



EXPERIENCE
Cathy Robinson
overcomes every
obstacle with
daimoku.
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FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA

A Great Movement Begins With Us

The SGI-USA's summer activities, which include publications promotion and propagation, are discussed by SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima.



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima (third from right) meets with dozens of youth in Louisville, Ky., June 13. The general director has been encouraging SGI-USA members to give youth more opportunities for leadership, with the goal of appointing youth leaders in every district throughout the country.

My dear SGI-USA friends, recently, traveling across the country, I have been reuniting with old friends while making new ones. And as I reflect on all the seen and unseen causes you have made to advance the kosen-rufu movement in America, I am filled with great appreciation. In particu-

lar, I am touched and invigorated by all your efforts to support our youth and the 43 festivals occurring throughout the country this summer.

Thank you so much! Seeing your action, I am reminded that each one of us — together with our mentor, SGI President Ikeda — is a pioneer

of the 21st century. I cannot even begin to tell you how moved I have been to hear the many dramatic stories and experiences of how new people

have joined SGI-USA. These feelings of appreciation brought to mind something PLEASE SEE GENERAL DIRECTOR, 10

Photo by AL AGIBINIK



The SGI-USA youth of Alaska, shown here at Portage Glacier, where SGI President Ikeda took a commemorative photo with Alaskan members during his historic 1983 visit to their state, have stepped up their efforts in Victory Over Violence activities and are gaining recognition in Alaskan society.

VOV HEATING UP IN ALASKA

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER



In commemoration of May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, SGI-USA members in Alaska resolved to create a new wave of activities centered on the Victory Over Violence project, a community outreach program designed to help each person see

the roots of violence in their own life and community. Each district in SGI-USA's Alaska Area, led by the district or chapter youth leaders, determined to take the VOV message to two schools in their neighborhoods. As a result of their efforts, more than 1,000 signatures for the VOV Peace Pledge have been collected, with still more school presentations to come. At one school, the principal enthusiastically

PLEASE SEE VOV, 5

JULY 16: 'ON ESTABLISHING THE CORRECT TEACHING FOR THE PEACE OF THE LAND'

Establishing Buddhism Is Our Responsibility

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

By **JOSHUA KRAWITZ**
LOS ANGELES



figure in the Kamakura shogunate government.

It may be difficult for us today to conceive of the climate for religious debate that existed when Nichiren Daishonin promulgated his teachings. When he authored "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" (Jpn "Rissho Ankoku Ron") issues regarding religious belief were central to daily life.

Although his intention was always to serve the people, the Daishonin was treated as a renegade priest from the moment he first introduced the teaching of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in 1253. Seven years later, he was thought of as a notorious religious and political radical when he submitted this treatise on July 16, 1260, to a leading

The Daishonin depicts here a conversation between a host (a person of correct faith) and a traveler (seeking correct faith). The guest begins by describing the deplorable conditions abounding in society — famine, natural disasters, pestilence and strife ruled the day. He wants to know why these conditions are occurring. "What is wrong? What error has been committed?" he asks (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 7).

The host answers that the sufferings plaguing society are the result of faith placed in erroneous teachings. This assertion was both provocative and compelled by deep conviction. The guest asks the host to cite passages of proof and, angered by the host's response, disagrees, challenging him with passages of his own. The host remains patient, citing the documentary history of Buddhism while stressing the proof of actual fact. He then says, "If we do not admonish the evil priests, how can we

hope to do good?" (WND, 12).

After considerable dialogue back and forth, the guest is convinced, abandoning his mistaken belief and at last taking faith in the Lotus Sutra. Throughout the dialogue, the host is thoughtful and lucid, demonstrating a mastery of what SGI President Ikeda calls "soft power." We see this power beautifully exhibited in the openness and humility with which the host speaks to his guest: "Though I may be a person of little ability, I have reverently given myself to the study of Mahayana. A blue fly, if it clings to the tail of a thoroughbred horse, can travel ten thousand miles..." (WND, 17).

We are all proverbial "blue flies." By submitting his writing to a local official, the Daishonin was attempting to help all people become happy and to ensure that his teaching would be passed along to future generations. Since Buddhism allows for flexibility, one's sense of personal mission may vary based on time, circumstance

and the depth of one's faith. It is unreasonable, perhaps, to expect a new practitioner to renege with government authorities. However, the spirit of this treatise — compassion for others — and the courage with which the Daishonin lived are necessary both for the fulfillment of our own dreams and the creation of a culture of peace in the future.

Faith and practice based on this mission enable us to "cling to the tail of a thoroughbred horse" and bring forth our inherent enlightenment. When we do gongyo and chant daimoku, we "think globally"; when we participate in our local SGI-USA activities — creating trust and friendship, and showing actual proof in daily life — we "act locally." All our activities for kosen-rufu are opportunities to manifest the spirit of "On Establishing the Correct Teaching." We can become champion listeners, full of the courage of our convictions and the compassion to speak the truth. **WT**

THE MIGHTY RIVER OF KOSEN-RUFU

WORDS To WIN By

By **GREG MARTIN**
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER



then they will form a Mount Sumeru of perfect enlightenment, an ocean of great nirvana. Seek no other path by which to attain Buddhahood! (WND, 579-80)

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

Little streams come together to form the great ocean, and tiny particles of dust accumulate to form Mount Sumeru. When I, Nichiren, first took faith in the Lotus Sutra, I was like a single drop of water or a single particle of dust in all the country of Japan. But later, when two people, three people, ten people, and eventually a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, and a million people come to recite the Lotus Sutra and transmit it to others,

gence of the Buddha nature from within the life of an individual is not confined to that person alone, but moves outward like ripples on a pond to influence the whole world. Our movement thus focuses its energies on the individual rather than focusing the individual on the movement.

This feeling resonates with the passage from the foreword to SGI President Ikeda's novel *The Human Revolution*, "A great human revolution in just a single person will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind." Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, and the SGI movement based upon it, values the absolute dignity and importance of each person — our commitment to achieve peace is through an unwavering commitment to foster people.

From another perspective, every effort we make to further our human revolution and the achievement of kosen-rufu is like a drop of water. Rain show-

ers in the mountains accumulate into gushing streams coursing down steep ridges, running through deep valleys, eventually joining other streams and rivulets, gathering into a mighty flowing river. But it all begins with individual drops of water.

In the Daishonin's time, he and his disciples started out as just a drop in the bucket of the Japanese nation. Yet 700 years later, with the appearance of the Soka Gakkai, this drop has grown into a river of some 12 million individuals practicing Buddhism in 165 nations and territories.

