

African Festival Honors Shared Humanity

By ALEXIS TRASS
LOS ANGELES CORRESPONDENT

This event is totally incredible." "Did you see the performances? They were great!" "I'm so glad they decided to have this festival and put so much effort into making sure everything went well."

These are just of few of the sentiments that one could hear expressed at the Southern California Zone African Arts and Culture Festival, held May 20 at the SGI-USA's Los Angeles Friendship Center. More than 2,000 people attended the festival with the theme "Honoring and Revealing a Shared Humanity."

The festival had many events for members and guests of all ages to enjoy. There were performances of traditional dance and music and exhibits of paintings, sculptures and masks. Interactive presentations on African issues addressed the Nile River and its people, why there are over 1,000 African languages and how courage is the ultimate weapon for peace.

There was plenty to keep everybody entertained while walking through the L AFC, with photo displays, maps and quotes scattered throughout. In addition, special activities for children were held, like face painting, folk tales, a drum cir-

Photo by DON HODGSON



Ali Kamiya dit Ba opens the first Southern California African Arts and Culture Festival by leading a world drum processional, representing cultures from all over the world, around the grounds of the SGI-USA's Los Angeles Friendship Center, May 20.

cle and a Masai puppet show.

Several local vendors of African fare were present and served dishes such as *yebeg wot* (beef stew), *yebeg alicha* (lamb stew) and *yemiser wot* (red lentil soup).

The festival's centerpiece

was the premiere of an original play, "Songs of the African Heart," a musical dramatization of Africa from prehistoric times through the dawn of the new millennium. The play eloquently portrays the roots of humanity that the people of

Africa share with human beings everywhere. The show ended with a rousing version of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck, on hand for the festival, said, "The theme of this festival speaks directly to the

goal of our SGI movement, bringing people together in an understanding of our fundamental equality and dignity."

Please see page 12 for more on the festival, including SGI President Ikeda's message to the event. ■

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



More than 2,000 people attended the African Arts and Culture Festival.



Traditional African dress was worn by many of the participants.

The Great Law Is for Everyone

WORDS To WIN By

By **PHYLLIS GOODSON**
GREAT LAKES REGION
VICE WOMEN'S LEADER

From "The Selection of the Time," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 538-94.

Question: If one preaches the great Law to people who do not have the capacity to understand it, then the foolish ones among them will surely slander it and will fall into the evil paths of existence. Is the person who does the preaching not to blame for this? Answer: If a man builds a road for others and someone loses his way on it, is that the fault of the road-builder? If a skilled physician gives medicine to a sick person but the



sick person repelled by the medicine, refuses to take it and dies, should one blame the physician? (WND, 539)

We have learned from Nichiren Daishonin in this letter that now is indeed the time to propagate the one great Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Here, employing a Q-and-A format to fully clarify his reasoning, the Daishonin raises a doubt and

questions if the people's capacity to understand the Law should be a concern. After all, if people lack the capacity to understand the Law and wind up slandering it instead, aren't both they and whoever taught it to them destined for suffering?

The Daishonin's answer is quite clear that this is *not* the case. In the Latter Day of the Law, the era in which we live, one should teach the correct Law regardless of people's differing capacities, the Daishonin says. Later in this letter, the Daishonin cites the Great Teacher Dengyo: "The Former and Middle Days are almost over, and the Latter day is near at hand. Now indeed is the time when the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra will prove how perfectly it fits the capacities of all people..." (WND, 543).

This means we should never withhold teaching the Law because we think someone is not ready for it. We should teach it to everyone, whether we think

they will understand it or not. This is not to say that we should not carefully consider each person's uniqueness — the point is that we should chant abundant daimoku for everyone with a resolute determination to find the wisdom and courage to teach them in a way that they can understand.

Because of their differing karmic tendencies, people will react in different ways to our shakubuku efforts. Some will understand and accept the teaching, while others may reject it or perhaps even give us a hard time for our efforts. However, it would certainly defeat the whole purpose of our efforts if we were to view this passage as license to be insensitive, overly aggressive or abusive in sharing the Law with others. Based on our respect for the person we are introducing to Buddhism, we should bring forth genuine sincerity and warmth from our lives. At the same time, if we have done our

best with a compassionate spirit to help the other person, there is no reason to worry or blame ourselves if their reaction is unfavorable.

With absolute confidence, we should communicate the joy and benefit of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo without hesitation, whenever we can do so in an appropriate way. Their reaction is their responsibility. Taking compassionate action is ours. **WT**

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The Oneness of Good and Evil

Back to the Basics

By **MARK KORAL**
LOS ANGELES

Buddhism offers the profound concept of the oneness of good and evil. This view posits that good and evil have no absolute substance in themselves but are based upon relative distinctions.

We see in the traditional Christian concept of original sin a clear duality in the substantial character of good and evil. Here, the sin of disobedience committed by Adam and Eve, and the subsequent guilt associated with their fall from grace, is emblematic of a clear-cut duality between good and evil.

In contrast, Buddhism expounds the doctrine of 3,000 thousand realms in a single life moment. This expresses the idea that all aspects of life are mutually inclusive. In this case, this means that all life contains the inherent potential to manifest either good or evil. A



supremely benevolent being such as the Buddha, for instance, still possesses the nature of evil, and a great villain like Devadatta, who was inimical to the Buddha, possesses the Buddha nature.

Buddhism is definitely not just saying that "it's all relative" — it emphasizes that good is created through a continual struggle against evil. Nichiren Daishonin thus explains: "Opposing good is called evil, opposing evil is called good. Therefore, outside of the heart there is neither good nor evil" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 563). First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi gives this example: "Even a good person,

if he opposes great good, immediately becomes a person of great evil. Even an evil person, if he opposes great evil, immediately becomes a person of great good" (June 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 28).

To bring all people along the path to indestructible happiness — Buddhahood — is "great good." Conversely, selfish personal interest that ignores the happiness of others is the root of the evil, the fundamental darkness, which we are struggling against. And we cannot create this good without opposing this evil.

Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, clarifies that "Devadatta was a slanderer in Shakyamuni's lifetime; he cut all the roots of goodness in the world. The pre-Lotus Sutra teachings say: 'Without the existence of evil, wise actions of good cannot be manifested. For this reason, Devadatta had for immeasurable kalpas always been together with Shakyamuni, and when Shakyamuni practiced the Buddha way, Devadatta practiced injustice. In this way they mutually inspired each other.' However, once good is completely revealed, evil in its entirety becomes good. There-

fore, the Lotus Sutra teaches the oneness of good and evil, the oneness of the erroneous and true, and the oneness of a reverse relationship and positive relationship. This is the inner doctrine that had not been revealed in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings" (June 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 31).

In other words, only by conquering the evil threatening Buddhism could Shakyamuni fulfill the purpose of Buddhism, expounding the Lotus Sutra and revealing his true identity as the Buddha who attained enlightenment in the remote past. Without Devadatta's "assistance," the profound teachings of the Lotus Sutra could not have been fully revealed.

