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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 21 SPEECH—PART 2

True Religion Means Commitment for Peace

'A religion that does not help people, that is not devoted to peace, is not a proper religion,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'At its essence, religion is commitment—commitment to saving people from suffering. True religion strives to instill that commitment in people's lives.'

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 6th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, Tokyo, May 21.

The German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte says, "It is education alone that can save us from all of the ills that oppress us." These are words of eternal wisdom.

The first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, were both educators. I also decided to make education my final undertaking, and I have poured all my energy into that goal.

It is through education that we become truly human. Reli-

gion by itself has a tendency to lapse into self-righteousness. Looking back through history, there have been religions that have closed people's minds and caused meaningless conflict. In some religions, arrogant clerics have regarded believers as little more than slaves and used them as a means of lining their own pockets. This is terribly wrong.

A religion that does not help people, that is not devoted to peace, is not a proper religion. At its essence, reli-

gion is commitment—commitment to saving people from suffering. True religion strives to instill that commitment in people's lives.

Education, meanwhile, fosters people through widely accessible and universal knowledge. Without both religion and education, the correct path for humanity cannot be completed.

Fichte also declares, "As the next generation that proceeds from you turns out to be, so will your reputation be in history." Ultimately, individuals, organizations and nations are evaluated in history based on the quality and quantity of capable people they find and foster.

We must raise leaders who will contribute to the welfare of the people, society and the human race as a whole. This creates widening ripples toward world peace. This is precisely what the SGI is doing. I hope

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 6

SGI-USA QUARTERLY FOCUS—PUBLICATIONS PROMOTION

THE 'WORLD TRIBUNE': LIFELINE OF SGI-USA

By MATILDA BUCK
SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER

Thank you so much for your efforts in our recent annual contribution activity! Because of your dedication, it was a great success.

As you know, in the months of June, July and August, our organization shifts its focus to the promotion of our publica-

tions, the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* magazine. I want to share some thoughts on what each of us can do to make this activity a success and further solidify the *World Tribune* as the lifeline of the SGI-USA.

SGI President Ikeda has said: "Reading is a privilege only human beings have. Through reading, we come into contact with hundreds and thousands of

lives and commune with sages and philosophers from as long as two millennia ago" (*Faith into Action*, p. 61). For me, the *World Tribune* is a critical source of such nourishment.

The word *promotion* means to put into motion, take action. When each of us who spreads this philosophy in America is

PLEASE SEE PUBLICATIONS, 10

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck (center) with fellow members at the dedication of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, May 3.

THE FOUR KALPAS

Back to the Basics

By JOHN KASAHARA
NORTHEASTERN ZONE
STUDENT DIVISION LEADER



It is natural to wonder about the value of learning Buddhist concepts such as the four kalpas — formation, continuance, decline and disintegration. Certainly such knowledge alone does not guarantee us a happy life. So why struggle to understand a seemingly obscure term like this?

The point is that by understanding how time, the world in which we live and our lives in general evolve, we can take each moment of life more seriously and further grasp the concept of cause and effect — thereby taking control of and shaping our

destiny. Understanding the four kalpas can actually empower us to live better lives.

The four kalpas are the four periods of time that a world is said to repeatedly undergo. But to understand this, first we must understand what a kalpa is. There are said to be three kinds of measurable kalpas: small, medium and large. One explanation sets the length of a small kalpa at approximately 16 mil-

lion years. According to Buddhist cosmology, each of the four stages lasts for 20 small kalpas, which equals one medium kalpa. Finally, one complete cycle forms a large kalpa. Thus, when we talk about the four kalpas, we are talking about huge pieces of time.

The world first takes shape and is occupied by living beings in the kalpa of formation. Living beings continue to inhabit the world in the kalpa of continuance. In the kalpa of decline, the first 19 small kalpas see sentient beings gradually disappear. In its 20th small kalpa, fire, water or wind destroys the world. Finally, the kalpa of disintegration lasts from the annihilation of a world at the end of the last kalpa of decline to the formation of a new world. The cycle then begins again.

On the individual level, these four kalpas can be thought of as corresponding to our four suf-

ferings of birth, aging, sickness and death. Every human life goes through a four-stage process of formation (birth), continuance (aging), decline (sickness) and disintegration (death). And the cycle then begins again. That is what is most interesting to me about the four kalpas — they are an eternal cycle. It is not as if the world and all living beings come to an irrevocable end at some final kalpa that happens millions of years from now. It is an ongoing cycle, just as our own lives are. We are born into this world, experience all there is to experience, at some point die and are then reborn.

The real message of the four kalpas, then, is one of hope: Life continues forever. The universal life has no end. And our lives, which are encompassed by and permeate the universe, are endless, too. As Nichiren Daishonin says in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings”: “To hate life and death and try to separate oneself from them is delusion or partial enlightenment. To perceive life and death

as essential is enlightenment or total realization. Now, when Nichiren and his disciples chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, they know that life and death are intrinsic workings of the fundamental essence. Being and non-being, birth and death, appearance and disappearance, worldly existence and future extinction — all are essential and everlasting processes” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 754).

By chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, we develop a deep understanding of these “essential and everlasting processes,” allowing us to live with great confidence. We can go through whatever we have to face without fear, at the same time making the most of each moment. We know that our lives start the entire cycle over again after the period of death. We will continue our eternal journey of faith, proving the greatness of the Mystic Law in lifetime after lifetime, as we continue to accumulate inexhaustible good fortune. The four kalpas are about the adventure of our life itself. **W**

The Sun of the Great Pure Law Rises

WORDS To WIN By

By RONNIE SMITH
MID-ATLANTIC ZONE LEADER



From the “The Selection of the Time,” *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 538–94.

In all the seven hundred and more years from the time of Emperor Kimei to the present emperor [Go’uda], such a thing has never been seen or heard of, namely, a wise man who urges others to chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and who chants it himself. When the sun rises, the stars go into hiding. When a worthy king appears, foolish kings perish. When the true sutra is spread widely, the provisional sutras will cease to circulate, and when a man of wisdom chants Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, those ignorant of it will follow after him as shadows follow a form and echoes follow a sound.

There can be no room for doubt that I, Nichiren, am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Japan. Indeed,

from this we may assume that, even in China and India and throughout Jambudvīpa, there is no one who can stand side by side with me. (WND, 575)

Nichiren Daishonin explains here that in the entire time Buddhism had existed — in India, China and Japan — no one had ever before revealed the great vehicle for the attainment of Buddhahood, the chanting of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon. By saying, “When the sun rises, the stars go into hiding,” he expresses his conviction that the time had arrived when the light of the ultimate truth of Buddhism to which he had awakened would eclipse all other partial interpretations and teachings.

By night, the light of the stars is to be valued, for it helps us to see our way. Similarly, previous Buddhist teachings held value in the Former and Middle Days of the Law. Now that we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, however, the Daishonin is saying that this is the time when the sun of the Great Pure Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo rises, and the light of the stars can no longer be seen. The Daishonin expresses his supreme conviction that now is the time for propagation of the Mystic Law throughout the entire world to take place.

“Foolish kings” are those who persist in clinging to fragmentary, partial truths beyond the time when they cease being appropriate, and a “worthy king” is someone awakened to the true teaching that befits the time and the people. A “man of wisdom” indicates the Daishonin, who established and propagated Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, enabling all people to attain enlightenment.

We, too, would be “foolish” if we were to cling to incomplete teachings after finding the correct practice. Wise are those who can sever such attachments to the past and fully embrace the single great vehicle of the Mystic Law.

Since Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the essence of the Lotus Sutra, is the true teaching that leads directly to enlightenment, then the Daishonin, the votary of the Lotus Sutra who revealed this Law directly, with no intermediary, must be the original Buddha. The Daishonin’s assertion that throughout the entire world “there is no one who can stand side by side with me” stemmed not from personal pride or arrogance but from his absolute conviction that the

teaching he expounded was the supreme vehicle for the times and the people.

