

# World TRIBUNE

## IN THIS ISSUE



### EXPERIENCE

**Juanita Maberry  
unites her  
divided family.**

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Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA



### MENTOR AND DISCIPLE

On March 16, 1958, Kosen-rufu Day, Daisaku Ikeda (right) inherited the mission of kosen-rufu from his mentor, second Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda (left). Ikeda was inspired by Toda to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world. Forty-three years later, there are SGI members practicing in 163 nations and territories.

# SEIZE the Day

## SPECIAL MARCH 16 COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

Inside, in a full-color issue of *Seize the Day*, our special youth section, we commemorate March 16, Kosen-rufu Day. As SGI-USA Vice Youth Leader Cory Taylor explains, "The meaning of March 16 lies in the bond between mentor and disciple."

In his message for SGI-USA's March district introductory meetings commemorating March 16, SGI Pres-

ident Ikeda says: "I ask that each of you build an eternal, indestructible palace of joy in your lives and become the greatest allies to suffering friends, rushing to their side and encouraging them with all your heart. Please build a beautiful castle of solidarity, as you expand your network of friendship, justice and happiness at your work and in your community."

### SGI-USA WOMEN'S COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS

# Becoming Examples of Splendid Courage

**More than 30,000 members and guests attend meetings commemorating SGI-USA Women's Day, which celebrates the courage of women.**

Throughout the month of February, more than 30,000 SGI-USA women and their guests gathered in locations across the country in commemoration of Feb. 27, SGI-USA Women's Day.

On Feb. 27, 1990, at a meeting at Soka University of America's Calabasas campus, SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda attended the 1st SGI-USA Women's Meeting, and President Ikeda delivered a speech that has become the focal point of the SGI-USA women's division members (see p. 7).

In his message to the 2001

gatherings, President Ikeda writes: "All of you who have gathered in America have an important mission. My wish is that all of you will uphold the ideals engraved in this profound Buddhism while becoming examples of splendid courage for the whole world to see" (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 1).

The women of Chula Vista Chapter in Southern California held their meeting at the Chula Vista Library Auditorium on Feb. 24. Chula Vista Mayor Shirley Horton presented SGI-USA Vice General Director Theresa Hauber with a proclamation declaring Feb. 24, 2001, as Chula Vista Chapter SGI-USA Women's Day. The mayor praised the women of SGI and reflected on women's power, courage and influence, and the great contribution that they make to society. She also asked for the members' help in expanding her program for abused children.

In Washington, D.C., more



Photo by CHERYL A. UTLEY

Kansas City Area women hold their commemorative meeting Feb. 25 at the Kansas City Community Center.

than 2,500 women of varying races, religious backgrounds, nationalities and political perspectives gathered for the "Imagine Peace" conference on Feb. 25 at the World Bank to exchange

ideas and develop relationships. (Please see next week's issue of the *World Tribune* for full coverage of the conference.)

In Austin, Texas, women met on Feb. 25 at the new

Austin Activity Center, filling it to capacity with 98 members and 14 guests. It was a diverse crowd typical of SGI-USA,

PLEASE SEE MEETINGS, 6

# THE TREASURE TOWER

## Back to the Basics

By DAVE McNEILL  
WEST HILLS, CALIF.

How do you really describe a human life? Not by the surface features: how a person looks, what she sounds like or how he acts. But by how precious the life itself is. Over the centuries, poets and prophets have offered many descriptions of the wonder of life. In Buddhism, the Treasure Tower serves as metaphor for the inherent value of human life, the life of the Buddha.

Few images in the Buddhist canon surpass the Lotus Sutra's Treasure Tower in scope. It reaches more than 2,000 miles

high with "numberless streamers," "ten thousand million jeweled bells," gold, silver and other treasures adorning its surface. With its "five thousand railings" and "thousand, ten thousand rooms," it is really hard to imagine. Which, of course, is the point.

This Treasure Tower, appearing in the Lotus Sutra's 11th chapter, is meant to be grand, awesome and unfathomable because that is how Buddhism views human life. The logic-defying description confused most people over the centuries, who often dismissed it as mere hyperbole. The genius of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, then, is its explanation of the fantastic image as human life itself. "Abutsu-bo is therefore the treasure tower itself, and the treasure tower is Abutsu-bo himself," he writes to his disciple Abutsu-bo. "No other knowledge is pur-

poseful" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 299).

This interpretation clarifies the Treasure Tower and its relevance today. One of society's greatest problems is people's lack of respect for life, both their own and others.

Not realizing the treasure within themselves, many feel their lives are without purpose. And a lack of reverence for the lives of others leads to discrimination, violence and war. The Daishonin's illumination of the Treasure Tower reveals to us just how precious both our lives and the lives of others are: full of wonder, vast, eternal.

Thanks to the Daishonin's Buddhism, which shows how to open the Treasure Tower within, we can bring forth the power we have to influence our world and make it a Buddha's land. We have the potential; we just have to decide to live up to

it. And once we do, watch out, because as belief in the sanctity of human life spreads, the world will be radically transformed. This principle of human life's infinite worth offers the greatest hope for our world.

The Treasure Tower and its appearance brim with symbolism, far more than this article can discuss. But in each case, the symbolism describes the reality of our lives here and now. "In contrast to what people commonly regard as treasures," SGI President Ikeda writes, "the gold, silver and other treasures adorning the Treasure Tower indicate treasures in the realm of faith; they are the treasures, for example, of 'listening to the teaching' and 'believing it.' They are the only treasures we can take with us after our death. They are eternal wealth" (March 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 35).

That the Treasure Tower rises

up from the earth is also important, as it indicates the world of Buddha deep within human life. It is our choice whether we will build such a tower of faith and happiness in our lives. President Ikeda urges us, "Let us adorn our lives by challenging ourselves with the spirit, 'This is where I will build my Treasure Tower'" (March 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 37).

To help us construct such a towering self, the Daishonin gave us the Gohonzon and Nammyoho-enge-kyo, which embody the Treasure Tower within. Through diligent faith and practice, we can come to understand with our very lives that our true identity — and the identity of all people — is best described as an infinite tower of treasure.

For an enlightening discussion on many aspects of the Treasure Tower, see President Ikeda's "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" in the March 1997 Living Buddhism, available on the Pubs 97-98 CD-ROM and the third volume of The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, available this spring.

APRIL 2, 1958 — SECOND SOKA GAKKAI PRESIDENT JOSEI TODA'S DEATH

## One Man Stands Alone

### SIGNIFICANT DATES

ON MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM AND THE SGI

By JAMIE LIPTAN  
STAFF WRITER

Josei Toda decided to change the world. A man of humble origins in a tiny country devastated by nuclear war decided that he would, alone if necessary, alleviate humanity's suffering and lead people to happiness. He seriously believed he could do it.

Guess what? He did. Imprisoned during World War II along with his mentor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, for refusing to bow to the Japanese military government, Toda devoted himself to his study of the Lotus Sutra.

"To experience the meaning of those passages," he later wrote, "I began chanting Nammyoho-enge-kyo as Nichiren Daishonin taught. When I finished chanting 2 million times, I experienced something mystic, beholding a state of existence never known to me before. Trembling with joy, I stood



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda.

in my solitary cell, proclaiming to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout time and space, 'I have shaken off my delusions five years behind Confucius but came to know my mission five years ahead of him'" (December 2000 *Living Buddhism*, p. 11).

