbor on the island's south side in a car that had been arranged for by the local members.

Shin'ichi began encouraging members the moment he landed at Tokunoshima Airport. When he saw a group waiting for him, almost hidden in the shade of some trees, he went immediately over to them, expressing his gratitude and offering words of encouragement. Brilliant smiles adorned their suntanned faces.

The road to the harbor was unpaved, and the car stirred up great clouds of dust as it went. Still, the scenery from the win-



dow was breathtaking. The island was densely forested with screw pines and palms, and red hibiscus flowers bloomed in all their glory. Many of the houses had thatched roofs.

Again and again, whenever Shin'ichi spotted people along the road who looked as if they were members waiting to greet him, he stopped the car to speak with them and shake hands.

After about an hour's drive, they arrived at Kametoku Harbor. Moored there was the ship that would transport Shin'ichi to Amami Oshima, a four-hundred-ton vessel called the *Akebonomaru*. A large crowd stood on the pier. The local members had chartered the ship for those attending the chapter meeting on Amami Oshima, and the crowd on the pier was all Soka Gakkai members.

The members had gathered at the harbor to welcome Shin'ichi and his party, and all had been waiting anxiously for their cars to arrive.

"Thank you for all your trouble!" he said, stepping from the car. Waving his hands high in greeting, he made his way toward the group of friends.

How praiseworthy were the efforts of the members living on the Amami Islands — they had worked to increase their membership to more than

6,000 households in just seven or eight years! Spoken ill of for trying to share Buddhism with others, they were sometimes even shouted at or cursed. The other villagers shunned them — a matter of life and death on an isolated island. Yet they held back their tears of frustration, gritted their teeth and continued to devote themselves to kosen-rufu. Their most fervent wish was that President Yamamoto would visit their islands.

"I finally made it here to see you!" Shin'ichi continued. "There are so many members here on Tokunoshima! How wonderful!" As Shin'ichi spoke, some of the members could be heard sobbing, unable to hold back tears of joy.

Shin'ichi deeply understood their feelings. He spoke to one person after another. To a mother holding her infant daughter he said: "What a beautiful baby! Please raise her to be a fine successor." And he patted the child on the head. To a young man's division member, he said: "I am counting on you to take care of Tokunoshima! Let's stand up and fight together!"

He met a woman whose leg had been disabled after she was bitten by one of the poisonous snakes that inhabited the islands. "Faith guarantees that we will become happy no matter

what. Please don't worry," he said, shaking her hand firmly yet tenderly.

In the limited time he had, Shin'ichi poured his whole life into encouraging each member. When it was time to go, he said: "I must be off now. I will be waiting for you over there. Let's meet again!" With that, he boarded the ship.

Some 80 members were with Shin'ichi on the ship, which made its way to Naze, the main city on Amami Oshima. The ship was to shuttle back and forth between Tokunoshima and Amami Oshima three times in order to transport all the members who would be attending the chapter meeting. Shin'ichi was in the second group.

The journey to Amami Oshima took about five or six hours. The local members remarked that the sea was very calm, but the leaders from Tokyo who had accompanied Shin'ichi were unaccustomed to ocean travel, and to them the waters seemed rough and choppy. Soon after they had left the harbor, all but Shin'ichi were seasick. Their faces pale, they sat slumped against the back of their seats.

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



MARCH 16, 1958—KOSEN-RUFU DAY

It's March 16—Are We Listening?

SIGNIFICANT DATES
ON MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND THE SGI
By **STEPHANIE CELANO**
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.



March 16, for Stephanie Celano, is an opportunity to listen and 'act on even a single word' of her mentor.

Historically, March 16 — Kosen-rufu Day — is a time in the SGI to celebrate youth. The day derives its significance from March 16, 1958, when 6,000 youth gathered at the foot of Mount Fuji to hear second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's spirited words. President Toda referred to this day as a historic "dress rehearsal" for kosen-rufu.

I imagine that on that cold day those youth, warmed by steaming bowls of pork soup that President Toda had provided, must have felt a tremendous bond with one another and with their mentor. Though it's impossible to know what each of them was experiencing, one

determined young man went on to share with us in detail what he was feeling on that day.

That young man is Dai-saku Ikeda. In reading his essays on March 16, it's clear that President Toda's words penetrated his life that day. He says: "When I heard him call out 'Let's fight!'...I was electrified. ... I resolved anew to fight intrepidly for kosen-rufu" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 4, p. 40).

He described March 16 as a day to eternally honor the selfless spirit of President Toda, who lived in complete accord with the Daishonin's teachings. "At the same time," he continues, "it was a private ceremony between just the two of us — a ceremony of the oneness of mentor and disciple — in which Mr. Toda transferred the seal of succession, the mission to achieve kosen-rufu, to me" (March 27, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 10).

