

World TRIBUNE

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new poem,
'Our Brilliant May 3!'

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE FOR MAY 3,
SOKA GAKKAI DAY

OUR TIME HAS COME

'It is time for humankind to turn away from narrow, individual self-interest and toward the welfare of the planet as a whole,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'It is time for humankind to develop a common identity as global citizens. In this respect, the harmonious solidarity of the SGI is a great light of hope for the world.'

My precious fellow members around the world! Congratulations on May 3, 2001! It is our first May 3 of the new century—in the year 2001 that marks a profoundly significant milestone in human history and also in the annals of our global kosen-rufu movement. It is through your unstinting dedication and tireless efforts that we are able to celebrate this day with such brilliant joy and wonderful achievements. Words cannot express the deep appreciation I feel for all of you! To each and every one of you, dear friends in 165 countries and territories around the world: "Thank you!" and "Congratulations on the first May 3 of the 21st century! Hooray!"

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Can there be any doubt that,



SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda celebrate the SGI's new start.

after this period described in the Great Collection Sutra when 'the pure Law will become obscured and lost,' the great pure Law of the Lotus Sutra [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] will be spread far and wide throughout Japan and all the other countries of Jambudvipa [the entire world]" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 550).

In perfect accord with this passage, the SGI has inherited the lifeblood of the Buddha's intent and decree, developing into a lay Buddhist organization of unparalleled scale and attaining truly monumental achievements. The dazzling sun of the Daishonin's Buddhism has now begun to illuminate the skies of the new millennium and usher

in the dawn of a Century of Life. Today, on May 3, 2001, when we sound the first bell of the second set of Seven Bells, let us embark with renewed determination toward peace and the happiness of all humanity.

It is now widely recognized that ideologies premised on

PLEASE SEE MESSAGE, 11

SGI President Honored in Puerto Rico

By ALINA MARRERO
PUERTO RICO CORRESPONDENT

On April 24, Poet Laureate Day in the Puerto Rican city of Manati, SGI President Ikeda was named Poet Laureate of the New Millennium. A section of the city's Francisco Alvarez City Library was also named after President and Mrs. Ikeda.

Also on April 24, the city of Carolina named President and Mrs. Ikeda honorary citizens and presented them the key to the city. "It is a great honor to be giving this proclamation and title to a genuine fighter for truth and justice," said Carolina Mayor José Aponte de la Torre. The city of Manati is located

in the northwestern part of Puerto Rico. Framed by the Atlantic Ocean, it is the site of Western civilization's first settlement on the island. Juan Ponce de Leon built the first Hacienda here in the 16th century.

The Hall of Poets, bearing the name of renowned poet Manuel Joglar Cacho, regaled the SGI-USA delegation with its beautiful Athenian façade, reaffirming the city's nickname, the Athens of Puerto Rico. A beautiful melody could be heard from the hall's entrance, played by master cellist and SGI-USA member José Daniel de Jesus.

PLEASE SEE PUERTO RICO, 10



Mayor Juan Aubín Cruz Manzano (left), of the Puerto Rican city of Manati, presents a city ordinance to SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. The ordinance names SGI President Ikeda Poet Laureate of the New Millennium.

Entrance Examination Held Throughout SGI-USA

Photo by DIXON HAMBY

By ALEXIS TRASS
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.

On April 22, a total of 1,411 people took the SGI-USA Study Department's Entrance-level Examination in 139 locations around the United States, Guam and Okinawa. There were 1,171 English-language participants, with the rest of the total taking the exam in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish. Make-up exams were to be held throughout the following week, resulting in an anticipated total of more than 1,700 participants.

Many of the members that joined SGI-USA last year were able to take the exam. This means that these new members are already studying, an essential aspect of Buddhist practice and foundation of faith. Speaking on the importance of Buddhist study, SGI President Ikeda

has said, "The purpose of practice is to assist and support faith, and the purpose of study is to support practice" (*Faith Into Action*, p. 166).

The test included works from *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, such as "On Attaining Buddhahood in this Lifetime," "The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon" and "Happiness in this World," as well as material on the life of Nichiren Daishonin and the SGI's Soka Spirit movement. Those who passed this exam have reached the elementary level of the Study Department.

Next up is the Advanced-level Examination, to be held across the country on Oct. 21. Local study meetings for this exam are already underway. For more information on the SGI-USA Study Department's curriculum, please visit SGI-USA's Web site at <http://www.sgi-usa.org>. **WT**



Members take the SGI-USA Study Department's Entrance-level Examination at the Seattle Culture Center, April 22.

Ordinary and Extraordinary

WORDS To WIN By

By RONNIE SMITH
MID-ATLANTIC ZONE LEADER

From "The Izu Exile," (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 35-38).

A sutra passage states that there are paths by which birds and fish come and go in the sky and the sea.... An ordinary person is a Buddha, and a Buddha is an ordinary person. This is what is meant by three thousand realms in a single moment of life and by the phrase "I in fact attained Buddhahood." (WND, 36)

To many, a Buddha is a resplendent being like those depicted in the sutras or the sculpted images. For someone unfamiliar with the deeper philosophy of Buddhism and who only knows the more popular versions of the Buddha, the idea that "an ordinary person is a Buddha, and



a Buddha is an ordinary person" might sound radical. It was certainly so for the people in Nichiren Daishonin's day. The idea that the Daishonin, who lived as an ordinary person, was a Buddha was difficult to accept. Even more difficult for them was the idea that they, too, possessed the potential to manifest Buddhahood as ordinary people.

For us as well, while it may be easy to intellectually grasp the idea of our inherent Buddhahood, when it comes to actually putting the idea into practice, we may not find it so easy. Especially when things are not going well — when we are feeling inadequate, weak or discour-

aged — it can be very difficult to believe that the person staring back at us in the mirror is a Buddha. But our perceptions in this regard are not always reliable.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that people become the people they expect themselves to be. It is really what we feel in our hearts about ourselves and others that is manifested in our daily lives. This perception is what shows up on the movie screen of our lives. However, in a single moment of life we can transform our world of suffering and pain to one of joy and happiness by deeply realizing our true potential as Buddhas. This realization allows us to surmount any walls and barriers that stand in our way.

The Daishonin explains in this writing that there are things human beings might not easily understand, like the "paths by which birds and fish come and go in the sky and the sea." Nevertheless, they exist. Our Buddha nature is similar to this.

The people of antiquity first noticed the ability of migratory birds and fish to follow paths in the sky or sea visible only to these creatures. Scien-

tists today are still unable to completely explain these phenomena. But the birds and fish certainly know and see these "paths" that are invisible to the human eye. As we continue our Buddhist practice, we start to reveal the unchangeable Buddha nature innate within us. We begin to see what we previously could not, as we continue to follow the path of correct practice.