After his release in 1945 after more than two years of imprisonment, Toda saw for himself the depths of human suffering. The people were ravaged by the war.

Sick, hungry and grieving, they had lost all hope.

Imagine Toda's state of mind. He realized that it was exactly as the Daishonin had predicted — in the Latter Day of the Law, when humanity was suffering the most, the Mystic Law would spread far and wide to alleviate human suffering.

And Josei Toda, barely alive after years of malnutrition and financially ruined by the war, had to do it. His mentor had

died in prison, too old to survive the ordeal. Everyone else had abandoned the Soka Gakkai, like rats from the proverbial sinking ship. There was, literally, no one else.

I often think of the moment it struck him, that he alone must save humanity. In my darkest hours, I don't think I come close to knowing how lonely he must have felt. But his resolve, his faith in the power of the Law, must have been just a little stronger.

That resolve propelled him to single-handedly rebuild the Soka Gakkai, one suffering, sick, destitute person at a time. One of these people was Daisaku Ikeda. The young Ikeda was profoundly moved by Toda's unrelenting spirit, and took that spirit as his own. It has been his unwavering foundation in spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism across the globe.

So while Josei Toda never left Japan and only lived to be 58, his single-minded determination created the SGI we have today, an organization that is leading humanity to happiness. Imagine the way we'll view this one man's efforts 100 or 1,000 years from now, when the Daishonin's Buddhism has reached

even further into every corner of the globe and gained acceptance as a world religion.

"I am now taking a stand and fighting," Toda said, "looking ahead 100 or 200 years into the future. But people don't understand this. Two centuries from now, my actions and my struggles will have been proven to be the only genuine struggle for truth and justice among all of humanity" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 4, p. 63).

For me, though, in those dark moments when I feel I'm at the end of my rope, his true legacy is that he did exactly what he knew he must, despite every obstacle and self-doubt: He changed the world. **WT**

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EXPERIENCE — JUANITA H. MABERRY, ALEXANDRIA, VA.

# Strong Faith Transforms Family Feud

**After 20 years, Juanita Maberry and her husband break down the racial barriers that divided her family.**

Twenty years ago, my husband, John, and I began preparations for our wedding. It was a time of conflicting emotions. I was happy because I was getting married and beginning a new life; I was sad because I was doing so against my family's wishes. My parents and I had, to put it mildly, an argument, which resulted in my being exiled from the family.

I was going against the "rules" of the family. I am a black woman who was considering marriage to a white man. They both were worried about what our relatives and others would think and say. As well intending as they may have been, I did not feel they were considering my happiness, my future or my ability to make decisions.

My father had very strong memories of how some white people had treated him and his family in the past. Although I understood his concerns, I had become the type of person who did not live in the past. I knew what I was doing was right, yet I couldn't make my parents understand.

After agonizing over my decision, I chose to disobey my parents and follow my heart. Even if the marriage were not to last and I were to find out later that I had made a mistake, it had to be my mistake to make. For the first time in my life, I didn't do what my father said.

Right after John and I announced our intention to marry, my father threatened to kill us. I knew that he was capable of carrying out his threat, and I was scared to death. We went from family member to family member to try and get them to intervene. That only made matters worse. My father was having me watched. Even though I never noticed anyone watching me, he could tell me what time I came home, especially when I had been out with John. My brother and his wife started trying to arrange dates for me with eligible black bachelors. They invited me over and tried to talk me out of my marriage plans. After I was not convinced to change my mind, the family

gathered to tell me how I was a disgrace to the family.

I was also forced to sell my house, co-owned with my father, and move into an apartment. Drawing on his past experience—my father's aunts had been taken advantage of by some white men, and had a general distrust of white people—my father was convinced that John was going to quit his job and I'd be supporting us both. Right! On my government secretary's salary. I don't think so. John had just passed the Virginia Bar, and today he has a good job with the Fairfax County Government. I've since moved from the secretarial field to my current job as a publishing professional for the Army.

John and I considered moving from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area—to California perhaps. As things went from bad to worse, we finally sought guidance from a fellow SGI member. We were told that by considering a move, we were using strategies other than the Lotus Sutra. He said that we could move, but we couldn't escape our karma. We had to chant for my father's happiness and to have a successful, safe wedding. We decided to follow this advice, and as we did, I knew it could be 20 years before we would reconcile our differences. It might be a long time before I would see my family again.

I decided to revitalize my sometimes inconsistent practice. My husband and I began to chant an hour or two a day. I started doing full morning gongyo on a regular basis, something that had been a rarity up to this point. When someone threatens to kill you, you

find a way to get up and do morning gongyo before going to work.

Our wedding went off without any problems—but also without any of my family attending. We invited our co-workers, and the Buddhist ceremony gave us an opportunity to introduce them to Buddhism. We had been praying to be able to get married safely, without an incident—and we did.

From my wedding day forward, I was able to chant for my father's happiness more earnestly than before. I felt a huge weight had been lifted from my shoulders: my fear had disappeared. I no longer feared that my father would be waiting for me with a gun wherever I went.

My hope was to get my family back together again. Through it all, I would remember a passage from "Happiness in this World": "Though worldly troubles may arise, never let them disturb you. No one can avoid problems, not even saints or worthies.... Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy. Regard both suffering and joy as facts of life and continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, no matter what happens. How could this be anything other



(L-r) Juanita Maberry and her two younger sisters, Cynthia Harrison and Wanda Harrison.

than the boundless joy of the Law?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 681). Even today when I'm going through hard times, this passage encourages me to persevere.

My husband and I continued to chant for my father's happiness as we started a new life together. Right before a trip to Japan, I called my father for the first time in two years and we had a brief conversation. Shortly after I found out I was pregnant with our first child, I called my father again. He was surprisingly happy. This positive response fueled the fire of our faith and my husband and I continued to chant for my father's happiness.

My husband's goal was to be able to shake my father's hand by the end of that year. I thought he was crazy to set such a goal, but then, I had become pregnant when I had been told I couldn't, so why not? When my parents came to the hospital to see the baby, my husband took this as an opportunity. My father shook his hand. Our family was back together again, and only two years after we were married. Today, my father is 83 and suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He forgets that he's been to my house; he forgets that he just asked me how everything

is going; but when I call him, he never forgets my husband. He always has something nice to say to John when we're over and scolds me for not bringing him when I visit by myself. Dad always lets us know that my husband is included in the family and that he thinks well of John. Their relationship far exceeds my expectations of 20 years ago.

I feel all our family relationships are better than ever as a result of the split and subsequent reunion. We don't take one another for granted, and when we see each other, there is an appreciation I could never have imagined. A unity I will always treasure. **WT**

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Juanita Maberry and her family: (l-r) her husband, John; Juanita; her mother, Callie Harrison; her father, George Harrison; her daughter, Jennifer Maberry; and her son, Richard Maberry.

# Bodhisattvas Show the Power of Buddhism Through Their Struggles

**'Buddhism teaches the concept of deliberately choosing our circumstances,' SGI President Ikeda explains. 'This is where practitioners of the Mystic Law voluntarily choose to be born into painful situations, so they might demonstrate the power of Buddhism to others through their struggles and their subsequent triumphs.'**

*The conclusion of a four-part discussion on life and death among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Teruhiko Yumitani (young men's leader) and Yoshiko Ueda (young women's leader).*

## Discussions on Youth

**SGI President Ikeda:** The good and evil energy that is engraved in one's life does not vanish at death. We carry it with us into our next lifetime. Perhaps you can think of this phenomenon as similar to the principle of the conservation of energy taught in physics.

But Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teaches us that we can change all such karma.

**Yoshiko Ueda:** Even immutable karma?

**Ikeda:** Yes. In fact, it is crucial that we change it. No matter what sufferings or hardships we may encounter, we must live bravely and strongly, challenging them until we triumph. The person who wins in the end is a true victor in life.

Victory is not decided halfway through. If we win in the end, we can look back on everything that has occurred up to that moment and realize that it all had a meaning. On the other hand, if we lose in the end, everything in our life will have been meaningless, no matter how smoothly things may have been going until then.

**Teruhiko Yumitani:** What about people who die of illness? Is that a sign of failure in life?

**Ikeda:** No. If a person has strong and invincible faith to the very end, he or she has triumphed. There are many people who, in spite of being fa-

tally ill and suffering greatly themselves, have prayed for kosen-rufu and the happiness of their fellow members and encouraged others right up to the very moment of death. Their lives and their bravery in the face of death have given courage and inspiration to countless people. Such people will quickly be reborn with a healthy body.

I knew a young girl who was found to have a brain tumor when she was eleven. She died at fourteen. But through it all, she was so happy and cheerful. She even cheered up the adults in the hospital, sharing her bright, positive spirit with all whom she met. No doubt her illness caused her terrible pain, but she continued to chant and to encourage others.

When she was dying, she said to one of her last visitors: "I don't care anymore about my illness or what happens to me. I've stopped praying for myself. There are so many others worse off than me. I pray with all my heart that they will take faith as soon as possible and find out for themselves just how wonderful the Gohonzon is."

To her parents she said: "What if this had happened to you, Dad? We'd be in terrible trouble! And it would be just as bad if it happened to you, Mom. And if it happened to my little brother, I'm sure he couldn't handle it. I'm glad that it happened to me instead of any of you.... I'm sure this is the result of a promise I made before I was born. If those who know me learn something from my life, I will be happy."

I heard about this girl's strug-



We will 'return quickly to the grand stage of kosen-rufu' again and again, SGI President Ikeda says. San Francisco youth celebrate the 40th anniversary of President Ikeda's first visit to their city, October 2000.

gle with illness, and I sent her ar roses. I also sent her a fan on which I had written the words, "Light of Happiness," and a photograph I had taken of a field of irises in bloom. I heard that she was thrilled when she received them.

The words she left to those around her were "Faith means having faith until the very end." And she demonstrated those words with her own life.

There was a long, long line at her funeral. In her brief 14-and-a-half years, she had told over a thousand people of the greatness of the Mystic Law.

That girl's name was Akemi Yamada, and she was from Kashiwa City, Chiba Prefecture, Japan. [She died in October 1982.] She triumphed. That is what I feel. Her entire life, all her suffering, had meaning. Or rather, through her own struggle, she succeeded in giving meaning to her suffering.

**Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — the eternal good medicine — is the greatest happiness.**

**Ikeda:** Akemi said that her illness was the result of a promise she'd made before she was born. Buddhism teaches the concept of deliberately choosing our cir-

cumstances. This is where practitioners of the Mystic Law voluntarily choose to be born into painful situations, so they might demonstrate the power of Buddhism to others through their struggles and their subsequent triumphs. This is the way of life of a bodhisattva.

If everyone who had faith was perfectly blessed from the start, people would never know of the power of Buddhism. That is why some people voluntarily choose to be born in circumstances of profound suffering, so that they can show others what it means to do human revolution.

It is like a play, a great drama.

**Ueda:** So there can be meaning to a person's death, even if that person dies in an accident or of an illness.

**Ikeda:** All of us will die eventually. The crucial thing is how we have lived. It is important to live as long as we can, but length is not the measure of a good life. What matters most is what we have done with our lives. That is what determines whether it has been a good life or not.

Dr. Norman Cousins of the United States has said: "Death is not the greatest tragedy that befalls us in life. What is far

more tragic is for an important part of oneself to die while one is still alive. There is no more terrifying tragedy than this. What is important is to accomplish something in life."

Dr. Cousins was a great journalist and a peace activist. In his later years, he carried out pioneering work in the field of mind-body medicine, based on the conviction that the body and mind are one.

At any rate, the important thing is not whether our life is long or short. For those who practice the Daishonin's Buddhism, chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — the eternal good medicine — while they are alive is itself the greatest happiness. And when they die, through their connection with Buddhism in this lifetime, they will return quickly to the grand stage of kosen-rufu. It is just as if they take a short nap to rest, and then wake up again. The same is true of people who die in accidents.

Of course we mustn't lose our precious lives through our own carelessness. Thinking that we're safe from accidents just because we practice Buddhism is a kind of arrogance. Our correct attitude in faith should be to take extra pre-

Photo by KINGMOND YOUNG

cautions against accidents and illness precisely because we are practicing Buddhism.

**The entire universe flows in the rhythm of life and death.**

**Yumitani:** Suicide rates are high in Japanese society today.

**Ikeda:** Yes, they are high all around the world. This is very unfortunate. It is heartbreaking. People who kill themselves feel as if they have no way out. They don't have the strength to fight. They have nowhere to take refuge or find solace. But seeking escape in death does not end one's sufferings. In fact, by destroying the treasure that is your own life, you commit a grave offense that only adds further to your sufferings.

Suicides feel trapped and drained of vital life force. The reason they feel that way is that they are essentially living in opposition to the fundamental law of life, the Mystic Law. The entire universe flows in the rhythm of life and death. The largest star lives and dies, the smallest insect lives and dies. All phenomena move in the rhythm of life and death. The foundation of all life and death is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. That is why our life force grows weak if we go against the Mystic Law and grows strong if we practice the Mystic Law.

At any rate, suicide is always and absolutely wrong.

**Yumitani:** I know a person who was depressed and had lost her reason for living because her child had died, but thanks to the encouragement and support of fellow Soka Gakkai members, she has been able to make a new start in life.

**Ikeda:** We are a family of the Mystic Law. We are connected together by the "wireless communication system" of the Mystic Law, transcending life and death. Our daimoku always reaches our deceased loved ones. And, if we wish it, they can be reborn as family, or friends, or somewhere close by us.

The bereaved family members should be confident of that, and strive to lead the most happy and fulfilled lives. Their happiness is, in fact, eloquent testimony to the deceased's attainment of Buddhahood.

**Yumitani:** So the important thing is how those who have been left behind live the rest of their lives?

**Ikeda:** That's right. Buddhism

expounds the oneness of life and death, and the oneness of parent and child. So if those family members who are still alive are happy, those who have died will move on a course to happiness, too. Similarly, if the family members who have died attain Buddhahood, they will be able—as part of the protective forces of the universe with which they have merged—to protect those of us, their family, who are still alive.

**Ueda:** We may not be able to directly comprehend what death is like, but we can get an idea from life.

**Ikeda:** That is possible. We cannot scientifically prove what the state after death is like. But if we practice Buddhism and receive clear actual proof of the validity of its teachings while we're alive, it makes sense for us to accept Buddhism's teachings on what happens after death as well.

