

MAY 3, 2001: JUST THE BEGINNING

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

In this special issue about May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, we feature excerpts of SGI President Ikeda's writings over the years about the SGI's history leading up to and progressing from the milestone we have set of May 3, 2001 (see pp. 8-10). This May 3 is the 50th anniversary of Josei Toda becoming the second Soka Gakkai president, the start of a new cycle in the SGI's history — the second Seven Bells — and the dedication of the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus.

SGI members have been waiting for this moment since May 3, 1966, when President Ikeda first shared his vision that May 3, 2001, would

be the kickoff for the SGI's 21st century activities. As he wrote in his New Year's poem this year:

*Now, let us courageously
advance together
Into the uncharted frontier
Of a new millennium
of hope!
As we ring in the second
series of Seven Bells,
Let us raise higher and
higher still
The banner of humanism
of Buddhism!*

(Jan. 1 *World Tribune*, p. 3) **WT**



Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, founded by SGI President Ikeda, will be dedicated on May 3.

FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA

Standing Alone, Advancing Together



'The second Seven Bells must begin with

each of us committed to realizing our own happiness,' says SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. 'This is the only way, I believe, to fulfill the pledge we made in the remote past as Bodhisattvas of the Earth — to strive for the happiness of all humanity.'

Congratulations on the beginning of a new era of our kosen-rufu movement! For decades, SGI-USA members have dreamed of May 3, 2001. This day, which begins the second set of Seven Bells, has been a guiding light for our organization, keeping our gaze fixed on the future. I cannot begin to fully ex-

press my gratitude for your unbelievable efforts up to this point.

The first set of Seven Bells — seven consecutive seven-year periods — began in 1930 with the foundation of the Soka Gakkai and continued until President Ikeda's resignation as Soka Gakkai president in 1979. This period established the

founding of Japan's kosen-rufu movement, with millions of members advancing the values of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism into society.

In 1966, SGI President Ikeda first shared his vision for a new era that would begin on May 3, 2001. From this time, the second set of Seven Bells would see the securing of the foundation for peace throughout the world.

This first half of the 21st century, therefore, is the most crucial time in the development of our movement in the United States. How do we proceed from here? We have been preparing for this time for many years. Do we know how to begin?

During almost 30 visits to America over the last four decades, President Ikeda has consistently emphasized that we should naturally, joyfully advance, while we grow into our true selves. He has constantly spoken of our becoming capable people and encouraged us to go to the forefront in every area

of our lives and society.

I believe he has been telling us that it is our personal struggles and triumphs that will propel our movement forward. We must win in everything — our relationships, our careers, our education, our self-esteem, our health — and become beautiful examples of the brilliance of the Daishonin's Buddhism in action.

We often talk about building unity in our organization, whether it's in our districts, our community outreach activities or planning a culture festival. But building unity based on our individual victories is the key. Only through our own experience of winning in faith can we contribute something concrete to our movement.

"Unity is not just huddling together in a cozy flock or leaning on one another for support," President Ikeda says. "True unity is the joint struggle of courageous individuals who



SGI-USA leaders, led by Matilda Buck and Danny Nagashima (center), plant a tree for May 3, 2001, at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Tokyo, March 18.

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI-Philippine Young Men Participate in Reforestation Activity

The SGI-Philippine young men's division members have been recognized for their environmental preservation activities in Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao Island, the Philippines. In recent years, the Philippine government's Department of Environment and Natural Resources has designated June as Environment Month. In support of this program, in June 1999, SGI-Philippines young men on Mindanao began planting trees in the Malasag hills. Every two months, dozens of young men take a 30-minute drive into the Malasag hills to plant 400 saplings, including oaks and mahoganies, in a two-hectare area assigned to them by the government. The site is close to the SGI-Philippines Cagayan de Oro Community Center. On Jan. 27 of this year, 40 members participated in this activity, their 10th effort since the start of the reforestation project.

Book Fair Featuring Daisaku Ikeda and Jin Yong Opens in Macao

On March 2, the "Quest for a Bright New Century — Jin Yong and Daisaku Ikeda's Joint Book Fair" opened at the UNESCO Center of Macao. Hong Kong literary scholar Jin Yong attended the opening ceremony as special guest together with 200 representatives from every sector of society,



including Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Chui Sai On. Mr. Jin Yong delivered a lecture following a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The book fair commemorates the 3rd anniversary of the publication of *Quest for a Bright New Century*, a dialogue between Mr. Jin and Mr. Ikeda, and celebrates Macao's third anniversary this year as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The book fair will be held at the UNESCO Center through March 4, then travels to various venues through the end of March, including the University of Macao. The Cultural Institute, the Education and Youth Affairs Department of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the University of Macao, the *Macao Daily* and SGI-Macao are sponsoring the book fair.

Singapore Soka Association Raises Money for Gujarat Quake Victims

The Singapore Soka Association raised approximately \$30,500 for victims of the recent disastrous quake in Gujarat State, India. A fundraiser was

launched Feb. 4 at a World Peace Prayer meeting at the SSA headquarters and continued through Feb. 8. The funds were entrusted to Mr. Lim Theam Poh, manager of the International Services Division of the Singapore Red Cross Society. The donation supports the organization's international relief efforts being carried out in Gujarat.

Italian Translation of 'Spiritual Lessons of the 20th Century' Introduced in Salzana City, Italy

On Feb. 15, the Italian translation of *Spiritual Lessons of the 20th Century* (working English title), a dialogue between former Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and SGI President Ikeda was introduced in Salzana, Italy. In the book, the two men explore various topics, such as politics and philosophy, in search of universal humanistic values for advancing civilization in the 21st century. The guest speakers at the ceremony were Liguria Province Environment Councilor Pietro Lazagna and former La Spezia City council member and deputy culture department

head Mario Farina. Mr. Lazagna, a renowned education, peace and human rights activist, told the audience that the serious discussions for the cause of humanity's advancement between the two authors appealed to the human conscience. He said that Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Ikeda both advocated the idea of global citizenship to prevent political subterfuge, radicalism and human massacre, and that he wholeheartedly supported their view.

Soka Gakkai Malaysia Opens New Center in Inpoh City

On Feb. 18, Soka Gakkai Malaysia opened the SGM Perak Culture Center in Inpoh, Perak State, Malaysia. Approximately 1,200 attended the opening, including local SGM members. Among the guests were Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy, and Dato'Ong Ka Chuan and Mr. Ho Cheng Wang, both members of the Perak State assembly and executive council. SGI President Ikeda sent a message to the opening, expressing his hopes that the "cultural palace" would be a hub for cultural exchanges in the community. Mr. Chan congratulated the SGM members and asked that they worked to spread the "wisdom of Soka" from their new cultural center.

Courtesy of SOKANET (www.sokagakkai.or.jp)

Making May 3, 2001, My Own

PERSPECTIVE

'What is May 3, 2001?' asks Doris McCloskey. 'It's a beginning for promoting world peace in my own neighborhood as SGI President Ikeda would.'



By DORIS MCCLOSKEY
CHICAGO

My trek toward May 3, 2001, began some 36 years ago. You might say that I stumbled onto the path toward enlightenment. Many SGI comrades of my era don't think of themselves as pioneers (those who blaze new trails) but as road warriors. You know who you are.

As a reluctant bodhisattva, I learned how to practice, how to follow my seniors in faith, and that May 3, 2001, was 30-some

years away. I didn't pay much attention to any of this for the first several years. I was never what you might call a "good Buddhist"—I couldn't keep my mouth shut or do anything unless I was first convinced of the value in doing it.