The human revolution accomplished by a single individual is, all in all, extremely significant. Whether we can see it immediately or not, our efforts in faith make a profound difference in the lives of others and, in fact, the world. Whenever we face difficult times or see the need to seriously change our lives, we should remember that our victory is not only for ourselves but for the two people, three

people, 10 people — eventually a hundred, a thousand, 10,000 or a million people — who will follow each of us. Individual victory opens the way for humanity's victory. One small step for an individual becomes a giant step for humankind. **WT**

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EXPERIENCE — CATHY ROBINSON, LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

The Key To Breaking Through Deadlocks

After overcoming numerous obstacles, Cathy Robinson appreciates the importance of abundant daimoku.

When I began to practice, in my early 20s, stressful events were a constant. I went through a divorce, suffered through repeated encounters with men that left me feeling rejected and endured the suicide of my 49-year-old mother and the early death of my father at age 53. I was an only child with no close family and this wave of loss filled me with a sense of panic and loneliness that I could fill only with hours of chanting daimoku. I literally could not leave my house before chanting many hours and would anxiously return to the Gohonzon, desperate to refill the void that threatened to overwhelm me.

After my parents' deaths, I made the determination to change both the unhealthy mental as well as physical karma that had plagued my family for generations. My leaders and friends supplied heartfelt support that enabled me to continue.

After months of chanting at least three hours each day, I learned to put the Gohonzon in the center of my life, rather than a man. With this new attitude, I unknowingly met "Mr. Right" while attending a class in college. I introduced him to Buddhism, and after dating for a short time, we became engaged and married. Ned and I have been married now for 18 years. I went on to receive a master's degree and become an elementary school teacher.

My next major struggle was trying to have a baby. We tried desperately, wanting so badly to have a full, happy family with a child. Month after month, we were disappointed.

After having tried every medical strategy to become pregnant, my husband and I decided to seek encouragement from our SGI-USA leaders. We spoke with someone who instructed us to chant with 100 percent faith and confidence and not to be swayed by medical opinion. This senior friend in faith had been diagnosed with incurable lung cancer and had



Photo by DEBRA KON

(L-r) Ted, Ned and Cathy Robinson have created a happy family through strong prayer.

been given six months to live, but he was not influenced by the doctor's diagnosis and chanted seven hours a day. At the time we met with him, seven years had passed since he was diagnosed and he was in good health, continuing to chant abundant daimoku — three hours every day.

After our meeting, I changed my attitude in front of the Gohonzon and began to chant with total confidence. One month later, I became pregnant. Although the pregnancy was ectopic (with the fertilized ovum developing outside the uterus) and ended quickly with surgery, I was still hopeful. I knew I could become pregnant. I went back to the Gohonzon with my prayer for a healthy baby. Six months later, at the age of 40, I again became pregnant with a boy, now a healthy, active 9-year-old.

I had begun to notice a pattern. Each time I succeeded in breaking through a deadlock, it always followed a period of time in which, motivated by a major problem, I was chanting enough daimoku to feel completely happy and fulfilled inside, before the problem showed any sign of changing. Wasn't it after I had finally felt that I could live se-

curately and happily even without a husband, that I met my husband, Ned? And hadn't it been after I realized that even without a baby I could live a fulfilled, happy life that I gave birth to Teddy? I came to the conclusion that I had to be happy in order to be able to attract happiness.

This was a theory I would soon have to put to the test.

A few years later, I began experiencing severe pain in my left shoulder. I attributed this to the effect of a minor car accident I had. However, no matter what I tried, I was unable to rid myself of the pain. I contacted a doctor and was immediately sent for a MRI. The tests revealed that I had a tumor on my spine that would leave me completely paralyzed if I did not have surgery right away.

I emerged from surgery with a brace from my chin to my waist, screaming: "I'm choking! I'm choking!" This brace remained in place for the next four months, 24 hours a day.

The night after the surgery, as I lay immobilized in my hospital bed chanting, I realized that I was in the process of fulfilling my vow to change my family's long-term karma of suffering from mental and physical illness. My father had died chok-

ing from a rare disease called scleroderma. My mother made her first of many unsuccessful suicide attempts by jumping out of a window, at the age of 48, my exact age at the time. She was rescued by a policeman and treated for her physical injury with a neck brace and walker. This obstacle was no coincidence. I felt with 100 percent confidence that my prayer to change my family's unhealthy karma was being realized.

Although the tumor had been removed, doctors had to determine whether or not it was malignant. I did my best to stay positive, but I began to lose confidence and became frightened. But with the encouragement of fellow members, friends, neighbors and relatives, I was able to carry on, chanting all the way.

The test results came back confirming that the tumor was cancerous. I was diagnosed with lymphoma. With the neck brace still in place, 24 hours a day, I underwent chemotherapy and radiation.

The months went by and finally the treatments were over. The brace came off last April, and the tests came back showing that the cancer was gone. Even in spite of my own doubts, I had won.

For me, the key to winning has been continual efforts to chant enough daimoku to establish a high life-condition — high enough to go beyond my mental and emotional boundaries.

In the letter "On Curing Karmic Disease," Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Even if one has committed grave offenses...the retribution can be lessened in this life. Thus, illness occurs when evil karma is about to be dissipated." (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 631). Intellectually, I knew these words to be true. I just had to prove it.

Based upon my precious experiences, challenging threatening waves of suffering and the wondrous ability I have gained to change poison into medicine through my practice, I have determined to spend the rest of my life helping others — members and non-members alike — to understand the profundity of Buddhism. I am determined to help spread Buddhism, so that many other people can also change their unhappiness into absolute happiness. **WT**

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 28 MESSAGE — PART 1

The Factors That Determine Victory

'Theory or calculation does not win a struggle,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'The factors that determine the outcome are energy, perseverance, capable people and single-minded action.'

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's message to a representative regional leaders conference held in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, March 28.

Thanks to all of you, our representative regional leaders from across Japan, for your hard work.

Putting the finishing touches on our lives is very important. When a plane lands, it gradually reduces altitude, but as we enter the final chapter of our lives, we should try to keep flying at the same high "spiritual altitude." We should keep moving forward without reducing our "spiritual speed" — right up until our final moments.

When we have this spirit, we can foster youth who will solidly shoulder the future and pass the baton of responsibility firmly on to our juniors. This point is very important. It is crucial that leaders maintain their fighting spirit right to the end.

All will be lost if our youth become conceited, spoiled and superficial.

Theory or calculation does not win a struggle. The factors that determine the outcome are energy, perseverance, capable people and single-minded action.

It is crucial to foster and develop new people, to allow them to play a full, active role. Leaders must not hold back their juniors.

We have now entered the age of women. And the spotlight is on the young women. It is a time when the women's division members, too, should give greater play to their potential.

Let us also thoroughly train the youth. All will be lost if our youth become conceited, spoiled and superficial. All growth will stop.