We discover that the life-condition established through faith in the Gohonzon has the power to transform all things into benefit. Even mistakes and failures can be turned to good account. This is one of the most difficult things to realize when in the midst of obstacles and sufferings.

While the Daishonin says that "an ordinary person is a Buddha," it is also an extraordinary thing to become a person with this strength of faith. As we come to understand the most precious treasure existing within ourselves, we realize that it also exists within all other people. Out of this strength is born the joyful desire to share the Daishonin's teaching with others and the commitment to accomplish kosen-rufu. **WT**

SGI-USA On The Web!

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

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EXPERIENCE — SIBYL FORSBERG, LOS ANGELES

Stopping the Path of Self-Destruction

Overcoming depression and loss, Sibyl Forsberg discovers her true self and becomes happy.

My life up until I was 18 years old consisted of an absent father, a depressed mother who attempted suicide several times and a stepfather who committed suicide when I was 18.

After my stepfather died, my mother was never the same. Her mental and physical health weakened. I did my best to go on with my life but felt I was on the verge of following my stepfather and mother down the path of self-destruction. I battled depression during high school and college. Because I had such little confidence in myself, I had little aspiration or hope for the future. But I always remember as a little girl this feeling that some day I would be happy, though I had no idea how.

Meanwhile, I was finishing up my degree at UCLA, which is where I met Heidi in 1990. She was a Buddhist and became my very good friend. I was in awe of her because I clearly saw the difference between her amazing life-condition and my miserable one. She had problems, too, but seemed happy anyway, which did not make sense to me.

She took me to a Buddhist meeting immediately, but I insisted on enduring five more years of misery until I finally began to chant in June 1995. And what a relief it was. The first thing I noticed was a lightness in my body, like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders and my surroundings actually looked physically different to me. Colors literally looked brighter and more vibrant. It was truly inspiring. For the first time in my life, I started to have some hope. I thought that happiness was in the realm of possibility for me.

As my faith deepened, the next two years became very difficult. My mother made another attempt to take her own life four months after I started to chant. This just made me chant more. Slowly, I started to build confidence as I chanted for my mother's and my happiness.



Sibyl Forsberg and her dog, Cora.

With this prayer, my self-destructive feelings also came to the surface like never before. Heidi and my boyfriend at the time reassured me that all this pain and suffering would turn into happiness. They told me my life was being purged of fundamental darkness and if I continued to chant and have faith, I would definitely break through. During all this suffering, I received great material benefits. Mostly though, I began to sincerely smile and feel joy, even in the midst of my struggle.

The year 1997 was a tough one to say the least. I was chanting three hours a day. My car was stolen, I was mugged at knifepoint, I lost my job and for seven months could not get another one, I went into severe financial debt and battled one flu after another. But worst of all, my mother's health and depression deteriorated. Her lupus and fibromyalgia became worse and she was in a car accident, causing her to need major back and neck surgery that left her disabled.

My relationship with my mother tore me up inside. My practice gave me clarity on how unhealthy our relationship was. I had spent my life taking care of my mom's feelings and realized that I needed to put boundaries between us. It was a constant struggle to do this. I battled feeling solely responsible for her health and happiness. But I knew that if I

so I joined that year.

Then in February 1998, I received the most devastating news of my life. My mother had killed herself. I was in complete shock. The grieving I did for the next two years was the most intensely difficult time I had ever been through. I thought there was no other way but for me to die too. I believed my life was broken and could not be fixed. I continued to chant but felt hopeless and desperate for an answer about how to continue my life.

I sought the advice of a fellow SGI-USA senior leader who told me to chant to appreciate my life. During our meeting, I truly felt he understood my pain and somehow I believed in what he said. This was the beginning of seeing how all my suffering could be a benefit. With his support, I made a resolution to create value with my mother's suicide and to not perpetuate the cycle of self-destruction in my family. I spent the next three years chanting to appreciate my life and focusing on supporting others in their practice. Byakuren is a tremendous gift that saved my life.

I started to see and recognize the part of myself that I had tried for years to push down inside and ignore — my "over sensitivity." I know that if my mother had not committed suicide, I would not have had to explore this part of myself so

deeply. Now, as I embrace and acknowledge this part of myself, it doesn't run my life but rather enriches it. I feel I have learned to care for and love others in a way I never thought possible. This is because I truly started to appreciate my own life. I see SGI activities as a lifeline to my heart, as this is where I began to develop courage and feel compassion for others.

The following quote from SGI President Ikeda comforted me many times because I knew he understood me, so it helped me continue to fight for my happiness: "Buddhism lists the suffering of parting from one's loved ones as one of the eight types of suffering. In life, we will encounter separations of inexpressible sadness. However, those who overcome such grief and continue to live with strength and courage will be cherished and respected by their juniors as kings and queens of life. There is no more lofty life than that of one who surmounts personal tragedy and leaves behind some achievement for future generations."

I can honestly say that much of my life now is joyful and I smile more than I ever have. I would bet my life on the wonders of this Buddhism because I know without it, I would not be who I am today — a person who never gives up on herself no matter how tough things get. I know there is always hope in any situation. **WT**



Sibyl was introduced to Buddhism by her friend Heidi Bergman-Epstein (right).

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 27 SPEECH—PART 2

Striving on a Daily Basis for All Humanity

'We live in a world where many think only about themselves and forget those who are suffering,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Yet all of you are striving day in and day out for the sake of humanity and working for the welfare of society. This is why people the world over place their trust and confidence in you. This is why people the world over find hope for the new century in the SGI.'

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 4th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, March 27.

Let us now return to Italy and the city of heroes, Varallo. During World War II, its mayor, Giuseppe Osella, laid down his life in the struggle against fascism. Leaders must stand in the vanguard. They cannot wage a genuine struggle unless they do. They will not win the trust and confidence of others who would follow them.

The leaders of Italy's partisan resistance also came from Varallo. And nameless heroes, ordinary men and women born and raised in this city, fought valiantly, resolutely for freedom, leaving behind an immortal history that is today known around the world.

It was the ordinary people who fought. It was the ordinary people who created a new age.

There is an episode that took place in the fall of 1944—around the same time that first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi died in prison, here in Sugamo, for his resolute stand against Japanese fascism. In the fierce resistance struggle that took place in Italy, a partisan from Varallo was captured by the brutal Nazi forces and executed without trial along with his comrades.

The man, who was in his 40s, wrote a letter to his family shortly before his death. This heartrending letter has been passed down through the family as a precious heirloom. The man writes to his wife and young daughters: "Don't cry. Be proud of your husband and father. When I was 18, I spent 18 months in prison. Now at 41, I give my life for my ideals and my country's freedom."