Allowed to run its course, evil can never become an entity of the oneness of good and evil. Only when it is completely defeated does "evil in its entirety" turn into good. It is then that evil can act as a "teacher" — as a means to help us polish and reveal our true identity.

In this way, the Daishonin's Buddhism makes it clear that the way to enlightenment cannot be found in an indolent practice, divorced from the

world of suffering and conflict. Rather, it blossoms in the powerful determination to battle the evil in society at its fundamental roots, through compassionate dialogue and action thereby opening the path to happiness for all people.

For more on the oneness of good and evil, see SGI President Ikeda's "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" in the June 1997 *Living Buddhism*, available on the Pubs 97-98 CD-ROM and the third volume of *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, available this summer.

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EXPERIENCE — STEVE DEPIRO, EAST WENATCHEE, WASH.

LEAVING THE DOUBT BEHIND

After 25 years of practice, Steve DePiro learns to be happy — in spite of himself.

My wife, Susan, and I were introduced to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism more than 25 years ago. Susan joined right away — she was and is very sincere — and chanted all the time.

I was a mess, working all the time, taking drugs and being miserable. I had zero self-confidence and spent a lot of time feeling sorry for myself.

Though I often mocked my wife for practicing Buddhism, I watched her grow, getting everything she was chanting for. I stayed the same. Susan was also attending a lot of meetings, and at one point I got fed up and gave her an ultimatum: She would have to choose between her practice and me. And if it were not me, I would leave. She said: "See you later. I'm doing this forever." This, I did not expect.

My wife was moving on with life, while I was standing still. I needed to chant, but my ego would not let me state the obvious. I began to chant after she went to work, too proud to let her know she had won. Yet once I began to practice, I could see things changing for the better.

A short while later, I got a job selling cars. Over the next 24 years, I had almost every position you can have in an auto dealership — from salesman to sales manager to general manager to dealer and back to salesman.

Throughout this period, I was sometimes hit with waves of depression and even self-hatred. I believe that since we all have a Buddha nature, self-hatred is a very serious problem. In a sense, when you hate yourself, you give your Buddha nature a black eye. I was giving myself a black eye for so long, I did not even know I was doing it.

Only by practicing and working with members in the SGI have I been able to face and deal with it. Learning to like who I am and believe that I deserve to be happy is something I had to wrestle with every day.

And although I received tons of benefits, I was a chronic whiner. I did not realize what fortune I had, nor did I realize how my self-sl-



Steve DePiro (center) with friends at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

der was blocking me from receiving more fortune.

Around two and half years ago, things got ugly. I could not see the positive in anything. I hated my job and wasn't crazy about my life either. I was miserable. A total burnout — in serious financial trouble and spiritually bankrupt — I wanted to die. I fantasized about buying a motor home and just disappearing, but I knew my wife might find me, and I could not bear the idea of how my kids would feel about their dad.

Fortunately, through my Buddhist study and years of practice, I knew I could never ingest enough drugs or travel far enough to escape myself. I continued to chant, but only half-heartedly. I wanted and needed to change, but it seemed I could not. I did not like who I had become and it was hard to face other members.

During this time, various SGI leaders visited our area, and I was able to receive a lot of guidance. It was suggested that I study SGI President Ikeda's book *Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death*. I was asked to study it very carefully; as if my life depended on it. I began to look at Buddhism differently. I slowly started to wake up.

First, I changed my schedule at work so I could chant an

hour in the morning before gongyo. I studied President Ikeda's writings like never before. I did my best to encourage my members, including visiting them at their homes.

I visited one member that lives on top of a mountain in a bread truck. It is hard to get to his place — there is barely a road — and when he saw me, he said, "Steve, you must really be screwed up to come all this way to visit me!" I laughed and said, "You have no idea."

As we chanted together, I began to feel the clouds break up and a little joy seep in. We talked a while, I thanked him for being there for me to visit, and I started on my way home. As I drove home, I felt so good, like there was hope. I remembered how great it is to be a Bodhisattva of the Earth and encourage other members.

I soon returned to — and finished — a project I had begun years ago: I wrote a book for car salesmen. I found the perfect editor and got it published. I quit my job and, with no money, started my own business, I on I Sales Coaching.com.

I now put on workshops and provide newsletters for salespeople and coaching videos for sales meetings. It has been two and a half years, and the business is a success. I travel, am

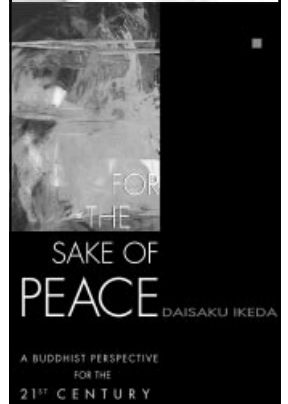
financially fit and love what I do. I get paid to encourage salespeople and managers to listen to others and treat them with respect.

But the real benefit is not simply that I have a great job — I have really changed. Buddhism has helped me to grow up, leaving the doubt, the complaining, the guilt and the self-loathing behind. I can now honestly say that I have become happy. I never thought it would be possible. I thought I would have to practice lifetime after lifetime before becoming happy, but here I am, happy.

So what is truly important to me now? Seeking out President Ikeda's guidance and moving forward with my dreams. Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy. Regard both suffering and joy as facts of life, and continue chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo no matter what happens" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 681). This is how I want to live.

I want to win in all the challenges I face, deal with the suffering, enjoy the joy and share my heart with others. With my Buddhist practice and the support of the SGI, there is no way I can lose. I cannot fail to become even happier. **WT**

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S APRIL 11 SPEECH

To Give Everyone the Joy of Winning

'Through victory, justice is proven,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'To give everyone the joy of victory—that is the mission and the glory of a leader. Toward that end, leaders have to work many times harder than others, taking concrete action and opening a way forward.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a conference for region leaders, held at the Soka Culture Center at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, April 11.

Thank you all for your efforts to attend this region leaders conference. In every part of the country, members are achieving unprecedented success in advancing kosen-rufu and their lives. It is a great cause for joy that we are able to welcome the long-awaited date of May 3, 2001, amid this rising tide of successive victories. I want to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to all the members.

The humanism of the SGI is also spreading in Asia, Africa and throughout the world. The dawn of the new century is a time of tremendous promise for kosen-rufu. This is a most auspicious juncture. A time of golden opportunity has arrived.

Those who fail to exert themselves at the crucial time cannot attain Buddhahood. Discarding vanity and concern for appearances, let us cause the "gears" of our hearts to mesh and resolutely advance along the great path of supreme faith.

In a well-known passage, Nichiren Daishonin instructs a lay disciple as follows: "I entrust you with the propagation of Buddhism in your province. It is stated that 'the seeds of Buddhahood sprout as a result of conditions, and for this reason they preach the single vehicle'" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1117). Each of you has been solemnly entrusted by the original Buddha, the Daishonin, with the realization of kosen-rufu in your area in the 21st century. Please create a splendid, glorious history in the land of your mission.

A leader has to stand up in the vanguard. You must not simply leave everything up to others. It is the duty of leaders to rack their minds in an effort to enable everyone to advance with joy, self-confidence and soaring hope.