But I started to ask myself: "What is May 3, 2001? Is it a destination? A goal?" I realized that it was somehow connected to the mentor-disciple relationship between SGI President Ikeda and me, as it is for President Ikeda and presidents

Makiguchi and Toda. So I began to chant about the mentor-disciple concept.

In 1980, President Ikeda told a group of us in Washington, D.C., to chant a lot between that time and May 3, 2001. I wasn't sure why he had emphasized this. Two years ago, I reflected on this direction and increased the amount I was chanting again. The question remained for me: "What is the significance of May 3, 2001?" After pouring over my collection of President Ikeda's writings, I concluded that it is the mentor-disciple relationship. Not just feeling it or realizing it. May 3, 2001, is the time to manifest it. I believe this is what President Ikeda is telling us.

How many times have we read in our publications about the importance of raising capable people, of protecting, raising and supporting the youth? Of the importance of activities behind-the-scenes? And, I ask myself, "How long will it take for you to get it?"

I was hit hard most recently by part of President Ikeda's poem, "Raise High the Banner

of Humanism and Advance Toward Lasting Peace!" (Jan. 19 *World Tribune*), where he says:

*I ask each of you, too,
Together with me,
And in my place,
To deepen the dialogue
Of real human exchange and
communication,
In all cultures, among all
peoples of the world.*

What can I do to repay my debt of gratitude to President Ikeda and manifest the mentor-disciple relationship? I can go to my local discussion group meeting six blocks from my home. I can talk with my local alderman about President Ikeda's concepts in his peace proposals. I can become active in my community and talk with people there on a daily basis.

What is May 3, 2001? It's a beginning for promoting world peace in my own neighborhood as President Ikeda would — as a pioneer, blazing new trails.

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



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EXPERIENCE — KEITH AND REBECCA THOMAS, MADISON, N.J.

Three Decades of Family Revolution

Twenty-six years of marriage and Buddhist practice have left the Thomas family stronger and happier. But this was not always the case.

Keith Thomas: The casual observer, viewing our happy family from the outside, would see four people living the great American dream. My wife, Rebecca, and I have been married for 26 years. We have two beautiful, healthy daughters. We have a charming house in Madison, N.J., good jobs, close friends, two cars, a 401(k) plan, a golden retriever named Sophie and a cat named Tabby. But believe me, it was not always this way.

When I received the Gohonzon in 1971, I was a disillusioned, burnt-out, 24-year-old rock musician. The plot thickened years later when I met Rebecca and introduced her to the practice.

Rebecca Thomas: Keith introduced me to Buddhism in July 1974 and asked me to marry him in August. Even though we had known each other less than a month, I said yes. This turned out to be my greatest benefit because throughout our 26-year marriage, Keith has always practiced consistently. He never gave up, while I, on the other hand, haven't always had a consistent practice.

Keith: For the next six years we practiced together vigorously. In 1980, our first daughter, Eliza, was born. At the time I worked in network and cable television. I was also an actor and a stand-up comic. I worked long hours at the station, and when I wasn't there, I was doing stand-up comedy. I consistently performed gongyo and daimoku, studied, and in my free time I would attend discussion meetings and do home visits. I thought I was doing my best, but as time went by, Becky started resenting me. She wanted me to spend more time with her and Eliza.

Rebecca: Things continued this way for four years, until I was so full of anger I stopped practicing, and life became

miserable. We fought all the time in front of our daughter. On Eliza's fifth birthday she actually stepped in-between us during a heated argument and cried, "I can't believe you are fighting on my fifth birthday!"

But through it all, Keith continued to practice consistently.

Eventually, Keith quit his job in television and began to do comedy full time. Since one of us had to make real money, I opened an exercise studio in Manhattan and began running a business. I became the main breadwinner in our family. By the time our second daughter, Kate, was born in 1989, the tension between us was so thick you could cut it with a knife. I thought I could get through life on sheer determination until 1992, when I faced a series of crises I simply couldn't handle on my own.

Keith: Eliza was 12 and had become involved with gangs, cutting school and hanging out on the streets of Manhattan. We were horrified. At one point, Eliza even threatened me with a kitchen knife during one of our many arguments. Rebecca and I decided that for our daughter's sake, we'd move out of Manhattan. But having lived there for 20 years, we had absolutely no idea where to go. At that time, our SGI-USA leader was living in Madison, N.J., and he told us it was a wonderful place to raise children.

Rebecca: It was at this point, I found out that my younger sister, Rachel, was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of breast cancer. I was devastated. In the midst of all of the chaos I began flying back and forth between New York and Florida to care for her. On one of my last trips, Keith came with me. Rachel, who was only 40 and suffering terribly, asked us to chant with her. Rachel had never before shown the slightest interest in chanting. Even though I wasn't practicing, I was so happy that my sister wanted to chant before she died. The three of us chanted together.

Rachel died on Nov. 27, 1993, the day after Thanksgiving. I returned home after burying my sister, wanting only some time and space to heal. But the losses in my life continued relentlessly. My fitness business, the main support for



Through their Buddhist practice, Keith and Rebecca Thomas have created a strong, happy family.

our family, was crumbling. The house we planned to buy got pulled out from under us. We were now faced with no income and no roof over our heads. Then I found out that at age 43 I was pregnant, only to discover that it was a life-threatening ectopic pregnancy.

I felt desperate and I knew things could not continue this way. I had just been with my sister, who at the end of her life wanted to chant. Even though I had the Gohonzon in my immediate environment for over two decades, perhaps I did not see what she saw. There is something very special and powerful in this practice. But for it to work, you have to take action. If I wanted to see change and growth, I would have to practice consistently. If I couldn't see it at that moment, I probably never would.

With the encouragement of my leaders as well as many members, I did my first gongyo in over 10 years. Immediately—and I mean as soon as I resumed a consistent practice—conspicuous benefits and protection from the Buddhist gods emerged from the universe.

Against all odds, we were able to buy a new house in a better location in only a few days. The very same day that I closed my fitness business, Keith was hired as a sales account executive at Kinko's Corporation. The day after my business closed, I was able to start a lucrative personal training business. With the help of a won-

derful therapist, Eliza began to turn her life around and ultimately went on to become class president for both her junior and senior years.

Keith: After working for Kinko's for four years, I left for a career with some exciting dot.com startups. These positions were short-lived, both financially and creatively. One of my bosses smoked four packs of cigarettes a day—I felt as if I was working in Chernobyl. The other one actually ran out of money and couldn't pay me for two weeks. We were under tremendous financial strain. Rebecca was in school working on her master's degree in occupational therapy at NYU and making very little money, and I was unemployed for six months. I too realized that things could not continue this way.

I went on a three-hour-a-day daimoku campaign and received guidance. I was told to chant to be true to myself and to not settle for less. It was also suggested that I apply Nichiren Daishonin's letter "General Stone Tiger," in which a warrior shoots an arrow at a stone he mistakes for the tiger that killed his mother. The warrior's belief is so firm the arrow penetrates the stone. If I wanted to end the cycle of strain and suffering, my belief had to be stronger than ever before. With Nichiren Daishonin's words as my touchstone, I continued to chant.