He tells his family not to shed tears for him. Ready to go to his death, he asks them to be proud of him, for he is dying

for the sake of his ideals and for freedom.

In the same letter, this hero also writes: "I say goodbye to you forever. But I will protect you from the world beyond.... Stay in high spirits and uphold the great cause that I was prevented from achieving by the despicable Nazis and fascists."

He tells his children that though not possible for him, he wants them to live long and see that justice is done. How lofty is the bond linking their lives!

Italy's victories for justice and human rights were won through the repeated struggles of such uncrowned heroes who risked their lives for their beliefs.

Unless we fight evil and injustice, we cannot say we are working for good. The same applies to our struggle for kosen-rufu. Unless we defeat evil, we cannot realize kosen-rufu.

In Japan, corrupt, malicious forces band together to harass good, honest people. Driven by a cowardly, animal nature and narrow-mindedness, the Japanese ruling powers attacked Nichiren Daishonin, who was just and right. They also inflicted untold suffering on the citizens of China and Korea, countries to which Japan owes a huge cultural debt. It is the Soka Gakkai that has fought head-on against the evils of Japanese nationalism.

The Soka Gakkai's history is one that has been pioneered by nameless ordinary people. You are all heroes of the people. Therefore I pray each day for your safety, health and longevity. I am also sending daimoku for the repose of our fellow members who have passed away.

I never forget those who have striven together with me for kosen-rufu. Even if I should



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the 4th Headquarters Leaders Meeting.

forget their names, our lives are connected. Our life-to-life bonds are everlasting, spanning the three existences of past, present and future.

And those of you who have children, I hope that you will firmly pass on the spirit of kosen-rufu to them. When this noble spirit is passed on from parent to child, the continuous flow of kosen-rufu will be assured. I stress this for the sake of the future.

History can never change without an all-out struggle.

Dr. Aurelio Peccei, co-founder of the Club of Rome, with whom I published a dialogue, also fought against Italy's fascist regime and suffered imprisonment and torture. [Their dialogue, *Before It Is Too Late*, has been published in 17 languages.]

I have spoken with many intellectuals around the world, and those who strike me as truly impressive are usually those who have undergone persecution and imprisonment for championing the cause of justice. History cannot be made without selfless, all-out struggle.

I met Dr. Peccei several times—in Paris, in Florence and at the International Friendship Hall in Shibuya, Tokyo. He told me in detail about his heroic struggle against fascism. He talked for hours. I vividly recall how happy and relieved he seemed at having been able to leave a correct account of

events for posterity.

After Dr. Peccei passed away, I met with his two sons, Roberto and Ricardo Peccei. I have fond memories of reminiscing with them about their father.

Speaking of Italy reminds me of the lecture I gave at the University of Bologna, one of the world's oldest universities, on June 1, 1994. I also visited Bologna City Hall on that occasion. I remember how its walls were adorned with the photographs and names of those who died in the partisan resistance struggle. Even then, many people continued to visit the city hall and lay wreaths of flowers in memory of their fallen heroes. I was deeply moved.

Life is a struggle. The lives of those who summon their courage when the crucial moment comes and fight resolutely for the sake of justice shine with indestructible triumph and glory.

On the proud front lines of our struggle, true revolutionaries stand with vigor and courage, burning with the passionate spirit of kosen-rufu. This is why we of the SGI are strong. This is why we are never defeated.

Those who live out their lives as true members of the SGI will enjoy great good fortune and benefit in lifetime after lifetime throughout eternity. Their noble names will resound far and wide throughout the universe. This is clear from the Goshō. It is the Daishonin's promise.

Faith is the ultimate source of courage.

Where can we trace the Italian partisan movement's origins from? One of the movement's driving forces was the courage of mothers, the courage of women.

Vercelli Province, where the city of Varallo is located, is famous as one of Europe's largest rice-producing regions. In the past, there were many women rice workers, known as *mondine*, who worked in the paddy fields. Seeking to better the harsh conditions under which they toiled, the *mondine* waged a human rights struggle with courage and tenacity, undaunted by persecution.

It is said that the signing of a contract in 1906 guaranteeing Italian workers an eight-hour workday was largely achieved as a result of the *mondine*'s efforts. The fighting spirit of the *mondine* also never wavered under fascist oppression.

They continued to press onward, singing as they went: "Although we are women, we have no fear. We have words, beautiful and good..." "Words, beautiful and good" refers to their voices, to the power of speech. The women workers fought by using their voices, by using speech.

Another song they sang went: "Prison, violence, nothing can stop me.... / If someone wants to make war, / all of us together will stop them. / We want peace on earth. / We will be stronger than any guns." Their courage is said to have spread like an underground stream—from heart to heart, life to life—until it gave rise to a great surging river of historic change.

"I am not afraid of anything! I will let nothing defeat me!"—those who have this inner strength are victors. The spirit of Italy's courageous women rice workers is mirrored by that of our SGI women.

We have faith. And faith is the ultimate source of courage. Let us bring the sun of courage to blaze in our hearts and use it to brighten our communities, our families and the lives of our fellow members.

Earlier this month, on March 3, the city of Varallo named me an honorary citizen at a ceremony held in the Palazzo D'Adda, one of the city's lead-

Annual Denver Tree Planting Held

Photo by PETER NELLHAUS

By IRLENE OWADA
ROCKY MOUNTAIN BUREAU CHIEF

Beautiful cherry tree blossoms bathed the city of Denver in splendor on April 21 as SGI-USA members planted cherry trees for the 13th consecutive year. The ceremony was held in the Pavilion of City Park overlooking a lake. This scenic view was photographed by SGI President Ikeda during his visit to Denver in 1996 and displayed in his "Dialogue With Nature" exhibition, which was shown in May 2000 at Denver City Hall. Members and forestry personnel joined with Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, his wife, Wilma, and Mrs. Sadako Tsubokawa in planting 28 cherry trees in the park. A total of 123 trees were planted by members around the city until 7:00 p.m. on April 21.

SGI-USA members have been planting cherry trees for the last 12 years, but only recently found out that Mrs. Tsubokawa's father, Dr. Konai Miyamoto, gave a gift of 25 cherry trees to the City of Denver in 1937. He made this gift in her honor as she visited that

year from Japan. Unfortunately, the trees did not survive. Other pioneer citizens such as George Cramer, a former city park planner also planted cherry trees. SGI-USA members wanted to acknowledge their pioneering efforts by planting the trees this year. Although these early trees did not survive, more than 600 cherry trees are now thriving around the city.

Dr. Miyamoto contributed to his community as well. His deep concern for his countrymen and other immigrants prompted him to courageously speak with then Colorado Governor Ralph Carr about the plight of people of Japanese ancestry, who were placed in internment camps during World War II. Governor Carr spoke out against such tyranny, declaring it "inhumane." He asked others to join with him in his stand, but they declined. He later lost his bid for the U.S. Senate, many believed, because of his human rights stand.