Among those 6,000 youth, SGI President Ikeda took it as his personal responsibility to carry out the mission of kosen-rufu, to create peace through sharing the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.

In just over 40 years, he has

led the effort to spread Buddhism to 163 countries and territories. And among other accomplishments, he's established the Soka school system, founded many cultural institutions, written numerous books and fought to preserve the truth of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings from the distortions of High Priest Nikken Abe and the Nichiren Shoshu sect.

More important, President Ikeda has made constant efforts to personally encourage people through his guidance and by his example. This is an important reason why I and more than 12 million others are practicing today.

How did he do this? President Ikeda has said, "When a person earnestly committed to a cause takes a stand, he or she can manifest the strength of two, three, 10 or even 100 people" (Jan. 15, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 7).

He also says: "The mentor-disciple relationship is strict. Everything depends on how earnestly one can accept and act on even a single word of the mentor" (January 2000 *Living Buddhism*, p. 31).

Based on President Ikeda's profound respect and earnest effort to put into practice every word of President Toda's guidance, he was able to accomplish many seemingly impossible

things. This is a direct example of the mentor-disciple relationship. He says, "I have accomplished everything that President Makiguchi and President Toda set out to achieve" (April 3, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 8).

We, too, can accomplish seemingly impossible things. We have all the tools: the Gohonzon, Nichiren Daishonin's writings and a great mentor. But have we asked ourselves how closely we are listening to what President Ikeda has been trying to say?

March 16 is an opportunity to take a stand and to follow our mentor's guidance as earnestly as he followed President Toda's. With Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo opening soon, the Soka Spirit movement building momentum and in preparing for our March 16 introductory meetings, we can use this day not only to determine to achieve our personal goals but also to dig deeper to contribute to the foundation that President Ikeda has already built. **WT**

Changes in 'World Tribune' Staff

The following changes in the *World Tribune* staff were recently announced:

Jeff Farr has become *World Tribune* managing editor.

Margie Hall is leaving her two-year post as *World Tribune* managing editor (she has served in various capacities on both the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, previously *Seikyo Times*, for the past

three decades) to become Membership Services Center deputy director and Planning Department director.

Staff writer Stephanie Celano has returned to *Living Buddhism* after a two-year stint with *World Tribune*.

Ted Morino remains the *World Tribune's* editor in chief.

Thank you for all your support of the *World Tribune!* **WT**

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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.

FROM CONFERENCE, I

eration and value creation. Ending her lecture, she quoted SGI President Ikeda, who has said, "One's heart can transform everything."

After lunch, the participants chose from 16 different workshops conducted in two concurrent sessions. They included workshops emphasizing the traditional psychiatric approach, as well as holistic, alternative and complementary approaches to mental health care; music and art therapies; and seminars on marriage and relationships, addiction, domestic violence and self-esteem issues. Many of the workshop lecturers were non-members teamed up with SGI-USA members who specialize in the health care field.

The "Coming Into Your Wiser Self" workshop focused on dispelling the myth that growing old necessarily means growing infirm and obsolete. "We do not degenerate because we grow old," said presenter Annie Siegel. "We grow old because we degenerate." At the outset of the workshop, Ms. Siegel asked the more than 200 participating women if they had any fears about growing old. The women responded by expressing dozens of fears, including the fear of growing unattractive and of not having enough money to live on when they are old. Ms. Siegel urged the women to shift their thinking about aging. Rather than think about it as growing weaker, less attractive and less powerful, she encouraged them to think of it as gracefully gliding into their wiser selves.

"All of us," said Ms. Siegel, "have unfulfilled dreams and hopes." But rather than telling ourselves that those are things we did not accomplish in our lives, she asked the audience to add the word *yet* after each unfulfilled ambition. She said the conscious mind places limitations on us, but by giving voice to an unrealized ambition by saying we have not accomplished it "yet," we validate that it is something we will accomplish in the future.

Ann Jacobs, executive director of the Women's Prison Association, presented the powerful workshop "Families in Crisis." "Women in prison are not who you think they are," Ms. Jacobs explained. "The lives of the Women's Prison Association's clients are not so different from many women generally." She noted that 75-80 percent of the women incarcerated are mothers and that 70 percent have custody of at least one minor child.

Although incarcerated women presently make up less than 10 percent of the prison population. But the number will likely increase, according to Jacobs, who cited the statistics in an introduction to the topic. She called the impending increase "a function of the war on drugs



Marcia Nedd explains healthy colon care at a workshop session.

which results in apprehension followed by speedy conviction."

The WPA does its part to curb the trend by offering such programs as the Hopper Home Alternative to Incarceration Program. This program targets the individual client and provides a drug-free residence, plus direct services based on gender and education in how to acquire independent life skills, break the cycle of domestic violence and survive in society.