**Yumitani:** If the teachings of Buddhism weren't true, our members wouldn't see that proof demonstrated in their lives, but they do.

**Ikeda:** We have all put this practice to the test, and all of us in the same way have obtained some form of actual proof that it works. That means that some kind of fixed law or principle is in action.

The foundation of all Buddhist teachings is a view of life as eternal. If this foundation were wrong, we wouldn't have actual proof of Buddhism's effectiveness while we are alive.

**Youth must spread the philosophy of the sanctity of life.**

**Yumitani:** There are many people, though, who say that it is impossible to prove the existence of life after death, and that we can only know what death is like by dying.

**Ikeda:** Well that's true—you can only know what death is like by dying. But what are you going to do if, after you die, you find out that Buddhism was right? It will be too late to change your life then!

**Ueda:** Yes, it's all over!

**Yumitani:** Even if, just supposing, there were no life after death, all your efforts to perfect yourself through Buddhist practice still wouldn't be wasted, because you'd end up a better person and leading a fulfilled life. Either way, you'd still come out ahead! If we think of this as a bet, it's the best bet going!

**Ikeda:** Buddhism is absolutely not mistaken about life and death. Science is not almighty; there are many things it can't prove. In particular, modern natural science excels at researching things within the realm of the five senses, but it has no means for inquiring into those things beyond that realm.

**Yumitani:** Science has no means to investigate life after death.

**Ikeda:** Therefore, the proper scientific attitude should be to

withhold judgment about things that one doesn't understand. Both Goethe and Tolstoy said the same thing. So did Gandhi. Science has no authority to declare whether life exists after death or not.

**Yumitani:** To declare without proof that life after death does not exist is arrogant.

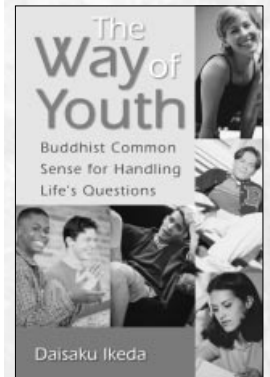
**Ikeda:** Yes, it is a tremendous error. No other age has been so intent on refusing to face the fact of death and so ardent in pursuing worldly desires as this age of science, the twentieth century. It has seen two world wars and a nuclear arms race carrying the threat of global annihilation. We cannot possibly hope to find a basis for respect for the sanctity of life in a view of life and death that maintains there is no life after death and that human beings are nothing but aggregations of matter.

That is why I want you, the youth, to study and spread the philosophy of the sanctity of life around the world so as to make the 21st century a century of peace. I want you to study the correct view of life and death, base your actions on it, and regard each and every day as a precious, irreplaceable treasure. I want you to fill your life with hundreds of years' worth of value and lead an invincible existence, the legacy of which will shine on brightly for all time.

*The previous parts of this discussion were published as follows: part 1 in the Sept. 15, 2000, issue; part 2 in the Oct. 13, 2000, issue; and part 3 in the Jan. 19 issue.*

**The Way of Youth**

Buddhist Common Sense for Handling Life's Questions  
**Daisaku Ikeda**



Based on the popular "Discussions on Youth" series in the *World Tribune*, *The Way of Youth* brings together President Ikeda's responses to the questions of today's young people. Edited for a general audience, the book offers insights into a variety of issues of concern to today's young people, including how to build confidence and character, learning to live with and respect both yourself and others, finding true happiness, dealing with peer pressure and how to contribute to a positive, free and peaceful society. The book is sure to appeal to teens and their parents of all faiths. 0-9674697-0-8, Paperback, \$14.95

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—Arun Gandhi, Founding Director of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence



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**Ikeda:** That's right. Buddhism

FROM MEETINGS, 1

with many nationalities represented, including members originally from Guam, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, France, Italy, and Mexico.

Members were asked to bring a small memento to create a collage expressing their feelings as women committed to world peace. The collage board was 5 feet tall by 4 feet wide and shaped like the state of Texas. Dorothy Pocaigue, from Guam, brought a series of pictures of her 35 nieces and nephews. She spoke of recent teen suicides on the island and expressed the hope that "if we, as women, take the reins, then we can show the world that war and conflict are not the solution. We can create a better future for our sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren."

Also on Feb. 25, close to 300 joyful members met at the Albuquerque Community Center for a program that encompassed all facets of women in society. The theme of the meeting, "Wise Women Will Change Society," was displayed through music, experiences and presentations. The meeting closed with a traditional Native American song and dance, after which everyone gathered for refreshments and dialogue. The high spirits and sense of accomplishment were obvious, with people continuing to share two hours after the meeting officially ended.

Despite a forecasted blizzard, nearly 100 women gathered at the Omaha Community Center, some driving as much as two hours to get there. Large paper dolls, paper crane mobiles and bouquets of flowers decorated the meeting place. In

contrast to the cold outside, the community center was warm, friendly and electric. The members enjoyed performances, small group discussions and refreshments afterward.

In an effort to provide a warm environment in the midst of a long winter, women in Spokane, Wash., decorated their community center with a Hawaiian theme. The members welcomed 15 guests to their meeting, and many courageous women shared their experiences of victories in faith.

Speaking about the nationwide efforts, SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck said: "I was so impressed by the depth and the hearts of the women. These are all busy women, but they reached beyond themselves, putting aside their personal routines, and invested so much meaningful effort into every gathering. The range of meetings was fantastic, big and small, from patio gatherings in the Southwest to the peace conference in Washington, D.C."

"I also heard wonderful stories about the participation of all the other members. This was an activity of tremendous teamwork. And, wow, are the guests responding to it all—many have already indicated that they want to start practicing. As SGI President Ikeda said in his message: 'What wonderful opportunities we have been given to put our faith into practice! What a great place to be at this moment in time!'"

*From reports by Emi Gwin, Carol Chastang, Barbara Fellman, Michele Chwastiak, Judith Hayes Austin, Barbara Saragosa and Jessie Keeney.*



Photo by BARBARA McCURDY

Albuquerque, N.M., members celebrate SGI-USA Women's Day at the Albuquerque Community Center.



Beverly Johnson speaks on violence at Austin Chapter's meeting, Feb. 25.



Photo by EMI GWIN

SGI-USA Vice General Director Theresa Hauber (left) speaks with Shirley Horton, mayor of Chula Vista, Calif.



Photo by CHERYL A. UTLEY

The women of Sunflower District in Lawrence, Kans., meet on Feb. 25.



Members of Richmond District in South Florida gather to celebrate Feb. 27, SGI-USA Women's Day.

Photo by DIXON HAMBY



The women of Renton, Wash., District gather for dialogue and encouragement.

Photo by KATHY AMERMAN



Valley Area women perform in San Fernando, Calif., Feb 25.

## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S 'CLEAR MIRROR' GUIDANCE

# WOMEN MUST LEAD THE WAY

The following excerpts are from SGI President Ikeda's speech at the first SGI-USA Women's meeting on Feb. 27, 1990. The speech appears in its entirety in the booklet *Buddhism Is the Clear Mirror That Reflects Our Lives*.

I hope that all of you will be cultured and graceful. Intelligent and kind people are beautiful. They inspire trust and a sense of reassurance in those around them. As you continue to deepen your faith in Buddhism, you can broaden your sphere of knowledge.