We need to strive daily to

build and expand our connections with people based on Buddhism, sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law and the seeds of victory in their hearts. These seeds will assuredly blossom as flowers of peace and happiness that fill the new century with exquisite fragrance.

Society is placing more and more trust in our movement for peace.

Buddhism becomes manifest in society. SGI members throughout the world are building wonderful trust in their respective countries.

The other day I received a fax from the South American country of Bolivia. The words of SGI-Bolivia General Director Takeshi Kamiya and Vice General Director Katsuo Takeno seemed to dance with joy on the page. They related how a special session of the city council of San Lorenzo was held April 7, with Mayor Freddy Antelo, the city council president and all members attending. There, City Council Secretary Elvira Antelo de Adiazola read a declaration stating that the city was awarding my wife and I, representing SGI members in 163 countries and territories, the title of Illustrious Guests, in praise of our activities for peace. Mr. Takeno accepted the commendation on our behalf.

Mayor Antelo also delivered a touching congratulatory speech. He said that while the world is full of confusion, with materialism and egoism running rampant, SGI members in Bolivia and throughout the world are "sowing seeds of compassion and peace."

Following the city council session, SGI-Bolivia members planted 30 cherry tree saplings in a park adjacent to the city hall. The park has a statue of the city's illustrious native son José Eustaquio

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



'Our friends in Bolivia are making wonderful contributions to society!' SGI members at the Bolivia Culture Center.

Méndez Arenas, a high-minded, courageous leader of independence, who stood up on behalf of the oppressed.

While a bouquet of flowers was presented at the base of the statue, the SGI-Bolivia Fife and Drum Corps performed a lovely melody praising Méndez. The event was attended by a direct descendent of the hero. Mayor Antelo declared that April 7, 2001, the date of the presentation, be designated Peace Day in the city.

I also recently accepted an honorary citizenship from the Bolivian city of Tarija and an education award from the state of Tarija. I have taken the liberty of reporting these matters as proof of the absolute trust that society places in our movement for peace.

Our friends in Bolivia are making wonderful contributions to society. A showing of the exhibition "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" in Santa Cruz last August was visited by 110,000 people. This comes to fully 10 percent of the city's population of 1.13 million. Bolivian President Hugo Banzer and Mr. Tito Hoz de Vila Quiroga, the country's minister of Education, Culture and Sports, sent congratulatory messages to the opening, which was attended by many distinguished guests.

SGI members' victory in spreading waves of peace to 110,000 citizens is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that the membership in the city comes to only about 500 households. In advance of the showing, everyone made a concerted effort to visit universities, educational institutions and all 1,030 schools in the city. The exhibit's great success was the direct result of their steadfast, earnest efforts to carry out dialogue with as many people as possible.

The exhibition also elicited a powerful reaction when it was shown in the Bolivian capital, La Paz, in September and October 2000. More than 52,000 citizens visited that showing, yet it was organized by a core group of only 27 members.

The opening ceremony was attended by former First Lady Ximena Iturralde de Sánchez de Lozada. And Education Minister Hoz de Vila Quiroga toured the exhibit with great interest.

During a visit to the Bolivia Culture Center in February, the education minister praised SGI members for having helped raise interest in peace among Bolivia's citizens. He added that he had been looking forward to seeing their activity center with his own eyes. [Last December, the Ministry of Education, Cul-

ture and Sports awarded SGI President Ikeda the Medal of Merit in the Grade of Comendador (Knight Commander), one of its highest honors.]

You cannot become a great person without winning a life-or-death struggle.

The great liberator of Latin America, Simón Bolívar, after whom Bolivia takes its name, says, "The noblest thing that a man can do is to enlighten his fellow men." In Bolivia today, the SGI members are harmoniously, vibrantly conducting dialogue to enlighten others. And the activities of the SGI women, led by Women's Leader Masako Kamiya and Women's Peace Forum Chairperson Hiroko Sasaki, stand out in particular.

Once a year, the Women's Peace Forum, which is composed of both women's and young women's division members, holds peace gatherings in cities across the country. By promoting the study of local history and the lives of distinguished individuals, they are sending out waves of fresh inspiration to society. Through holding joyful dialogue with local cultural figures, they are constructing an important network of humanism.

The Mystic Law activates all things. Through its practice, we can give full play to the unique

character and culture of our particular area, causing it to blossom. While earnestly seeking to contribute to the community, we can create and expand a seamless, boundless solidarity of peace and justice.

Franz Tamayo, the Bolivian poet activist, calls out: "It is necessary to teach people to speak up about the truth, and to be honest with themselves, too. The worst evil is not evil by itself — if any exists. Even worse is to know about the existence of evil and to conceal it, or to see it and yet remain silent."

Another poet, Fernando Diez de Medina, says: "To fight for truth and beauty is not easy. But to fight among mountains, harassed by envy and ingratitude, and among people of denial and silence, that is even more difficult." Those who undertake such an extremely difficult struggle of words are truly great.

Tamayo declares: "Nothing is proven by simply suffering a great deal. However, it is possible to prove that we are greater than our suffering." And Bolivar cries out, "Victory led by justice has always been our guide."

Through victory, justice is proven. To give everyone the joy of victory — that is the mission and the glory of a leader. Toward that end, leaders have to work many times harder than others do, taking concrete action and opening a way forward.

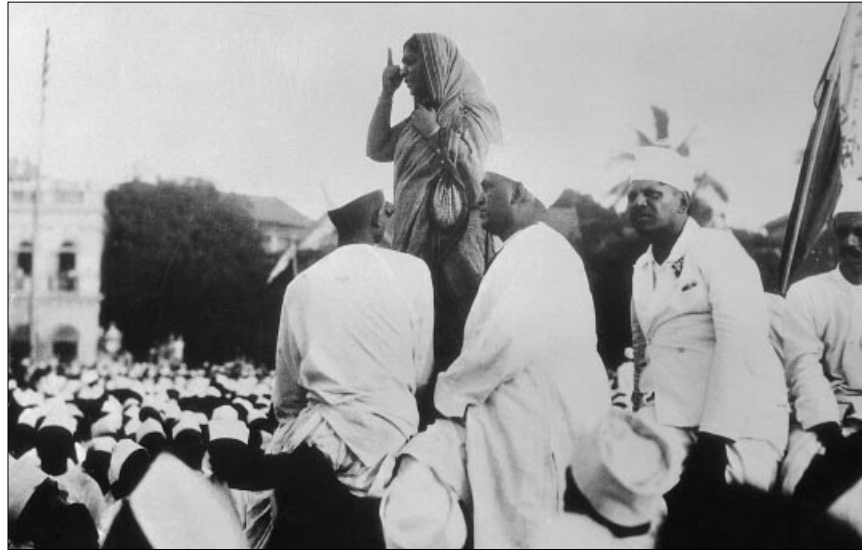
In any realm of activity, one cannot become a person of the highest caliber without overcoming some kind of life-or-death struggle. And this is all the more true when it comes to the strict path of mentor and disciple in Buddhism.

Young people, in particular, ought to delight in hard work. They should determine with genuine humility to struggle hundreds of times harder than others. For only thus is it possible to become a great leader.