I say to our youth: Create your own proof of victory in your daily lives. Take pride in hard work and challenging difficulties. Boldly construct a great monument of achievement in your youth.

On March 27, I visited the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo for the first

time in a long while [for the 4th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, May 3 and 11 *World Tribune*]. It was on April 2, 43 years ago, while the cherry trees were in full bloom, that my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, died. From that time on, there has not been a single day that I have not thought of him.

Of all President Makiguchi's disciples, President Toda alone stayed true to him.

In November 1950, on the occasion of the 7th memorial (6th anniversary) of the death of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, President Toda reminisced: "When Mr. Makiguchi was being moved to Sugamo [to the Tokyo Detention House from the Metropolitan Police Department in September 1943], I was permitted a brief meeting with him. I said to him, 'Please take care of your health.'

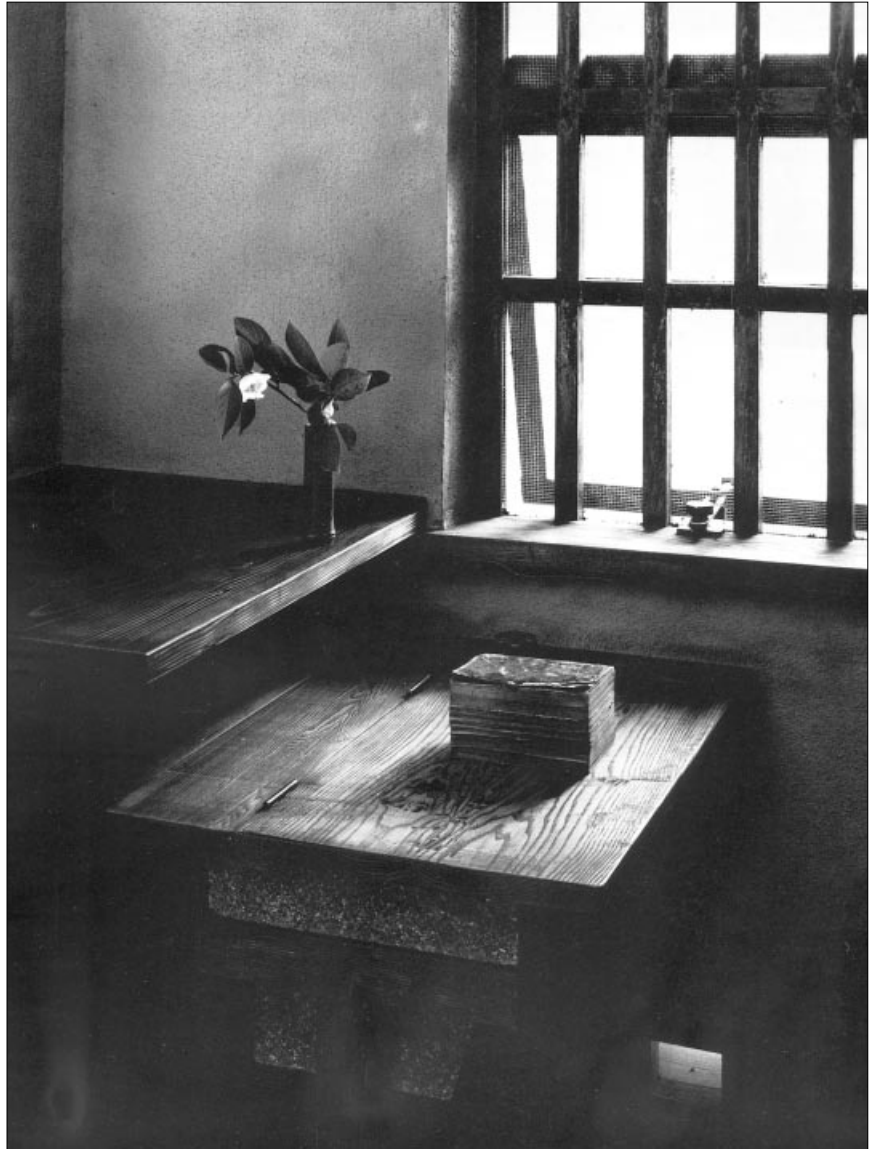
"I have been told that on the way to the car after we parted, he asked, 'Where is Toda?' 'What has happened to Toda?'

"I chanted earnestly with the prayer 'I am still young, but Mr. Makiguchi is old. May he be released as soon as possible. I do not care how long I remain here, but please let Mr. Makiguchi be released as quickly as possible.' But perhaps because my prayers were not strong enough, he died in prison the following year [in November 1944].

"When I was told, 'Makiguchi's dead,' I was devastated. I wept all night long in my prison cell."

[Both Makiguchi and Toda were arrested in July 1943. After a period of detention at the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, Makiguchi was transferred to the Tokyo Detention House in Sugamo first, and Toda followed a short time later.]

President Makiguchi died at the age of 73. Of all his disciples, my mentor alone felt a



The prison cell in the Tokyo Detention Cell where first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi spent his last days. His disciple, Josei Toda, determined to be victorious in proving Makiguchi's greatness.

deep sense of gratitude to be able to accompany him to prison, chanting fervently for President Makiguchi's safety. When his mentor died, as you just heard, President Toda blamed himself, saying that his prayers had not been strong enough. As for President Makiguchi's other disciples, as soon as the Soka Gakkai encountered persecution, they did an abrupt about-face and cursed and abused their mentor.

Only a small handful of Soka Gakkai members attended

President Makiguchi's funeral. President Toda also commented on this at his mentor's 7th memorial: "I later learned that Mr. Kobayashi [an employee of one of Makiguchi's relatives] carried Mr. Makiguchi's body home on his back from Sugamo Prison.

"You cannot imagine the bitter anger and intense sorrow I felt [when I heard this and that so few disciples came to their mentor's funeral]. Those were difficult times [because of the government's crackdown on

the Soka Gakkai], I admit, but I could not help wondering bitterly: Did they not come because they did not know of his death? Or did they know but still not come [because they were afraid of persecution]? I vowed then and there: 'Right! I will, without fail, hold a memorial service for Mr. Makiguchi!' From that time, I felt a powerful reason for living surge inside me."

This was the vow of an indomitable champion of kosen-rufu. Herein lay the

true Soka Gakkai spirit of mentor and disciple, and the triumphant spirit of justice.

Women played a decisive role in Italy's resistance movement.

On March 3, as a representative of our members in Italy and all around the world, I received an honorary citizenship from the city of Varallo, Italy. [This was the 160th honorary citizenship bestowed upon President Ikeda.]

Varallo was the birthplace of Italy's partisan resistance movement against fascism. I also spoke about this at the 4th Headquarters Leaders Meeting (May 3 and 11 *World Tribune*). Some of the Italian members who attended that meeting have written to me in response, offering valuable historical information about that time. With their permission, I want to share some of their remarks with you today.