Without wisdom and sagacity, leaders cannot fulfill their mission, that is, convince others of the power of this Buddhism and help them attain true happiness. In this sense, I would like to speak about the correct attitude in faith through the analogy of mirrors.

A Japanese proverb has it that the mirror is a woman's soul. It is said that just as warriors will never part with their swords, women will never part with their mirrors. There would seem to be some truth

to this saying, in that mirrors are prized by women the world over.

In Buddhism, the mirror is used to explain various doctrines. In one place, Nichiren Daishonin states, "There are profound teachings transmitted secretly with regard to mirrors" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 724). Another *Gosho* states: "A bronze mirror may reflect the body but not the mind. The mirror of the Lotus Sutra reflects not only our physical form but our inner being as well. Furthermore, the sutra mirrors, with complete clarity, one's past karma and its future effect" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1521).

Mirrors reflect our outward form. The mirror of Buddhism, however, reveals the intangible aspect of our lives. Mirrors, which function by virtue of the laws of light and reflection, are a product of human wisdom. On the other hand, the Gohonzon, based on the Law of the universe and life itself, is the culmination of the Buddha's wisdom and makes it possible for us to attain Buddhahood by providing us with

a means of perceiving the true aspect of our life. Just as a mirror is indispensable for putting your face and hair in order, you need a mirror that reveals the depths of your life if you are to lead a happier and more beautiful existence.

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Just as you look into a mirror when you make up your face, to beautify the face of the soul, you need a mirror that reflects the depths of your life. This mirror is none other than the Gohonzon of "observing one's mind," or more precisely, observing one's life. Nichiren Daishonin explains what it means to observe one's life in the *Gosho* "The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind," "Only when we look into a clear mirror do we see, for the first time, that we are endowed with all six sense organs" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 356).

Similarly, observing one's life means to perceive that one's life contains the Ten Worlds and, in particular, the world of Buddhahood. It was to enable people to do this that Nichiren Daishonin bestowed

the Gohonzon of "observing one's mind" upon all humankind. In his exegesis on "The True Object of Worship," Nichikan, the twenty-sixth high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, states, "The true object of worship can be compared to a wonderful mirror."

Nichiren Daishonin states in the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," "The five characters of Myohorenge-kyo mirror all things without a single exception." The Gohonzon is the clearest of all mirrors that reflects the entire universe exactly as it is. When you chant to the Gohonzon, you can perceive the true aspect of your life and tap the inexhaustible life force of Buddhahood.

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In *Le Père Goriot*, the French author Balzac (1799-1850) writes, "Whatever evil you hear of society, believe it..." So full of evil was the world that he perceived. He adds: "And then you will find out what the world is, a gathering of dupes and rogues. Be of neither party."

We must gain decisive vic-

tory over the harsh realities of society and lead a correct and vibrant life. This is the purpose of our faith. We have to become wise and strong.

Also, in the organization for kosen-rufu, we have to clearly say what must be said. The purpose of Buddhism is not to produce dupes who blindly follow their leaders. Rather, it is to produce people of wisdom who can judge right or wrong on their own in the clear mirror of Buddhism.

I hope that you, women's division members, learn the correct way to practice Buddhism so that, in the event that a leader or a man does something that goes against reason, you will be able to clearly point out the error and identify the correct path to follow. Nichiren Daishonin compares men to an arrow and women to the bow. An arrow flies in the direction that the bow points it.

I would like to tell you that when the members of the women's division freely devote themselves to activities and provide a confident and strong lead for men, that will mark the dawn of the new SGI-USA. **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# The Atsuhara Persecution: Putting Buddhism First

**‘Practitioners can be clearly divided into two categories: those who put Buddhism first and those who put themselves first,’ SGI President Ikeda explains. ‘In every age, one finds that those who abandon their faith tend to put their own feelings and interests before the teachings of Buddhism. By doing so, they create an opening by which devilish functions can gain entrance to their hearts and minds.’**

*The second of two essays by SGI President Ikeda on the Atsuhara Persecution. The first essay appeared in the March 9 World Tribune.*

If teacher and disciple are of different minds, they will never accomplish anything” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 909). During the Atsuhara Persecution, Nikko Shonin sent detailed reports on the unfolding events to Nichiren Daishonin, who was then at Mount Minobu, and received practical guidance and instruction from him. He faced this persecution completely united with his mentor, the Daishonin.

In 1278, Gyochi — the deputy chief priest of Ryusen-ji temple in Atsuhara Village — forged a government directive with his cronies outlawing faith in the Lotus Sutra in what was an underhanded attempt to stop the spread of the Daishonin’s teachings. The Daishonin declared that he did not even have to see the directive to know that it was fake. And in fact, it was quickly exposed as a forgery.

The schemers, however, were persistent with their devious machinations. They plotted to

destroy the unity of the Daishonin’s followers by sowing seeds of doubt and dissension among those who harbored ill feeling or jealousy toward their fellow believers and cunningly persuading them to abandon their faith and turn on their comrades.

It is believed that onetime followers Ota Chikamasa and Nagasaki Tokitsuna, who abandoned their faith during the Atsuhara Persecution, had nursed ill will toward Takahashi Rokuro Hyoe, a key figure among the lay believers in the Fuji area.

Also, Sammi-bo, another who forsook his faith during the persecution, had been jealous of Nikko Shonin. As Nikko Shonin’s senior and a scholarly priest who studied at Mount Hiei, site of the head temple of the Tendai school, he was very arrogant, making much of his limited learning. And he was quite unenthusiastic about working among the people. Though the Daishonin had sent Sammi-bo to the Fuji area, he objected to serving there under his junior, Nikko Shonin.

Practitioners can be clearly divided into two categories: those who put Buddhism first and those who put themselves first. In every age, one finds that those who abandon their faith tend to put their own feelings and interests before the Buddhist teachings. By doing so, they create an opening through which devilish functions can gain entrance to their hearts and minds.

The Daishonin saw through the base nature of such people, describing them as “cowardly, unreasoning, greedy, and doubting” (WND, 998). One after another, these thankless traitors who had appeared among the Daishonin’s followers met untimely deaths — several of them being thrown from their horses.

The Daishonin declares that their fate constitutes “punishment for their treachery against

the Lotus Sutra,” and he identifies that punishment as “conspicuous and individual” (WND, 997). As many of you may know, those who betrayed their faith and forgot their debt of gratitude by turning on the Soka Gakkai — an organization acting in complete accord with the Buddha’s intent and decree — are all meeting the most pitiful, wretched ends.

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Sept. 21, 1279 — Gyochi chose this day, because he knew that many of the Atsuhara farmers who followed the Daishonin were going to harvest



the rice in the fields that belonged to Nisshu, one of the priests at Ryusen-ji who had converted to the Daishonin’s teachings thanks to Nikko Shonin. Gyochi gathered together a large force, including local officials of the Shimogata Manor Administration Office, and launched a sudden attack on them in the midst of the harvest. Twenty farmers who were followers of the Daishonin were arrested and detained unjustly at the local administrative office.

In addition, Gyochi drew up a list of false charges and presented it to the military government. He accused Nisshu of leading a group of armed farmers in an attack on the chief priest’s private quarters at Ryusen-ji and of stealing rice from fields belonging to the temple. These charges were nothing more than “a false suit designed to hide his [Gyochi’s] own offenses” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 850).