Gandhi's followers had the faith that they were always together with their mentor.

In Bolivia and other countries around the world, the activities of women truly shine. The Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize was recently awarded at Morehouse College, which is a stronghold of human rights. Gandhi, who deeply trusted and had the highest expectations for women as champions of peace, says, "I have worshipped woman as the living embodiment of the spirit of service and sacrifice."

In 1930, the year of the Soka Gakkai's founding, Gandhi, having set his sights on the new target of winning India's total



Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India, called out to Gandhi's followers, "Gandhi's body is held in jail, but Gandhi's spirit exists within all of you." Many women were leaders in Gandhi's independence movement.

independence, initiated a nationwide movement that led to a decisive confrontation with the powerful colonial regime. That March, he began his historic Salt March. [The British colonial government that ruled India had a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of salt, on which it levied a high tax. Gandhi challenged this oppressive system by marching with his followers to the sea to make salt. Over the course of 24 days, they walked some 240 miles.]

As the struggle spread during April and May, many women bravely stood up and surged to the front of the popular movement, taking the place of men who had been imprisoned. One of the central figures among them was the poet Sarojini Naidu, who is known as the Nightingale of India.

When Gandhi was imprisoned after completing the Salt March, Naidu nobly called out to her comrades, "Gandhi's body is held in jail, but Gandhi's spirit exists within all of you." Always together with the mentor! Always together with justice! With this faith, they fought on without any fear. News organizations transmitted accounts of this nonviolent struggle and the ensuing onslaught of repression, rallying international public support.

For me, the courageous efforts of those women call to mind the valiant struggles of the women of the Kansai Soka Gakkai, who joined me in overcoming the Osaka Incident and many other difficulties, as well as achieving unprecedented propagation results during the Osaka Campaign. [In the Osaka Campaign of May 1956, the

Kansai members, rallying around President Ikeda, who had been dispatched by second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda to support them, introduced 11,111 households to the practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism. In the 1957 Osaka Incident, President Ikeda was arrested and wrongfully charged with election law violations in an Osaka by-election. In January 1962, at the end of a lengthy trial, he was fully exonerated of all charges.]

Sincere praise encourages the growth of young people.

What lent still more force to Gandhi's campaign was the appearance and ripple effect of new leaders, new classes — new people from new communities standing up and summoning unstoppable passion. Today, in every region of Japan, new capable people are awakening one after another to their mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth and vigorously taking their place on center stage.

This is truly the rhythm of a victorious struggle. The unity of capable people will expand to the extent that leaders develop their own state of life and exert themselves with all-out intensity.

In his work *The System of Value-Creating Education*, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president, says, "The root of every deadlock in society and all spheres of endeavor comes down to a lack of capable people." The "humanistic competition" that he proposed is also the competition to raise capable people.

Praise encourages growth — this is particularly true in the case of young people. I hope that lead-

ers in the men's and women's divisions, as experts in humanistic education, will earnestly seek to encourage, train and raise capable successors.

The first recipient of the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Award was His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, who has made important contributions to peace in the Middle East. Prince Hassan is president of the Club of Rome, a gathering of some of the world's leading intellectuals, and is active in a number of international organizations. [President Ikeda is an honorary member of the Club of Rome.]

Prince Hassan has highly praised the SGI's movement for peace. He emphasizes that the SGI places importance on education, and that its activities are based on a philosophy of the sanctity of life and the value of the human being. He has described our movement as playing an extremely important role in the world and has expressed heartfelt sympathy with its ideals. Prince Hassan's comments suggest a long-standing familiarity with the SGI's philosophy of humanism and harmony.

Morehouse College is well known as the alma mater of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In conjunction with the presentation of the award, a special exhibition, "Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace," was held on the campus. The world now looks to the SGI to carry on the movement of nonviolence.

The SGI's cry of justice is a struggle to change the spiritual climate of society.

The purpose of our advance

is to enable everyone to become happy and to create a world overflowing with the joy of life. Toward that end, we need to construct a society in which justice and reason are victorious.

In April 1275, the year after his return from exile on Sado Island, the Daishonin writes to Shijo Kingo: "I nearly had my head cut off. [But] Because I have persevered without fear, there are now people who think my teachings may be true. ... Watch what happens in the future. If those priests who abuse me should pray for the peace of the country, they will only hasten the nation's ruin...."

"I have enjoined the heavenly lords Brahma and Shakra, the gods of the sun and moon, and the four heavenly kings to punish those who have become enemies of the Lotus Sutra...."

"When I speak in this way, the ruler and others may think I am making threats, but I in no way speak out of hatred. I speak out of the profound compassion to enable them to eradicate in this life the tortures of the hell of incessant suffering, into which they are otherwise destined to fall. The Great Teacher Chang-an said, 'One who rides the offender of evil is acting as his parent.' Nichiren, who admonishes them for their evil, is father and mother to the ruler, and the teacher of all living beings" (WND, 489).

The Daishonin makes this supremely confident declaration after overcoming a persecution that nearly cost him his life. I feel that the Daishonin's words express his brilliant spirit of justice.

The members of the SGI — which is carrying on the Daishonin's true spirit — have fearlessly overcome numerous persecutions arising from libelous allegations, just as the Daishonin instructs. Our cry of justice is a struggle to change the spiritual climate of society and construct true happiness and prosperity.

To a woman follower of admirable faith, the Daishonin writes: "The people of Japan, by becoming enemies of the Lotus Sutra, have brought ruin on themselves and their country. And because I proclaim this, I am called arrogant by those of little understanding. But I do not speak out of arrogance. It is simply that if I did not speak out I would not be the votary of the Lotus Sutra. Moreover, when my words prove later to be true, people will be able to believe all the more readily. And be-

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 10

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 5 SPEECH

Living With Wisdom and Strength

'We must live out our lives with wisdom and strength,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'forever in accord with the laws of the universe. This is the quintessence of the spiritual legacy and wisdom of Henry David Thoreau, whose writings have had such a powerful impact on the world.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech at the Soka Schools Alumni Gathering, held at the Soka University Auditorium, Hachioji, Tokyo, May 5.

My heartfelt welcome and congratulations to our Soka alumni, who have gathered today brimming with youthful zest and vigor!

Ever since I was young, I have been a devoted reader of the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great philosopher of the American Renaissance and mentor to Henry David Thoreau.

Emerson writes, "Friendship and association are very fine things, and a grand phalanx of the best of the human race, banded for some catholic object; yes, excellent...."

Today, we have the peerless honor of welcoming a most distinguished delegation from the United States, members of the Thoreau Society. They are truly great teachers who shine with immense intellect and noble character. My gratitude to you from the bottom of my heart for joining us today.

On this day, graduates of Soka University have returned to their alma mater from every corner of Japan and from 50 countries and territories over five continents, so that they, too, may band in "a grand phalanx" before embarking upon new epics of their own making. Thank you so very much! To those of you who have gathered at the Central Gymnasium [and are watching the proceedings via closed-circuit video transmission], I thank you dearly for traveling long distances to join us on this occasion.