Maurizio Tosi, a vice headquarters leader in Turin, had this to say: "As I listened to your guidance, President Ikeda, I was deeply moved, and I also remembered my grandmother's story. Her name was Maria Falcetti, and she was born on Feb. 7, 1900. She was killed by the Nazi-fascists on Sept. 14, 1944.

"Women played a decisive role in the victory of the partisans in the World War II. My grandmother, like my aunts and many other women, supported the partisans. They carried provisions and information to their husbands and sons fighting for freedom, either traveling on foot or by bicycle for many kilometers to do so.



Anti-fascist Italian women helping the Allies near Castelluccio, Italy, take a break during World War II.

"During one of these trips, she was caught and arrested by the Nazi-fascists. For two days she was tortured and then killed. But she never breathed a word about where her husband, son and their comrades were hiding.

"My grandmother's story is part of the history of many brave Italian women during that period—a history in which we find not the slightest trace of cowardice.

"When you, President Ikeda, spoke of Varallo, you brought to life once more the history of these women and the partisans

who gave their lives for freedom and are today the symbol of the city of Varallo. I feel that my grandmother, together with her comrades who fought for freedom at the risk of their lives, participated joyously in today's leaders meeting."

Let me now share the words of Mauro Deretti, a headquarters leader in Milan: "Listening to your speech on the partisans, a powerful feeling of respect for my parents welled up in me. They were persecuted by the fascists. My mother, who has now passed away, used to talk about it often. Because her fa-

ther was opposed to the fascists, she and her sister had their heads shaved and painted red, after which they were paraded through the town. This happened many times and always took place after the fascists had almost beaten my grandfather to death. And countless other families suffered similar persecutions.

"It was my mother [who was also an SGI member], as a matter of fact, who enabled me to develop a closer connection with you, President Ikeda. When you were visiting Italy in 1992, she insisted that I go to

Florence where you were, in spite of the fact that she was very ill. Mysteriously, while I was in Florence, her condition improved, and I was able to cheerfully carry out my responsibilities as a staff member for your visit.

"Four days after you left Italy, my mother died peacefully. She had a serene expression on her face. She unflinchingly chanted one hour of daimoku every day, and she used to say, 'When I chant, I feel as strong as a lion.'

"Thank you so much for speaking today about the resistance movement and the partisans, which are an important part of the history of many Italian families."

I chanted sincere daimoku in memory of all of Italy's courageous freedom fighters who have passed away.

As the ancient Roman philosopher Seneca says: "Whome'er thou shalt see brave, call him not wretched." "Dauntless mother-love admits no fears."

I offer these words with the greatest respect and reverence.

To be continued in an upcoming issue.

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FROM VOV, I

read the pledge over the school intercom and encouraged each student to sign it.

The youth produced a video about VOV and distributed it to the major television stations in Anchorage, which aired throughout the month of May as a public service announcement. Alaska Governor Tony Knowles issued an Executive Proclamation naming May 2001 Victory Over Violence Month in Alaska. Area youth leaders Grace Christianson and Todd McGovern also met with Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch on May 25, who commended the youth for their efforts to end violence in the city.

In addition, members have

also visited two youth detention centers, receiving such a positive response that they have been asked to visit several more.

"In Alaska, we are so geographically removed from the rest of SGI-USA," said Grace Christianson, area young women's leader. "We really wanted to create a way for our members to connect with the rest of the SGI and with SGI President Ikeda's vision for peace. We challenged each district to go into their community and really establish relationships.

"We are determined to continue displaying our pride as SGI members in Alaska, creating many friendships and expanding our network of humanity based on President Ikeda's example." **VI**



SGI-USA member Montel Massenberg (left) responds to interview questions from an Anchorage TV reporter during Alaska Area's month-long Victory Over Violence campaign.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S APRIL 26 MESSAGE — PART 2

OUR LIVES TRANSMIT A FREQUENCY

‘When we chant the Mystic Law, our lives transmit a frequency that connects us with other people, with the community — with everything,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘While building our own happiness, contributing to the prosperity of our community and forming ties of harmony and friendship with everyone around us, we are forging a unity for peace that encompasses the entire world.’

The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s message to a nationwide conference for prefecture leaders in Japan, held at the Soka Culture Center in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, April 26.

A leader’s words should have fresh appeal, and this requires continuous learning. I want to present you with the words of several philosophers.

The Swiss thinker Carl Hilty says: “The truest help we can render one who is afflicted is not to take his burden from him, it is but to call out his best energy, that he may be able to bear it.” The ultimate strength to which Hilty refers is faith. I hope that all SGI leaders will become “masters of encouragement” who can help everyone energetically face and resolutely triumph over life’s struggles.

In one of his writings, the French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau says: “Gentleness, which is the most appealing of

the virtues, is sometimes also a weakness of the soul. Virtue is not always gentle. It knows how to arm itself appropriately with severity against vice; it is inflamed with indignation against crime.”

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president, declares, “Unless you have the courage to become the enemy of a person of evil, you cannot become the friend of a person of good.”

In his famous work *Civil Disobedience*, the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau appeals: “Why does it [government] not cherish its wise minority?...Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and do better than it would have them?” This deeply



It was in Varanasi, India, that Shakyamuni first expounded the Law.

resonates with President Toda’s strict admonition: “Young people should keep a close watch on politics.”

We can each create a momentous personal history in rhythm with the Seven Bells.

The other day, a young Indian woman named Namrata Sharma sent me a letter outlining her goals in life, a personal cycle of Seven Bells. With Ms. Sharma’s permission, and with

deep gratitude to her for sharing this, I want to introduce some of her targets.

Ms. Sharma is from a prominent family in India, and both she and her sister studied at Soka University. After returning to her country, she published her research in a volume titled *Value Creators in Education: Japanese Educator Makiguchi and Mahatma Gandhi and their Relevance for the Indian Education*. Most touchingly, she dedicated it to me as the founder of Soka University and presented me with a copy.

Ms. Sharma, an outstanding student and scholar, is presently working on her doctorate in education in London. By 2008, completing the 1st bell of the second Seven Bells, she has two goals: the completion of her doctorate and the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

By 2015, the 2nd bell, her goal is the construction of a strong foundation for the young women’s student division in India and the establishment of a teachers college in India that focuses on training teachers in Soka education, or the pedagogy of value creation.

By 2043, the 6th bell, she aspires for the school system in India to become a model of value-creating education and to see schools and universities that practice the same pedagogy spread throughout the world.

By 2050, the 7th bell, as the summation of her life, she will draw up a new plan for the next Seven Bells, while watching over the growth and happiness of the students she has raised. That is what Ms. Sharma wrote in her letter.