To bring a fraudulent lawsuit against innocent individuals in order to hide one’s own crimes constitutes a blatant

“abuse of the right to sue.” The malicious plots against the Soka Gakkai in recent years have followed this pattern.

As soon as he learned of the content of Gyochi’s suit, Nikko Shonin drafted a letter of petition to the authorities and sent it to the Daishonin. Nikko Shonin’s draft clearly explains what happened and sets forth the evil deeds of Gyochi and his confederates. The Daishonin added to the first half of the petition the fact that the predictions of his treatise “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land” had come true, along with a refutation of the erroneous teachings of Gyochi and other Ryusen-ji priests.

With the first half written by the Daishonin and the second by Nikko Shonin, this document, the “Ryusen-ji Petition” (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 849–53), is clear evidence of the shared struggle of mentor and disciple.

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The 20 farmers under arrest were quickly dispatched to Kamakura, the seat of the military government, where they underwent questioning by the powerful Hei no Saemon, the deputy chief of the Office of Police and Military Affairs. Not one of them broke under the inhumane interrogation to which they were subjected. Not one of them caved in to the authorities’ threats, intimidation and torture.

Finally, Jinshiro and his two brothers — the three martyrs — gave their lives for their beliefs. It was a moment of indelible significance in the history of human rights. They died truly heroic deaths.

“On Practicing the Buddha’s Teachings” tells us that even should we be beheaded, “Shakyamuni, Many Treasures, and the Buddhas of the ten directions will come to us instantly...while all the heav-

enly gods and benevolent deities will raise a canopy over our heads and unfurl banners on high. They will escort us under their protection to the treasure land of Tranquil Light” (WND, 395–96).

Once asked my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, about the deaths of the three martyrs of Atsuhara. His reply was clear and unequivocal: “Even if we should be killed, if our death has been for the sake of the Mystic Law, then we will attain Buddhahood without fail. It will be like having a dream shortly after drifting off to sleep, and then falling into a deep, peaceful slumber afterward.” No matter how those who dedicate their lives to kosen-rufu may die, it will never be a miserable, wretched death.

There is also a legend that one of the farmers arrested was a woman, who declared bravely: “Don’t delay my execution because I am a woman. Execute me now!”

Immediately after learning of the deaths, the Daishonin wrote the letter “Reply to Sages and Others,” in which he urged his followers: “You must not be afraid. I am sure that if you keep advancing strongly things are certain to become clear” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1455). This was his lion’s roar.

Nanjo Tokimitsu, a young local steward in his 20s and a lay follower of the Daishonin, carried out this injunction to the letter, stepping bravely into the fray to fight for his comrades. He became the target of much pressure from the government for protecting and giving shelter to the Atsuhara believers, but even in the direst of circumstances he staunchly defended the Daishonin and led the counterattack against the authorities in the cause of justice.

The fact that the local believers surmounted and emerged triumphant in the Atsuhara Persecution was due to the intrepid, tenacious efforts of this youth, who dedicated his life to the path of mentor and disciple.

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At that time, the Daishonin observed, “In the past, and in the present Latter Day of the Law, the rulers, high ministers, and people who despise the votaries of the Lotus Sutra seem to be free from punishment at first, but eventually they are all doomed to fall” (WND, 997).

Fourteen years later, in April 1293, government forces sur-

# 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 31-32

*Visiting the islands often kept Takashi Nogawa, the first chapter leader of Amami Oshima Chapter, away from home for a week or two at a time. 'When he left his house, he'd say, "See you soon!" without mentioning when he might return.'*

Shin'ichi Yamamoto and the other leaders talked until the early morning, deciding finally to call the new organization Amami General Chapter and that it would consist of the chapters Amami Oshima, Naze and Koniya. It was also decided to appoint Takashi Nogawa, until then the leader of Amami Oshima Chapter, as the new general chapter leader, and Haru Fujisawa, the current chapter women's division leader, as the general chapter women's division leader.

Nogawa ran a general store on Amami Oshima. An earnest-looking man in his late 30s, he was straightforward and honest. Upon returning home after serving in the army during the war, his life on Amami Oshima under U.S. military rule was very hard, and he lived day after day in desperate poverty.

Eventually he opened the general store and got married, but just as business seemed to be taking off, he contracted tuberculosis. Both of his parents had died when he was a child, and his sister died at 16. Sensing that his entire family was fated to die young, Nogawa began to fear his own demise.

He grew thin from the disease, and his face became so pale that he had to put on rouge when he went into the store to meet with customers. It was around this time that he first heard about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. He was so moved by the confidence of the Soka Gakkai members who came to talk to him that he and his family decided to join in the hopes that the practice would cure him. They received Gohonzon in May 1957.

Determined to beat his illness, Nogawa devoted himself enthusiastically to Buddhist practice. Day by day, he began to feel better, and when he had an X-ray taken about a year later, not a trace of shadow was found on his lungs. The doctor was astonished. This experience gave Nogawa tremendous confidence in his faith, and he began to put even more energy into Soka Gakkai activities. He had experienced the power of Buddhist practice to change karma.

Three years after he had joined the Soka Gakkai, in October 1960, Koniya District of Kagoshima Chapter was formed, and Nogawa was appointed district leader. Ten months later, in July 1961, with the establishment



of Amami Oshima Chapter, he was asked to become the chapter leader. He was troubled about whether he should accept the appointment, however. Though he would be head of Amami Oshima Chapter, in addition to his home island of Amami Oshima, the chapter included Kikaijima, Kakeromajima, Tokunoshima, Okinoerabujima and Yoronjima — all of the Amami Islands.

He knew full well that it would be impossible to fulfill his responsibilities as chapter leader unless he devoted himself entirely, day and night, to the good of the chapter members.

At the time, the roads on Amami Oshima were in extremely poor condition. Furthermore, the only way to travel to the other islands was by boat, which often involved many transfers from one passenger ship to another, or making one's way in a small fishing vessel while being tossed about by the waves. It took 13-and-a-half hours by regular passenger boat to get from Naze on Amami Oshima to Chabana on Yoronjima, if all went according to schedule. The return trip took 18-and-a-half hours.

A chapter leader in those early days of the Soka Gakkai's activities in the Amami Islands would have to cut back on working hours in order to visit all the members. Nogawa knew this

and was therefore hesitant to accept the position of head of Amami Oshima Chapter. His wife Yoshimi was also well aware of the weight of responsibility that would come with the post. If her husband accepted it, she knew that he would be virtually unable to work in the general store or contribute to taking care of the household. But she also understood that to transform the tragic karma of the Amami Islands and bring happiness to all of the people there, someone had to take on that burden, and so she made up her mind.

"We can do it. I'll take care of the store!" she told her husband. These words enabled Mr. Nogawa to make his decision. He felt that he owed his very life to his faith and it was therefore only right that he should devote that life to the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

He was appointed as chapter leader at the Headquarters leaders meeting in Tokyo, and on that day he met President Yamamoto for the first time at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters. Shin'ichi sincerely congratulated Nogawa on this new start for Amami Oshima Chapter, and expressed high hopes for him in meeting the bold challenges ahead.