I urge all of you to always forge ahead with youthful vigor, no matter what. You may grow older, and the years may begin to take their toll on you physically, but your spirit must always be young. The spirit, after all, is most important.

Also present today are representatives of the Soka Gakkai future division, who are with us

to celebrate our Successors' Day [May 5]. My congratulations to each of you. Your efforts alone will determine whether the Soka Gakkai can enjoy a truly successful centennial celebration in 2030. That is why I have such high expectations for you to do your very best!

Thoreau Society President Ronald Bosco and Secretary Joel Myerson, both of whom I hold in the highest esteem: Together with the youth who shall succeed my work, and with the resolve to further learn the spirit of Thoreau, the great explorer of life's inner realm, and to follow in his footsteps, I wish to humbly accept the Honorary Life Membership of the venerable Thoreau Society. I thank you for this unequalled distinction from the bottom of my heart.

The SGI's strength comes from the heroism of its members.

A telling incident took place in the summer of 1844. Thoreau, the poet of eternal youth, was 27 years old—the same age as many of you here. Indeed, I understand that Mr. Thomas Harris, the Thoreau Society's executive director, who is also here with us, is a young 28 years of age.

On that day some 160 years ago, Thoreau's mentor, Emerson, was planning to speak out against slavery at a rally to be held in Concord, Mass. However, the local church, being quite conservative at the time, took a dim view of Emerson's position and would not allow the rally to be held on its premises.

Emerson was also denied the right to have the church bell rung to notify residents of the gathering. Instead, the rally had to be held at the court building, and the turnout suffered as a result.



Thoreau Society President Ronald Bosco presents the society's first Honorary Life Membership to SGI President Ikeda during the Soka Schools Alumni Gathering at Soka University of Japan, Tokyo, May 5.

Thoreau, however, would not tolerate the affront his cherished mentor was forced to bear. Rejecting the constraints the authorities imposed, an infuriated Thoreau stormed into the church and rang the bell vigorously with powerful sweeps of his arms.

It was a resounding appeal to the citizens of Concord: Arise, sleeping souls! Gather, people of conscience! Come hear my mentor's cry for truth, and join our phalanx for justice!

I have long held Emerson and Thoreau—who stood undaunted as mentor and disciple—as heroic figures, and I drew inspiration from them as I, too, extolled to the world the dawn of the ideals upheld by my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda. I have thrown myself into this struggle without cease to this day, never once succumbing to fear.

According to Thoreau, "when you plant, or bury, a hero in his field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up." This is the spirit that the Soka Gakkai epitomizes.

Indeed, the citadels for peace that we have built around the world are impervious, for they are founded on the heroism of common citizens, never to be defeated, never to be intimidated. That is why I hereby declare that the Soka Gakkai's triumph is total, for we have overcome even the most vil-

lainous acts by those who connived to see us fail.

People of unshakable philosophy are never misled or swayed.

The long-awaited dedication of the Aliso Viejo campus of Soka University of America has finally arrived. SUA is a liberal arts college for the 21st century, an institution devoted to the ideals of humanistic education that Thoreau embraced.

In spite of their busy schedules before traveling to Japan, our guests from the Thoreau Society took the trouble to visit the new campus and extend their warm felicitations for the dedication. Once again, my heartfelt gratitude to you.

Soka University in Japan, the Soka schools in Tokyo and Kansai, and Soka kindergartens in Japan and several countries overseas have made dramatic strides over the years, a feat largely due to the long-standing support of the Soka alumni. Among our Soka graduates are those who were first accepted by prestigious schools such as Tokyo University and Kyoto University, yet who chose to attend Soka University. I shall always remember you and the courage and conviction you showed in making such a decision.

Many freshmen standouts entering Soka University this

year have demonstrated similar resolve. They, too, passed the entrance examinations of the finest schools—ranging from Japan's leading national and private institutions to renowned universities abroad—yet they elected to enroll at Soka. I therefore ask every member of the university faculty and administration to respond to our students' sincerity and commitment in kind, to ensure that no effort is spared in addressing their needs. The network of friendship, which has been built by those of you engaged in Soka education over the years, is being joined by an endless procession of immensely gifted, hardworking youth from around the world.

François Duc de La Rochefoucauld, the 17th-century French author, observes, "The greatest Treasure in this World, is a true Friend, and yet it is a Treasure which Men least trouble themselves to look after." Every Soka alumnus should be proud that his or her life shines with this most precious treasure.

You may have felt a touch of nostalgia at being reunited with the statue of Leo Tolstoy that stands in the entrance of this auditorium. It is a well-known fact that, at a time when the censors of Czarist Russia were giving his work careful scrutiny, the Russian novelist

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



Henry David Thoreau lived a solitary life by Walden Pond, near Boston, for more than two years. His seminal work, 'Walden,' is based on this transformative experience.

had the audacity to parade Thoreau's thoughts in his writings. Tolstoy carried on from Thoreau in raising high the torch against tyranny, using the power of the pen to wage the struggle for a great social reformation that arose from a revolution of the inner self.

Those whose lives are founded on an unshakable philosophy will never be misled by the absurdities perpetrated by the powerful or swayed by superficial trends. We must therefore live out our lives with wisdom and strength, forever in accord with the laws of the universe. This is the quintessence of the spiritual legacy and wisdom of Thoreau, whose writings have had such a powerful impact on the world.

Those who take a valiant stand in an hour of need live on in glory.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the father of Soka education, who gave his life for peace, felt that no disgrace was worse than the praise extended by fools. He upheld his faith and conviction to the very end, accepting every abuse and persecution as a great honor.

A 1943 book on the history of modern education in Japan, *A Chronicle of the Lives of Great Educational Theorists of the Meiji, Taisho, and Showa Eras*, states to the effect: "As to the well-known primary school principals in Tokyo during the Taisho Era (1912–26), it is to be regretted that not a single individual commanded admiration. Instead, the truly great educators were hidden among the ranks of teachers who persevered in ob-

scurity. And the most outstanding among them was Principal Tsunesaburo Makiguchi." Therein lies the greatness of our late mentor, the noble pioneer of Soka education.

In addition, Makiguchi was among the first in Japan to advocate the harmonious coexistence of nature and humanity, an understanding that was deeply shared by Thoreau.

In any event, it is those who take a valiant stand in an hour of need, battling for justice to the very end, who live on in glory in our hearts. Such people attain immortality through the drama of their lives, the tale of their deeds passed on from generation to generation. This was Thoreau's view of history.

"There is never an instant's truce," Thoreau maintains, "between virtue and vice." This is why he chose to set forth into the harsh realities of society, to teach and demonstrate to us through his own actions the manner in which a person may persevere in the relentless, ever-vigilant practice of self-reformation.

He imparts an equally profound message to us in this observation: "The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable, — of a bad one, to make it less valuable." If we do not engage in the immediate issues of politics and society, then we can never establish a life of genuine value. The philosopher thus appeals to our innermost depths with these words: Accept the challenge! Take action!

