

Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD



Northeastern Zone members enjoy their first Mothers Group meeting, June 10, at the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center.

Mothers Group Holds First Meeting in Northeastern Zone

By CARMEN RECALDE AND
JANET BLAZEY
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

More than 200 women gathered at the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center June 10 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the women's division. It was the first Northeastern Zone Mothers Meeting, and an opportunity to receive encouragement from Matilda Buck, SGI-USA women's leader. For the mothers who planned the meeting, it was a dream come true to present questions to Mrs. Buck collected from members about how to practice and pass on the gift of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to their children.

The meeting began with SGI President Ikeda's message to the members of the Mothers Group, which said in part: "In the course of our lives, there are times when everything seems to be moving

smoothly and there are times when you experience storms of hardships and difficulties. However, no matter what difficult situations you may be in, it is up to your determination in faith to win an easy victory over these difficulties and lead a life filled with happiness."

A powerful experience was given by Elizabeth Vengen, who shared that at the age of 15 months, her son was diagnosed with profound deafness in both ears. With the help of her group leaders, she began a daimoku campaign that showed actual proof of the Gohonzon's power. Four-and-a-half years later, her son is speaking and hearing at normal conversational level with the help of a cochlear implant. The women in the audience were deeply moved and gave her a standing ovation.

The song "Hero," sung by the Mothers Chorus, echoed the sentiments of President Ikeda's

message. The song was chosen to honor the strengths of mothers, their fortitude and resilience. The melodic refrain, "The hero lies in you," acknowledged that mothers are true heroes.

Then Matilda Buck, introduced as a mother and grandmother, was enthusiastically welcomed by the members. "In terms of raising children and taking care of our families, a mother's prayer is the most important thing," Mrs. Buck said. "Myo of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo has three meanings: The first is to open, in the sense that it enables a person to develop his or her full potential as a human being. The second meaning is to revive, that is, to revitalize or renew one's life.

"The third meaning, to be endowed, refers not only to our own potential, but to the fact that every aspect of our environment, every situation we en-

Dewey Center Honors SGI President Ikeda

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, upon receiving a commendation from the Center for Dewey Studies of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, June 6.

SGI President Ikeda received a commendation from the Center for Dewey Studies of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale on June 6, the 130th anniversary of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's birth. In this week's issue, we have included President Ikeda's acceptance speech (pp. 6-7) and his new essay on John Dewey's contributions to international education (p. 8).

President Ikeda draws many parallels between the lives of Dewey and Makiguchi. "Dewey and Makiguchi were both dedicated educators whose lives were guided by a philosophy of action," he says. "Burning with principle and courage, always striving to create something of value toward a better society, they fostered the growth of young people, heirs to the future, in a vital, free and creative manner" (p. 7). **WT**

counter, is 'perfectly endowed' with what we need for our self-development. It means that every moment has great possible value; every circumstance can be transformed to support our growth."

In the past, many of the young mothers present were very busy with SGI activities. Mrs. Buck said: "Of course, when we have children, we cannot move in the same way. Instead of any regret, we should

embrace our lives as parents as a way to develop ourselves and develop many new relationships. When we attend activities, we can bring a new perspective to our group based on these experiences."

When we are anxious about our children, she added, we should determine: "I will chant and take action for the best outcome. My child must become happy, no matter what circumstances they are in." **WT**

The Oneness of Person and Law

Back to the Basics

By **DAVE McNEILL**
WEST HILLS, CALIF.



When we look at the large characters down the center of the Gohonzon, we are looking at one of the most revolutionary religious statements ever made. The bold words “Nam-myohorenge-kyo — Nichiren,” the expression of the Buddhist principle of the oneness of Person and Law, gave the world a completely new idea of what humanity should revere and devote themselves to.

In the Japan of Nichiren Daishonin’s time, the Buddhist establishment taught people to worship Shakyamuni and other

Buddhas (the Person) as super-human beings who dispensed good fortune and salvation. Such deification, however, completely contradicted the Buddha’s intent. Shakyamuni was, first and foremost, a human being who awakened to the truth that his life was the universe. All of his preaching aimed at urging everyone he met to follow their own path

and discover their own true selves, so that they could enjoy the same enlightenment.