It is marvelous to envision how this one youth who came from the birthplace of Buddhism to study at Soka University will ring the bell of humanistic education! Her spirit is most noble. My wife and I were profoundly moved by her determination. And we chanted daimoku with her letter on the altar.

I hope each of you will likewise strive to greatly expand your state of life, accumulate tremendous good fortune and benefit, and leave behind a momentous history, upholding specific goals and objectives for your place of mission in tandem with the Seven Bells.

When we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we have nothing to fear.

On April 25, 1273, Nichiren Daishonin completed the treatise “The True Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind” in his place of exile on Sado Island. In his exegesis on this writing, Nichikan, the 26th high priest, writes: “When one embraces and has faith in this Gohonzon and



SGI President Ikeda last traveled to India, the land of Shakyamuni, in 1997, when he and Mrs. Ikeda visited the ‘Rajiv Gandhi: An Intimate Vision’ exhibition with Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi.

Phoenix Hosts 'Dialogue With Nature'

By COLLEEN STONE
PHOENIX CORRESPONDENT

The beautiful Phoenix City Hall Atrium was transformed into a magnificent gallery for "Dialogue With Nature," an exhibition displaying the photographs of SGI President Ikeda. The arched three-story glass atrium, with its polished terrazzo floor, was the perfect setting to present this remarkable collection of photographs, taken during President Ikeda's years of travel for world peace, to the community of Phoenix.

In presenting the exhibition, SGI-USA members in Phoenix hoped to increase public awareness of the beauty and blessings of the planet and the importance of humanity's role as caretakers of the Earth.

At the opening ceremony on May 29, Michael Kelly, assistant to Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza, welcomed everyone and praised the exhibition as the largest and finest ever presented in the atrium. He commented about the artist's sensitivity and insight revealed in the images.

Securing the atrium as the exhibition site was accomplished through the sup-

port of Phoenix City Councilman Cody Williams. Councilman Williams remarked that City Hall was the citizens' building, and spoke of the hundreds of people that pass through the atrium for business or to just linger in its beauty for a few moments of solitude. He added that Phoenix was honored to be among the major cities worldwide to host this exhibition.

Arizona State Senator Edward Cirillo was moved by the beauty and depth of the exhibition's images, saying, "This artist's worldwide mission is to light the way to a future which will protect the Earth and its beauty, moving all people to recognize that they are all members of one family."

SGI-USA General Director Emeritus Fred Zaitso read a message of congratulations and appreciation from President Ikeda, and the SGI-USA's Arizona Cactus Chorus entertained the crowd with the song "Circle of Life."

Two additional special receptions were held during the two-week showing, one for the Interfaith Action Coalition and another for SGI-USA members and guests. **WT**



Right: (L-r) Phoenix City Councilman Cody Williams, Assistant to the Mayor Michael Kelly and SGI-USA General Director Emeritus Fred Zaitso officially open the 'Dialogue With Nature' exhibition, May 29.



Left: Regina Cirillo, wife of Arizona State Senator Edward Cirillo, studies one of SGI President Ikeda's photos at the Phoenix opening of the 'Dialogue With Nature' photography exhibition, May 29.

FROM MESSAGE, 6

chants Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, one's life immediately becomes the object of devotion of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. It becomes the life of the Daishonin." He says in the same commentary: "Adoring and revering the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law, we must strive to develop our own power of faith and power of practice. Do not spend this life in vain and later regret it for all eternity."

When we chant the Mystic Law, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, our very life becomes the object of devotion and that of the Daishonin. Therefore, we have nothing to fear whatsoever. We cannot possibly be defeated. Our life itself is the ultimate bell of hope.

When we chant the Mystic

Law, our lives transmit a frequency, as it were, that connects us with other people, with the community — with everything. While building our own happiness, contributing to the prosperity of our community and forming ties of harmony and friendship with everyone around us, we are forging a unity for peace that encompasses the entire world.

Toward that end, let us crown this year, which marks the first ringing of the new cycle of Seven Bells, with resolute victory while striving each day with a sense of joy and exhilaration.

Shakyamuni always took concrete action for the Law and the people.

Shakyamuni and his disciples continuously traversed the vast Indian subcontinent to help the people. I once discussed

their travels with the noted Indian philosopher Lokesh Chandra, director of the International Academy of Indian Culture.

Deer Park in Varanasi, where Shakyamuni first expounded the Law, is located approximately in the middle of the vast region that he covered in the course of his lifelong travels to lead people to enlightenment.

From there, Shakyamuni made frequent journeys by foot to the kingdom of Shravasti, some 150 miles away, and to Rajagriha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, a distance of 190 miles. He also walked to the area known as Kammasadhamma, which was more than 430 miles away. In his courage and indefatigable spirit to travel to those in need, Shakyamuni was second to none.

A Buddhist text describes a scene in which a deity, wonder-

ing why Shakyamuni's disciples are not present in greater number, asks, "Where are those [eloquent, learned] Gotama-disciples gone?" To which another deity replies: "They've gone to Magadha, to Kosala, And some into the Vajjian land have gone" (*The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, part I, p. 253). I understand there are records that indicate that over the course of more than 50 years one female disciple of Shakyamuni traveled tirelessly to Anga, Magadha, Vajji, Kashi and other regions.

It was most gratifying to hear Dr. Chandra say that in his view, the Soka Gakkai, in carrying out activities on a global scale, is continuing the travels of Shakyamuni and his disciples in the modern age. And that the SGI is communicating the compassionate humanism of Buddhism to the world.

Unless people take concrete action for the Law and for the people, the religion and philosophy that they uphold is bound to perish.

Everywhere, the noble SGI members are welcoming the second Seven Bells while energetically taking action, speaking out and struggling for kosen-rufu. This is surely a sign that the SGI will realize towering development as a world religion in the 21st century.

Please convey my warmest regards to all the members in each region, prefecture and ward throughout the country. Every day, morning and evening, I am sending daimoku and earnestly praying for the speedy recovery and longevity of all those suffering from illness.

Let us cheerfully advance, and let us win. I look forward to seeing all of you again soon in high spirits! **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

Unity Starts With You

‘What is the key to unity?’ SGI President Ikeda asks. ‘It may seem at first like a contradiction, but the key is for each individual to stand up on his or her own. Each individual must pray earnestly and become strong.’

What is our aim? It is victory! This was the famous declaration made by the newly appointed British prime minister Winston Churchill in his maiden speech 61 years ago, in May 1940, as he took up the challenge to defend the country from Nazi Germany. “Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be,” he said. And he closed his speech urging the British people, “Come, then, let us go forward together with our united strength.”

From this moment began Britain’s fierce five-year struggle against the dictator Hitler. Evil quickly clusters together and proliferates like cancer cells. That is why good people must forge a core that is even stronger than these negative forces and work to expand a solidarity of truth and justice. This is the unchanging rule for victory in any age.