Three months later, still looking for a job, I saw a one-

inch ad in *The New York Times*. I applied and was hired as a sales marketing executive in a 9 billion-dollar firm. The company's core business is disaster recovery for the top eight banks in the world. The money is good and the benefits are better—health, vision, dental and more for the entire family. And these benefits started on day one, the same day and month that our previous benefits ran out. Now, I enjoy going to work and I have an upbeat, non-smoking boss who is well-funded and not running out of money.

Rebecca: Our practice has not only helped us with our own dreams, but set a foundation for our family. Our oldest daughter, Eliza, is now flourishing at the University of Colorado in Boulder with a 3.6 average, and she's a published poet. She's practicing with the youth division, has received her own Gohonzon, and introduced her friends to the practice.

Keith: Finally, our youngest daughter, Kate, is a wonderful, bright student and an excellent writer. In her own wonderful way, she turned to us one day and said, "It is so great to have a practice that brings our whole family together." This makes me think of some favorite guidance by SGI President Ikeda, "In a family the sorrows are halved and the joys are multiplied."

Being among our true SGI family, we feel this more than ever. **WT**

FROM SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER MATILDA BUCK

Let's Make Our Own History

CELEBRATING
MAY 3, 2001

'Now that May 3, 2001, is here, we have an opportunity to grasp its historical significance,' says SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck. 'Each of us can make it a significant turning point, a day where we choose our goal, our dream, our hope — whatever change we want to make.'



Photo by JEAN FRITCHARD

At a recent meeting I attended, Kazuko Aoki shared her memories of the historic meeting on March 16, 1958, when second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda met with 6,000 youth and entrusted them with the future of kosen-rufu. What was a revelation to me was that she had no sense at that time of just how historic that meeting would be. She was only high-school age, and her mother made her go. She didn't think, "Oh, yes, this is our final moment with President Toda," or "He's handing this mission to the youth."

Only time would tell what a profound moment it was and how much it would affect her life. Today she is devoted to the kosen-rufu movement in Los Angeles.

We often do not have a historical sense or perspective. But President Toda did, and SGI President Ikeda does. He is already talking about the 23rd century!

Over the last few decades, President Ikeda has been making friends all over the world, and in this way making Buddhist humanism available to all. He has shown us that this Buddhism is so broad, so embracing, that he can share great understanding with people without directly mentioning

Buddhism. Not only has he exerted himself beyond anything we can imagine, but he has included millions of people in this effort. That is amazing. He sees the most common person as a great bodhisattva, whose contribution is no less important than his.

The point is to spread the ideals of Buddhism, not just to have religion for religion's sake or so that we can count people in our census. The goal is to make humanism — the humanistic foundation of Buddhism, where the human being is the focus — the most important factor in society, enabling all people to live creative, harmonious lives.

It is now our turn to start reaching out.

I think these last 10 years have been extremely important for the SGI-USA. They have been a time of growth and reflection, of solidifying and diversifying our mission as an organization. I saw this illustrated by the recent "Imagine Peace" Conference organized by the SGI-USA women in Washington, D.C. (see the March 23 *World Tribune*). I talked to some of the women who had been among the so-called pioneers, American women who, decades ago had been girls rehearsing in parking lots, wearing shiny satin short dresses and

boots, marching in parades. That had made little sense to these former hippies, but they knew it was for world peace, and they felt happy when they did it. At the recent conference, many of them said: "It's our same little group, only now we're at the World Bank, and we're talking with ambassadors and peace workers, like-minded people who can take action to make a peaceful world."

We're doing the same things as before. We're taking care of every detail the way we did before, when we were looking ahead toward May 3, 2001, but now it is May 3, 2001."

In 1972, the year I joined the SGI, there was a convention in Los Angeles called "L.A. in May," and even then people were aiming for May 3, 2001. It had no sound of reality to me. I did not think I would still be chanting in 2001. It sounded like something for other generations.

Some members may remember a slogan we used to hear, "Let's keep fighting to 2001!" But I never believed I would be part of that. It sounded like fiction then, but it is here. I am so grateful to the people who, in 1972, had a different goal for me; people who have allowed me to develop and have supported me so that I could become the happiest woman by May 3, 2001. And I am.

The idea of the Seven Bells, of having that goal toward May 3, 2001 — this concept is not readily accessible to most people. I have often heard about the Seven Bells but understanding it was something I put off. When I saw an article about it in the *World Tribune*, I was so happy to see it spelled out. Even then I had to read it over and over.

In our high-tech society,

where speed and convenience are highly prized, we are seldom thinking about a five-year plan or a 10-year plan. In America, we've got the five-minute plan and the one-minute manager. We love books that tell us how to spend the least amount of time with maximum result.

But the truth is that anything of value takes time to construct. This is what I have learned from President Ikeda. If he says it is going to happen, it is going to happen — not mystically, but through tenacious effort. Personally, I need to start thinking more that way, tenaciously working toward specific goals rather than just responding to the moment or hoping and chanting that things will turn out.

We have now entered the Century of Women. I heard recently about a group of women who emigrated from Cambodia between 1975 and 1980 because of the strife in Cambodia. They moved to Long Beach, Calif. and eventually encountered the Gohonzon. One by one, they committed themselves to a dream: They wanted to go to Cambodia to share Buddhism. They saved their money, working more than 10 or 12 or even 14 hours every day. After that, they would translate Buddhist materials into Cambodian. Finally, they went back to Cambodia in 1995 and stayed for two months.

They racked their brains about how to introduce people to this practice. They only knew their relatives and families, so they would pick one house in a town or street and ask permission to use it as a meeting place. And then they would visit all the neighbors and give them fliers announcing their meeting. Many people came, and the number of members increased. Last year, the government approved this group as an official SGI organization. In Phnom Penh, they have 100 members, including 40 to 50 youth, and counting the outlying provinces, they have 300 members.

These are just ordinary women, but look at what they are accomplishing. I think this is a great example of creating a spiritual civilization.

To appreciate our differences, to say there is something important to do with your life and that it includes many other people — this is kosen-rufu.

This is teamwork.

Those Cambodian women work all day long and most of them have children. Yet they want to create something, so it is natural to create a team because they could not do it all themselves. They do not have the time or the money to just go off on their own. They need one another.

If we can all recognize that we need one another, we need our differences, we need our unique abilities — then we know that what it takes to accomplish kosen-rufu is a team. When there is a team, no one gets overworked or feels burdened. That is one of our keys as women for the 21st century, to demonstrate the power of teamwork.

The SGI, under the leadership of Daisaku Ikeda, is the one organization that has dedicated itself for 70 years to raising women — women who can speak, who can write, who can talk, who can move, who can self-reflect. And we all know how to work together to accomplish a great goal. This is the most amazing organization. We just have to open up our doors now for the world.

Now that May 3, 2001, is here, we have an opportunity to grasp its historical significance. Each of us, and particularly young people who will be living for decades after this, can make it a significant turning point, a day where we choose our goal, our dream, our hope — whatever change we want to make. It can be a day that we will look back on and say, "That was the day that I decided that I would accomplish all of my dreams." We can give ourselves our own historical perspective connected to this great movement of kosen-rufu.

May 3, 2001, is a day of resolution, of determination, a day that is part of our individual and collective history. **WT**

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FROM SGI-USA YOUTH LEADER JAMES HERRMANN

A Life Without Regret

CELEBRATING
MAY 3, 2001

'In the future, as my life comes to its final stage,' says SGI-USA Youth Leader James Herrmann, 'I want to be sure I can say with confidence that there was not a single thing I wanted to accomplish that I did not try.'