But over time, his true teachings became obscured with various dogmas of subsequent teachers, who, whether intentionally or not, started making Shakyamuni out to be not just a special human being, which he was, but a supreme being, a god of gods. While there may have been some comfort in believing that an all-compassionate Buddha looked down upon us, Shakyamuni the human being was dispensed with. People stopped believing that they could attain Buddhahood, too.

The Daishonin dared to bring Shakyamuni’s humanity back to the fore, reminding everyone that the Buddha was a person who practiced the Law. He then clarified that Law as Nam-myohorenge-kyo, embodied in the Person,

Nichiren. When he writes “I, Nichiren, have inscribed my life in sumi ink” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412), he is indicating that the Gohonzon actualizes the oneness of Person and Law, the Buddhahood inside of us.

Just having Buddhahood as our inherent true identity, however, does not mean we have attained or manifested that life-condition. To understand intellectually that we are the Buddha is not the same as experiencing true oneness.

To help us achieve this oneness with the Law, the Daishonin gave us the Gohonzon, with his statement “Nam-myohorenge-kyo — Nichiren” front and center. The Daishonin’s life and Nam-myohorenge-kyo were one, which he proved with every action he took. His actions also show us the path to oneness, for if we practice as the Daishonin did, we, too, can

attain oneness.

“The strength of mind to be determined to help the suffering become happy and to accomplish kosen-rufu is most respectable,” explains SGI President Ikeda. “This is what it means to be at one with the Law. ... When we focus on the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law and devote our lives to realizing this goal, we become one with the Mystic Law in both body and mind. In a broad sense, we enter the path of oneness of the Person and the Law” (December 1999 *Living Buddhism*, p. 21).

So as we chant to the Gohonzon, “Nam-myohorenge-kyo — Nichiren” becomes for us both a challenge to bring out our best and an assurance that we can do so, thereby creating a revolution not just in religious philosophy but in our lives — a revolution that is the only sure way to peace and happiness for all. **WT**

Three Powerful Enemies: A Source of Great Hope

WORDS TO WIN By

By **KATHLEEN OLESKY**
NORTHEASTERN ZONE
VICE WOMEN’S LEADER



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

These passages from the sutras speak of powerful enemies of the correct teaching. Such enemies are to be found not so much among evil rulers and evil ministers, among non-Buddhists and devil kings, or among monks who disobey the precepts. Rather they are those great slanderers of the Law who are to be found among the eminent monks who appear to be upholders of the precepts and men of wisdom.

The Great Teacher Miaolo, speaking of such men, says,

“The third [group] is the most formidable of all. This is because the second and third ones are increasingly harder to recognize for what they really are.” (WND, 584)

This passage appears at the conclusion of “The Selection of the Time.” Nichiren Daishonin adopts a cautionary tone here, fully aware that the grand undertaking of kosen-rufu will be met with fierce opposition.

As individuals, there are various hindrances that have

the potential to negatively affect our practice, such as negligence, lack of time, fear, illness and doubt. There are also difficulties we must face collectively as believers in the Daishonin’s Buddhism. The Daishonin teaches that forces opposing the movement for kosen-rufu assume external form as the three powerful enemies.

These are the three types of people who persecute those who propagate the Lotus Sutra after the Buddha’s passing: 1) lay people ignorant about Buddhism who denounce and attack the votaries of the Lotus Sutra; 2) arrogant, cunning priests who slander the votaries of the Lotus Sutra; and 3) priests respected by the general public who, in fear of losing fame or profit, induce the secular authorities to persecute the sutra’s votaries.

Since the third, most powerful enemy adopts the form of an apparently virtuous religious authority, it is hard for people to perceive his or her true intent. During the Daishonin’s

time, Ryokan, chief priest of Gokuraku-ji temple, personified this third powerful enemy. Despite his strong reputation as a saintly priest, he incited the government’s attempt to exile the Daishonin.