"We are proud of the beautiful cherry trees now blooming along Cherry Creek," said Brian Matsuo, SGI-USA vice general director. "SGI President Ikeda has expressed great



Participating in SGI-USA's 13th annual Denver cherry tree planting are (l-r) Wilma Webb, director of the Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film, Sadako Tsubokawa, Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, SGI-USA Vice Women's Leader Rita Risom and SGI-USA Vice General Director Brian Matsuo.

hope for the cherry trees, calling them a great contribution to our society." Mr. Matsuo voiced his hope that the youth would carry on these efforts with the spirit of togetherness and that Denver will one day be famous for its cherry trees.

"I think that the citizens of Denver are very lucky to have you helping the forestry plant

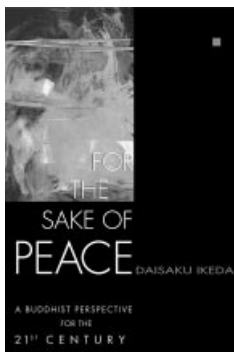
these trees for such a long time," commented City Forester Judy O'Connor. "When I drive around Denver and see the cherry trees blooming, I know it must be spring."

Mrs. Webb, who is the director of the Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film, said, "The mayor and I are happy to see such items of beauty, like the

cherry trees, that help people love one another and love the beauty of this earth."

Mayor Webb spoke about leaving behind a legacy: "This is a great tradition that we want to continue here, a way for each person to leave behind their own individual legacy. To have this from as far back as 1937 is wonderful. I applaud you!" **WT**

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—David Krieger, President,
Nuclear Age Peace
Foundation

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S POEM FOR MAY 3, 2001

Our Brilliant May 3!

By Shin'ichi Yamamoto
[the name President Ikeda uses for his character in the *Human Revolution* novels]

*Finally, we have won!
You and I have won!*

*Earnestly striving to achieve
A solidarity for humanism and peace
Ten million strong,
My beloved comrades in faith
Energetically celebrate
This day—
The first May 3 of the 21st century.*

*We have triumphed,
Amid cheers and jubilation,
We have triumphed,
Overcoming every obstacle
and hardship.*

*May 3, 2001
Was a momentous target
For our movement,
The years to which
Were marked by continuous struggle
As we fought to surmount
Every criticism and slur.
Now finally we greet that day;
We have scaled that towering peak
And conquered it!*

*Thank you,
Each and every one of you,
my dear friends!
Thank you,
My fellow members around the world!
We have won.*

*The mother
Wholeheartedly wishes
To celebrate the triumph
Of her beloved son
Whose greatest pride
Is working selflessly*

*For the happiness of those suffering,
Never ignoring their plight.*

*The father
Is proud
Of his daughter
Who speaks out fearlessly:
"Peace! We want peace!"*

*While many of her friends
Are off enjoying idle pleasures,
She, the admirable young woman
she is,
Shines her brilliant,
Star-bright light on all around her.
With gentle eyes as luminous as
the moon
And a smile as lovely as a flower,
She makes her way in the fresh air,
Exerting herself tirelessly
To encourage many friends
Who are racked by sadness
and sorrow —
How noble she is!*

*The father
Prays that his wonderful daughter,
Shining with brilliant hope,
Will walk the golden way of happiness
Throughout life,
With joy, strength, and integrity.
He watches after her,
A broad smile on his face,
His happiness in full bloom.*

*Those others [traitors of the SGI]
Boast the rampant bad taste of the
vulgar;
They brag of their wealth
and prosperity,
Blind to the fact
That they are the laughingstock of all.
They do not know
That they emit a stench
More foul
Than stinkweed.*

*And so,
They lack that most important eye
For discerning the essence
Of a life of supreme good,
Of the most noble deeds,
Of excellence of character,
Of real truth and justice.*

*Those others!
Oblivious to the new age,
They constantly repeat old sins,
Over and over!*

*For us, however,
An age of peace and tranquillity
Is always waiting.
We always wear
Our jeweled crown
Of happiness.*

*Here,
Absolute, eternal happiness,
True, unsurpassed happiness,
Awaits us.*

*No matter how fierce
The storms of sorrow that
may beset us,
We will never succumb.
No matter how others may inflict
Savage wounds on our hearts,
Their efforts will only backfire
And rage as storms of mental torment
In their own minds.
And, eventually,
These individuals,
Who are obsessed with title
and status,
Power and fortune,
Will be tortured
By endless agony.*

*There is no force
That can alter our truth and justice.
Those who have tormented us
Will only suffer retribution
Inflicted by their own hand.*

*A cursed blood flows through the veins
Of such odious individuals
And they will end their days
Suffering for the offenses
Of their utterly corrupt beings
And cursing their own evil lives.*

*As for us,
We need no crown of authority;
We possess no dark ambitions;
We commit no offenses
That will give us cause for regret.
We will never become
The kind of people who pretend
to goodness
But suffer the torments of hell inside.*

*No matter how many fabrications
People broadcast throughout society,
We fear nothing.
Such pitiful schemes
And the cold winds of malice*

*Are no more than the shadows
of phantoms
To those who possess a state of life
As indomitable as a majestic palace,
To those who are strong and true.*

*We merely laugh
At the black-hearted,
Quivering,
Pitiful wretches
Who resemble petty thieves.*

*Our citadel of truth and justice
Remains completely unshaken
By the harsh blast of arctic winds,
By the storms of cruelty,
By the wild cacophony.*

*Oh May 3!
A day
When ambassadors of peace,
Emissaries of happiness,
Who have appeared all over the world,
Set forth with fresh energy and joy!*

*Oh world citadel of kosen-rufu!
Standing firm and unmoving
Against every underhanded
And vile attack—
At times, the persecution of authority,
At times, the treachery of priests,
At times, the violence of words!*

*We have laid the foundation
For global kosen-rufu—
Our organization is solid,
Our bases, sound,
Our network, strong.
There is no doubt
That the next thousand,
10 thousand years,
Will be our age.*

*My fellow members,
Comrades of shared mission,
Never be defeated!
We must win without fail.
To do so,
Advance, run—
Forward, ever forward!*

*The wise
Are always learning.
Let us,
You and I,
Striving each day
As people of outstanding wisdom,
Calmly meet the challenges
Of every new age
And win.*

*As we achieve
Victories that create value
And bring spiritual fulfillment—
The greatest desire of
all human beings—
We will adorn our lives
As victors who have won
honestly in society.*

*All of us
Must eventually experience death,
Which evokes feelings of darkness
and sadness.
A great philosopher
Once described life as but a reprieve
Before that inevitable destination.*

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



SGI President Ikeda writes, 'We have triumphed, / Amid cheers and jubilation, / We have triumphed, / Overcoming every obstacle and hardship.'