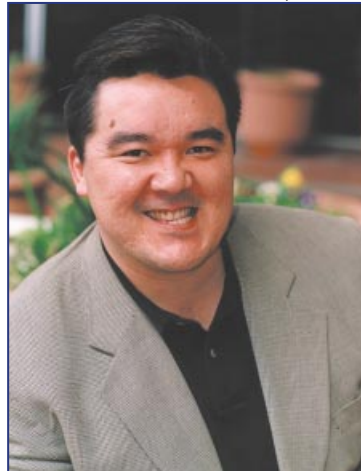


Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

When I first heard about May 3, 2001, I was in the SGI-USA Boys and Girls Group (then called Junior Pioneers). We were asked to think about how old we would be. I figured out I would be 33. I remember thinking 33 was such an old age, even wondering if I would be alive then.

We were challenged to think about what we would be doing May 3, 2001, and I remember it was so difficult for me to envision the next day, let alone that many years in the future. So my first impression of May 3, 2001, was wondering how SGI President Ikeda could be thinking that far into the future.

While growing up participating in SGI activities, May 3, 2001, was consistently emphasized. As I became older, and through my youth activities, I've learned to have a vision for the future. Needless to say, that's not something I'm always able to maintain. Rather, it's something I continue to develop through my activities.

Back when I was in the Boys and Girls Group, we always talked about creating world peace. I thought that by May 3, 2001, our work would be finished, that it would be a time of bliss. World peace would be attained by then, and there would be no more violence, no more war, no more racism. It would be a time, I thought, when President Ikeda would go up on a platform and declare: "OK, we did it! World peace is now accomplished."

Creating world peace, I've since realized, is a process.

Kosen-rufu is something we have to continue to work for — not something we achieve but something we are always moving toward.

It is through this process that we really grow and learn to care for others. When I was younger, I wasn't a very compassionate person. I was a self-centered child and young adult. President Ikeda's guidance and my efforts to introduce others to Buddhism have enabled me to become a better human being and, in fact, develop the ability to truly care for others.

May 3, 2001, I feel, must be a turning point for the youth of SGI-USA. This is our time to stand up, with the men's and women's division's consistent support, to truly understand President Ikeda's vision for the future. It is a time for us to develop a direct connection with our mentor, where each of us is working toward the realization of our shared dream of peace.

This is also the day in 1960 when President Ikeda was inaugurated as the third Soka Gakkai president and took full responsibility for kosen-rufu. When we look at the development of the SGI over the last 41 years, we can clearly see the expansion of Buddhism to every corner of the globe. I can't help but think that the next set of Seven Bells will see our generation — the current youth of SGI-USA — taking that same initiative as President Ikeda did in 1960 and broadening the path he has opened.

I've had the fortune to attend some dialogues President Ikeda has held with great scholars and

world leaders, who all refer to him as the one person who is truly leading the peace movement in the 21st century.

I remember being at a meeting in Japan with President Ikeda and Lawrence Carter, dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, who is a friend of the SGI. Dean Carter said that President Ikeda, more than anyone else, was the embodiment of the teachings of Jesus Christ, Mahatma

Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. This really struck me, and it began to sink in that great people throughout the world are praising President Ikeda's efforts.

Of these four world leaders Dean Carter mentioned, only President Ikeda is still living. At that time, I felt so fortunate to be young, to be practicing Buddhism together with President Ikeda, and have the opportunity to devote my life to spreading this great teaching.

As we look at this year's youth activities, everything is focused on the expansion of our movement. In our March meetings, we are gathering several thousand members and guests in an effort to spread Buddhism throughout society. Also this year, we have seven youth conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture, as well as several SGI Family Youth Culture Festivals being held throughout the SGI-USA with the goal of gathering 100,000 members and friends. I strongly feel that these activities, led by the youth, are the stepping stones for us to take the initiative for kosen-rufu — on our own, without being told to do so.

In the 1980s — when the organization was very focused on propagation — I remember we took time to write our goals toward May 3, 2001. I was in my late teens at the time, and simply writing my goals helped me see that, through activities in the Boys and Girls Group and later the young men's division, my life had really expanded and I had developed the ability to dream. I understood the importance of

having a long-range vision.

I have to be honest, though; many of the goals I put on that piece of paper have not come to fruition. But I am happy — in fact, I'm probably more happy than if I had attained those things. At the time I made those goals, I dreamed about being rich, about being a doctor, about doing many different things.

Although I'm not rich or a doctor, I find tremendous joy and happiness in what I am doing in the SGI for peace. I've come to realize that my happiness is not based on my social status or the amount of wealth I accumulate. Rather, joy actually comes from within me. I've experienced that joy emerge from my faith, practice and study, and from naturally sharing this Buddhism with others.

When I think about the end of the second Seven Bells, I know that I will be entering the twilight of my life. In 2050, I'll be 82 years old. My grandchildren

will probably be in the forefront of the youth division, leading activities for peace, and it brings me great joy to dream about that.

My determination is that this May 3, I will be able to personally take responsibility for kosen-rufu, just as my mentor did 41 years ago. I don't want to have any regrets.

In my experience working in the medical field, I talked with many people who were about to die or were terminally ill. Although many of them had lots of regrets, they only regretted those things they never attempted. What they did made them who they were.

In the future, as my life comes to its final stage, I want to be sure I can say with confidence that there was not a single thing I wanted to accomplish that I did not try. Together, let's live with no regrets, pursuing the vision we share with President Ikeda with every ounce of energy we possess. **WT**

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.

May 3: Fulfilling a Dream...

By DANIEL Y. HABUKI, PH.D.
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA PRESIDENT

In 1995, Soka University of America purchased a parcel of land overlooking a 4,000-acre wilderness park in Aliso Viejo, Calif. The site was beautiful, but even more exciting was the vision of creating a new, four-year liberal arts college founded upon the pillars of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life.

On March 15, SUA, Aliso Viejo sent out its final admission notices for the class entering in 2001. The 120 freshman that we have talked about and visualized now have names and faces—and come from 16 countries and territories. The individuals who will bring the last six years of hard work to fruition, our students, are about

to enter center stage!

SUA, Aliso Viejo is approaching completion, as we prepare for our dedication day on May 3. This will be a day to look back to the origins of Soka education, and it will be a day to look forward to the many generations we know this college will nurture for the sake of the future.

It is with great appreciation that I thank all who have supported SUA for so many years to help us reach this milestone. Your continued help and support in the future are vital, as we work together to reach out to students around the world to share the special opportunity that is SUA, Aliso Viejo. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for helping to realize President Ikeda's vision for Soka education. **WT**



SUA President Daniel Y. Habuki (left) meets with prospective students.

SUA Announces Dedication Events



Soka University of America has announced that in commemoration of the dedication of the Aliso Viejo campus, a series of community-oriented events are scheduled to be held on campus in May.

On May 2, there will be a classroom building dedication honoring Dr. Linus Pauling and his wife, Ava Helen Pauling, as

well as the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition at SUA. Both of these events are by SUA invitation only.

On May 3, the official campus dedication and opening ceremony will be held. This event will also be by SUA invitation only. Because of the international interest in the dedication, SUA will post streaming video of the ceremony on the www.soka.edu Web site the afternoon of May 3, so that everyone around the world will be able to share in this special day.