The Daishonin recognized the appearance of the third powerful enemy as something positive — the validation of his identity: “I know that, if I do not call forth these three enemies of the Lotus Sutra, then I will not be the votary of the Lotus Sutra. Only by making them appear can I be the votary” (WND, 53). When I read these words, I feel great pride to be living at this time. The current Nichiren Shoshu priesthood’s attempt to destroy the SGI is an unavoidable obstacle that we, with SGI President Ikeda’s leadership, have called forth. It happened because we have been spreading the true teaching as the sutra’s votaries.

The message of the above passage is clear — we should never fail to recognize the appearance of the third powerful

enemy. Nor should we let others fall prey to such evil. The negative function of Nichiren Shoshu, which has disrupted the harmonious body of believers in the Daishonin’s teaching and is obstructing the kosen-rufu movement, must be pointed out. We must pray for and awaken those who have fallen prey to the deception. In order to fully reveal the great teachings of the Daishonin’s Buddhism and cause them to flourish infinitely, we must triumph over the evil that currently threatens kosen-rufu. **WT**

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EXPERIENCE — TAKAKO HASHIMOTO, CRYSTAL RIVER, FLA.

MY HAPPINESS IS UP TO ME

After spending years rejecting the practice, Takako Hashimoto realizes how important it is to have Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in her life.

I grew up with the practice of Buddhism. A "fortune baby." Many people knew me as a short, grinning little kid. But this was not always the case. I did not like going to SGI-USA meetings, hated being forced to sit in front of the Gohonzon and with my non-stop complaining, let my parents know it.

My take on things was often different than everyone else's. Since elementary school, my parents compared me to my older brother and sister: "Why don't you study hard like them? Why don't you chant and do gongyo like they do?" I would reply: "Don't compare me to them! Takako is Takako!" At such a young age, I seemed so sure of who I was. But the reality was different—I was miserable. And even more, I hated myself. My rough exterior was there to cover up the

emptiness I felt inside.

Every day I would climb my tree in the yard and curse the world. I would think: "If I die, it would just make it easier for everyone. It would be one less human on the planet." I kept these thoughts to myself, and no one knew what I was going through.

But at the age of 12, things began to change. I was attending a meeting in Washington, D.C., and for some reason, I began to listen to what was being said. I believe the lecture was about the Buddhist concept of the oneness of self and environment; how our actions influence our environment and visa-versa.

It dawned on me that my happiness was not to be realized in spite of me but because of me. It was all up to me to either change or to stay the same. Little by little, I began to do gongyo and chant daimoku on my own.

I have to admit I wasn't completely aware of how I was changing; I thought it was my environment changing. But it was, indeed, me. I started

helping around the house more, cleaning things up, washing the dishes and saying "Thank you" to my



Celebrating Takako's graduation from the Japanese language program at Soka University in Tokyo in March: (l-r) Kazue, Rika, Takako and Akira Hashimoto.

parents. Of course, this was a shock to my mother. As a result, my world began to change. My mom was not annoying me as much, I got more focused on school and I got more involved with SGI-USA youth activities. I still had a temper, but I was no longer on an emotional roller coaster.

As I look back now, I also believe it was through reading many of SGI President Ikeda's speeches that I began to understand what appreciation meant to my life. I could see how much my parents had done and had to put up with over the years. No matter what I did or said, they loved me and supported me.

Because of my parents, my siblings and I were also given the chance to visit Japan and attend Soka University. While there, I had some memorable experiences.

I witnessed President Ikeda's sincere actions for others first hand. Not at large meetings or festivals but on a small scale with the students. He was incredibly supportive of the foreign students, always worried if we were adjusting to Japanese culture, the high cost of living and how our studies were coming along. Whether it was sending us certificates to buy books, chocolate during exams or ice cream on hot summer days, his attention touched the hearts of so many students—members and

non-members—it was amazing to witness. I honestly believe there is no other place where the mentor's spirit can be felt so strongly.