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the human rights champion who fearlessly upheld the ideals

of Thoreau from his days as a student, writes the following, "History has thrust upon our generation an indescribably important destiny — to complete a process of democratization which our nation has too long developed too slowly...."

In Japan, as well, the times more than ever call for youth imbued with true sincerity and integrity to maintain a sharp vigil over the country's political course. I urge my dear friends, the Soka alumni, to stand up for the sake of their nation, for the cause of peace. I ask that you exert every fiber of your being to this struggle, whose outcome will be crowned with exhilarating victory!

Tenacity and effort are what ensure victory — a formula for success that applies equally to the individual and organizations. Without these two qualities, every struggle is doomed to fail.

We live in an age that desperately needs genuine leadership.

Thoreau had his gaze set firmly on the future of humanity. I, too, am looking far beyond the time when I shall no longer be here. This is the spirit of a genuine leader.

Thoreau envisions, "In the last stage of civilization Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy will be one." The leaders of tomorrow must be endowed with a poetic mind, inspired by strong faith and empowered by a vast, profound philosophical understanding.

We live in an age in desperate need of genuine leadership. People around the world yearn

for it. I earnestly hope that many such capable leaders will rise from among your ranks.

The true poetic mind alluded to by Thoreau possesses a cheerful optimism that cannot be discouraged, a robust view of life and the world unfettered by trivial matters. [Writes Thoreau: "The poet will maintain serenity in spite of all disappointments. He is expected to preserve an unconcerned and healthy outlook over the world, while he lives."]

We, too, must forge on, undaunted by adversity, our spirits joyful and unbounded as we soar far above the trifling abuse and mockery that so often attempt to hinder our advance. Our stage, after all, is the world. Our task is truly global in scale.

Thoreau's poetic mind is also honed to overcome every challenge — the obstacles that arise to impede one's progress — to the very end. To achieve this, one must possess a passionate fighting spirit and tenacity of purpose.

With the fighting poetic spirit of Thoreau blazing in my heart, I, too, having humbly received the distinction of being named a world poet laureate, vow to write many more poems that sing of the victory of justice for the sake of posterity.

May 6 this year marks the 140th anniversary of Thoreau's passing. Two other momentous anniversaries also await us in the near future: the bicentennial of Emerson's birth in 2003 and the 150th anniversary of the publication of Thoreau's seminal work, *Walden*, in 2004. As such, I pray that the esteemed Thoreau Society be blessed

with prosperity for all time, that it continue in this new century to inspire in all of us the exquisite hues of a harmonious life lived creatively.

Be true to your mission in life until the very end.

In closing, I want to dedicate a passage by Walt Whitman, whom Thoreau admired, to you, the Soka alumni, whom I deeply cherish, as you depart this seat of learning once again to embark upon a journey fraught with challenge and adversity to fulfill the purpose of your life.

Whitman urges us not to be trapped by jealousies or divisions. While acknowledging that they bear down on us, he says:

Yet we walk unheld, free, the whole earth over, journeying up and down till we make our ineffaceable mark upon time and the diverse eras.

I urge all of you to make your mark upon the path you have chosen to walk, to always be true to your mission in life until the very end.

Our Soka alumni are a gathering of the lion-hearted. And we must now stand as boldly as the king of lions, rising up together to roar as one! Roar in triumph!

I will always be praying for each of you, my treasured friends, that you may lead a life of health, success and victory. Never lose your vigor and cheer! I am truly grateful that you have come here today from around the world. Thank you very much! **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

RIPPLES FROM THOREAU

‘The ripples from the pebble that Henry David Thoreau tossed into the pond have spread out across the world,’ SGI President Ikeda writes. ‘His immortal voice has set in motion a vast chain of grassroots revolutions.’

The unchangeable laws of the universe...are all on the side of the just and fair.” This was the great conviction of the 19th-century American thinker Henry David Thoreau. A life actively committed to truth and justice is a life in accord with the unchangeable laws of the universe. A person who lives such a life will never succumb to any base harassment or oppression.

The luminescence of such a spirit transcends the trivial concerns of public opinion. It transcends nations and time, giving rise to an unfolding tide of sympathy, understanding and solidarity. This is a principle that is true, regardless of the age or country.

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People the world over are congratulating us on celebrating our momentous milestone, May 3, 2001.

We are also honored that members of the Thoreau Society, including President Ronald Bosco and Secretary Joel Myerson, have come to Japan from the United States to offer us their congratulations on this joyous day.

Dr. Bosco is a professor at the University at Albany, State University of New York, and Dr. Myerson is a professor at the University of South Carolina. Both gentlemen are world-renowned scholars of Thoreau and of his mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson. They have noted a deep resonance between the SGI’s movement of human revolution, or inner transformation, and Thoreau’s philosophy of personal reformation.

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Thoreau was born in July 1817, in the town of Concord,



Bettmann/CORBIS

Mass. This region was the birthplace of the American Renaissance, a vibrant literary and intellectual movement led by the great poet and writer Emerson. Five decades had passed since the American Revolution, and the times were calling for change: to break through the wall of suffocating religious authority, to cut the binding chains of avarice and materialism, to give people back their pride.

It was against this backdrop that the young Thoreau found the warm friendship of Emerson and, under the latter’s influence, went on to give resounding voice to his dream of a spiritual revolution.

If the role of the mentor is to lay out the principles, then the role of the disciple is to develop them in actual practice.

On July 4, 1845, the 27-year-old Thoreau commemorated his personal independence by beginning his solitary life in a log cabin he had built beside Walden Pond, outside of Concord. He devoted more than two years of his youth to putting into practice his mentor Emerson’s philosophy of self-reliance and self-cultivation.

He spent his days living with nature, reading, thinking, and interacting with his neighbors.

The record of this experiment and his spiritual deepening in *Walden*, a classic that remains widely read around the world.

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A year after Thoreau began

his life by Walden Pond, in July 1846, a major event in his life took place: He was jailed.

Thoreau was vehemently opposed to the United States’ war against Mexico, not least because he viewed it as an effort to expand slavery. Refusing to contribute to his nation’s unjust actions, he declined to pay the poll tax that was levied on all adult males at the time and was jailed as a result.

This experience gave birth to an essay that would change the world: Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience.”

Thoreau believed that any individual “more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one.” In other words, a true majority is not determined by sheer numbers. The rightness of one’s position is the decisive factor.

One person is enough. When a person dedicates his life to truth and justice, he has taken the first step toward what Thoreau described as a “peaceable revolution.”

He calls for us to become people of integrity and genuine backbone. True change begins from a single brave individual willing to fight against evil. Thoreau declared, “Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison.”

In another July, almost a century after Thoreau made this pronouncement, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, were imprisoned for resisting the repression of religious freedom by the Japanese military authorities. And years later, I, the third Soka Gakkai president, was imprisoned on malicious, false charges and had to fight in court for years to prove my innocence.

Persecution and imprisonment for upholding truth and justice: This is the eternal pride of the Soka Gakkai.

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Thoreau’s thought had a profound influence on the renowned Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, the towering hero of Indian independence, kept Thoreau’s writings by his side as he led his nonviolent struggle. Many of the valiant fighters of the anti-Nazi resistance movements in Europe during World War II, as well as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., leader of the U.S. civil rights movement, were inspired by Thoreau’s works.