After his appointment, Nogawa gave himself wholeheartedly to helping the members practice and to spreading the Daishonin's teachings through-

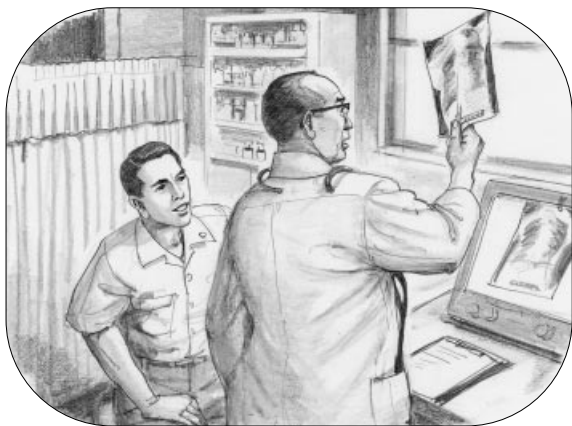
out the Amami archipelago. It turned out to be just as challenging as he had anticipated — in fact, even more so.

Visiting the islands often kept Nogawa away from home for a week or two at a time. When he left his house, he'd say, "See you soon!" without mentioning when he might return. He simply couldn't say, mostly due to the unpredictability of the weather.

Some of the islands had no regular passenger ship service and the only way to reach them at all was on a fishing boat or by rowboat. When he went to Tokunoshima, the second largest of the Amami Islands, he would take a motorbike with him and use that to get around the island.

Nogawa was rarely able to sleep in his own bed. He always carried a raincoat on his travels, and when he became tired, he would put it on and sleep under the stars. While traveling very late one night, he was suddenly overcome with fatigue. He stopped his bike and lay down by the roadside. He awoke to the feel of something on his stomach. He opened his eyes and gulped. It was a *habu*, a poisonous snake native to the southern Japanese islands.

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



# Appreciating Myself As I Am

## PERSPECTIVE

By M. LAVORA PERRY  
EAST CLEVELAND, OHIO

**Lavora Perry says she is 'coming to understand that there are not two me's—the good me and the bad me. There is only me, and I am always a Buddha.'**

Since the early 1990s, I've tried to answer SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's call for us to contribute to our local areas. He says: "Because of the profound way our lives interact with people around us, it is vital that we reach out to others, that we be engaged with our environment and with our local community. A self-absorbed practice or theory without action is definitely not Buddhism" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 62).

I have been a participatory parent in my preschool's and kindergartner's schools, a socially engaged employee and an active resident of East Cleveland. In addition to my SGI activities, my efforts to support my community have been a hodgepodge of whatever I had the time and inclination to do.

My contributions were recognized at a recent city council meeting. I joined several others in being awarded with a certificate "in appreciation of devoted and invaluable services rendered to the Greater East Cleveland Community." The awards were the brainchild of council member Saratha Goggins, a hardworking neighbor of mine. She gives them out each February in celebration of Black History Month.

When I arrived back home from the council meeting, I decided to fax President Ikeda a copy of the certificate, as I believe the award is fundamentally the effect of me following his guidance.

My ankle's broken right now and I'm on crutches, so I avoid going up and down stairs too often. So before hobbling up to the fax machine in my third-floor writer's studio, I stayed downstairs at my altar to chant about what the award meant to me. Through chanting I realized that, once again, I was devaluing my

own efforts, and therefore, I was devaluing my life. I found myself thinking "I didn't really do so much" and wishing that I lived somewhere where there isn't so much that needs to be done.

East Cleveland, where artfully designed, turn-of-the-last-century, mini-mansions in need of sometimes-major repair stand regally, is a 95 percent African-American municipality. For a city our size (population 33,000), our racial makeup is a rarity. In the 1970s and '80s, we boasted Ohio's first African-American female mayor and youngest African-American female city council member. Both women are still active citizens here, and today we are a city rebuilding itself after a couple of decades of constantly living the blues.

Before the Gohonzon, I looked my self-slender in the eye. I felt ashamed about where I live. But, in chanting, I realized that this shame was not the result of me living in East Cleveland. It was a shame I carried in my heart, the childhood shame of not being pretty, thin, rich, popular, smart or "fill-in-the-blank" enough. It was the shame of being me.

This shame judged me, instead of appreciating me. It also prevented me from being able to really appreciate, and not judge, others. No matter if my efforts were way behind-the-scenes or way out front, this shame said, "What you do doesn't count."

I am coming to believe that the same type of low self-value I saw within my life was at the root of what held our city down during the last part of the 20th century. During that time, white residents fled in staggering numbers, and I think black people took it personally. African-Americans have too often accepted this type of reaction from whites as an indication that being black is something to run away from.

It seems to me that, throughout the long course of slavery and its inhuman brutality and lingering evils within our society, blacks' self-esteem could not have been negatively affected by some whites' poor opinions of us had we truly believed we are precious as we are.

In terms of the effects of low self-value on our communities, I've concluded that while blacks' weak self-esteem was reflected in the downward spiral of many neighborhoods, whites' devaluing of themselves was played out in the way many



LaVora Perry (right) receives an award from East Cleveland, Ohio, City Council member Saratha Goggins.

of them flew from homes they loved, simply because new people were moving into the area. It was as if they had so little appreciation for the priceless nature of their lives that they thought having black neighbors could reduce their worth.

The truth is, what makes a person's life worthy of respect is not skin color, wallet size, educational degree, owning a home or anything like that. Nichiren Daishonin taught that a person is worthy of respect simply for being alive. Hopefully, respect for ourselves and for all others is the lesson we are learning from our past experiences in trying to build strong, harmonious communities in our diverse nation.

As I kept chanting on the evening that I received the award, I repeated the determination I've been making lately: I prayed to really appreciate everything about me—imperfections and all. This included appreciating my chock-full-of-potential city. I vowed that, "Because I am a disciple of Nichiren Daishonin and a successor of President Ikeda, I will value my life, and the life of all others. I will pray and take action to make this city known to all as the Buddha land that it is. I will continue to work with the many others who value our community, and together, we will show just how East Clevelanders shine—our city's phenomenal rebirth will inspire and encourage the people who live in many others. In all I do, I will prove the

power of my Buddhist practice."

Nichiren Daishonin says, "There are not two lands pure and impure in themselves, the difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 40). I'm also coming to understand that there are not two me's—the good me and the bad me. There is only me, and I am always a Buddha. As such, I am a shining, wish-granting jewel

who can create any reality I want.

Being the Buddha that I am, I can freely travel the entire universe. So, if my family decides to relocate someday, that's OK. But, while we live in East Cleveland, I vow to make all the difference in the world.

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

## 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.

## World Tribune MAILBOX

### Gongyo Workshops a Success

Our district recently held its first gongyo workshop with Cindy Carrillo's article in the Nov 17, 2000, *World Tribune* (p. 6) as the format. I had been leading our monthly, traditional slow gongyo meetings for several months, and the members attending had improved.

But this meeting was different, full of joy and enthusiasm. After a moderately paced gongyo, we each took turns reading her article. Then we practiced some of the "problem" areas. Some of us have been doing gongyo for over 20 years and had come just to support. Instead, all went home feeling supported after experiencing the fun, joy and powerful exhilaration of this particular activity. The benefit and impact of just wanting to improve our gongyo was immediately apparent in our lives.

— ROCHELLE K. MELAMED  
Delray Beach, Fla.