The evening of May 4, SUA will hold its first guest lecture, by Dean Lawrence Carter of the

Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta. The lecture will be followed by an Aliso Viejo Symphony Orchestra concert celebrating the opening of SUA and Aliso Viejo's recent incorporation as a city. The lecture and concert are free and open to the public—first come, first serve. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

On May 5, another in the series of SUA Family Days will be held from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., providing an opportunity for prospective students and their families to come and tour the campus. In addition, the Linus Pauling exhibition will be officially opened to the public in

the just completed art gallery located in Founders Hall.

In conjunction with SGI-USA, SUA is planning an SGI-USA Celebration Day at the campus, which will take place sometime this summer. "For this Celebration Day, we want to invite SGI-USA members and their guests to come and visit the campus," SUA President Daniel Habuki says. "We look forward to welcoming you to our new campus in the coming year. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank all the SGI-USA members for your support in making this university—the dream of the founders of Soka education and the SGI—a glo-

rious reality." Details of the event will be published in the *World Tribune* in advance.

Many SGI-USA members have been asking the SUA staff when SGI President Ikeda will be visiting the campus as the school's founder. The SGI president has expressed his intent to visit the campus sometime after the incoming freshman have arrived, so that he will be able to meet with them personally.

For more information, please see "What's New?" at www.soka.edu/homeav.html. If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Harder at SUA at wwharder@soka.edu or (949) 480-4081. **WT**

SUA Freshman Class Is Selected

By ERIC HAUBER
SUA VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT SERVICES AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo is proud to announce it has admitted its first entering class! SUA received more than 600 applications for the 120 positions available. On March 15, letters were mailed to all applicants announcing the admission decisions for this coming fall. Accepted stu-

dents have until May 1, 2001, to pay their tuition deposit and reserve their position in this entering class.

Students were evaluated using all required admission materials without special emphasis given to any one category. Every applicant received a telephone interview as a means for SUA to more clearly understand each person.

Sixty-three admitted students, or 53 percent, reside in

the United States and come from 17 different states. The remaining students are international, representing 15 different countries and territories: Argentina, Austria, Fiji, Ghana, India, Japan, Korea, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela, and Zambia. The demographic statistics of these accepted students reflect those of the applicant pool. **WT**



Prospective students gather at SUA in early March.

PAULING EXHIBIT COMES TO SUA

By PAUL R. CARBAJAL
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Linus Pauling was a larger-than-life personality, and to mark the 100th anniversary of his birth this past February, the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition will open at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo's Founders Hall Art Gallery on May 5.

The exhibition traces more than seven decades of Pauling's life and his influence on the past century. The 2,556-square-foot exhibition features photos, diaries, molecular models and historic artifacts on loan from Oregon State University's Pauling Special Collection and the Pauling Family.

"The rigor of Pauling's life and the rigor of science are symbolic of how we at Soka will apply the same vigor to pursuing peace, to creating values, and to achieving our mission," says Phat Vu, SUA physics professor. "I think Pauling's life is an exemplary one for a scientist with

deep rooted concerns about many sectors of our society."

Pauling was regarded as one of the world's foremost scientists, yet he would risk his own reputation for humanitarian causes. A two-time Nobel Prize winner, he was a giant promoter of healthy living and a champion of peace.

But Pauling also endured 24 years of FBI investigations. During the McCarthy years, Pauling was a vocal opponent of cold war policies and nuclear proliferation. Often vilified by local and national press, he did not shy away from controversy or threatened incarceration.

Pauling was not deterred and continued to leap over scientific boundaries in physics, chemistry, biology and medical research. In 1954, he won his first Nobel Prize in chemistry and was the author of one of the most cited sources in scientific history, *The Nature of the Chemical Bond*.

In the early 1960s, Pauling, did not hesitate to take on the



Linus Pauling meets with SGI President Ikeda at SUA, Calabasas in 1987. President Ikeda, founder of SUA, proposed the idea for the 'Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century' exhibition.

world's two dominant nuclear powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. He called for them to reconsider their nuclear arsenals. In 1962, he was awarded his second Nobel Prize

for peace. Later that year, Pauling was honored by being invited to the White House to meet and shake the hand of U.S. President John F. Kennedy.

The exhibit will run May

5–June 10, Tuesdays–Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and Sundays from 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The exhibit will be closed on Mondays. There is no admission charge. **WT**

SUA Family Tour Day, May 5

If you have been looking for a chance to see the new SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, May 5 is your chance. SUA's staff and faculty will be on hand to answer questions and assist with self-guided walking tours that will give parents, students and interested friends and neighbors a chance to go inside key buildings.

Here is the schedule:

9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Self-guided Walking Tours (SUA provides the map!)

11:00 a.m.

Student and Parent Q-and-A session

Noon

Boxed Lunch (\$5 reservation required)—or bring your own!

2:00 p.m.

Student and Parent Q-and-A session

3:00 p.m.

Ice Cream Social

SUA Family Tour Day Reservation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Number of other people attending with you? _____

How many prospective students will be in your group? _____

Lunch reservations requested (at \$5 a person)

(Please enclose a check made out to Soka University for this amount.)

Will anyone in your group need special assistance for the tour? _____

If so, please let us know how we can assist you:

Please return to: Family Tour Day Reservations
Soka University, Aliso Viejo
1 University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656



- **Wooden floor in campus gymnasium is being installed.**
- **Grass is being planted on center campus green.**
- **Carpet is being installed in Founders Hall.**
- **Eight lily ponds are nearing completion.**

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S GUIDANCE ON MAY 3 AND THE SEVEN BELLS

The Day We Start Fresh

May 3 is the day when a brilliant rainbow breaks through the dark storm of intrigue and deceit and shines in the vibrant hues of victory and glory. It is the day we who champion the noble cause of kosen-rufu set out anew on our journey along the indestructible golden path of Buddhism that extends throughout eternity. (May 15, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 9)

At a May 3, 1958, general meeting, SGI President Ikeda first shared how the Soka Gakkai's history to that point could be divided into seven bells—seven seven-year periods from 1930–79. And on May 3, 1966, President Ikeda shared his vision of a second set of seven bells—a new history for the Soka Gakkai beginning on May 3, 2001.

From 'The Human Revolution,' volume 12

Shin'ichi Yamamoto [Daisaku Ikeda] knew that Josei Toda had often mentioned that "the Soka Gakkai should advance a major step every seven years." He also remembered Toda saying, "Let's sound a bell every seven years to mark our progress toward kosen-rufu. Let's aim to strike seven bells!"

[Just prior to the May 3, 1958, general meeting,] Shin'ichi tried to recall what had happened in the Soka Gakkai's history each seven years since its inception.

The organization had originally begun as the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Society for Value-Creating Education), founded by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda on Nov. 18, 1930. Then, seven years later, in 1937, it had kicked off its activities in earnest with a formal inauguration ceremony being held to mark the occasion. Seven years further on, on Nov. 18, 1944, President Makiguchi had died in prison. And seven years after that, on May 3, 1951, Josei Toda had become the Soka Gakkai's second president. Finally, after seven more years, having completely fulfilled all of his life-long objectives, Toda had passed away.

This mysterious pattern moved Shin'ichi deeply and he pondered its significance:

If the Soka Gakkai's first bell for kosen-rufu had tollled in 1930, with the organization's ini-

tial formation, then the ringing of the fourth bell—the fourth seven-year period—would now have come to an end. If this was the case, then the forthcoming spring general meeting should initiate the loud and clear sounding of the fifth bell.