“If you are of the same mind as Nichiren,” the Daishonin says, “you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth” (WND, 385). Anyone who practices with the same intent as the Daishonin, sharing his great desire to propagate this Law in exact accord with his teachings is certainly none other than a Bodhisattva of the Earth. What great fortune we possess! **W**

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 — MARC GOLDENBERG, WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.

KEEPING A PROMISE

Through 25 years of practice, Marc Goldenberg has learned the importance of prayer and commitment.

When I was growing up, every Friday evening at my grandparents' house the entire family shared Sabbath. My grandfather read the *Siddur* (Jewish prayer book) assiduously in the morning and evening, attended *Shul* (synagogue) twice a day, and gave me a deep appreciation for sincere religious practice.

The discussion at dinner usually centered on news about the family or remembrances about who survived World War II and who made it to Israel. Some of my grandmother's family and friends were forced by the Nazis to walk into a river, where they were shot. I grew up feeling that the so-called "chosen people" had suffered a great deal.

In October 1973, a girlfriend introduced me to the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. At my first discussion meeting, I felt extremely negative, wondering if I was praying to idols. I was so angry afterward, I couldn't talk to my friend for three weeks. Then, once I got hold of myself, I agreed to try chanting on my own to prove my friend wrong. I decided I would read the sutra book and chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo as an experiment for a month, and then stop for a month to see how I felt.

When I went to synagogue, I noticed what seemed a constant discussion of illness among the attendees, but none at Buddhist meetings, so I assumed that Buddhists must have a higher life-condition, although I couldn't articulate this at the time. This was a large part of the reason, at the age of 18, I decided to receive the Gohonzon. I remember feeling as if bricks had been removed from my shoulders, and that I no longer had a ball and chain tied around my foot pulling me toward a certain destiny. I began practicing with an SGI-USA district in North Kingston, R.I.

I also became very curious about Japanese culture. So much so that the following spring, I became an exchange



(Top, l-r) Marc and Charles Goldenberg; (bottom, l-r) Brian, Hisae and Sandra Goldenberg.

student so I could study in Japan. Once there, I met many other Soka Gakkai members and began practicing with the organization. This is also where I met my future wife, Hisae.

When I returned to the United States in 1976, I did not know what direction to take with my life. My parents had finally divorced after years of bickering. At school, I had been a pharmacy major, but ended up graduating from the University of Rhode Island in 1978 with a degree in political science. Once out of school, I got a job in New York with Mitsubishi International Corporation handling logistics in the ferrous raw materials department, but was let go just before Hisae and I got married in May 1980.

I participated in many SGI activities, including SGI President Ikeda's visit to New York in 1981, however, I was struggling to find steady work. I drove a truck for a printing company, worked at a number of fast food places and pumped

gas. I hustled, doing anything to make money. Quite honestly, I felt lost. I remember my eyes began to tear up every night on the graveyard shift at the gas station, as I thought about sharing my struggle with my leaders. But I would always decide not to.

In 1981, we had a new baby, Charles, and because of financial pressures, things began to go from bad to worse. I was practicing Buddhism, but more out of habit than commitment. I began receiving unemployment insurance and food stamps, and my wife and I discussed whether we could afford to go to McDonald's for hamburgers. At one point, out of anger and frustration, I even struck Hisae in the face. I was suffering, and so was my family.

After nine months of living with my mind closed, I finally decided to call one of my leaders for advice and encouragement. But before I could, he called me. I remember his words very clearly: "You have to pray."

I will never forget crying to him on the phone, asking, "What is prayer?" Looking back, it was as though, after seven years of practice, I didn't understand the simple profundity of honest prayer to the Gohonzon.

The Daishonin wrote: "You must pray to the heavenly gods with all your heart. Be ever diligent in your faith so that your desires will be fulfilled" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 452). Using this passage as a touchstone, I began to see how serious my prayers had to be. I began to chant differently, with more of a purpose, and I began to devote more energy to my activities in the organization. Once I did this, things began to change.

I eventually landed a position with the Civil Service of Westchester County as a buyer and was promoted just eight months later to senior buyer, which is the position I hold today. I purchase electronic and telecommunications equipment, lab and medical equipment, bulk chemicals and clothing for the county. This job has not only allowed me to establish stability for my family, it has given me a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. I have been with the county for more than 15 years.

The second important change had to do with my father. For quite some time, my relationship with my father had been strained. I have clear memories of growing up, when my father would come home, listen to music, yell at my mother and then go to sleep. There were times when he would literally push me up against a wall and grill me about my homework. Oftentimes he and my mother would fight, and I got involved in extracurricular activities at school just to stay away from the house.

But after I began chanting determined daimoku with a clear purpose, our relationship began to change. I realized he had always shown concern for my education and been open-minded toward new things. He supported me when I went to study in Japan and came to Japan when my wife and I were married. And now, he has even visited the SGI-USA's Florida Nature and Culture Center. I have really grown to appreciate him.

For the last five years, we have spoken nearly every day, and today I am responsible for my father's retirement investment funds. By supporting him, I have discovered that I enjoy and have a talent for working with investments. I now plan on

taking Securities and Exchange Commission exams for investment counseling. Although my career with Westchester County continues to improve, I am considering starting my own investment company.

Looking back at my practice of Buddhism, I can see I have really changed. I have developed the wisdom to take care of my family, my career and my responsibilities within the SGI. I have the courage to realize my dreams.

My wife and I have been married now for 21 years and have raised three wonderful children who never cease to amaze us with their resilience and strength. Our oldest son, Charles, is now attending Brown University on a scholarship, and our other children, Sandra and Brian, are both doing well and practicing with the SGI organization.

Twenty-five years ago, I made a promise to myself that I would make the most of this Buddhist practice. I am now beginning to see the great value of that pledge.

I know that my growth, and my family's growth, would not have been possible without the support of our family and our friends in the SGI. With that in mind, I will continue to do whatever I can to create a harmonious family and a strong SGI-USA organization. **WT**

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FROM 'MY DEAR FRIENDS IN AMERICA'

Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship

'Buddhism calls a person who embodies the qualities of wisdom, courage and compassion, who strives without cease for the happiness of others, a bodhisattva,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'In this sense, it could be said that the bodhisattva provides an ancient precedent and modern exemplar of the global citizen.'

From SGI President Ikeda's lecture at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, June 13, 1996.

It is with profound emotion that I speak today at the college where the world-renowned philosopher John Dewey taught. The first president of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, whose thinking is the founding spirit of Soka University, referenced with great respect the writings and ideas of Dewey in his 1930 work, *The System of Value-creating Pedagogy*.

My own interest in and commitment to education stem from my experiences during World War II. My four elder brothers were drafted and sent to the front; the eldest was killed in action in Burma. During the two or so years following the end of the war, my three surviving brothers returned one after another from the Chinese mainland. In their tattered uniforms, they were a truly pathetic sight. My parents were already aged; my father's pain and my mother's sadness were searing.

To the end of my days, I will never forget the disgust and anger with which my eldest brother, on leave from China, described the inhuman atrocities he had seen committed there by the Japanese army. I developed a deep hatred for war, its cruelty, stupidity and waste. In 1947, I encountered a superb educator, Josei Toda. Toda, together with his mentor, Makiguchi, was jailed for opposing Japan's wars of invasion. Makiguchi died in jail. Toda survived the two-year ordeal of imprisonment.

When, at 19, I learned of this, I instinctively knew that here was someone whose actions merited my trust. I determined to follow Toda as my mentor in life.

It was Toda's constant and impassioned plea that humanity could be liberated from the horrific cycles of war only by fostering new generations of

people imbued with a profound respect for the sanctity of life. He therefore gave the highest possible priority to the work of education.