Therefore,
We who have unshakable belief
In the eternity of life
Know the boundless joy
Of devoting ourselves unceasingly
In the pursuit of unsurpassed value
Throughout our lives.

And we,
In our struggle toward our lofty goal,
Constantly seek to elevate ourselves.
Those others, however,
Toying as they do with petty goals,
Only lower themselves further.
Human beings
Must live
In the most human fashion.
But what does that mean?
This seems easy to answer,
But it is actually quite difficult.

It is Buddhism
And our faith in the Mystic Law
That provide
The ultimate, all-encompassing
Answer to that question.

Those who have earned
the right to shout
"Hurrah for humanity!
Hurrah for myself!"
Are happy,
Are people who have won
over themselves.
Those who have won over themselves
Enjoy day after day of happiness.

Such people
Traverse a realm of supreme
happiness
And, as people of outstanding
humanity,
Have built an indestructible fortress
of character.

Even among our comrades,
There have been many who,
Though in the past
Burned with sense of justice,
Mission and commitment,
And worked earnestly for kosen-rufu,
Eventually grew arrogant,
Forgot the purpose of their faith,
Fell prisoner to baseness,
And left our gathering of kosen-rufu.

There have been foolish people
Who took lightly
The goodwill
And the pure, profound realm of faith
Of the SGI—
A realm of pure-hearted members
Dedicated to truth and justice—
And who caused trouble for others,
Acting in such a way
As to disrupt the harmony of believers.

We absolutely refuse
To compromise with evil.
We sever our ties with—
And, moreover, fight rigorously
against—
Those who share the life-state
Of the treacherous and destructive
Devadatta.

No matter what they may have



With the help of SGI-USA members over the last 13 years, more than 600 cherry trees now bloom each spring in Denver (see story, p. 5).

achieved in the past,
Buddhism is concerned with
the present and the future.
We cannot forgive those who,
While holding the highest leadership
positions—
Just like the five senior priests
Who betrayed Nichiren Daishonin—
Behaved like degenerate madmen.

How immense must be
The Daishonin's anger,
And that of his successor,
Second high priest Nikko Shonin!
The anger of the SGI,
Which has inherited the Buddha's
intent and decree,
Is no less.

We cannot forgive evil
If we are to protect the good!
We must drive out the corrupt
If we are to protect the SGI!
If we are to protect truth and justice!

How pitiful
Are these
Prisoners of delusion,
Without principle,
Without faith,
With vindictive eyes,
Their basest animal instincts exposed,
Howling wildly at the good and just!

Cringing before truth and justice,
The arrogant authorities
Try to flee, to escape its hands.
They, with their many celebrated titles,
Combining their personal interest
and pleasure,
Unknowingly tread on
a path that leads
Into a scorching, inhospitable desert.
Oh how futile
Are all their fine-sounding words!

We, in contrast, are living

Lives of integrity.
We have chosen the path
leading to truth.
And
Without allowing a single person
to fall victim
To the insidious schemes of
the jealous and deceitful,
We will continue to advance
With invincible passion and energy.

May the lofty song
Of our chorus of peace
Take us from the discord
Of a world of dark envy,
To a world that rejects
conflict and war!
Above all,
How joyous it is to forge
A world of unity that extols
The duet of justice and conviction!

Following the path of the wise,
We gaze down,
From our lofty palace,
On the crazed
World of barbaric strife.
The foolish remain eternally
Ignorant of virtue,
Choosing intentionally the path of evil
And stupidly pursuing it
Until they arrive
At a place that is human hell.

Oh May 3!
Fighting together,
Working together,
From times of suffering,
From times of sadness,
From times of frustration,
To a new age of certain victory
Of the spirit
Of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth!
Forever without confusion,
Without self-contradiction,
We gather
At that citadel

Of deep abiding respect,
Of the noblest heights of
human existence,
Where the spirit shines with truth.

May 3!
May 3!
Oh our proud May 3!
This brilliant day
On which ordinary people,
Who have sincerely been seeking
The truth,
Awaken!

May is the fifth month:
It corresponds to the deeply profound
Five characters of Myoho-rengo-kyo
As well as to the five guides
for propagation
Set forth by the Daishonin—
The teaching, the people's capacity,
the time, the country
And the sequence of propagation.
Oh the sacred undertaking of the SGI,
Which, in accord with these five
guidelines,
Has propagated the great teaching
of Buddhism
To the five continents of the world—
Asia,
Africa,
Europe,
The Americas,
And Oceania!

At the same time,
The "3" of May 3
Corresponds to past,
present and future.
For, as the Daishonin writes,
"The heritage of the Lotus Sutra
Flows within the lives
Of those who never forsake it
In any lifetime whatsoever—

FROM POEM, 7

Whether in the past, the present, or the future" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 217).

*The bonds of mentor and disciple
In the dedicated pursuit of kosen-rufu—
Both across the three existences
And across three generations—
Are as indestructible as a diamond.*

*The 130th anniversary of the birth
Of our first president,
Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi!
The 50th anniversary of the inauguration
Of our second president, Josei Toda!*

*The great honor of the third president
On May 3 of this milestone year,
Who joyfully shares with all SGI members
And proudly dedicates to his mentors,
Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda,
The more than 100 Honorary degrees and professorships
Received from five continents!*

*Oh my beloved comrades!
With the vast sky unfolding high above you
And your hearts, too,
Open wide to infinity,
You ride on a rhythm
Of cheers, applause
and jubilation,
Together, always together
With the law of the universe!*

We possess wings

*With which to soar on high;
We possess a diamond-like spirit
That can endure all;
And
We possess compassionate hearts
That deeply and broadly embrace and shield
People throughout the world.*

*Our lofty dream
Will never succumb
To the bitter winds of adversity.
It is not a weak, fragile
Armchair conviction.*

*A state of life that strives ever higher
And yet higher again.
The more we fight,
The more we obtain
An absolutely invincible,
everlasting strength.*

*Oh hearts
Gazing down serenely on all
From the skies of a lofty state of being,
Always shining with golden light
In times of prosperity
And on dark night roads alike!*

*Buddhism is a struggle to be victorious.
It is a struggle for truth and justice
For happiness,
For peace.*

*Buddhism without action
Is not the Daishonin's Buddhism.
It is only
An exploitation of Buddhism.
And Nichiren Shoshu today
Is the epitome of this.*

People all around the world

*Are seeking true Buddhism.
Therefore,
We must state the truth
With firm conviction.
The same action if carried out
In a weak, halfhearted manner
Will not serve the cause of justice.*