I also saw pure-spirited students challenging themselves every day to study and reply to President Ikeda and their families' expectations. Many of the students had to work every day to be able to eat and pay for transportation expenses. Watching their continuous efforts toward their goals was awe-inspiring, and sometimes, I felt small and weak in comparison. But based on President Ikeda's guidance, "It all comes down to what you do, not what anyone else does," I moved ahead. Instead of running away, I decided to support my friends.

Whenever I heard that one of the students in our dorm was feeling under the weather, I would make miso soup, packed with Japanese vegetables and tofu. I was there to support others when they were down, and they were there to encourage me to set my own goals and work harder.

I also had the fortune of traveling throughout Asia—with the support of my parents, of course. With the goal of making a global network of friends, I traveled to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea and different parts of Japan. I had many opportunities to visit SGI members and community centers, and gain a new perspective

on our world peace movement.

I was so encouraged by my experiences abroad, I wanted to share them when I returned to the United States. I wrote a letter to the local paper in my hometown in South Carolina regarding my experiences with notes from my journal and pictures I had taken. To my surprise, the article was published. And this wasn't just a small column, but a large layout with color pictures.

I was born into a family that was practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, and for several years, I fought it. I wanted nothing to do with it. But when I realized how important it was for me, and how priceless my parents were for sharing Buddhism with me, so many things changed. So many things opened up. Including my heart. The once angry little girl is finally becoming sure of who she is.

This past May, I graduated from Clemson University with a degree in wildlife biology. Shortly thereafter, I started a job in Crystal River, Fla., with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I am very much looking forward to my new career and to helping strengthen the SGI-USA organization in my area.

I am determined to use everything that I have learned from my parents and the SGI to win in my new job and community. It's the least I can do for what my parents and the SGI have done for me. **WT**



Photo by RIKA HASHIMOTO

Takako Hashimoto (bottom) with fellow Soka University students Akiko Kotera (left) and Dhyana Tirta.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MARCH 28 MESSAGE — PART 2

The SGI Upholds the Torch of Justice

'The 20th century was a century of war and violence,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'In its midst, valiant fighters for the cause of world peace passionately upheld the torch of justice. Now that torch has been squarely entrusted to the SGI, a movement of global citizens.'

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



SGI President Ikeda presents British physicist and Nobel laureate Joseph Rotblat with the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research's first Toda Prize for Peace Research, Feb. 10, 2000. Dr. Rotblat has expressed his high expectations for Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo.

The May 3 dedication of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, in Orange County, Calif., is fast approaching. Leading figures around the world from many realms, including from academia and education, have expressed high hopes for the university.

Dr. Joseph Rotblat, with whom I have been in close, extended communication, shares these high expectations. He is an eminent scientist and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. We have met and spoken at length on two occasions, once in Osaka and once in Okinawa. We promised to continue our discussions at SUA, and I have heard that Dr. Rotblat is eagerly looking forward to that day.

Dr. Rotblat has experienced two world wars. He lost his beloved wife in the Nazi Holocaust. Determined that such a tragedy should never be repeated, he has fought vigorously with an undaunted spirit, enduring oppression and insult, for the cause of peace and humanity. Welcoming Dr. Rotblat to SUA, which is committed to fostering leaders of peace for the 21st century, will be a profoundly meaningful event. I await that day with great anticipation.

Incidentally, Dr. Hideki Yukawa, the eminent Japanese physicist, joined Dr. Rotblat and another dear friend of mine, the late Dr. Linus Pauling, in writing a noble page in history. In 1955, in the midst of the tensions of the

Cold War, the Russell-Einstein Manifesto was issued. This was an epochal declaration, in which many of the leading scientists and philosophers of the 20th century called for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. In total, 11 people of conscience and intellect signed the appeal, including Einstein, Yukawa, Rotblat and Pauling. The latter three men also kept the spirit of the declaration alive through the Pugwash Conferences, working together in the struggle for world peace. [Dr. Rotblat is currently president emeritus of the Pugwash Conferences.]