Education is a uniquely human privilege. It is the source of inspiration that enables us to become fully and truly human, to fulfill a constructive mission in life with composure and confidence.

The destination in the development of knowledge isolated from human concerns is the weaponry of mass destruction. At the same time, it is also knowledge that has made society comfortable and convenient, bringing industry and wealth. The fundamental task of education must be to ensure that knowledge serves to further the cause of human happiness and peace.

Education must be the propelling force for an eternally unfolding humanitarian quest. It is for this reason that I consider education the final and most crucially important undertaking of my life. This is also the reason I deeply concur with the view expressed by Teachers College president Arthur Levine that while education is perhaps the slowest means to social change, it is the only means.

Global society today faces a myriad of interlocking crises. These include the issues of war, environmental degradation, the North-South development gap and divisions among people based on differences of ethnicity, religion or language. The list is long and familiar, and the road to solutions may seem all too distant and daunting.

It is my view, however, that the root of all of these problems is our collective failure to make the human being—human happiness—the consistent focus and goal in all fields of endeavor. The human being is the point to which we must re-



Prospective students and their families tour Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, on May 5. The freshman class entering this summer hails from 16 countries and territories.

turn and from which we must depart anew. What is required is a human transformation—a human revolution.

There are many areas of commonality in the thinking of Makiguchi and Dewey, and this is one of them. They shared an immovable conviction in the need for new modes of people-centered education. As Dewey put it, "Everything which is distinctly human is learned."

Dewey and Makiguchi were contemporaries. On opposite ends of the Earth, amidst the problems and dislocations of their newly industrializing societies, both wrestled with the task of laying a path toward a hope-filled future.

Greatly influenced by the views of Dewey, Makiguchi asserted that the purpose of education must be the lifelong happiness of learners. He further believed that true happiness is to be found in a life of value-creation. Put simply, value-creation is the capacity to find meaning, to enhance one's own existence and contribute to the well-being of others, under any circumstances. Makiguchi's philosophy of value-creation grew from the insights on the inner workings of life his study of Buddhism afforded him.

Both Dewey and Makiguchi looked beyond the limits of the nation-state to new horizons of human community. Both, it could be said, had a vision of global citizenship, of people capable of value-creation on a global scale.

What then, are the conditions for global citizenship? Over the past several decades, I have been privileged to meet and converse with many people from all walks of life, and I have given the matter some thought. Certainly, global citizenship is not determined merely by the number of languages one speaks or the number of countries to which one has traveled. I have many friends who could be considered quite ordinary citizens but who possess an inner nobility; who have never traveled beyond their native place, yet who are genuinely concerned for the peace and prosperity of the world.

I think I can state with confidence that the following are essential elements of global citizenship:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
- The courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect

and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them.

- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.

The all-encompassing interrelatedness that forms the core of the Buddhist worldview can provide a basis, I feel, for the concrete realization of these qualities of wisdom, courage and compassion. The following scene from the Buddhist canon provides a beautiful visual metaphor for the interdependence and interpenetration of all phenomena.

Suspended above the palace of Indra, the Buddhist god who symbolizes the natural forces that protect and nurture life, is an enormous net. A brilliant jewel is attached to each of the knots of the net. Each jewel contains and reflects the image of all the other jewels in the net, which sparkles in the magnificence of its totality.

When we learn to recognize what Thoreau refers to as "the infinite extent of our relations," we can trace the strands of mutually supportive life and discover there the glittering jewels

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

of our global neighbors. Buddhism seeks to cultivate wisdom grounded in this kind of empathetic resonance with all forms of life.

In the Buddhist view, wisdom and compassion are intimately linked and mutually reinforcing. Compassion in Buddhism does not involve the forcible suppression of our natural emotions, our likes and dislikes. Rather, it is the realization that even those whom we dislike have qualities that can contribute to our lives and can afford us opportunities to grow in our own humanity. Further, it is the compassionate desire to find ways of contributing to the well-being of others that gives rise to limitless wisdom.

Buddhism teaches that both good and evil are potentialities that exist in all people. Compassion consists in the sustained and courageous effort to seek out the good in all people, whoever they may be, however they may behave. It means striving, through sustained engagement, to cultivate the positive qualities in oneself and in others. Engagement, however, requires courage. There are all too many cases in which compassion, owing to a lack of courage, remains mere sentiment.

Buddhism calls a person who embodies these qualities of wisdom, courage and compassion, who strives without cease for the happiness of others, a bodhisattva. In this sense, it could be said that the bodhisattva provides an ancient precedent and modern exemplar of the global citizen.

The Buddhist canon includes the story of a contemporary of Shakyamuni, a woman by the name of Srimala, who dedicated herself to education, teaching others that the practice of the bodhisattva consists in encouraging, with maternal care, the ultimate potential for good within all people. Her vow is recorded thus: "If I see lonely people, people who have been jailed unjustly and have lost their freedom, people who are suffering from illness, disaster or poverty, I will not abandon them. I will bring them spiritual and material comfort."

In concrete terms, her practice consisted of the following:

- Encouraging others by addressing them with kindness and concern through dialogue (Skt *priyavacana*).
- Giving alms, or providing people with the things they require (Skt *dana*).
- Taking action on behalf of others (Skt *arthacarya*).
- Joining with others and

working together with them (Skt *samanartha*).

Through these efforts she sought to realize her goal of bringing forth the positive aspects of those she encountered.

The practice of the bodhisattva is supported by a profound faith in the inherent goodness of people. Knowledge must be directed to the task of unleashing this creative, positive potential. This purposefulness can be likened to the skill that enables one to make use of the precision instruments of an airplane to reach a destination safely and without incident.

For this reason, the insight to perceive the evil that causes destruction and divisiveness—and that is equally part of human nature—is also necessary. The bodhisattva's practice is an unshrinking confrontation with what Buddhism calls the fundamental darkness of life.

Goodness can be defined as that which moves us in the direction of harmonious coexistence, empathy and solidarity with others. The nature of evil, on the other hand, is to divide: people from people, humanity from the rest of nature. The pathology of divisiveness drives people to an unreasoning attachment to difference and blinds them to human commonalities. This is not limited to individuals but constitutes the deep psychology of collective egoism, which takes its most destructive form in virulent strains of ethnocentrism and nationalism.

The struggle to rise above

such egoism and live in larger and more contributive realms of selfhood constitutes the core of the bodhisattva's practice. Education is, or should be, based on the same altruistic spirit as the bodhisattva.

The proud mission of those who have received an education must be to serve, in seen and unseen ways, the lives of those who have not had this opportunity. At times, education may become a matter of titles and degrees and the status and authority these confer. I am convinced, however, that education should be a vehicle to develop in one's character the noble spirit to embrace and augment the lives of others.

Education should provide in this way the momentum to win over one's own weaknesses, to thrive in the midst of society's sometimes stringent realities, and to generate new victories for the human future.

The work of fostering global citizens, laying the conceptual and ethical foundations of global citizenship, concerns us all. It is a vital project in which we are all participants and for which we all share responsibility. To be meaningful, education for global citizenship should be undertaken as an integral part of daily life in our local communities.

Like Dewey, Makiguchi focused on the local community as the place where global citizens are fostered. In his 1903 work, *The Geography of Human Life*, which is considered a pioneering work in social ecology, Makiguchi stressed

the importance of the community as the site of learning.

Elsewhere Makiguchi wrote: "The community, in short, is the world in miniature. If we encourage children to observe directly the complex relations between people and the land, between nature and society, they will grasp the realities of their homes, their school, the town, village or city, and will be able to understand the wider world."

This is consonant with Dewey's observation that those who have not had the kinds of experience that deepen understanding of neighborhood and neighbors will be unable to maintain regard for people of distant lands.