Within the ensuing seven-year period, he would see to it that a membership of 3 million households was achieved without fail, as President Toda had envisioned. The goal for the seven years following that—the period of the sixth bell's tolling—would in all likelihood be to achieve a membership of 6 million households. After that, they would have to realize the construction of the Sho-Hondo—the Grand Main Temple in which the Dai-Gohonzon would be enshrined—by 1972, the beginning of the seventh bell. This seventh bell, Shin'ichi mused, would finish tolling 21 years from now, in 1979, signaling the completion of a total of seven seven-year periods. By that time, he vowed, he would make kosen-rufu in Japan a tangible reality. This completion of seven bells would also mark the dawn of the full-fledged worldwide spread of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Shin'ichi would then be 51. If his health would just hold out, then a new century, with all of its grand possibilities, would be awaiting him.

Shin'ichi's hopes and dreams for kosen-rufu were infinite. As he envisaged the brilliant future ahead of them, Shin'ichi decided to share his ideas for the Soka Gakkai's future goals, based on the concept of Seven Bells that Toda had so often spoken about, at the upcoming general meeting. He couldn't help sensing that his own lifetime mission lay in realizing these long-range goals.

Many Soka Gakkai leaders were senior to him. Nevertheless, he had been unable to find



SGI President Ikeda on May 3, 1960, the day of his inauguration as the third Soka Gakkai president. This painting was a gift to President Ikeda from Kenichiro Uchida, the illustrator of 'The New Human Revolution.'

anyone among his comrades whom he could rely on as a solid pillar for the future of kosen-rufu.

On this day, Shin'ichi made an entry in his diary, his heart pounding with excitement: "May 3, that significant day, is just around the corner. Will this be the day on which I effectively take leadership of the Soka Gakkai? My heart is heavy—a pressing weight. I will powerfully strike the Fifth Bell. I will fight—to prove my mentor's greatness to the world. I will advance straight ahead. Resolved to exert my all, overcoming onslaughts of obstacles and hindrances. I am now beginning the most essential period of my youth" (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 42).

From SGI President Ikeda's Dec. 14, 2000, speech

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

PLEASE SEE PRESIDENT IKEDA, 10

May 3, 1951

When Josei Toda became second president of the Soka Gakkai on May 3, 1951, he proclaimed that he would accomplish a membership of 750,000 households. And in just under seven years, he reached his goal.

The day of "casting off the transient and revealing the true" for the Soka Gakkai was May 3, 1951, when Josei Toda became the second Soka Gakkai president.

At that time, President Toda made his great declaration, vowing to achieve a membership of 750,000 households. In response to his impassioned call, the entire membership of the Soka Gakkai became filled with the great awareness: "We are Bodhisattvas of the Earth!" "We are the true followers of the original Buddha!"

Around that day, President Toda said many times: "Look-

ing back, from around the spring of 1943, President Makiguchi was always saying that the Soka Gakkai 'has to cast off the transient and reveal the true.' Unless we actualized the principle of 'casting off the transient and revealing the true,' he said, something was wrong with us. Everyone just stood around perplexed, not knowing what to do."

In the end, Mr. Toda carried out President Makiguchi's spirit. The bond of mentor and disciple is the key to "casting off the transient and revealing the true."

We are all children of the original Buddha. There is not one of us who does not have an important mission to fulfill. There are no members of the SGI who do not possess the true identity of a Bodhisattva of the Earth. (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 2, pp. 58–59)

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

THE SGI'S SEVEN BELLS

‘Let’s sound a bell every seven years to mark our progress toward kosen-rufu,’ President Toda said, laying out a future vision for the SGI.

The 1st Bell (1930-37)	The Soka Kyoiku Gakkai transitions from educational reformation to religious reformation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 18, 1930 — Foundation of the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creation Education Society) • 1937 — Inaugural ceremony for the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai 	T H E 1 S T S E V E N B E L L S 1930-79
The 2nd Bell (1937-44)	The Soka Gakkai makes it clear that its goal is kosen-rufu, as it confronts militarism head-on. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 18, 1944 — First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi dies a martyr in prison for standing up to the military government. 	
The 3rd Bell (1944-51)	Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda rebuilds the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai as the Soka Gakkai. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 3, 1945 — Josei Toda is released from prison. • Aug. 24, 1947 — Daisaku Ikeda joins the Soka Gakkai. • May 3, 1951 — Josei Toda is inaugurated as second Soka Gakkai president. 	
The 4th Bell (1951-58)	The Soka Gakkai starts its phase of rapid growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 8, 1957 — Josei Toda makes his “Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.” • Dec. 25, 1957 — President Toda achieves his goal of reaching a membership of 750,000 households. • March 16, 1958 — President Toda holds a ceremony to pass on the responsibility for achieving kosen-rufu to the youth. • April 2, 1958 — President Toda dies. 	
The 5th Bell (1958-65)	The Soka Gakkai sets its membership goal as 3 million. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 3, 1960 — Daisaku Ikeda is inaugurated as the third Soka Gakkai president. • Oct. 2, 1960 — President Ikeda arrives in Hawaii, his first stop in his travels for worldwide kosen-rufu. • Nov. 27, 1962 — The Soka Gakkai achieves its membership goal of 3 million households. 	
The 6th Bell (1965-72)	The Soka Gakkai sets its membership goal as 6 million. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 1, 1965 — The serialization of President Ikeda’s novel <i>The Human Revolution</i> begins in the <i>Seikyo Shimbun</i>, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper. • April 8, 1968 — The first entrance ceremony is held for the Soka Schools (junior high and high school). • Jan. 28, 1970 — The Soka Gakkai achieves a membership of 7,550,000 households. • April 2, 1971 — Soka University, Japan opens. 	
The 7th Bell (1972-79)	The Soka Gakkai begins its full-scale worldwide kosen-rufu movement as the SGI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 26, 1975 — The SGI is founded on the island of Guam. • April 24, 1979 — President Ikeda resigns as Soka Gakkai president to protect the organization when various anti-Soka Gakkai parties incite a conflict between the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and the organization. 	

THE 2ND SEVEN BELLS

(2001-50)

Goal: To secure the foundation for peace in Asia and throughout the world.

- May 3, 2001 — The dedication of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo.

THE 3RD SEVEN BELLS

(2051-2100)

Goal: To see the philosophy of the sanctity of life established as the spirit of the age and the world.



In the second Seven Bells, today’s youth will ‘secure the foundation for peace throughout the world,’ SGI President Ikeda says. Above, Philadelphia Region youth perform in October 2000.

THE 4TH SEVEN BELLS

(2101-50)

Goal: To lay the indestructible foundation for world peace.

THE 5TH SEVEN BELLS

(2151-2200)

Goal: To see the brilliant flowering of an age of humanism.

The 6th and 7th Seven Bells will follow in the 23rd century, which will see the 1,000th anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism in 2253.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE FOR KOSEN-RUFU DAY, MARCH 16, 2001

The SGI Is Part of Me

‘It is important to have the awareness and sense of responsibility of a protagonist of kosen-rufu — the active attitude that “the SGI is part of me” rather than the more passive stance “I am part of the SGI,” SGI President Ikeda says.

SGI President Ikeda wrote a message that appeared in the March 16 issue of Seize the Day for the SGI-USA's March introductory meetings commemorating Kosen-rufu Day. He wrote this additional March 16 message to all SGI members.