The ideals championed by Josei Toda are shining in the 21st century.

The first time a Pugwash Conference was held in Japan was in August 1975, in Kyoto, the city where Dr. Yukawa lived. Kyoto was chosen because everyone was eager to have the Japanese scientist participate. In May of that year, however, Dr. Yukawa was suddenly hospitalized. He was found to have cancer. With the encouragement and nursing care of his wife, Sumi, he was able to fight his illness and attend the conference.

His opening speech was so energetic that it was hard to be-

lieve he had recently been so ill. He called to those present: "We must return to the spirit of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 20 years ago. Nuclear weapons are an enemy of all humanity, and their complete elimination is our ultimate goal."

Dr. Rotblat was the next to speak. He declared that he had the greatest respect for the invincible courage of Dr. Yukawa in attending the conference despite his illness, and he promised that he would do his best to keep the Japanese scientist's spirit alive in the Pugwash Conferences. It is a wonderful story of shared commitment, as rousing as a great drama.

Dr. Rotblat first visited Japan in 1957, shortly after the first of the Pugwash Conferences was held. [That conference was held in July 1957 in the village of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, from which the Pugwash Conferences take their name.] This was the same year that Mr. Toda made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons at the Mitsuzawa Stadium in Yokohama, on Sept. 8.

Reflecting later on this coincidental timing, Dr. Rotblat told me: "I also regret that I never met Mr. Toda in person because he died shortly afterward. But nev-

ertheless, the work that he started has been pursued in parallel by you and the Soka Gakkai, and we at Pugwash — for both our organizations are committed to the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons, indeed a world free of war altogether."

The ideals championed by Mr. Toda — human revolution, global citizenship and the right of all human beings to live happily — are shining ever more brightly as a key philosophy of peace for the 21st century.

A new appreciation of Dr. Linus Pauling's lifelong dedication to peace is now spreading.

Dr. Linus Pauling's eldest son, Dr. Linus Pauling Jr., a renowned psychiatrist, is also a dear friend of mine. The "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition, which is the fruit of our friendship with the Pauling family, has to date been viewed by some 400,000 people in the United States.

Mountains of abuse and persecution were heaped on the late Dr. Pauling because of his activities for peace. These included insidious attacks by the authorities, such as his interrogation by various U.S. senate committees. However, together with his

wife Ava Helen, Dr. Pauling always faced these challenges bravely and continued his anti-war struggle. A renewed appreciation of his lifelong dedication to peace is now spreading.

On Feb. 28 this year, a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Dr. Pauling's birth was held at his alma mater, Oregon State University. At that ceremony, Dr. Pauling Jr. related: "My father said: 'I am certain that after my passing, the struggle for peace that my wife and I have devoted our lives to will be carried into the future by President Ikeda and the SGI.'" I share this statement with you because it is a very important declaration. [Dr. Pauling Jr. also said that one of the greatest highlights of his father's life was meeting President Ikeda. Through his encounter with the SGI leader, he continued, his father was convinced that the struggle for peace to which he and his wife had dedicated the better part of their lives was identical to that advanced by the SGI.]

The 20th century was a century of war and violence. In its midst, valiant fighters for the cause of world peace passionately upheld the torch of justice. Now that torch has been

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

squarely entrusted to the SGI, a movement of global citizens.

We are forging deeper exchange with thinking people throughout the world.

Dr. Yukawa said: "Peace is something that the majority of the people must work together diligently and ceaselessly to build. While destruction can be carried out by a minority, construction requires the concerted efforts of the majority, which is the reason for the uncertainty of humanity's future." The uncertainty clouding humanity's future cited by Dr. Yukawa still persists.

And if that is not enough, many thinking people are sounding the alarm at the signs of growing danger they see in Japan. They see a society seething with envy and jealousy, an upsurge in narrow-minded nationalism, the irresponsible, defamatory reporting of the mass media, human rights infringements and the steady siege on spiritual and religious freedom.