Come then, let us take on the great challenge of opening the door to glory in the new century! And if we are going to do so, let us fight to win! The key to victory — first, last and always — is our advancing with indestructible, diamond-like unity.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

A certain person observes: “The Kansai members have a strong sense of unity. Whenever some area of Kansai is praised, all Kansai members rejoice as if their own area was being praised. Likewise, when an area of Kansai is criticized, they get as angry as if they were personally being criticized. And they will not take it sitting down!”

When the time comes to



Winston Churchill flashes his famous ‘V’ for victory in London, 1943. ‘Let us go forward together with our united strength,’ he told the British people as they fought the Nazis.

fight, the brave members of Kansai vow in their hearts: “We will not let a single person fall by the wayside. We are all going to win together.” That passionate spirit of unity among the Kansai members sends out ripples of victory beyond Kansai to Tokyo, all of Japan and the rest of the world.

If there are fellow members who are struggling amid adversity, the Kansai members hasten to their side to encourage them, no matter how difficult their own circumstances might be. They are far from cold and bureaucratic — they never dismiss others’ problems as something of no concern to them. This is Kansai’s strength. This is the humanistic world of Buddhism.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Buddhism is harmony, solidarity, the unity of many in a body, one in mind. Everyone is a supremely worthy Buddha, a Bodhisattva of the Earth with a

profound mission.

That is why a spirit of mutual respect and friendly support and assistance is so important. If we have this spirit, we are guaranteed to triumph both in life and in kosen-rufu. We will be absolutely unbeatable.

In an environment of animosity and discord, everyone suffers. It is a state of misery, destructiveness and hell.

Unity is strength. Unity is right. Unity is beautiful. Unity is enjoyable. Solid unity for kosen-rufu is always accompanied by the development of a more expansive state of life by each individual.

This is because when we align our spirit with the advance of kosen-rufu, we can break through the shell of our selfish ego. When we have the spirit to advance together with the Soka Gakkai, together with our fellow members, together on the path of mentor and disciple dedicated to the cause of justice, we can climb

the summit of our great human revolution.

Do not be self-absorbed! Be ready to go anywhere if it is for the sake of kosen-rufu! Stand up together with your friends who are valiantly struggling to win amid daunting obstacles! Create a new impetus in those areas that are facing the greatest challenges!

It is from this caring network that the Soka Gakkai derives its solid unity. That is why it is strong. That is why nothing can defeat the Soka Gakkai.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

What is the key to unity? It may seem at first like a contradiction, but the key is for each individual to stand up on his or her own. Each individual must pray earnestly and become strong.

As long as we think, “Someone else will do it,” we can never build true unity. Depending on others and irresponsibly letting things take their course is certain to result in a weak gathering of mindless sheep.

“Youth, just one of you stand! A second and then a third will definitely follow!” In these words, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda revealed the formula for kosen-rufu.

Another factor that is especially important for unity is the dedication of the leaders — their passion, their consideration for their fellow members, their wisdom. It is also vital to have well-defined goals and to chant wholeheartedly toward them. Leaders must always have a clear vision of where we are going, why we are fighting and what we are fighting against. They must lead the way forward accordingly with confidence and precision.

Also, they must not lose sight of antagonistic forces. When the spirit to refute evil wanes among the leaders, the three obstacles and four devils take advantage and start to wreak their havoc. Leaders must not be cowardly and afraid to fight against evil. Nichiren Daishonin strictly warns: “An enemy will try to make you forget the danger so that he can attack” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 952).

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

In May 1956, I was in Kansai working on building an unassailable bastion of the people. With “Forward, ever forward!” as our rallying cry, a wave of joyous propagation spread through the towns of Kansai. In the very midst of this

dynamic expansion, the insidious nature of state authority reared its ugly head in the form of persecution and obstruction, just as the Lotus Sutra and the Daishonin’s writings predict.

The police arrested several completely innocent Kansai members on fabricated assault charges and began to investigate the Soka Gakkai’s internal matters. Malicious journalists came out in force to portray us as a “violent religion,” and traces of uncertainty, fear and hesitation began to show in members’ hearts.

The Daishonin writes, “The three obstacles and four devils will invariably appear, and the wise will rejoice and the foolish will retreat” (WND, 637). I therefore called out spiritedly to my fellow members: “Children of the lion, do not fear! Do not retreat a single step! Cut yourself loose from cowardice with the sharp sword of faith! Now is the time to bravely stand up and fight!” In a flash, everyone united and began a vigorous counterattack.

Courage is key to creating a unified force of lions. As the Daishonin teaches, “Slanderers are like barking foxes, but Nichiren’s followers are like roaring lions” (WND, 997).

And in that May of 1956, the Kansai members and I accomplished the towering achievement of 11,111 new member households joining in a single month — an achievement that will live forever in the history of kosen-rufu.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Even while I was exerting myself in Kansai at the time, I could not help but be deeply concerned about Tokyo. I wrote my heartfelt hope in my diary: “They [the Tokyo-area members] must not forget that only faith and unity will lead to victory... I have decisively taken the lead in Kansai. Hoping for the members’ glorious victory in Tokyo as well” (*A Youthful Diary*, p. 296).

Today, I am resolutely taking the lead in Tokyo. My beloved Tokyo, my beloved Kansai and my beloved fellow members everywhere: Create an eternal monument of achievement based on unity! As an invincible unified force of lion kings, let us win and adorn the start of the Century of Soka with victory!

This essay was published in the “Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*” series in the May 19 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper.

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 17-18

Difficult as the 'One Hundred and Six Comparisons' was, Shin'ichi Yamamoto thought it appropriate for student division members to study. This treatise, which was transmitted directly from mentor to disciple, would help the students really understand the Buddhist way of thinking.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto continued, speaking calmly at the 6th student division general meeting: "It is difficult to maintain faith throughout life. From here on there are liable to be those who betray their fellow members and give up their faith. But Buddhism is about winning. I want each of you to carefully observe the lives of those who have upheld Nichiren Daishonin's teachings and those who have left the Soka Gakkai, 10, 20 or 30 years down the line — I want you to witness and experience this contrast firsthand." He closed by calling on the participants to strengthen their foundation and advance with hope toward the future.

Three days later, on July 17, Shin'ichi attended a district leaders meeting of the Chubu No. 1 Headquarters in Nagoya. The next day, July 18, he participated in the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Chubu Headquarters Building in Minami Ward, Nagoya. Then he left for Kansai, where on the 19th he was to address a meeting of student division members studying at Kyoto University, held in the Kyoto Annex. This meeting effectively inaugurated the series of lectures on "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" that Shin'ichi would be giving to Kyoto University students.