I am delighted to celebrate this landmark March 16 — Kosen-rufu Day, 2001 — with all of you, my dear fellow members in 163 countries and territories, as we advance with fresh determination and hope toward further victories and development in our movement.

Last month, the number of honorary doctorates and professorships granted me by universities and academic institu-

tions around the globe reached 100. I am humbled by this great honor. I have accepted each one as a direct disciple of Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, and as a representative of all of you. These awards attest to the support, trust and high expectations for the humanism of the SGI among people who are widely acknowledged as the world's leading intellects.

There is a passage in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” a transcript of Nichiren Daishonin's lec-

tures recorded and compiled by his true disciple, Nikko Shonin, which states: “It is due to the authority and supernatural power of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy that this Lotus Sutra is propagated throughout Jambudvīpa [the entire world]” (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 780). In a broad sense, this means that worldwide kosen-rufu will advance through the power of universal, wise intellect.

There could be no better example of this function of Bodhisattva Universal Worthy than you, the SGI members. All over

the world, you bring forth great wisdom to challenge and overcome various hardships while striving as good citizens in your communities to forge friendships and foster greater solidarity among people.

The activities of the youth in each country and region have been astounding. The 21st century will be the grand stage for the youth. The time has come to hand everything over to you, our youth.

As you all know, March 16 is the eternal prime point of mentor and disciple — it is the day when the youth stand up and shoulder full responsibility for the realization of kosen-rufu. I hope that each of you, in your respective countries and regions, will become a leader determined to show

proof of the principle that faith manifests itself in society, who works to create a strong alliance of people committed to justice and humanism.

It is important to have the awareness and sense of responsibility of a protagonist of kosen-rufu — the active attitude that “the SGI is part of me” rather than the more passive stance “I am part of the SGI.” From the time I was a young man, irrespective of my organizational position, I regarded any and all matters relating to the Soka Gakkai as my personal responsibility. I worried, thought, and chanted about how we could best advance kosen-rufu.

I pray earnestly each day that you will move forward with joy and courage, always remembering to cherish the pioneer members around you, and that you will strive to grow stronger and develop into genuine leaders who will prove the SGI's correctness.

I close with my fervent wish that each of you will achieve a proud, momentous victory in life and in society, making this first March 16 of the 21st century a day of fresh determination and fresh departure.

Please take good care of your health. I entrust the future of the SGI to you — I leave everything in your hands.

Together sharing both suffering and joy, let us lead lives of unsurpassed fulfillment!

March 16, 2001
Daisaku Ikeda



Pacific Northwest youth discuss the meaning of Kosen-rufu Day at the Seattle Culture Center, March 16.

May 3, 1960

When Daisaku Ikeda became third president of the Soka Gakkai on May 3, 1960, he proclaimed that he would accomplish a membership of 3 million households. And in less than three years, he reached his goal.

From ‘The Human Revolution,’ volume 12

An explosion of joy and a storm of applause rocked the auditorium [on May 3, 1960]. It was the day — the moment — they had all been waiting for. Now, in reply to their long and cherished hope, before them stood their new president, Shin'ichi Yamamoto [Daisaku Ikeda]. The air was filled with anticipation of a great, fresh surge of progress toward kosen-rufu. Hearts

pounding with excitement, the members silently awaited Shin'ichi's words:

“Though I am young, from this day I will take leadership as a representative of President Toda's disciples and advance with you another step toward the substantive realization of kosen-rufu....”

His voice resounded with strength and dignity. It was a lion's roar, signaling a new dawn for the spread of the Law. The members' applause, expressing their desire to share in this struggle, echoed through the auditorium like surging waves of joy. The moment marked a powerful new departure into the vast and open seas of world peace and human happiness. (June 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 42)

FROM PRESIDENT IKEDA, 8

which will awaken all people to the supremely noble entity of life that lies dormant within them.

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

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

Bells, which will continue through 2050.

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

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

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

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

- That, during the fourth Seven Bells in the first half of

the 22nd century, an indestructible foundation for world peace will be laid.

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

When that happens, we can move on to the sixth and seventh Seven Bells. From the middle of the 23rd century, when in 2253 we celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of the establishment of Nichiren Daishonin's teaching, a new phase in our movement will begin. (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 6) **WT**

If you have any questions about your subscription to the *World Tribune* or *Living Buddhism* magazine, please call 1-800-835-4558

FROM NAGASHIMA, I

share and put into action the stand-alone spirit. In such unity lies the key to achieving the unprecedented undertaking of kosen-rufu" (May 15, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 9).

So the second Seven Bells must begin with each of us committed to realizing our own happiness through our Buddhist practice and achieving our dreams; whether you want to open your own business, find someone to share your life with, get your master's degree — whatever it is. This is the only way, I believe, to fulfill the pledge we made in the remote past as Bodhisattvas of the Earth — to strive for the happiness of all humanity.

Through each of us standing on our own and displaying the Mystic Law in our own unique way, we will create a beautiful unity as true disciples of President Ikeda, naturally spreading Buddhism to every area of society. In my travels across the United States, I have seen our members on the frontlines, leading the way in government, in education, in the entertainment industry — everywhere in society. Our friends, co-workers, family members — they're waiting for us to shine, to illuminate the path to happiness.

For both second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda and President Ikeda, May 3 was the day to stand alone, the day to declare to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas that they would accomplish kosen-rufu, on their own if necessary. It was this determination, and their efforts to realize the dream of their mentors, that has brought us to this grand stage. May 3, 2001, is our opportunity to do the same, to begin our own new era based on our mentor's vision and revolutionize our lives, while we help our families and friends overcome their sufferings.

In his beautiful poem "Soar — Into the Vast Skies! Into the New Century!" dedicated to the SGI-USA members, President Ikeda writes:

Toward the civilization of the 21st century; for the sake of the young leaders and scholars; for the sake of the peace, prosperity and joy that come from humanistic education! Soka University of America has been constructed...

He has dedicated his entire being to bringing us to this moment, pouring all his energy into developing capable people.



SGI President Ikeda encourages SGI-USA leaders, including General Director Danny Nagashima (left), at Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, July 18, 2000.

Because of his efforts and the efforts of so many wonderful pioneers here in America, our members are capable of accomplishing anything. And Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo is the crystallization of these efforts, a place from which many young leaders will emerge.

He goes on to write:

For the sake of these free, young spirits, I have determined to spend the culminating years of my life in this America I love, together creating infinite memories, sounding the reverberant trumpet of the dawn.

I feel strongly that it is from America that this great wave of peace — of *myoho* — must begin. America is unique in the whole of human history, bringing together every conceivable mixture of ethnicity, lifestyle, political affiliation, and economic and social condition. Because we come from such a diversity of cultures and experiences, Americans can identify with the sufferings of others more acutely than anyone else does. When the recent, devastating earthquakes struck El Salvador and India, millions of Americans felt the pain of those who have lost love ones and rose to action in organizing a response for those in need.

What each of us can accomplish here in America will nat-

urally ripple throughout humanity. This victory in each of our lives is "the reverberant trumpet of the dawn" that President Ikeda is talking about. This May 3, with the dedication of the SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, our mentor's dream, and the beginning of the second set of Seven Bells, it is now our time to take full responsibility for the next stage of our movement for kosen-rufu.