Thoreau’s views of nature and life, and his resolute refusal to compromise with injustice, have also been an immeasurable source of sustenance and inspiration for the environmental movement that flourished from the mid-20th century on, led by the efforts of individuals such as the noted marine

PLEASE ESSAY, 11

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SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 11-12

Shin'ichi Yamamoto offers three practical guidelines to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the young men's division's formation: 1) 'establishing a strong foundation of faith, practice, and study'; 2) 'having lofty ideals while being grounded in reality'; and 3) 'forging unity among members.'

The dialogue between Shin'ichi Yamamoto and the Suiko-kai members was a true life-to-life exchange. At the end of the session, Shin'ichi added: "Those of you who haven't received a message in calligraphy from me, please leave your names with the young men's division leader. I want to present this to each of you as encouragement to commemorate the fresh start we are making here together. I am depending on you. Let's work in unity to spread the Daishonin's teachings around the world!"

Night fell on Amagi as Shin'ichi continued giving inspiration to the Suiko-kai members.

The young women's division Kayo-kai training session was held on July 7, the following day. Once again, Shin'ichi answered the members' questions, pouring all of his energy into encouraging them. He sensed that an age in which women would come to play a central role was near at hand, and that

the very future of kosen-rufu hinged upon how many capable and wise women leaders the Soka Gakkai could nurture in the meantime. These training sessions for the Suiko-kai and the Kayo-kai were perfect opportunities to further strengthen the faith of the young men's and young women's division members, his youthful successors.

Shin'ichi's mind was constantly occupied with the thought of how to educate and cultivate young people. Many leaders in society begin to raise successors only after having achieved success and recognition themselves. In the endeavor to create lasting peace through broadly spreading the Daishonin's teachings, however, that would be too late. That is because it is a task requiring countless capable individuals whose stage of activities is varied and widespread. Aware of the possibility that he might die young, Shin'ichi felt an urgent need to foster a great many successors who could

carry on with his vision and resolve, boldly assuming leadership in his stead.

He began to draw up new guidelines to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the young men's division on July 11, in preparation for the beginning of the "essential phase" of the Soka Gakkai's development. It was titled "Youth, Become World Leaders!"

Shin'ichi's pen raced: "The Soka Gakkai youth division will be the leaders of the new century. Mr. Toda's essay 'Youth, Be Patriotic!' was a call to the youth to become leaders of not only Japan, but of the world. Mr. Toda clearly outlined his guidelines for the youth division in his two essays 'Precepts for Youth' and 'Youth, Be Patriotic!' These should therefore be the principles of action practiced by the youth division.

"The youth division of the new age must possess an even greater international outlook and be active on all fronts. They must develop into talented, first-rate leaders in their chosen fields of endeavor."

In his guidelines, Shin'ichi also established for the youth division the goals of contributing to the welfare of all humanity and achieving world peace.

Shin'ichi went on to identify the source of the impasse facing humankind as a lack of vision on the part of world leaders. New leaders with new guiding principles were needed, he insisted. "Now is the time," he wrote, "for us to

embrace as youthful reformers the highest ideals of leadership and show the way to realizing world peace."

He then offered the youth three practical guidelines: first, "establish a strong foundation of faith, practice, and study of the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, the original Buddha"; second, "have lofty ideals while being grounded in reality, always advancing steadily, one step at a time"; and third, "forge unity among members."

Expressing great hopes for his youthful successors, Shin'ichi elaborated on the second point: "Those who aspire to become world leaders should first consistently be winners at their places of work and in other areas of daily life. We build the foundation of our lives during our youth. That foundation must be deep and solid. I hope that you all become dignified, generous and courteous young people."

Concerning the third point, he emphasized that they "should never forget that unity among our youth division members constitutes an eternal bond and a lifeline in the movement to lead people to happiness."

Shin'ichi's pen continued to move swiftly across the page: "The growth of the youth division is the progress of the Soka Gakkai. The progress of the Soka Gakkai is the progress of Japan. And we should be confident that our development is directly related to the creation of lasting peace."

Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA



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

New England Members Plant Cherry Trees

By FLETCHER DALTON
BOSTON BUREAU CHIEF

New England Region members and Waltham, Mass., Mayor David F. Gately joined in a tree-planting ceremony at the SGI-USA New England Culture Center on May 6.

Three cherry trees were planted in honor of the first three Soka Gakkai presidents, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda. The first was planted by the mayor and New England Region Leaders, the second by youth and the third by representatives of the Soka Spirit Committee. Boy and Girls Group members gen-

erously doused the roots from an apparently bottomless watering can.

Bringing with him a proclamation from the City Council designating May 3 as President's Day in the City of Waltham, the mayor called SGI-USA a "good neighbor." The large crowd of onlookers responded with cheers and applause.

This was Mayor Gately's second visit to the Culture Center. Last November, accompanied by his wife, he attended a Victory Over Violence celebration put on by the youth. He declared he was very favorably impressed on that visit. He and the City Council proclaimed the day Victory Over Violence Day in Waltham. **WT**



Photo by DEBBIE FOTOFF

New England Region Boys and Girls Group members water a cherry tree planted near the New England Culture Center in celebration of May 3.

FROM SPEECH, 5

cause I write this down now, the people of the future will recognize my wisdom.

"[*The Annotations on the Nirvana Sutra* states,] 'One's body is insignificant while the Law is supreme. One should give one's life in order to propagate the Law.' Because my body is insignificant, I am struck and hated, but because the Law is supreme, it will spread without fail...."

"The benefits that come from opening the eyes of even one blind person are beyond description. How then is it possible to describe the benefits that derive from opening the blind eyes of all the Japanese people, and from giving the gift of sight to all human beings throughout Jambudvīpa and the other three continents? In the fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra it reads, 'If after the Buddha has passed into extinction one can understand the meaning of this sutra, one will be the eyes of the world for heavenly and human beings.' Those who uphold the Lotus Sutra will be the eyes for all the heavenly and human beings in the world. Therefore, those Japanese who are hostile to me are in effect gouging out the eyes of all the heavenly and human beings in

the world" (WND, 615).

The SGI members who are carrying on the Daishonin's legacy are the "eyes" of the people of Japan and the world in the 21st century. Hope for the new century rests with the victory of the SGI. Resolutely defeating all unjust slander, let us cause the great light of justice of the SGI to shine in our communities and throughout the world.

When we exert ourselves for kosen-rufu, we naturally become healthy.

April 20 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. In 1956, on the newspaper's 5th anniversary, President Toda said: "We have the good fortune to have been born as human beings at the time of kosen-rufu and to devote ourselves to the Law, which is extremely difficult to encounter.

"How encouraging it is to think that the bodhisattvas Superior Practices and Boundless Practices, as well as Pure Practices and Firmly Established Practices are sure to appear to valiantly assist with the great work of kosen-rufu. The *Seikyo Shimbun* is working to accomplish this mission with these bodhisattvas as its standard-bearers. In truth, we can call it a most honorable newspaper.