More than 20 Kyoto University students had assembled in the room. Three or four student division leaders from other schools in the Kansai area, such as Osaka University and Doshisha University, were also there. Shin'ichi entered the room and said with a smile, "Good evening!"

"Good evening!" replied the students, but there was a bit of apprehension in their greeting. This was due not so much to

nervousness as it was to their being overwhelmed by the prospect of the upcoming lectures on "One Hundred and Six Comparisons." When Shin'ichi had visited Kansai in June two years earlier, he talked with several Kyoto University students for the first time. "Above all, you need to study the Daishonin's writings in earnest," he said to them. "But understanding Buddhist principles alone will not make you happy. Faith is essential. It is important that you deepen your faith and grow into a person who, 10 or 20 years down the road, will truly be able to contribute to the realization of peace and to humanity based on the ideals of Buddhism. This takes time, so there is no need to be hasty.

"I hope you will join me in working throughout your lives for the people's well-being." As he talked with the students, Shin'ichi recalled how Mr. Toda had once given lectures on the Lotus Sutra to the Lotus Sutra Study Group at Tokyo University, and had raised many talented people as a result. Shin'ichi determined that he would give lectures on the Daishonin's writings to Kyoto University students in the future and thus create a strong core for the Kansai student division.

The lecture series on "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" was settled upon two months earlier in May, when Shin'ichi had visited Kansai. Learning from Yoshihiko Ohya, who was in charge of the Kansai student division, that the number of members studying at Kyoto University had increased, Shin'ichi met with Student Division Leader Goro Watari, and they decided to hold lectures for the



Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

students on this treatise.

Shin'ichi selected "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" because it was one of the Daishonin's most important writings, explaining his most essential and profound teaching concerning the superiority of the Buddhism of sowing to the Buddhism of harvest. [The Buddhism of sowing means the Daishonin's Buddhism, which reveals the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, while the Buddhism of harvest indicates the essential teaching revealed in the latter half of the Lotus Sutra.] "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" is one of two documents that the Daishonin directly entrusted to Nikko Shonin in January 1280, when the Daishonin was 59, the other being "On the True Cause." Together they are known as documents that transmit the ultimate heritage of the Law, or the lifeblood of faith.

"One Hundred and Six Comparisons" consists of 106 articles in which the Daishonin elucidates in great detail the superiority of his own Buddhism of the sowing, which clarifies the profound underlying meaning of the Lotus Sutra, over the Buddhism of the harvest as taught by Shakyamuni

and T'ien-t'ai, which is based on the literal meaning of the sutra. For this reason alone, it is a challenging piece of writing.

Difficult as it was, however, Shin'ichi thought it appropriate for student division members, as it would give them an opportunity to encounter the core teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism. In addition, though the students may have been familiar with Western methods of reasoning taught in Japan's post-war educational system, they were not accustomed to traditional Oriental methods of reasoning, and the Daishonin's writings could not be fully apprehended by Western methods alone. "One Hundred and Six Comparisons," which was transmitted directly from mentor to disciple and which transcends formal Western logic, was the best among the Daishonin's writings to help students really understand the Buddhist way of thinking.

However, the participants assembled there that day had tried to study the document on their own in preparation for the lecture series, and the truth was that they had found it incomprehensible.

"Before we start studying 'One Hundred and Six Comparisons,' I want to get to know

you all a little," Shin'ichi told the students. "Would you mind introducing yourselves?" He wanted to begin by gaining a deep impression of each person.

The introductions commenced. Two leaders within Kyoto University were the brothers Itaru and Isamu Nomura. Itaru was the elder and a second-year student in the Agriculture Department. His younger brother, Isamu, was a third-year student in the Economics Department. Though there was a three-year gap between them, Itaru had spent a few years away from school studying for the university entrance exam and repeating classes, so his younger brother was a year ahead of him in school.

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

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Refreshing Our Core Spirit

EDITORIAL

By JEFF FARR
MANAGING EDITOR

Believing in humanity — our own and everyone else's — is the true spirit of propagation and the core of our practice.

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima has been traveling the country to encourage all of us to refresh our spirit of propagation, or *shakubuku* spirit. Trying our best to inspire our friends to take faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is forever the central challenge of



(June 29 *World Tribune*, p. 4).

The starting point for this spirit is believing in ourselves. We may not always think of ourselves as people with a mission, but we are. And our mission is profound: to discover a deep sense of satisfaction with our lives and to make all our dreams eventually come true. In this way, we give our friends a real feeling for the incredible hope Buddhism has to offer.

The spirit of propagation is also about believing completely in our friends, in their potential. When we believe in ourselves, it is of course much easier to believe in others. If we have this amazing mission to become happy, our friends must, too. They may not be aware of it at this point, but it must be their birthright as much as it is ours.

Having this spirit also means believing that we can funda-

mentally change the world — that *all* humanity has this birthright. If we truly believe in ourselves, if we truly believe in our friends, great faith in humanity follows. This world can be transformed into a happy place, according to the Daishonin. Human culture can unite to thrive in peace.

The Daishonin believed in these three things — himself, his friends and all humanity. His determination was thus “I will be the pillar of Japan. I will be the eyes of Japan. I will be the great ship of Japan. This is my vow, and I will never forsake it!” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 280–81). Putting this vow into action, he pulled the rug out from under the corrupt religious authorities of Japan, and his followers responded by standing up for their spiritual liberation.

This new faith in human potential has begun its flight across the world. Because the Daishonin believed in these three things, each of us now

has the invaluable opportunity to be SGI members, to be part of the continuation of the Daishonin's dream, to be responsible for ensuring the future of this philosophy.

When you really think about it, the biggest problems in the world result from people not believing in themselves, not believing in each other and not believing in humanity. These have been our biggest struggles for the longest time. With our propagation of the Mystic Law, we are working as hard as we can to break this addiction to self-destructiveness.

It is surely no easy task; changing humanity's collective self-doubt is not something that can happen overnight. But this is precisely why we must strengthen our spirit — we must become stronger inside than any of the negativity around us. Believing that we can become that strong, knowing that such strength is already inside us, is where the spirit of propagation begins. **WT**

FROM GENERAL DIRECTOR, I

President Ikeda spoke about in Okinawa, Japan, several years ago: “*Jiga sakko* means the will to blaze a trail in an unexplored area, set an example and lay a foundation for the many who will follow. It suggests possessing a positive vision of and great confidence in the far-off future, and making oneself the starting point, the pioneer in creating the foundation for a new history.

“Your fathers, mothers, elder brothers and sisters, as well as your seniors in faith, who opened the path to kosen-rufu, embody

the spirit of *jiga sakko*... You, too, are pioneers for the wider propagation of the Mystic Law in the ten thousand years to come... A mighty river begins with you, and I expect you to practice with the realization that you are the starting point” (*Buddhism in Action*, vol. 7, p. 164).