For my part, I will continue to strive together with all of you, creating the most beautiful people's movement in history from America. Together, let's make the first half of the 21st century an unprecedented, unforgettable time of growth for ourselves and all humanity. **WT**

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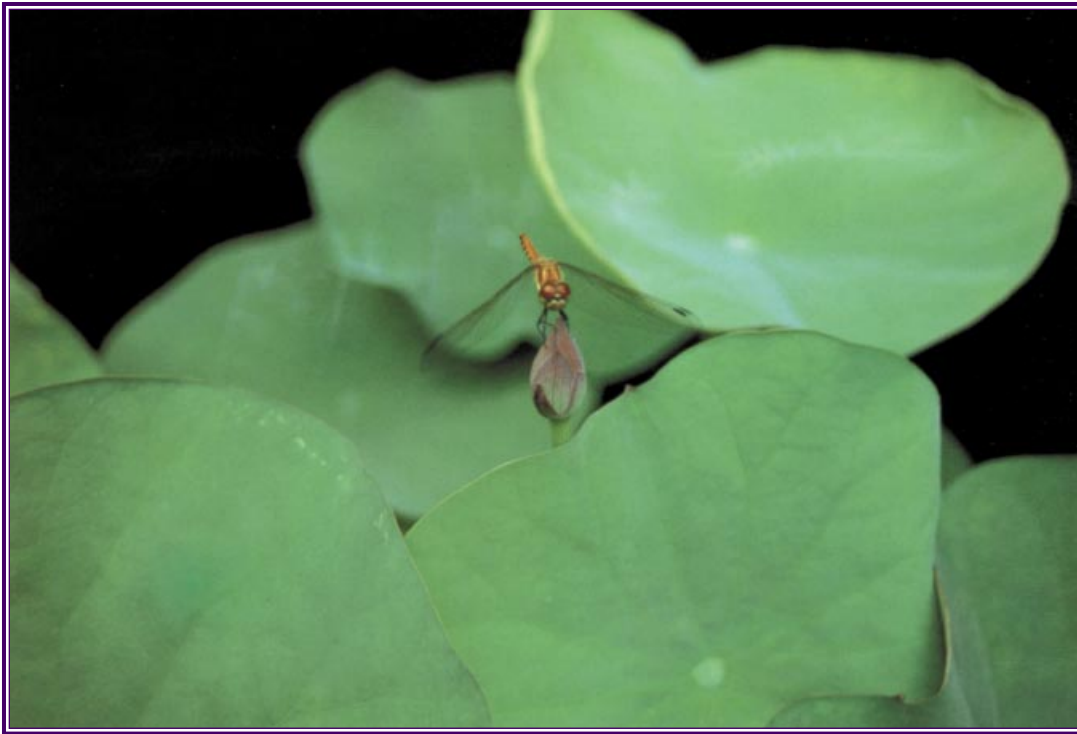
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THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA



'Poetry by the Water'

Motionless on the lotus bud, a red dragonfly rested its wings. Perfect stillness. I clicked my shutter five times, and still it did not move. Perhaps it was entranced by the shimmering of the water's surface; or perhaps its wings, exhausted from flight, had not yet recovered; or could it have been waiting for the clouds to part to reveal a ray of sunlight? In any event, this king of flight had turned the peach-colored bud into a fitting throne.

It was July 15, 1991; Tokyo's summer rainy season had yet to end. Under a thinly clouded sky, three planters containing lotus plants lined the edge of a small pond in a corner of the Soka Gakkai Headquarters. The broad lotus leaves completely hid the planters from view. I drew a little closer. The lotus leaves with their thick veins were somehow reminiscent of an insect's wings. On the other hand, the transparent wings of the dragonfly, with their fine network of veins, looked somehow like leaves.

A single essence called life in some instances emerges as a green plant with leaves that rustle in the breeze; at others it forms an insect whose wings

slice the wind. But now these two expressions of the same life-force seemed to merge again as one. No artwork could hope to capture this mysterious beauty of creative form. It was a lesson in how all things are connected.

When I was a boy, dragonflies were my friends. In the 1930s, Tokyo still had many green woods and fields. In my home area of Ota, too, the waters of the Tama River ran deep, and along its banks one could enjoy an expansive stillness. Red dragonflies glided about, and in the evenings fireflies danced. On summer vacation mornings, I would stride with friends along dew-covered paths through the rice fields, chasing dragonflies. Soon thunderheads would rise in the distance, and the smell of the grass in the burning heat would be almost stifling.

We had only one aim: to catch the king of dragonflies, the Japanese golden ringed dragonfly. We were not interested in white tipped skimmers. The golden ringed dragonfly far excelled all others in terms of its size and black and golden-yellow striped markings. We would find a likely spot, hide our nets, breath quietly and lie in wait. Then at the right moment our nets would snap out,

and when we heard the sound of the wings of a captured golden ringed dragonfly, what joy we would feel. Careful not to be bitten by it, we pinched the wings between our fingers. Then after our moment of pride and triumph, we would release the dragonfly to the sky.

In those days, dragonfly hunting was a kind of children's culture. But those throngs of dragonflies have long since disappeared from the skies of Tokyo. The red dragonflies have become airliners, and the fireflies have given way to neon signs. Sadly it seems that with the dragonflies has gone the people's poetic spirit.

Since ancient times, Japan has been a haven for dragonflies. Some 180 varieties exist in this relatively small group of islands, the most of any country in the world. One of Japan's ancient names was Akit-sushima, Island of Dragonflies. Here flies the living fossil known as the Japanese relic dragonfly, found only in Japan and in the Himalayan region. Its form hasn't changed in more than 100 million years — since its ancestors glided and sailed among the dinosaurs. Its original forbears appeared 300 million years ago. Human beings

date back only several million years. Among the community of life on earth, dragonflies are by far our seniors. For 300 million years, their lineage has been passed down perfectly and without interruption from parent to child, parent to child.

When I think of this, I am struck with the profound solemnity of life's workings. In this small red body before my eyes, resided countless epochs of Earth's history. Everything that strives to live is like a "cell" of this greater life called Earth; each living thing, in itself a living planet. A dragonfly on the edge of the water; lotus leaves fresh with the rich moisture they hold.

In its larval stage, the dragonfly lives in water, and so the water's edge is its childhood home. I am told that the larva of a certain species awaits a moment of calm when it can turn into a winged adult. Some time near dawn or twilight, when the wind has died down and the water still, in that fleeting moment when all is wrapped in silence, the young insect makes its way among the stems and reeds and pokes its head above the water. Then, with great deliberation, gauging its surroundings, it begins

to transform.

Such periods of morning and evening calm are related to the rise and fall of the tides. The pulsation of high and low tide is like the breathing in and out of the Earth. How is it that a tiny larva is aware of this rhythm? The birth and death of human beings is also connected to the tidal ebb and flow, it is said. Humans and dragonflies alike play the same melody of birth and death.

Wings glistened. Shiny droplets of dew slipped from the lotus leaves like unstrung crystal beads. Without a sound, the dragonfly launched itself skyward and flitted across the pond out of sight.

One explanation has it that the Japanese word for dragonfly, *tonbo*, comes from the Japanese phrase meaning flying pole, *tofu bo*. The impression it gave as it jaunted away made this seem quite plausible. Without the slightest doubt or hesitation, it darted off as straight as an arrow.

As if nothing at all had happened, the lotus bud quietly kept waiting for its own moment to blossom. In such noble decorum, I could sense the silent music of the heavens.

Twenty-one in a series