### Rejuvenated Through Evening Gongyo

Mike Lisagor's article "Beare the Five Minute Prayer" (Jan. 19 *World Tribune*, p. 10) was uplifting. My job as an electrician for security alarms, fire and burglary and security cameras involves being on the road sometimes 12 or more hours a day, so it's easy to rationalize skipping evening gongyo because of being tired. As a result of Mike's article, even though I had a busy week and sometimes drove 200 miles a day, I came home and did a sincere gongyo and chanted at least a few min-

utes. I noticed I wasn't as tired the next day. Thank you, Mike.

— PHILIP RAY  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

### Don't Forget About Nutrition

It seems depression is very popular these days. On the same day I received the latest *AARP Bulletin* and my Feb. 9 *World Tribune*, and they both featured articles on depression. Both publications recommended therapy, medication and meditation but not in the same order. Nowhere in the articles is nutrition considered. Yet the symptoms Lee Wolfson listed from the DSM-IV can be caused by a variety of nutritional deficiencies.

I am not advocating eschewing medications, but I believe a nutritional assessment should be included in considering a treatment protocol for mental illness. And I understand that medication can't be discarded abruptly should one want to go an alternative route. For example: Valerie Kurita's experience (March 2 *World Tribune*, p. 3) about how her son was able to replace his medication with megavitamin therapy (and prayer). But it took a year to gradually reduce the medications by half.

There are many examples of vitamin, mineral and fatty acid deficiencies that can contribute to depression. There are also medical causes such as hypothyroidism, hypoadrenia and other hormonal imbalances. The important thing is to consider the whole person. That is what is meant by a holistic approach and moreover, I believe, would be consistent with our Buddhist practice.

— SYLVIA ELBAZ  
New York

### Perseverance in Practice Can Heal Depression

I want to thank Terri Johnson for sharing our experience about challenging depression in the Feb. 9, 2001 *World Tribune* (p. 6). Her account so accurately portrayed severe depression as a lifelong battle that Buddhism has the power to eradicate. Each year of my own Buddhist practice, I have watched my depression lift a little more, so that now it never has the power to paralyze me the way it used to.

Each of us who suffers from depression heals ourselves in different ways, but I believe the key for all of us is to continue persevering in our Buddhist practice no matter what, even if some days we can only chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo a few times. Then, without fail, life will get better beyond anything we ever imagined, and real joy emerges. That's been my experience.

Also, since I began participating in Soka Spirit activities a year and a half ago, I feel I have blasted through my depression 10 times faster than in my previous 16 years of practice.

— KALI SAPOSNICK  
Boston

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### FROM ESSAY, 8

rounded Hei no Saemon's residence and set it on fire. His eldest son, Munetsuna, had secretly accused him of plotting against the government.

As the flames and government forces closed in around him, Hei no Saemon had no choice but to kill himself, tormented by the agonies of the hell of incessant suffering — in the very house where he had tortured and killed the three martyrs. By his side was his second son, Sukemune, who had tortured the captive Atsuhara farmers by firing blunted arrows at them.

The entire family, once so illustrious and powerful, perished in the flames. The eldest son, who had betrayed his father, was exiled to Sado, and Hei no Saemon's line was wiped out.

The 26th high priest, Nichikan, wrote in his "Commentary on 'The Selection of the Time,'" "The distant cause [of the demise of Hei no Saemon's family] is the offense of striking Nichiren Daishonin, while the near cause is the offense of executing the three martyrs at the time of the Atsuhara Persecution."

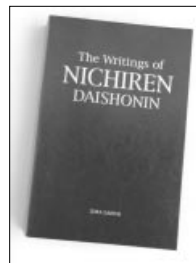
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Another verse of the Soka Gakkai song "The Three Martyrs of Atsuhara" goes:

*Jinshiro, passing from one life into the next,  
Like cherry blossoms scattering in the breeze,  
Renowned as a model of devotion to kosen-rufu—  
How noble the life  
Of this honorable martyr of Atsuhara.*

The Soka Gakkai's founding father, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, died in prison in the same spirit as the three martyrs of Atsuhara. And Mr. Toda and myself, too, following in

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my mentor's footsteps, have borne the brunt of all manner of persecution. To battle on amid persecution and give our lives to our cause is the source of the greatest pride.

Obstacles lead to enlightenment. Selflessly propagating the Mystic Law toward the realization of worldwide kosen-rufu is the undying distinction of the first three Soka Gakkai presidents.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the Feb. 7 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.



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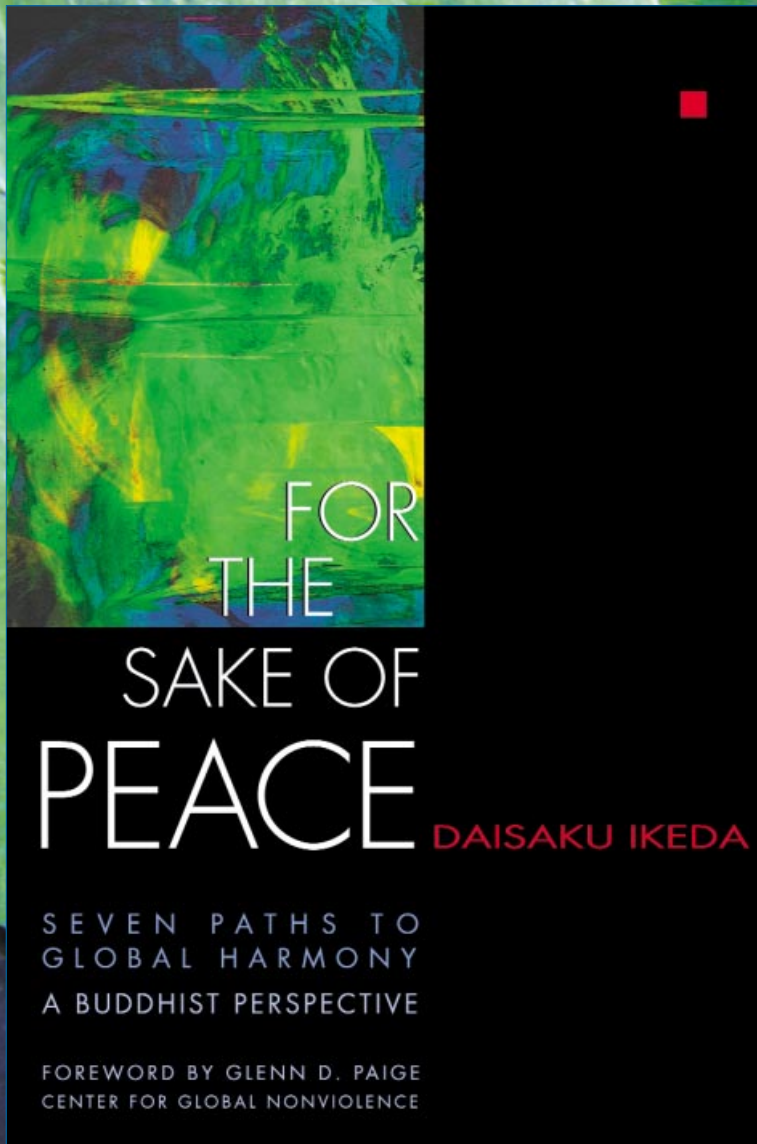
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