*A true pacifist
Shares the spirit
Of a genuine practitioner of Buddhism.
We both seek to transform
The tragedy of war
Into a lasting peace.
The foundation for this quest is humanity;
It is the human spirit.
That is why human revolution
Is absolutely necessary.*

*May 3!
Once again,
Let us, the eloquent,
The great unsung champions of kosen-rufu
Who shine with glory,
Fight and take the lead
In every situation,
in every season,
As we, together with wonderful companions,
Rise above the uncaring and the indifferent,
And triumph over he cowardly
Spinning their unending lies.*

*Because you, my friends,
Know
That this struggle
Will bring you
the eternal reward
Of a life of supreme value.*

*Now,
For great victory
In countless future undertakings,
Let us advance,*

*Our hearts brimming with excitement,
Aspiring for the distant golden horizon.*

*May 3!
A day on which
The skies are clear;
the earth illuminated,
And our hearts are filled with joy!*

*May 3!
A day on which the spirit
Of fresh advance,
Of fresh determination,
Toward kosen-rufu
Burns bright!*

April 20, 2001

SGI President Ikeda is recognized throughout the world as a poet laureate.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S SHORT POEMS FOR MAY 3, 2001

Celebrating Soka Gakkai Day

SGI President Ikeda composed the following short poems in celebration of May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, for all SGI members around the world:

*It has come at last!
The sun shines
On the bright, smiling faces
Of fellow members
Ten million strong.*



*Nichiren Daishonin teaches
That all who strive
assiduously
With selfless devotion,
Will, without exception,
Attain Buddhahood.*



*Together
We have prospered
and triumphed—
Our lives,
Dedicated to fulfilling
a lofty vow,
Are a paean to
the human spirit.*

*Like bright May skies,
The faces of all who work
For the cause of Soka and
kosen-rufu
Shine with the joy of living
On our exciting journey.*



*Great waves
Of kosen-rufu and humanism
Envelop the world
With joy and acclaim.*



*Our jubilant cheers
At the indisputable victory of
Soka
Will rise and resound
Throughout the ten directions
And three existences.*

SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA'S MAY 3 MESSAGE

LET'S CHALLENGE NEW HORIZONS

'Working alongside President Ikeda, let's continue to develop many personal experiences in faith and win in every area of our lives,' says SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima.

Congratulations to all of you! May 3, 2001, has finally arrived! And the much-anticipated dedication of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, has been achieved. I truly wish for everyone's great victory in all the activities that you are holding to celebrate this historic date.

SGI President Ikeda, on this day in 1966, shared his vision of a second set of Seven Bells, which would mark our progress toward kosen-rufu from May 3, 2001, until 2050; the goal—to secure the foundation for peace in Asia and throughout the world. Never before has this vision been so true than at this time.

Working alongside President Ikeda, let's continue to develop many personal experiences in faith and win in every area of our lives, especially in our families. And strongly united, let's challenge new horizons as we fulfill our own unique missions, contributing to the happiness of our local communities. **W**



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 3-4

'Just as a broad interwoven nexus of roots that sink deep into the earth supports a mighty tree, it is the consistent and painstaking actions of members to offer personal guidance at the grassroots level that hold up the Soka Gakkai.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued with conviction at the young women's leaders meeting: "The Soka Gakkai is the most noble organization in our society, for it has sincerely embraced even those society has rejected, and has shown them the way to happiness. Any conscientious leader should see this and praise the Soka Gakkai for it.

"If we had imposed restrictions on our membership, accepting, for example, only those with high social standing, financial means, good health and other qualifications, we would never have been called an organization of the poor and the sick, and many problems could have been avoided.

"But that would mean that we would have abandoned the true spirit of religion, and of Buddhism in particular, which is to save those who are suffering."

Whenever members saw or heard a media report that a Soka Gakkai member had been in-

involved in some incident, they did not know what to say to their friends and neighbors, and this frustrated them. By addressing this, Shin'ichi shed light on the essence of the issue. He always tried hard to keep himself abreast of what kinds of problems and opposition were troubling the members. Once he discovered what these issues were, he would immediately confront them head-on and clearly refute what needed refuting. In the war of words, such quick action is of utmost importance.

Shin'ichi went on: "I hope that all of you, the members of the young women's division, will do your best to personally meet with and encourage each member."

He was concerned that the activities of the young men's and young women's divisions were becoming too focused on organizing meetings and events, and that one-on-one encouragement was falling by the wayside.

At the foundation of Soka

Gakkai activities are practice for oneself, which consists of doing gongyo and chanting daimoku, and practice for others, which means sharing the Daishonin's Buddhism with others and encouraging and guiding fellow members in faith. In one sense, introducing another person to Buddhism does not stop with that person joining the Soka Gakkai. Truly enabling others to practice means consistently guiding and encouraging them until they surpass oneself in ability.

Meetings are of course important, but in reality not everyone can attend them. There are usually at least twice as many members in a local organization as the number who regularly participate in any given discussion meeting. Only by personally visiting and encouraging each member in our area can we solidify our organization. This will lead to the Soka Gakkai's growth and development and in turn to the advancement of kosen-rufu. Soka Gakkai activities without personal guidance are like a masterpiece without the finishing touches.

Offering personal guidance is of course easier said than done. The Soka Gakkai is made up of all kinds of people. Some may refuse to meet or speak with other members, while others perhaps joined as children along with their parents but do not consider themselves believers. We may even come across members highly critical of the Soka Gakkai. Others may be suffering so deeply from fi-

nancial difficulties or illness that they are bereft of any hope for the future.

It is no easy task to visit the homes of such members, to try and make conversation, forge bonds of friendship, talk about the importance of faith, and teach them about gongyo and Buddhist principles. Doing so is far more challenging than talking with members we see at meetings or organizing various activities.

But it is these very efforts that enable us to polish ourselves. In striving to help others grow, we grow too. Furthermore, struggling in this way constitutes true Buddhist practice. Promoting activities together with those who regularly attend meetings is simple, but this in itself will not enable the Daishonin's Buddhism to spread. To concern ourselves only with such members would be comparable to the captain of a ship bound for a distant shore contenting himself with sailing around the harbor. Leaders must realize that the main stage of Soka Gakkai activities is not meetings themselves, but the hard work that takes place beyond the meetings.

The network of life-to-life bonds that is the Soka Gakkai was built through the efforts of individuals to visit and personally encourage their fellow members. Just as a broad interwoven nexus of roots that sink deep into the earth supports a mighty tree, it is the consistent

and painstaking actions of members to offer personal guidance at the grassroots level that hold up the Soka Gakkai.

A person who does nothing but grandstand, who is cowardly and lazy, cannot carry out this difficult work, which requires tremendous courage and perseverance. On the other hand, those who personally talk to and encourage their friends and the people they meet are true emissaries and children of the Buddha; they are the real champions of faith.