As SGI members, we are committed to forging deeper exchange with thinking people throughout the world and further developing at all costs an unshakable alliance for peace and humanism.

Those who only act out of obligation cannot create their own history.

The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for whom I have had an immense fondness since my youth, has left a great mountain range of towering masterworks. He continually strove to elevate the "pyramid" of his life as high as he possibly could. He continued writing to the end of his days, never giving up on challenging himself.

Goethe hated what he called "mannerism," asserting: "Mannerism is always longing to have done, and has no true enjoyment in work." Those who have no challenge or purpose of their own, who only act out of obligation, cannot create their own history.

Each day of life is a new, precious and irreplaceable day. Those who challenge themselves earnestly, with all their heart and being, shine with joy and fulfillment. In each fresh day of challenge, we can open the way to momentous victory.

As Goethe writes:

*If you act with determination, you will succeed
For the work was already half done.
The twinkling stars are my sun.*

Night exists only for the coward.

In other words, are we going to do it or not? If we start a task with steadfast determination, it is already half completed. For the courageous person, the twinkling stars are as bright as the sun. But for the coward, there is only the blackness of night. Therefore, have the courage to take that first step, says Goethe.

Like Goethe, who caused the sun to rise in the vast skies of his heart, let us, too, live in such a way that all of our actions are a cause for victory.

Leaders need to communicate clearly. They need to give everyone courage and hope. This is the model that all wise leaders have shown us down through the ages.

The renowned Chilean poet Pablo Neruda writes: "He who does not fight now is a coward. Ours is not the time for looking back on past achievements or for exploring the labyrinth of dreams."

He also cries out:

*Now, let us sing together
Of those who have risen up
from endless sorrows,
Of those who have appeared
Out of the heavy silence and
solemn victory.*

The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau declares, "You owe the use of your life to your fellow men!" That is, we must dedicate our lives to the welfare of humanity.

And Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the father of European unification with whom I published a dialogue titled *Civilization East and West*, states: "Without improvement, there is no incentive. Without incentive, there is no accomplishment."

Since we champion the cause of good and truth, it is vital that we emerge victorious.

Exactly 50 years ago today, on March 28, 1951—a Wednesday just like today—President Toda spoke at a monthly chapter leaders meeting. It was in the midst of the Korean War and a month before he became the second Soka Gakkai president. "How can we bring the light of hope to the peoples of Asia, and indeed all humanity, who do not know what tomorrow will bring?" he asked. "Surely it is only by enabling them to be embraced in the compassion of Nichiren Daishonin. In other words, kosen-rufu is the only way.

"And who will carry out this sacred task? Though the Buddha's will is difficult to fathom,

it is we of the Soka Gakkai and no one else. [The propagation of the Daishonin's Buddhism in Asia and the rest of the world] has been our destiny and mission since the time of our mentor Mr. Maki-guchi.... All that is left is for us to advance, to fight on."

It is the Soka Gakkai—made up of each one of you—that has worked to actualize kosen-rufu, the Daishonin's will, in complete accord with the lion's roar of President Toda.

Buddhism is about winning. Since we champion the cause of good and truth, it is vital that we emerge victorious. If we summon courageous faith and fight tenaciously against evil and injustice, we will definitely attain clear, incontestable results.

"We will advance toward kosen-rufu! Forward, ever forward! Taking on challenge after challenge!" This is the Soka Gakkai's eternal vow.

It is from this commitment

that we can build a magnificent force for peace among the people. No matter how deeply society sinks into chaos, if the people stand up, there will be hope.

Now is our chance to construct the foundations for lasting peace. Let us unite in purpose and advance without retreating a single step.

In closing, I call to you: Be strong, be ever strong, and adorn the drama of your life with triumph! **WT**

IN THE JULY 20 ISSUE

Advanced-level Exam: Sample Questions Coming Soon

1) Date of the Exam: Sunday, Oct. 21, 2001.

2) Eligibility of Candidates: Those who are currently SGI-USA members and who have passed the SGI-USA Study Department Intermediate-level or Senior-level examination previously.