Our daily lives are filled with opportunities to develop ourselves and those around us. Each of our interactions with others—dialogue, exchange and participation—is an invaluable chance to create value. We learn from people and it is for this reason that the humanity of the teacher represents the core of the educational experience.

Makiguchi argued that humanistic education, education that guides the process of character formation, is a transcendent skill that might best be termed an art. His initial experience as a teacher was in a remote, rural region of Japan, where he taught in the Japanese equivalent of a one-room schoolhouse. The children were poor; the manners they brought from their impoverished homes, rough. Makiguchi, however, was insistent: "They

are all equally students. From the viewpoint of education, what difference could there be between them and other students? Even though they may be covered with dust or dirt, the brilliant light of life shines from their soiled clothes. Why does no one try to see this? The teacher is all that stands between them and the cruel discrimination of society."

The teacher is the most important element of the educational environment. This creed of Makiguchi's is the unchanging spirit of Soka education.

Elsewhere, he writes: "Teachers should come down from the throne where they are ensconced as the object of veneration to become public servants who offer guidance to those who seek to ascend to the throne of learning. They should not be masters who offer themselves as paragons but partners in the discovery of new models."

It is my abiding conviction that it is the teacher dedicated to serving students, and not the inanimate facility, that makes a school.

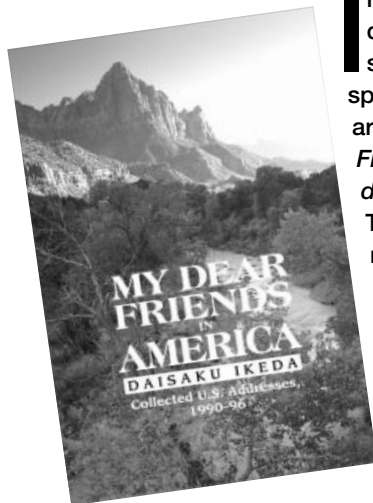
I recently heard an educator offer this view: Students' lives are not changed by lectures but by people. For this reason, interactions between students and teachers are of the greatest importance.

In my own case, most of my education was under the tutelage of my mentor in life, Josei Toda. For some ten years, every day before work, he taught me a curriculum of history, literature, philosophy, economics, science and organization theory. On Sundays, our one-on-one sessions started in the morning and continued all day. He was constantly questioning me—interrogating might be a better word—about my reading.

Most of all, however, I learned from his example. The burning commitment to peace that remained unshaken throughout his imprisonment was something he carried with him his entire life. It was from this, and from the profound compassion that characterized each of his interactions with people, that I most learned. Ninety-eight percent of what I am today, I learned from him.

The Soka, or value-creating, education system was founded out of a desire that future generations should have the opportunity to experience this same kind of humanistic education. It is my greatest hope that the graduates of the Soka schools will become global citizens who can author a new history for humankind. **WT**

'My Dear Friends' Reprint Now Available



In this series, in response to readers' requests, we are reprinting excerpts from some of SGI President Ikeda's 1990s speeches in the United States. All of these are available in the new book *My Dear Friends in America: Collected U.S. Addresses 1990-96*, published by World Tribune Press. As was previously announced, an earlier edition of *My Dear Friends* was pulled from bookstore shelves because of some missing text. If you purchased a copy of *My Dear Friends* with a blue spine and back cover, you can now exchange it for this reprint, which has a green spine and back cover.

FROM SPEECH, I

you will remember that now, as the curtain rises on the Century of Education, it is the mission of the SGI to take the lead in the "humanitarian competition" of fostering capable people.

Fostering capable people is the basis for everything.

The Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, about whom I once wrote a feature article in my youth, says, "The beginning and end of my politics is education." Our elected representatives should take a leaf out of his book and make a special effort to support, defend and devote themselves to the cause of education. Naturally, it falls to the task of government to tackle various social problems, including economic and environmental issues.

But the most important thing is producing people who are aware and educated. When people are aware, educated and uphold higher values, the road to a wise solution of environmental and all other such problems can be found. Fostering capable people is the basis for everything. That is also why I have issued various proposals and articles toward the development of a society that serves the essential needs of education.

Participating in a momentous struggle changes your karma quickly.

At the previous Headquarters Leaders Meeting, I suggested we make our next long-term goal the year 2030—the 100th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding (see the May 25 *World Tribune*). However, I want to clarify that in presenting this goal, I was thinking primarily of the youth! [Laughter.]

Actually, after the last meeting, I was inundated with determinations from members of the Many Treasures Group [those 65 and older] voicing their firm resolve to be with us for that anniversary and to chant even more daimoku to make sure they will live that long! [Laughter.]

Given this situation, I want to suggest that we advance first toward a closer goal, 2005. What do you say? No doubt this will be a big relief to all our Many Treasures Group members! [Laughter.]

The year 2005 marks the Soka Gakkai's 75th anniversary. And the number 75 has a mystic correlation with the five or seven characters of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. [The phrase Myoho-enge-kyo consists of



The 6th Headquarters Leaders Meeting is held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, May 21.

five Chinese characters; Nam-myoho-enge-kyo consists of seven.) That same year, we will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the SGI's founding.

Then, five years after that, we will reach 2010, the Soka Gakkai's 80th anniversary. The Chinese character for *eight* means to open. It will also be the 50th anniversary of my inauguration as third Soka Gakkai president.

These are the immediate milestones I suggest we set our sights on. What do you think?

Let us advance resolutely toward the expansion of kosen-rufu, with each member, community, prefecture and region making May 3, 2005, their grand goal.

The summit of kosen-rufu is high. The Soka Gakkai has at last reached the halfway mark in its ascent of the Mount Everest of kosen-rufu. And I am deeply grateful that I personally have been able to make it this far together with all of you.

Let us live long lives and make our way to the top of this mountain with joy, hope and strong commitment, with the goal of completing the foundations for kosen-rufu. Though some may pass away in the course of our journey, they will attain Buddhahood and quickly be reborn. Since life and death are indivisible, they will continue to work for kosen-rufu as our fellow members in faith forever.

The first challenging slope

of the 21st century—one that will determine the future destiny of Japan—is right before us. Those who climb this slope successfully, who win in this challenge, will be victorious in all struggles in the 21st century.

I am now earnestly trying to create the impetus for that victory within the Soka Gakkai. The next few years will be very important. Let us leave behind a magnificent history!

Also, especially since we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the youth division this summer, I want the youth, with their innate passion and power, to adorn the occasion by winning a wonderful victory for the cause of good.

There is no greater happiness than participating in a momentous struggle. It is also a quick way to change one's karma. Great benefits arise from great challenges. Mr. Toda was always saying: "I wish we could face bigger persecutions!" "Isn't there some bigger struggle we could undertake?" Mr. Makiguchi had the same spirit. And so do I.

The Buddhist Law is wondrous and unfathomable. The greater our efforts for kosen-rufu, the greater the energy and strength that wells forth from within us. Our lives overflow with rich benefit.

Only through such tireless endeavors can we build a solid, lasting foundation that is capable of providing direction not only for

Japan but for all of humanity.

To attain Buddhahood, Nichiren Daishonin says we must fight evil priests.

Napoléon Bonaparte says, "In any career, glory comes only at the end." It is the end that is important. The final years of those who were seduced by worldly fame and fortune to abandon their faith are miserable. On the other hand, there are many heroic ordinary people who end their days wonderfully.

Toshiharu Omachi, a dedicated pioneer Soka Gakkai member who was active in the Komae area of Tokyo, is a fine example. He died at the age of 92 on April 29. Today, his son Fumio Omachi, a vice ward leader, and his daughter-in-law Toshiko, a women's vice headquarters leader, are with us.