Shin'ichi was certain that if the leaders of the youth division actively engaged in giving personal encouragement, the Soka Gakkai's future would be firmly and eternally established. He knew that just as a river grows fuller and wider as it flows to the sea, the Soka Gakkai would expand and produce an ever-growing number of talented individuals as the years passed. If the youth division leaders neglected this one crucial area, however, they would be severing with their own hands the roots of the mighty tree of the Soka Gakkai.

That was why Shin'ichi emphasized the importance of offering personal guidance when he spoke at the young women's division leaders meeting.

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

Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA



FROM PUERTO RICO, I

Mayor Juan Aubin Cruz Manzano presented the city ordinance naming President Ikeda Poet Laureate of the New Millennium to SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. A donation of 100 books from President and Mrs. Ikeda was made to the Francisco Alvarez Marrero City Library. The books included selections from such illustrious poets as Pablo Neruda and Federico Garcia Lorca, as well as titles from President Ikeda such as *The Princess and the Moon* and *The Cherry Tree*.

"I am delighted and deeply moved to receive this distinguished recognition as Poet Laureate of the New Millennium," said President Ikeda in a message. "I am deeply touched to be recognized here in the Hall of Poets of Manati. Please accept my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for your generous consideration and good will.

"As the humble successor of

the past presidents of the Soka Gakkai in Japan and on behalf of millions of SGI members in 165 countries, I'm honored to accept this award. I also feel great pride to have a section of the city library named after Kaneko and I.

"We consider that our life work is to share the importance of culture with others, especially with youth. I hope that the 100 books donated today will allow more youth to follow in the footprints of culture, so they themselves may be inspired to contribute and protect the culture of their country.

"In closing, please accept my best wishes for the further development and prosperity of your historical city, Manati, its visionary mayor Juan Aubin Cruz Manzano, as well as its glorious citizens."

Mr. Nagashima also bestowed the SGI-USA Liberty Award upon Mayor Cruz, which is granted in acknowledgement of an individual's outstanding contribution to so-



Mayor José Aponte de la Torre (center), of the Puerto Rican city of Carolina, presents a proclamation to SGI-USA representatives naming SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda honorary citizens of Carolina.

ciety. Mayor Cruz joyfully accepted the award and proclaimed, "This is the first flower of a new friendship."

"This ceremony was a cele-

bration of poetry," said Jose Luis Vargas, Puerto Rico young men's leader. "President Ikeda's experiences are engraved in his poetry, his quali-

ties are transformed into poems. This great honor signifies Puerto Rico's cultural openness, a wish to open our doors to the world." **WT**

FROM SPEECH, 4

ing cultural landmarks. In his speech, Varallo's well-known mayor, Mr. Pier Angelo Pitto, said that people's spirit today has grown weak, and that they tend to leave issues like peace and human rights to others, such as the government or the bureaucracy. He deplored this development, saying that peace and human rights are issues that each of us must work for on a daily basis. In this regard, he said, he has great respect for my activities and those of the SGI for peace and human rights.

I have shared his thoughts with you today as an example of the support and understanding our earnest daily efforts are winning among leading figures around the globe.

We live in a world where many think only about themselves and forget those who are suffering. Yet all of you are striving day in and day out for the sake of humanity and working for the welfare of society. This is why people the world over place their trust and confidence in you. This is why people the world over find hope for the new century in the SGI.

The ground swell of international support for the SGI is now beginning to impact and change the perception of our organization in Japanese society. As the Daishonin writes: "The time will certainly come when, by the workings of Brahma, Shakra, and other gods, the entire Japanese nation will simul-

aneously take faith in the Lotus Sutra [the Mystic Law]. At that time, I am convinced, many people will insist that they too have believed since the very beginning" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 800). The times are dramatically changing, and the correct teachings of Buddhism will become widely sought after without fail. A tremendous opportunity now lies before us. As we ring in the next set of Seven Bells as exemplary global citizens of the 21st century, let us launch an even more powerful momentum to continue achieving victory after victory.

If we fight against evil, the forces working for good and for peace will spread.

Petrarch is a famous 14th-century Italian poet laureate, whose work had a great influence on the Renaissance. In denunciation of those who betrayed their homeland, he declares, "Against that kind—whom I would call wild animals rather than men—every severity is saintly, every mercy is inhumane."

He calls to us: We must not condone traitors! They are animals! Fight rigorously against them!

Petrarch also says: "We have been born to do honorable labor. Why should we seek idleness? Many things, then, that may seem difficult on the first attempt become easier as we progress."

Nothing happens unless we try. It may be hard at the outset, but if we keep persevering, the

path will open up for us.

Emerson, the eminent American Renaissance thinker, says: "With [a friend], we are easily great.... How he flings wide the doors of existence!" When we meet with friends, talk with them and share our thoughts and feelings, our own hearts open wide, are broadened and enriched.

The other day, I received a precious photo from my friend Mrs. Sumi Yukawa, the widow of Japan's first Nobel laureate, Dr. Hideki Yukawa. Showing Dr. Yukawa and other scientists talking with Albert Einstein, the photo is a treasure of the Yukawa family. It is a treasure of the entire world.

Sounding a warning against the dangers of nationalism, Einstein writes, "For the time being, our only satisfaction must come from the knowledge that the fight against evil will strengthen the forces working toward greater decency in society." If we fight against evil, the forces working for good and for peace will spread. To shirk fighting against evil is cowardly and contemptible.

Mrs. Sumi Yukawa is 90 years old. She is still working for peace with youthful vitality and energy. [She is honorary president of the World Federalist Movement and president of the Japanese Women's Conference on World Federation.]

Mrs. Yukawa says, "Possessing great hope is the secret to well-being." There is no greater hope than world peace.

She also says: "World peace

is not a subject that is remote from our daily lives. The wish of each one of us to be on good terms with our neighbors, to think about living not only for ourselves but to contribute to the welfare of others—these things lead to peace. This is where women have an important mission, I feel. We should not just stay in the house, as the word *housewife* implies, but instead go out and think widely about the world." Indeed, we have now entered the age of women.

Mrs. Yukawa shares that her husband once said: "If you leave people to their own devices, they will quarrel. It takes hard work to be on good terms with others." Neither peace nor solidarity can be achieved without unceasing effort.

Dr. Yukawa presented the following words to his junior high school alma mater: "We do not live alone in a vacuum. I would always like you to remember that we live together with many other people who are like us but are also very different from us. How can we enable all people, not just ourselves, to become happy? This is the most important question in life." He says that ensuring that everyone becomes happy, not just ourselves, is the most important thing in life.

Dr. Yukawa's motto was "Let each day be one step forward." In the SGI, we have a similar philosophy—"Not advancing is regressing." In accord with his motto, Dr. Yukawa led a life of continual

advancement and growth.