3) Study Materials: The study materials are the same as announced at the end of 1998. The materials are from three different sources. *Selected Lectures on the Goshō*, vol. 1, and *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*,

vol. 1, are available at SGI-USA bookstores and from the SGI-USA Mail Order Center.

Source No. 1: Selected Lectures on the Goshō, vol. 1, published by NSIC in 1980.

- "The True Entity of Life" (pp. 3–24, 30–38, 58–70, 87–89).
- "Heritage of the Ultimate Law" (pp. 95–109, 121–23, 150–55, 169–72, 190–95).
- "The True Object of Worship" (pp. 203–23, 240–81).

Source No. 2: The Wisdom of Lotus Sutra, vol. 1, pub-

lished by World Tribune Press.

- The entire book (1st through 9th installments of "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" series that began in the April 1995 *Seikyo Times* and continued in *Living Buddhism*).

Source No. 3: Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue.

- The entire pamphlet.

4) Sample Questions: The sample questions will be published in the July 20 issue of the *World Tribune*.

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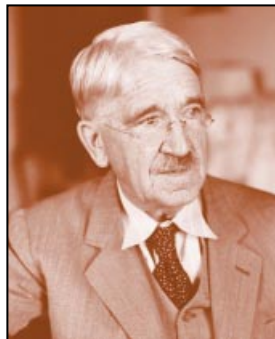
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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 6 SPEECH

Following in the Footsteps of Dewey and Makiguchi

'Whatever challenges you may face,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'please proceed with composure and dauntless conviction — following the examples of John Dewey and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi!'



John Dewey



Tsunesaburo Makiguchi

SGI President Ikeda's acceptance speech upon receiving a commendation from the Center for Dewey Studies of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The ceremony was held at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, on June 6.

I want to thank our women's division members from throughout the Kanto Region for traveling such long distances in this rainy weather to join us today. My thanks also to the student division members.

In the midst of the struggle for women's suffrage in the United States in the early 20th century, activists held a parade down Fifth Avenue in New York City. They marched cheerfully and energetically, calling out for the right of women to participate in government.

Among the many women in the parade was a tall older man carrying a placard, marching enthusiastically along with the rest. The placard said: "Men Can Vote! Why Can't I?" People lining the street laughed and applauded at the humorous sight of a man carrying a placard obviously designed for a woman. The man had picked up the placard without stopping to look at what it said.

This unaffected, cheerful champion of human rights was none other than the great American philosopher and educator, John Dewey.

As our distinguished guest, Director of the Center for Dewey Studies Larry Hickman, has pointed out, John Dewey and Soka Gakkai founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi have much in common. One im-

portant point of resemblance that deserves special attention is how both men were dedicated to raising the curtain on an age of women. They both conferred closely with women and joined them in their struggles.

Most esteemed Dr. Hickman, honored guests and fellow members: On this auspicious day, the 130th anniversary of Makiguchi's birth, I humbly accept on behalf of my illustrious predecessor the honor that has been conferred on me by the Center for Dewey Studies. As the third Soka Gakkai president, nothing could make me happier.

Thank you very, very much.

The more people are deceived by lies, the more rampant the abuses of authority become.

Assembled today are representatives of the Kanto women's division, the Soka Gakkai's strongest alliance for peace. To all our members from Saitama, Chiba, Ibaraki, Gumma, and Tochigi prefectures [which comprise the Soka Gakkai's Kanto Region], thank you for your tremendous efforts. I deeply appreciate everything you are doing.

The victory of Kanto will determine the victory of Japan. That is the age we have now entered.

At the same time, in all regions across Japan, our members are advancing enthusiastically, determined to realize victory in our endeavors.

Congratulations, too, to the young men and women of the student division who are here today — representing students from Soka University and 127 other colleges and universities throughout Japan — on this commemorative meeting celebrating the division's establishment [on June 30, 1957]! I am confident that in the future, great political leaders, Nobel Prize-winning scholars and top leaders in all fields will emerge from your ranks.