I visited Mr. Omachi at his home on Sept. 15, 1979, and spoke with him about many subjects. He had the strong, imposing presence of the 19th-century Japanese hero Saigo Takamori. Originally active as a Liberal Democratic Party-backed representative of the local village and town councils, he worked hard for the development of his local area. He was well known to all in his community.

In 1955, he made the firm decision to join the Soka Gakkai. He was 46 years old.

It caused quite a stir. His entire family was strongly against it. His neighbors and people in

the local community called him a religious fanatic and showered him with insults. Undeterred by the furor, he stood up confidently and declared that he was devoting his life to the Soka Gakkai and kosen-rufu.

It was Mr. Omachi who donated the land for the Tamagawa Peace Center, the area's main Soka Gakkai community center. He also sincerely supported the temple Butsuju-ji, which was built by the Soka Gakkai [on land that he donated adjacent to the center], with the aim of promoting close, harmonious unity between clergy and laity. The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, however—after taking full, eager advantage of the financial offerings that Soka Gakkai members brought them—did an abrupt about-face and betrayed the Soka Gakkai to whom it owed so much.

Mr. Omachi was one of the first to rise up and fight against this, speaking out to refute falsehoods and reveal the truth, as did his eldest son, Fumio, and the rest of his family [who had eventually followed his lead and joined the Soka Gakkai].

As Nichiren Daishonin says, "Both teacher and followers will surely fall into the hell of incessant suffering if they see enemies of the Lotus Sutra but disregard them and fail to reproach them" (*The Writings of Nichiren*)

FNCC Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

By **JAMIE LIPTAN**
STAFF WRITER

On June 19, the SGI-USA's Florida Nature and Culture Center completed its fifth year of operation. SGI President Ikeda officially opened the center, which the Soka Gakkai donated as a gift to SGI-USA members, on June 19, 1996. The 21st SGI General Meeting was held June 23 in the FNCC's Friendship Auditorium, welcoming SGI representatives from 52 countries and territories around the world.

"Together with members around the world, I truly rejoice at the opening of this wonderful Florida Nature and Culture Center," said President Ikeda at the meeting. "Every inch of the center's grounds sparkle with the members' beautiful sincerity" (*My Dear Friends in America*, p. 459).

The FNCC is located on 125 acres of restored wetlands in Broward County, Fla. The Florida-style campus of 15 buildings draws influence from Mediterranean and Latin architectural styles while only occupying one quarter of the site. The remaining acreage is comprised of untouched or restored wetlands and the 20-acre Toda Lake and fountain. Amid the oak trees and sabal palms native to the Florida landscape, discussions on philosophy and everyday life experience take place in a relaxing atmosphere.

In its first five years, the center has welcomed nearly 20,000 people to more than 160 SGI-USA conferences, providing faith encouragement, relaxation and rejuvenation to participants from throughout the world. "There should be time for sleeping and time for chanting," President Ikeda commented at the center's opening.

"People should leave energized and filled with hope."

"The FNCC, in my opinion, is one of the greatest gifts from President Ikeda to SGI members in America," says Rajan Gainey of South Carolina, who has attended two conferences at the center. "Every time I go there, I enjoy myself, learn a great deal and really feel President Ikeda's compassion for all the members. It's a place where everyone can revive their spirit and determinations."

David Kasahara, executive director of the FNCC, is determined to fulfill the center's mission of encouraging conference

participants to continue their journey of faith. "Our staff will continue to strive with the spirit to make this center an oasis of faith," he said, "where each and every person who visits will feel the heart of President Ikeda."

Twenty conferences are scheduled for the remainder of this year, including sessions specifically for youth, language groups, Buddhist study, parents and much more. To find out more about the FNCC and how you can attend a conference, please contact your zone or region office, or visit the SGI-USA's Web site at www.sgi-usa.org. **WT**

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



Conference participants enjoy a conversation near Toda Lake at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



SGI President Ikeda greets members at the opening of the Florida Nature and Culture Center, June 19, 1996.

FROM SPEECH, 6

Daishonin, p. 747). Mr. Toda often quoted this passage and said that we must fight decisively against evil and injustice.

Fifty years ago, in August 1951, a short time after he was inaugurated as second Soka Gakkai president, Mr. Toda sent a letter to a leader who had been active since the early days of the organization. In it, he wrote with

characteristic strictness: "When viewed from the eternity of life, what are the petty difficulties of this world? To attain Buddhahood is to reside in a state of eternal happiness.... Now, in every chapter, our members are working passionately for kosen-rufu. Faith is the basis for everything. We have no need for those who want to be praised by priests!" This was Mr. Toda's guidance. He was always looking far into the future.

In another Goshu, the Daishonin teaches the spirit of fighting against corrupt priests and cites these words of the Nirvana Sutra: "It is because I was a defender of the correct teaching that I have been able to attain this diamond-like body" (WND, 20). This "diamond-like body" is the indestructible state of Buddhahood. That is why the Daishonin tells us to fight against evil priests.

Mr. Omachi fought bravely,

exactly as the Daishonin instructed. He also contributed to his community as a city councilor for the Komeito [now known as New Komeito; the political party in Japan of which Soka Gakkai is the main support body] and was much loved by all. Even after he retired from local politics, he earnestly continued to do everything he could for his juniors, his fellow members and the Soka Gakkai.

This is the mark of greatness.

You can judge a person's true worth by how he or she behaves after retirement.

I have heard that well over a thousand people attended Mr. Omachi's funeral. Leaders in various fields attended the wake or personally visited his family to pay their condolences out of their profound respect for him.

Mr. Omachi had spent his

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 11

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

WORDS OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE

In an essay for the 50th anniversary of the 'Seikyo Shimbun,' SGI President Ikeda emphasizes the importance of our publications, reminding us that 'kosen-rufu is a peaceful revolution carried out through a struggle of words of truth and justice.'

This year, we celebrate the glorious 50th birthday of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. My profoundest gratitude to our many readers.

A half century has passed since the *Seikyo Shimbun* debuted in the struggle for kosen-rufu with a courageous roar, on April 20, 1951, just ahead of Josei Toda's inauguration as second Soka Gakkai president on May 3 the same year.

Now, with the momentous milestone of May 3, 2001—as we ring in a new set of Seven Bells—the *Seikyo Shimbun* stands poised to advance with an even deeper sense of mission.

With a daily circulation of 5.5 million copies, the *Seikyo Shimbun* has become a towering pillar of truth and justice in Japanese society. Nothing could make me happier.

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"The Buddha saves people through the written word," Nichiren Daishonin asserts (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 153). How immense is the mission of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, which has embraced the great compassion of the Buddha as its own spirit and, by means of the written word, is working tirelessly for people's happiness.

The *Seikyo Shimbun* is a source of powerful ammunition in our struggle for kosen-rufu! The *Seikyo Shimbun* is a citadel of truth and justice defending the people! The *Seikyo Shimbun* is a light of hope opening a new age!

My day always starts with the *Seikyo Shimbun*. Praying with my wife for the safety of

those who deliver the newspaper around the country, I look through the freshly delivered paper, still smelling pleasantly of ink.

As I do, I start to think of the next day's front page. What will be the top story, the "face" of the paper? Will the content enrich the spirit and shine with intelligence, appropriate to the Soka Gakkai, which is committed to culture, education and peace?

I am also always keen to see how the latest installment of the popular "Open Forum" series turned out. [In this regular feature of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya leads a discussion on a wide array of subjects related to the Japanese organization and Japanese society at large with other Soka Gakkai leaders.] On occasion, in my capacity as honorary Soka Gakkai president, I offer my honest opinions and advice to the paper's editorial department on various articles.

The paper we put together today determines the enthusiasm and energy of tomorrow's activities. In these peril-ridden times, my thoughts are always on the production of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the voice of truth and justice.