I feel such a sense of gratitude towards the sponsors that introduced each one of you to the SGI and Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. It takes tremendous effort and prayer to sponsor even one person to begin practicing. This kind of care is exactly at the heart of SGI-USA. As I travel around the

country, I am thrilled to learn that so many of you are sharing this practice with others.

It is my greatest hope and prayer that each one of you, through your activities and festivals, can experience the joy of having your friends or families begin practicing Buddhism this year.

We are also now focusing our energies on the promotion of our publications. Subscribing to, reading and promoting the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* is the cause to advance kosen-rufu one step further. I sincerely thank you for your efforts to promote our publica-

tions behind the scenes.

President Ikeda recently quoted Nichiren Daishonin as saying, “The Buddha saves people through the written word” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 153). President Ikeda goes on to say, “How immense is the mission of the *Seikyo Shimbun* [the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper], 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” (June 22 *World Tribune*, p. 8).

The *World Tribune* is our *Seikyo Shimbun*, our source for

inspiration. Let's take full responsibility to inspire ourselves and encourage our friends and families, connecting them to this lifeline of hope. When we earnestly struggle to propagate Buddhism, when we labor for the sake of another's happiness, these publications become a pivotal source of encouragement for our continuous efforts.

I wish to ask everyone — the men's, women's and youth divisions — to please rack your brains and break new ground in utilizing our publications to propagate Buddhism and advance the kosen-rufu movement in America. **WT**



COMING TO THE FNCC



Youth Performing Groups Conference July 19-22



Impression from last year's conference by Stanley J. Henderson, Chicago

“Listening to the participants' stories and watching them perform in the talent show made me want to work even harder and gain the same magnitude of talent that all those members had achieved. Since that conference, I have taken leadership responsibility in the Chicago Music Corp. I am now the low-brass section chief.

“I encourage all youth to participate in any of the youth conferences that are held at the FNCC. No matter which one you attend, you will no doubt leave with something that will last forever, as I have.”



Upcoming conferences at the FNCC:



Youth Performing Groups
Student Division Conference
Jr. High and High School Conference

July 19–22
Aug. 2–5
Aug. 9–12

Raising Our Children
Men's Conference
Japanese Language Conference

Aug. 16–19
Aug. 23–26
Sept. 6–9

For more information: Please contact your region leader or your SGI-USA zone office to find out how to sign up for a conference. You can also visit the SGI-USA Web site at www.sgi-usa.org and click the FNCC icon.

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.

Caribbean Studies Association Honors SGI President Ikeda

On May 28, the Caribbean Studies Association appointed SGI President Ikeda Honorary President at its 26th General Meeting in St. Maarten. This is CSA's first honorary title in its 27-year history.

Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis, attended the general meeting. The "Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace" exhibition was also shown at the gathering.

Dr. Cora Christian, president of the CSA, said the organization identifies with the philosophy and actions of President Ikeda, which, she believes, provide inspiration for the future development and cultivation of the Caribbean islands.

Dr. Christian remarked further that the organization hopes to continue learning from President Ikeda and the SGI's pacifistic ideals. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima accepted the certificate on behalf of President Ikeda.

Founded in 1974, the CSA is a professional society that promotes research on the Caribbean. The association's aim, as provided in the preamble of its constitution, is to "foster contact, communication and cooperation among scholars, professionals and other persons interested in the study of Caribbean affairs and concerned about the realities and aspirations of the Caribbean peoples."

Years of colonial rule had divided the Caribbean islands based on adopted languages and lifestyles. In light of these differences, the CSA aims to cultivate solidarity among the countries and territories in the region by advancing dialogue and understanding through academic, educational and cultural exchanges. The organization now has a membership of about 1,100 in more than 55 countries and territories, including prime ministers, government officials, scholars, economists, people in the arts, and human rights activists.



Photo by YOSHI NAGAOKA

The Caribbean Studies Association holds its 26th General Meeting on the island of St. Maarten. At the meeting, the association appointed SGI President Ikeda honorary president, the first such honor the organization has bestowed in its 27-year history.

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Courtesy of SOKANET
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Wisconsin State Capitol Hosts Exhibit

By ELIZABETH THOMPSON
MADISON, WIS., CORRESPONDENT

The premier of SGI-USA's "Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities" exhibition in Madison, Wis., was a great success. After many hours of groundwork and preparation by the members of SGI-USA's Madison Chapter, the exhibition opened on June 1 in the beautiful State Capitol rotunda. Fred Zaitso, SGI-USA general director emeritus, and Malina Moore, SGI-USA exhibits coordinator, as well as local members and their families attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Two children, winners of SGI-USA Madison Chapter's essay contest, read their winning entries. Many members of the audience reported fighting back tears with the reading of the winning entry, "When I See What Some Kids Have and Some Don't" written by 4th-grader Ketan Ramakrishnan. The essay details his experiences interacting with other children while visiting his grandparents in India, a place he had never been to before.

"Whether in India, America, the Netherlands or Britain, it does not matter," he writes. "Kids all around the world should be equal in every re-

spect. The poorest kids are as important as the richest kids, and maybe someday the world will acknowledge that."

Local musicians performed at the opening ceremony and the next day when the exhibition officially opened to the public. During the week, hundreds of school children stopped by during class tours of the Capitol. SGI-USA members had the opportunity to view the exhibition and staff the reception table. Some came from as far away as Iron Mountain, Mich., Milwaukee, Baraboo, Wis., and other parts of the state.

Reaction to the exhibition was tremendously positive. Mike Bennett, SGI member and master of ceremonies for the opening, said that the photo of a Rwandan child made him think back fondly to when he was the same age. A woman serving as a facilitator for a local youth leadership group remarked that the panels were outstanding and taught her kids a great deal.

The exhibition was also lauded by proclamations and letters of congratulation from Madison Mayor Susan Bauman, Wisconsin Governor Scott McCallum and Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk.

In his proclamation, Gov-



Photo by YOSHI NAGAOKA

The beautiful rotunda of the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison plays host to the 'Treasuring the Future: Children's Rights and Realities' exhibition, which opened June 1.

ernor McCallum wrote: "I commend the SGI-USA and the U.N. Children's Fund for their dedication and commitment to educating others about the wonders of youth as well as the perils of abuse. Their generous contribution to children, families, the community and the world is truly an inspiration to all." WT

Right: Sayon Chandrakanthan (left) and Ketan Ramakrishnan, winners of a children's essay contest sponsored by SGI-USA's Madison Chapter, with their prizes.



Photo by JEFF WEISS

Below: The Suzuki Strings of Madison perform at the exhibition's opening, June 1.



Photo by JEFF WEISS



The Wisconsin State Capitol, as seen from downtown Madison.