I have introduced the words of Dr. and Mrs. Yukawa as an expression of my profound appreciation for Mrs. Yukawa's generous gift to us of this historical photograph. [In the May 1, 2000, *Seikyo Shimbum*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, Mrs. Yukawa said in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's inauguration of Soka Gakkai president: "Following the lead of President Toda, who advocated global citizenship, and President Ikeda, who is meeting with leading intellectuals around the world, the Soka Gakkai members are working energetically to pass on a safe, peaceful world to the next generation based on heart-to-heart dialogue." She also mentioned: "In order to carry out a momentous undertaking, it is not only important for the individuals leading it to have character and integrity, but for them to have people who will work at their sides and assist them. In that respect, as a woman, I find Mrs. Ikeda's behind-the-scenes support of her husband deeply moving."]

We are in the midst of the change of seasons, so please take care not to catch a cold. Please stay well, and look after yourselves. My most fervent hope is that all of you will lead the most wonderful lives, enjoying good health and longevity.

Thank you so much for today. I appreciate your traveling such long distances to be here. **WT**

Fifteen-year Time Capsule Opened

Photo by GERRY HALL

A time capsule sealed 15 years ago under the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium in Santa Monica, Calif., was opened this week. When the construction of the auditorium was completed on May 30, 1986, the time capsule was lowered into a large concrete vault in front of the altar area and sealed until its opening on May 3, 2001.

Items contained in the time capsule, representing highlights of the organization's development, included 27,000 personal resolutions from SGI-USA members nationwide — the goals and dreams they hoped to accomplish by 2001.

"Unearthing these 15-year-old items amid the renovations taking place at the World Culture Center and Ikeda Au-

ditorium felt like a new beginning toward the future rather than a nostalgic look at the past," said Wendy DeSouza, SGI-USA young women's leader, who attended the time capsule opening.

"I felt honored to be present while the time capsule was being unearthed," said James Herrmann, SGI-USA youth leader. "When I looked at all the items that we took out of the capsule, I thought of the amazing effort of our pioneers and how much has been accomplished up until now."

New items will be placed in another time capsule and sealed once again under the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium, with the new capsule's opening scheduled for May 3, 2030, the 100th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding. **WT**



SGI-USA staff members look over the contents of a time capsule unearthed on April 26. The capsule was buried under the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium in Santa Monica, Calif., in 1986.

FROM MESSAGE, 1

changing the human being through social reform have failed to achieve their goal, and that while scientific progress has brought much benefit to the world, it has also brought much harm. The great lesson of the 20th century, therefore, has been that global change and even our very survival hinge on our own inner transformation. When human beings change, all else will follow.

The humanism of the Daishonin's Buddhism, which sheds new light on the human being and enables people to draw forth their infinite potential, is the sun of hope for humankind in the 21st century.

I can still hear the ringing voice of my mentor Josei Toda as he said to us youth: "Our movement of human revolution will spread throughout the world. It will start from your time. I'm counting on you. This [spreading the movement in which people around the globe strive earnestly to do their human revolution and achieve world peace] is the way to prove the validity of the Daishonin's Buddhism. For Buddhism exists in active efforts to realize peace and enrich human civilization."

Together with all of you, I renew my pledge to spread the "Buddhism of human revolution" around the globe.

The Daishonin also states, "I entrust you with the propagation of Buddhism in your province" (WND, 1117). In light of these words, we each have a unique and noble mission that has been entrusted to

us by the Daishonin to ensure the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law in our respective communities and regions. In the Daishonin's Buddhism, those who are aware of their profound mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth are precious beyond measure.

The unprecedented spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism that we see in each region around the world today started from the pioneering efforts of devoted individuals. It is always individuals with a strong sense of commitment and responsibility who open the way for kosen-rufu. I hope that each one of you will have the awareness, pride and sense of responsibility of being a leader of our global kosen-rufu movement, and become a transmission point for the spread of Buddhism in society.

Buddhism is a ceaseless endeavor for good, for positive value; it is a philosophy of social contribution. As Buddhists, we therefore strive to nurture mutual friendship and goodwill in our personal relations, to foster wisdom and trust in society, and to make practical efforts to promote culture and peace in the world at large.

Shariputra was known as the foremost in wisdom among Shakyamuni's disciples. What led him to seek out the Buddha's teachings? He had met one of Shakyamuni's disciples and been deeply impressed by the sincerity and dignity of his speech and conduct. The teachings of a mentor who has such a wonderful disciple, he thought, are bound to be outstanding.

I hope that each of you, too, in your own capacity and situation, will strive as good citizens within the framework of the respective cultures and societies in which you live. I hope you will illuminate all around you with your sunny presence, brilliantly conveying the universality of the Buddhist teachings to others and radiating the warm humanism of the SGI. It is in this way that our humanistic network will expand — with one person connecting to another in a chain-reaction that steadily and solidly unfolds across the globe. Here we see the dynamics of peace creation. It is also the key to the advance of worldwide kosen-rufu.

The world is becoming increasingly borderless and interconnected. It is time for humankind to turn away from narrow, individual self-interest and toward the welfare of the planet as a whole. It is time for humankind to develop a common identity as global citizens. In this respect, the harmonious solidarity of the SGI is a great light of hope for the world.

Both humanity and the Earth thirst for compassion and care. The bright, compassionate light of the sun of Buddhism will revitalize humanity, the world, and human civilization.

From today onward, I will continue to fight together with all of you, my beloved fellow members, against the devilish forces that weaken the life force of human beings and our planet, and that threaten human happiness and peace. I will continue to work tirelessly for a new human

solidarity and the creation of an ideal global human community.

Dialogue and exchange are the most effective means for achieving this. I will therefore energetically continue to conduct sincere, ongoing dialogue. Always holding fast to hope, I will continue, today and tomorrow, engaging in exchange for the sake of peace. For I believe that bridging the differences between cultures and civilizations will be one of the biggest challenges of this century.

As exemplary models of the Buddhist principles of faith equals daily life and Buddhism manifests itself in society, please strive to become bridge-builders who, based on trust and respect, forge bonds of friendship and understanding between people through dialogue and exchange.

We now embark on a new phase in our journey toward the eternal spread of Buddhism and the realization of a world where humanism and peace prevail. Let us advance in solid unity, holding high the banner of Soka humanism.

I pray with all my heart that you will enjoy happiness, good health and richly fulfilling lives of value-creation and that your families will also be blessed with good fortune. I pray that you will continue to advance harmoniously together for kosen-rufu in your respective countries, in the spirit of many in body, one in mind.

May 3, 2001

*Daisaku Ikeda, President
Soka Gakkai International*

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