"From the moment you are made a leader in the SGI, your whole experience — in addition to getting benefit and showing actual proof — is about caring for other people, and it has to come from the heart," said Dr. Katherine Golar, the featured speaker at the workshop on "Hormonal Changes and Mental Health." She is an internist and director of the Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. Golar has been practicing in the SGI-USA for 17 years, and she credits her Buddhist practice with helping her develop a compassionate practice of medicine with a focus on the happiness, growth and health of human beings.

A necessary component for achieving wellness, said Dr. Golar, is for patients to have some sort of spiritual foundation to their life.

"You hear people in all parts of

medicine talking about the importance of spirituality," she said, "so it has entered the official dialogue."

As a practicing physician, she does not advocate any particular spiritual practice for her patients, but does encourage them to seek one out. "We recognize that any division between mind, body and spirit is artificial," she said, "and that true health results from care given to all these areas of our lives."

"I have been touched by everything that I heard today and I'm really excited," commented Denise Royal, an SGI-USA member. "The highlight for me was one of the experiences, talking about never giving up on looking for solutions to overcoming problems. It woke me up to my power and potential."

Megan HERNs, an SGI-USA member and college student, also had a revelation through this conference. "Seeing depression from a Buddhist perspective is very refreshing and eye opening," she said. "Buddhism is not just a philosophy or a religion. It also relates to daily life, science and medical issues. This conference made me rethink the way I live."

Nicole Williams, a non-member who was looking for insight into how to deal with her diabetes, said, "I would like to deal with my diabetes spiritually, not just physically." She then noted that the conference "helped me dig a little deeper into myself and not just rely on medication to heal."

For Maria Guerrier, the benefit of creating a bond among women was the highlight of the day. "Women together, women empowering each other," she said. "This is wonderful." **WT**



Dr. Katherine Golar, an SGI-USA member, speaks at the 'Hormonal Change and Mental Health' workshop on the importance of having a spiritual practice for good health.

Photos by GINGER NEWBY



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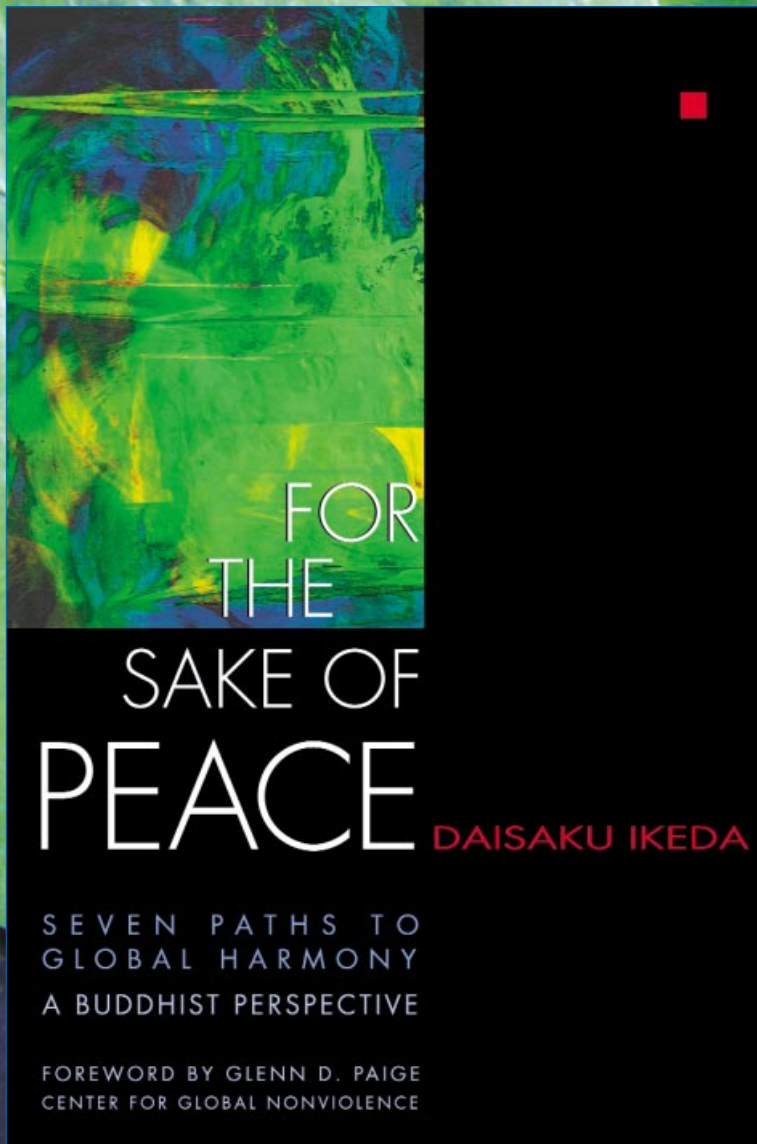
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