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I often receive requests from the editorial department to write pieces for the paper. In particular, as a poet whose pen is his weapon, I frequently agree to compose lengthy

poems out of a desire to inspire and guide the construction of a new century. It is my wish to leave as many guiding principles, ideas and instructions as I can for coming generations, because I believe they will provide a path to the future. An organization that strays from the correct path disintegrates.

There are many times when the torrent of words I dictate flows too fast for my colleagues, struggling to take them down as I speak. Recently, instead of actually writing with my own hand, I do more dictation and have my words typed out by the modern convenience of the word processor. This is faster and a more productive use of my time.

But whatever form it may take, writing is a struggle. A single word can cast people into the depths of despair. A single word can become the source of hope that illuminates an entire life. That is why I take writing so seriously.

When I come to the end of a dictation session, not only do I feel a wonderful feeling of satisfaction but a deep exhaustion. I get so engrossed sometimes that my wife, Kaneko, worried about my health, has to intervene and ask me to take a rest.

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From April 20, my novel *The New Human Revolution* resumes publication in the *Seikyo Shimbun* after a roughly four-month hiatus. The demands of a serialized novel are

such that you cannot relax for even a single day.

When I have meetings with world leaders and thinkers, I often become a reporter myself and ask them questions about their lives and experiences for the sake of the youth who will inherit the future. In addition, when I hear that there are important meetings taking place somewhere, I am always happy to send members messages or poems if it will please them.

Each and every one of these efforts represents a grand struggle with the limited time I have in this life. I am determined to pour all of my heart and soul into the task of saying everything necessary for the sake of future generations.

My mentor, Mr. Toda, too, took a leading role in writing for the *Seikyo Shimbun*. Under the pen name Myo Goku, he wrote the serialized novel *The Human Revolution*. As an editorial writer, he wrote many of the paper's lead stories. And he also wrote the daily "Epigrams" column, which continues to this day. [It is renowned for its pithy and sometimes scathing social commentary.]

By his example, he urged us to take up the weapon of words and speak without restraint for the sake of truth and justice. This was the *Seikyo* spirit that he demonstrated for us through his life.

And I, his disciple, am faithfully carrying on the relentless struggle that he waged. That is why the Soka Gakkai, champion of truth, has grown and developed so greatly. We have triumphed over every vile obstruction in our path.

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Nichiren Daishonin says that there are two ways in which people can use their voices. One is to deceive others, and the other is to say what one truly believes (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 86). An extreme example of the first might be the cold, cunning demagoguery of the Nazis and other such groups, but there are many other cases in which people or groups purposely stir up evil passions and deceive and manipulate the people, exploiting them for nefarious purposes.

The polar opposite of that are words that express one's true

thoughts and beliefs just as they are. The *Seikyo Shimbun* has given voice to, and recorded forever in writing, the determination not to condone evil or injustice that inflicts suffering on people, along with the sincere desire to encourage and inspire those who are racked by pain and unhappiness.

Kosen-rufu is a peaceful revolution carried out through a struggle of words of truth and justice. Nothing promotes the rampant growth of evil as much as the silence of truth and justice. Lions must roar. They must not lose their teeth!

One false statement, dripping in lies, needs to be met with a volley of 10 or 100 true statements, boldly launched to vanquish evil. Protecting good, honest people is the very lifeline of the *Seikyo Shimbun*.

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In March 1951, at the first planning session for the *Seikyo Shimbun*, Mr. Toda said: "This newspaper will truly launch our kosen-rufu movement. Let us become, in every arena, champions in the verbal battle for truth!" That day I wrote in my diary: "Sincerely resolved to develop it [the *Seikyo Shimbun*] into the greatest newspaper in Japan—no, in the world" (*A Youthful Diary*, p. 99).

Seikyo! May you always be a jeweled sword that refutes the erroneous and reveals the true, cutting through the darkness of injustice and evil! May you be a beacon of hope for people, illuminating life's winning path! May you be a flag-bearer of humanistic philosophy, uniting the people of the world!

Now is the time for us to boldly take up our pens again and let the spirit of *Seikyo* burn forth brightly. There is no better time.

The advance of the *Seikyo Shimbun* is the advance of kosen-rufu and peace.

My dear friends, striding forth courageously together with the *Seikyo Shimbun*, let us make the lion's roar of truth and justice resound powerfully across Japan and the entire world!



The Seikyo Shimbun Building in Tokyo was completed in 1970.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the April 20 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'SECURING THE FOUNDATION'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 43-45

Due to an oversight in the production process, the final installments of the "Securing the Foundation" chapter were not printed in the World Tribune. Please see the April 27 issue for where we left off. The "Jeweled Sword" chapter will resume next week.

The heat of the summer and the Amami members' excitement filled the hall at the men's division group leaders meeting. Beads of sweat trickled down their faces as they listened intently to President Shin'ichi Yamamoto. "Propagation is the lifeblood of religion, and kosen-rufu is the spread of the True Law," he said. "If this Law does not spread, happiness for all people will not be realized. Naturally, the means of propagation differs according to the time and place, but without steady growth, our movement will stagnate.

"Some people believe that because the Soka Gakkai has reached a total membership of 3 million households, it will probably not grow any larger, but that is completely unfounded. We must develop and expand our movement for kosen-rufu throughout our lives. If we consistently act with the determination to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and to dedicate our lives to promoting this great cause, no matter what anyone says, even if we have to do it alone, there will be no limit to the Soka Gakkai's development.

"Our movement has made incredible progress in a very short time in the Amami Islands. That is because all of you have worked hard to tell as many people as you can here about this Buddhism, without fearing any obstacle.

"That is the Soka Gakkai spirit. If we can keep this spirit burning forever, passing it on from member to member, to our children and our grandchildren, we will achieve kosen-rufu without fail. Please remember, too, that 'leader' is another name for those who are responsible for kosen-rufu. It is important that you always ask yourself how much you, as one of the central figures of our organization, have contributed to

this movement.

"Amami is the Hawaii of Japan. I love these islands. Your friends in nearby Okinawa have written a song, 'Heroes of Okinawa,' and are singing it proudly as they advance. Why don't you write a song of your own and call it 'Heroes of Amami'? You can sing it together as you go forward in high spirits and friendship, with 'unity first' as your motto.

"You are the only ones who can realize kosen-rufu of the Amami Islands. I hope that, with my spirit and determination as your own, you will begin to advance anew." Shin'ichi's words moved and inspired the members.

As Shin'ichi climbed into the car after the meeting, a wave of dizziness swept over him. In addition to being unaccustomed to the heat, he was suffering from exhaustion and lack of sleep.

When he arrived back at the community center, some 269 members from Okinoerabujima and Yoronjima were waiting for him in the main hall. Their ferry to Amami Oshima had been delayed, causing them to miss the inaugural meeting for Amami Oshima General Chapter.

Shin'ichi called energetically to the members waiting for him: "Thank you for coming! How nice to see you! How long did it take you to get here?" One of the members from Yoronjima answered cheerfully, "The sea was rough, so it took 38 hours."

"That is a long time!" Shin'ichi responded. "You must be tired. This center belongs to all of you, so please relax and make yourselves at home."

Shin'ichi then encouraged the members, praising their strong seeking spirit. He said that he hoped all would persist in their faith, never forgetting the great joy of encountering the supreme teaching of Bud-

dism, and that they would continue to transform their lives to the point where they could say they had attained a state of unsurpassable happiness.

He then addressed each member individually, exchanging firm handshakes. To an elderly woman he said: "Please live very long. Being healthy and happy in itself is proof of the power of Buddhism." To a young man he said: "The future belongs to your generation. Please develop your strength and ability and become a great leader! A great leader of Okinoerabu!" One men's division member shared his determination with Shin'ichi as they shook hands, and another woman told him with tears in her eyes of the tremendous joy she felt through her faith.