My hope is to enable all people in Japan to read this newspaper as soon as possible."

The *Seikyo Shimbun* has the determination and mission to accomplish kosen-rufu. It is brimming with hope and encouragement. It has a universe of poetic spirit, a flower garden of experience and offers a window on new philosophical horizons. It gives voice to the clarion cry of justice to resolutely battle the evil that tramples on humanity.

Through the printed page, it is facilitating dialogue with intellectuals around the world. It is creating a global solidarity of peace with friends the world over. This venerable paper now marks its 50th anniversary.

I offer my sincere gratitude to all those who have promoted the *Seikyo Shimbun* throughout the country, and to those uncrowned heroes who deliver it daily.

And I want to present all of you, who are leaders among leaders, with some words of wisdom.

The father of modern China, Sun Yat-sen, observes, "Out of faith power is born." It is not about other people. Everything depends on whether you yourself burn with dauntless faith.

The Athenian philosopher Isocrates says, "Base men wrong alike those who help

and those who harm them." This is why we absolutely cannot ignore evil.

The legendary Chinese minister and strategist Chuko Kung-ming says: "When you seize the force of the moment to attack evil, you can manifest power surpassing even that of the sagely Huang Ti. When you gather together the strength of allies and victoriously advance, you can realize success surpassing even that of King Tang of the Yin dynasty, or King Wu of the Chou dynasty, who were known as great rulers. When you face your opponent, aware of your source of strength and utilizing it fully, you can defeat even a brave general who leads a force of ten thousand or a renowned hero."

The important thing is the time. It is a rising tide of enthusiasm. It is to pool our strength.

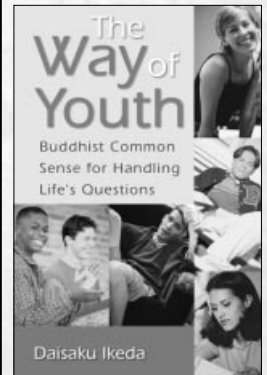
When we exert ourselves for kosen-rufu, we become healthy. Joy wells forth. We lead lives of increasing value.

Each of you should become a Chuko Kung-ming of kosen-rufu, a great leader who dauntlessly leads others toward certain victory. Be always youthful! Be vigorous! Be full of life force! That is my heartfelt wish.

Please convey my warmest regards to all the members in your area. **WT**

The Way of Youth

Buddhist Common Sense for Handling Life's Questions
Daisaku Ikeda



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

"An outstanding guide to humanity. I recommend it to all who desire to seek self-improvement."

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



APPLYING BUDDHISM TO DAILY LIFE

Middleway Press books are available at your favorite neighborhood or on-line bookseller. (Not available at SGI-USA bookstores.)

Annual Memorial Service Held

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Members pay their respects to the deceased at a memorial service held May 20 at the Oasis of Eternity, SGI-USA's cemetery. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima also attended the ceremony, offering prayers for all the deceased loved ones of SGI-USA members and expressing his determination to continue striving for American kosen-rufu. Located in beautiful Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, Calif., the cemetery offers burial lots to SGI-USA members and their families. For more information on the Oasis of Eternity, please contact Tony Sugano at (310) 393-0016 or by e-mail at tsugano@sgi-usa.org.

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FROM ESSAY, 8

biologist Rachel Carson. The ripples from the pebble that Thoreau tossed into the pond have spread out across the world. His immortal voice has set in motion a vast chain of grassroots revolutions.



An English translation of "The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs" chapter of the Lotus Sutra was published in the January 1844 edition of *The Dial*, a journal edited by Emerson and Thoreau. This translation, thought to be the first publication of the sutra in English, was based on a French translation, and some believe that Thoreau was the translator.

"The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs" chapter of the Lotus Sutra sings the praises of all-embracing compassion and life's infinite diversity.

According to Emerson, Thoreau regarded the natural environment as a single living entity, with the birds and beasts, fish and insects "all known to him, and, as it were, townsmen

and fellow creatures." Thoreau believed that all living things were intertwined and in harmony with one another. He had a solid intuition of the law of life that governed all phenomena. That is why even amid the harsh realities of society, rife with all its contradiction, he strove to live in accord with a higher law, to be as the pure lotus blossom that blooms in the mud.

That is also why he possessed the self-confidence to stand up unflinchingly to the authority of the state when the need arose. Thoreau viewed the process of history as it evolved toward democracy as "a progress toward a true respect for the individual."

How great and noble is the life of a single individual! The Lotus Sutra, in which both Emerson and Thoreau had a deep interest, is a magnificent tribute to that truth.



On the morning of May 6, 1862, Thoreau died of tuberculosis at the young age of 44.

He was a true educator in the broadest sense, always

ready to engage young people in openhearted dialogue. Thoreau hoped for the emergence of an academy that, while rooted in the local community, would invite great thinkers from around the world and nurture talented young people who possessed broad learning and understanding.

The new Soka University of America campus in Aliso Viejo, Calif., was officially dedicated on May 3. The university has four noble principles:

- 1) Foster leaders of culture in the community.
- 2) Foster leaders of humanism in society.
- 3) Foster leaders of pacifism in the world.
- 4) Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity.

I am confident that SUA will produce many Emersons and Thoreaus of the 21st century and extend a vast network of global citizenship, of creativity and friendship, all over the world.

Our aim is to continue our spirited pursuit of the universal path of humanistic education,

just as Thoreau did, bathed in the refreshing morning light.



Thoreau stated: "It is not an era of repose.... If we would save our lives, we must fight for them."

For us, the SGI members, May 3 is the day when we eternally embark afresh on our struggle for truth and justice, always in rhythm with the timeless Law of the universe.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the May 4 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

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



SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE AFRICAN ARTS AND CULTURE FESTIVAL

Africa: Continent of Hope

'Africa is the birthplace of humanity; it is a great source of energy for art and culture,' writes SGI President Ikeda. 'Let us celebrate the magnificent mission of those who have their roots in Africa.'

My heartfelt congratulations on your historic Southern California Zone African Arts and Culture Festival! Africa is the birthplace of humanity; it is a great source of energy for art and culture. Let us celebrate the magnificent mission of those who have their roots in Africa — the Continent of Hope!

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "If a person cannot manage to cross a moat ten feet wide, how can he cross one that is a hundred or two hundred feet?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 766). The true path of Buddhism must be traveled one step

at a time. You are tenaciously challenging what lies before you. Out of such noble efforts will unfold the future spread of Buddhism. No matter what may happen, please continue to climb mountains and cross valleys toward your victory. Challenging yourself repeatedly in your immediate circumstances will eventually lead to the great, victorious blossoming of your life.

I ask that each of you — through chanting *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* with a firm, brilliant resolve — live in the present moment, a way of life that can only be described as "the greatest of all joys" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 788). Please become exemplary citizens and further expand the network of understanding and appreciation for Buddhism in your community and throughout society.

I am praying for the longevity, happiness and prosperity of you and your families, whom I deeply cherish.

May 20, 2001
Daisaku Ikeda

Photos by DON HODGSON and GREGORY NAKASUJI