Superficial words do not touch other people's lives. Shin'ichi poured his entire being into each word and each handshake as he wholeheartedly encouraged the members. After 20 minutes of shaking hands and exchanging greetings, his right hand was numb.

Following dinner, he met with the leaders of Amami Oshima General Chapter. He then sat down to inscribe copies of Mr. Toda's poems to present to members as gifts:

*No matter how painful,
Do not lament, my friends!
Tomorrow we will see
A realm of true happiness
Of kosen-rufu.*

*Death awaits
All of us one day;
Thus, be fearless,
Leaving unchallenged
Not a single enemy of
the Buddha.*

*Now, let us set out on a
journey
Our hearts emboldened
To spread the Mystic Law
Even to the farthest reaches
Of India.*

Shin'ichi wrote each word with his life, praying that every member would stand up in faith and realize great development.

Night deepened on Amami Oshima. Midnight came and went, but Shin'ichi did not stop writing.

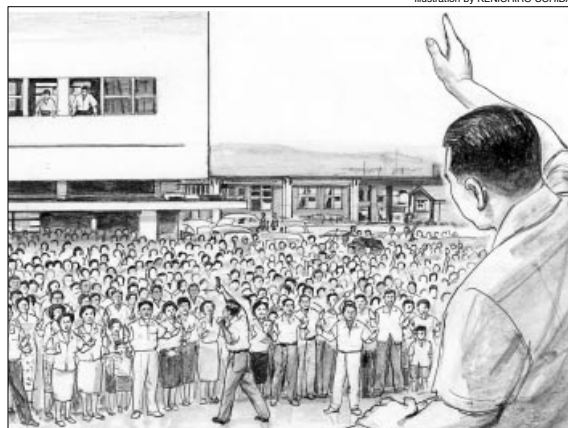


Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

On the morning of June 23, Shin'ichi departed from Naze Harbor, sent off by members singing Soka Gakkai songs. The ferry took him back to Tokunoshima, where he boarded a plane for Kagoshima. He arrived at Kagoshima Airport at 5:30 p.m. There he transferred to a flight headed for neighboring Miyazaki Prefecture, where he was scheduled to attend the Miyazaki General Chapter leaders meeting at the Prefecture Public Hall that evening.

At the Public Hall, Shin'ichi's exhaustion had reached its peak. Even so, he gave his all to encouraging the members, declaring that the growth of the Soka Gakkai was in exact accord with the Lotus Sutra's description of the emergence of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. He then went to the nearby Prefecture Education Hall to speak with members who were waiting there for him as well.

Shin'ichi's high spirits made it impossible for the members to know just how tired he was and how much he was exerting himself. He lived by the passage in the "Twenty-six Admonitions of Nikko": "Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618). In other words, kosen-rufu will only be made possible through the selfless efforts of individuals dedicated to spreading the Daishonin's teachings.

Shin'ichi's mentor, Josei Toda, had demonstrated this principle with his very life. He only left the world after having

achieved the unprecedented goal of a membership of 750,000 households. Shin'ichi had made a profound vow to embody and communicate his mentor's spirit of total devotion to realizing world peace and happiness for all humankind.

Spiritual succession does not take place in the conceptual realm. It happens only through action and behavior. That is why Shin'ichi poured everything he had into each moment. He consistently gave his all, knowing that one's actions now, in this instant, reveal one's spirit.

The formation of many new headquarters and general chapters was steadily securing the Soka Gakkai's organizational foundation, but Shin'ichi felt deeply that securing the spiritual foundation would breathe real life into the organization. He was determined that the 7th memorial (6th anniversary) of Mr. Toda's death (on April 2 the following year, 1964) would be a true gathering of lions who had inherited Mr. Toda's spirit and could say with confidence that their mentor was alive in their hearts.

As the leader in the race for kosen-rufu, Shin'ichi ran ahead alone at full speed. He believed that scores of runners, true friends in faith, would definitely follow in succession.

(This concludes "Securing the Foundation," Chapter 1 of Volume 8 of The New Human Revolution.)

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

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



High school newspapers across the country are getting help starting their own book review columns from a program that SGI President Ikeda's book 'The Way of Youth' helped launch.

'The Way of Youth': Furthering Teen Literacy

By DAVE McNEILL

MIDDLEWAY PRESS MANAGING DIRECTOR

Book Expo America, the book industry's huge annual convention, on June 1.

SGI President Ikeda's book for young people, *The Way of Youth*, has helped initiate the launching of a new program to increase reading in high schools across the country. The "Mind the Gap" program is designed to jump-start book review columns in high school newspapers across the country, many of which do not have regular book review columns.

"Kids read for fun, and adults read for pleasure and information, but teens often only read because they have to. This is the gap we want to fill," explains Marika Flatt, of Phenix & Phenix Literary Publicists, who brainstormed this idea as part of their promotional campaign for *The Way of Youth*.

After a test period in the Austin, Texas, area, which received an enthusiastic response, "Mind the Gap" was officially launched at



Phenix & Phenix will supply sample book reviews and general guidelines on the review writing process, supplied by *Austin Chronicle* book review editor Clay Smith. They are also supplying *The Way of Youth* to all the high school newspaper staffs to kick off the slate of reviews.

"The ultimate goal is to increase teens' interest in all types of literature, not just romance novels and magazines," says Elaine Froelich, who is coordinating the program at Phenix & Phenix. "*The Way of Youth* is the perfect book to launch this program, because one of its central messages is the importance of reading to the growth of a person's character."

For more information on the "Mind the Gap" program or to get your high school involved, contact Elaine Froelich: (512) 478-2028 or elaine@bookpros.com. **WT**

FROM PUBLICATIONS, 1

proactive and promotes our newspaper to fellow members, we accomplish many goals for ourselves and for others:

- We ensure the arrival of life-to-life encouragement to our homes every week.
- We know that when we cannot be with a friend—who may be feeling stuck, depressed, confused or isolated—he or she will have a resource, nourishment for their lives.
- We support the development of the one newspaper that conveys Buddhist philosophy, guidance for living from President Ikeda and life experiences of great hope and inspiration.
- We strengthen the bridge—the direct link—between the members and President Ikeda.
- In reading the *WorldTribune*, we find gems from sages of the past and present, and we are able to use this wisdom to advance our lives today.

For example, on page 7 of the April 13 *World Tribune*, President Ikeda says: "When we chant and exert ourselves for kosen-rufu, we can block devils or negative, destructive forces from 'entering' our lives and allow the positive, protective forces of the universe to 'enter' instead. Please chant with strong conviction, as if calling, 'Brahma, Shakra

and the gods of the Sun and the Moon, "enter" my life and put your power to work!" The ultimate essence of faith in the Mystic Law is to manifest the Daishonin's life within ourselves. We can then fight with the same strength as the Daishonin. When we do so, we will never be defeated, no matter what hardships we encounter. We will not be unhappy. We will not fail to win. We will not fail to become happy. This is the quintessence of faith."

I just had to share this with you. This is the kind of gem that we find on every page of the *WorldTribune*. What could be better than a publication that is, in effect, a direct connection with a teacher like President Ikeda, who constantly reminds us of our personal power, our innate wisdom, our incredible potential?

I frequently ask members if they are reading the publications, because I have noticed that often people who feel overwhelmed are not getting the kind of nourishment they offer. I carry subscription envelopes with me to make it easy for them to subscribe. Imagine if each of us helped just one person to do this! That would be one more person reading President Ikeda's guidance, one more person empowered with information and encouragement to spread our movement for peace.

This is our goal through these three months and beyond: Each leader in the SGI-USA—from the group to national level—promotes at least one subscription to the *World Tribune*. From the earliest days of my practice, and when I first took leadership, I learned that this was a fundamental responsibility of a leader in our organization. It is one of the most vital ways that

we can care for our members.

Let's also cultivate some proactive thinking. Consider, for example, our upcoming activities this summer. We have many rehearsals toward our family youth festivals. We have the festivals themselves, with many in attendance. We have our district meetings, world peace gongyo meetings, and so on—many events where we can set up a subscription table.

The main thing is that we are proactive as leaders. When we understand that one of the greatest things we can do is to help another human being practice Buddhism and receive benefit, and the role that reading our publications plays in this, then we will naturally speak with confidence in encouraging others to subscribe.

And read to their heart's content. **WT**

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SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

Staying Focused on the Big Picture

By JAMES HERRMANN
SGI-USA YOUTH LEADER

SGI-USA Youth Leader James Herrmann explains the significance and focus of this summer's 43 SGI-USA family youth festivals.



Thank you for all of your efforts so far this year! Summer is already upon us. Our movement to host 43 family youth festivals across the nation has already begun. In the midst of our struggle, it's easy for us to lose sight of the big picture—in other words, what are the youth trying to accomplish?

Our goals for this movement are:

- Joyful propagation of Buddhism
- Appointing young women's and young men's leaders in every SGI-USA district
- Fully supporting the Soka Spirit movement
- Complete success of the seven youth conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture Center this year

"A truly great person is a friend to those in suffering, pain and misery," says SGI President Ikeda. "Such a person can be called a 'leader of the new century'" (*Discussions on Youth*, vol. 1, p. 17).

With the great desire to afford our friends, families and acquaintances the opportunity to enjoy true happiness and fulfillment, we are taking the lead to spread the Mystic Law across America, displaying our pride as disciples of President Ikeda.

In his message for May 3, the start of the second set of Seven Bells—a time that I feel signifies the beginning of the American youth taking the lead in propagation—President Ikeda quotes Nichiren Daishonin as saying, "I entrust you with the propagation of Buddhism in your province" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1117). President Ikeda goes on to say, "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" (May 11 *World Tribune*, p. 11).

He further states, "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."

Our family youth festivals are the launching pad for the hopes and dreams of a new generation of youth. Through months of earnest preparation—chanting together, working together, dreaming together—new friendships will be forged. Conviction will be solidified. And from this new generation, new leaders will emerge.

Our purpose in appointing young women's and young men's leaders in every SGI-USA district is to boldly entrust these young people with the responsibility for the success of our movement. While their fresh optimism and vital idealism will strengthen our organization, bequeathing them with this responsibility allows them to put faith into action. As we continue to appoint these youthful leaders in the districts throughout the summer and fall, I would like to highlight their names and the names of their districts in *Seize the Day*, our bimonthly youth section of the *World Tribune*.

Our seven youth conferences at the FNCC for this year, starting in July, will gather young people from all over the United States, providing a venue for deep encouragement, the sharing of values and the strengthening of friendships based on shared commitment. Let's completely fill these con-

ferences with youth, ensuring that no one misses this wonderful opportunity.

As you have probably heard, another important feature of our family youth festivals is the singing of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," a song that expresses humanity's inherent dignity and freedom. Ten years ago, the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood was angered by SGI members singing the song, which they erroneously claimed slandered the Daishonin's Buddhism. They unilaterally excommunicated our mentor, President Ikeda, and the entire SGI membership of 12 million people. This authoritarian move was clearly designed to intimidate our membership into joining the Nichiren Shoshu and abandoning the Soka Gakkai. But our resolve proved unshakeable.

The singing of "Ode to Joy" in America this summer is, in one sense, a celebration of our 10 year emancipation from a corrupt clergy that has distorted a fundamental tenet of the Daishonin's Buddhism: All human beings equally possess the potential for enlightenment.

Through the tireless efforts of President Ikeda, our beloved pioneer members and our seniors in the men's and women's divisions, SGI-USA was built. Now, lit by the warmth of their gaze, we initiate our struggle, resolved to become outstanding young people, taking full responsibility for our organization and welcoming our mentor back to the United States. **WT**

FROM SPEECH, 7

days in constant dialogue. That is how he made so many precious friendships.

Passing one's faith on to one's children is a sign of a person of true faith.

Faith alone is life's greatest treasure. When Mr. Omachi joined the Soka Gakkai 46 years ago, he was the only one in his family to do so. Now, his three sons, two daughters, 13 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren are all exerting themselves in faith as Soka Gakkai members and leaders in our kosen-rufu movement.

Many of the members of Mr. Omachi's extended family have also studied at the Soka schools, and they joke that there are enough of them to form their own Soka alumni reunion!

Mr. Omachi's family is a shining example of the transmission of faith from one generation to another. This was Mr. Omachi's brilliant legacy. I think that passing one's faith on to one's children is a sign of a person of true faith.

When I learned that Mr. Omachi had died, I immediately composed a poem for him:

*We miss you—
He who was like
A great king—*

*And await with longing
For your return.*

*— With profound respect
for the leader who paved
the way
to Komae's momentous
victory.*

Mr. Omachi is a comrade in faith whom I will never forget.

In closing, let me share the words of some great thinkers.

The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe says, "What shines is for the moment born, must perish; / The genuine, posterity will cherish."

The American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson writes, "Patience and patience, we

shall win at the last." This epitomizes how the Soka Gakkai created its history of undefeated victory.

The French writer Victor Hugo consistently indicts the unjust politicians of his time. He declares that it is the duty of representatives of the national legislative assembly to "rise, offer their chests, neither calculating the number nor the force of the enemy, and defend with their bodies the sovereignty of the people."

And José Martí, the father of Cuban independence, says, "In times that call for decisiveness, indecision is a crime."

With this, I conclude today's speech. Thank you! **WT**

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The *World Tribune* welcomes reader submissions. If you are interested in contributing an article or photograph, please contact us for guidelines. Together we can make a great newspaper.

Makiguchi Garden Blossoms in California

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER

The Makiguchi California Native Plant Garden was dedicated at Beyer Elementary School in San Ysidro, Calif., June 6, in honor of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. The ceremony coincided with the 130th anniversary of Makiguchi's birth.

Expressing SGI President Ikeda's appreciation to the school, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima announced that the SGI president would be donating 100 cherry trees to the garden. Mr. Nagashima also announced an SGI-USA donation of 33 children's books to the school's library.

Josie Hamada, a teacher at the school for nine years and 26-year SGI-USA member, dreamed of creating the garden to help the students learn responsibility, build strength of character and take pride in creating something themselves. "Gardening teaches teamwork," she explained. "In the garden, you don't talk badly about one another. If kids learn how to behave in the garden, they'll behave outside the garden as well."

Inspired by Makiguchi's educational philosophy of a partnership between parents, teachers and students, she led the children in cultivating the ground where the garden would be planted. The garden, which was designed with the help of Josie's husband, Steve, is populated with plants native to the state of California.

San Ysidro is located two miles from the border between Mexico and the United States. Of the 620 students at Beyer Elementary School, 98 percent call Spanish their primary lan-



guage. Consequently, they often struggle with the American educational system. Josie's dream for the garden is that it will inspire the students to overcome the stigma of disadvantaged circumstances and create a bright future for themselves.

Also dedicated at the ceremony was the Beyer Community Garden, to be tended by the local citizens, and where trees were planted in the names of Makiguchi, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., President Ikeda and legendary Mexican-American activist Cesar Chavez. **WT**



(Top) Beyer Elementary School students celebrate the opening of the Makiguchi California Native Plant Garden in San Ysidro, Calif., June 6.

(Left) Josie Hamada, a teacher at the school and SGI-USA member who worked for nine years to create the garden, encourages a student.

(Below left) The garden features many varieties of plants native to the state of California and will soon include 100 cherry trees donated by SGI President Ikeda.

(Below) Planting a tree in honor of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.