I will leave a record for posterity of the names of all the noble Kanto women's division and student division members in attendance at this historic gathering.

Recently, my wife and Yoshiko Hirakawa, Kanto women's division leader, proposed making this profoundly meaningful day, June 6 — Makiguchi's birthday — Kanto Women's Division Day. This proposal has now been adopted, and I want to take this opportunity to announce it to you all. Congratulations, Kanto women's division members! My dearest wish is that each of you, without a single exception, will become happy.

The Buddhist scriptures tell

us that the number six represents perfect endowment (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 249–50, 365). I pray that the lives of our Kanto women's division members will be fully endowed with benefit, good fortune, wisdom, brilliance, strength, health, longevity, harmony and happiness.

My wife and I will keep chanting strongly that, from the ranks of the Kanto women's division and from among the successors whom they raise, many incredibly talented, capable individuals — Tsunesaburo Makiguchis of the 21st century — will appear and take their place on the world stage.

Some 80 years ago, John Dewey, a model of global citizenship, visited Japan and China [from 1919–21]. The American educator expressed strong indignation at the arrogance with which Japan treated its neighbor China and at the way it attempted to conceal that iniquity with lies and deception.

Dewey was quick to recognize deception and stern in his reaction to it. That is only right.

The more people there are who are deceived and led astray by treacherous lies, the more rampant the abuses of authority become. Those in power then manipulate the blindfolded masses and defame decent, upright individuals by means of false accusations inspired by jealousy. And then begins the reckless dash toward nationalism that tramples on friendly



SGI President Ikeda shakes hands with Dr. Larry A. Hickman, director of the Center for Dewey Studies, June 6, in Tokyo.

ties with other nations.

That is why malicious lies and deceptions must never be left unchallenged. This is history's lesson to us. We must be vigilant in this regard in Japan today.

During Dewey's visit to Japan, the Japanese government wanted to bestow a decoration on him, but he firmly rejected the proposal, saying that the system of conferring those awards was undemocratic. This is a fact that is on record.

Incurring slander and abuse in spreading the Law is the highest honor.

Like Makiguchi, Dewey did not write an autobiography. However, Dewey's spiritual legacy is being perpetuated and disseminated worldwide through the energetic efforts of the Center for Dewey Studies and its director, Dr. Hickman. Let us give Dr. Hickman, who has pursued the most noble human path of a spiritual successor, a magnificent "decoration of the heart"—a sincere round of applause that symbolizes the profound trust and respect of the people.

Dewey and Makiguchi were both dedicated educators whose lives were guided by a philosophy of action. Burning with principle and courage, always striving to create something of value toward a better society, they fostered the growth of young people, heirs to the future, in a vital, free and creative manner.

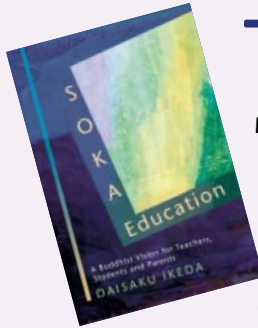
In the fight against political corruption, Dewey participated in political campaigns. To strengthen democracy, it is crucial that citizens and students keep a close watch on government and make their voices heard.

Dewey also fought head-on against dictators of the likes of Hitler and Stalin—and, indeed, against any authoritarian force, whether of the right or left, that threatened democracy. He became the target of unjust personal attacks because of this. However, persecution is an honor for those who are fighting for what is right.

In the realm of Buddhism, incurring slander and abuse as a result of our efforts to spread the Law is the highest honor. It is actual proof that we will attain Buddhahood. Nichiren Daishonin teaches that we must never fear such persecution.

The most important value for Dewey, which he dedicated his life to defending, was democracy. In his view, democracy was not merely a political system. It was something that extended much further—it was a way of life.

Dewey and Makiguchi Highlighted in New Book



The lives of John Dewey and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi are discussed further in SGI President Ikeda's newest book from Middleway Press, **Soka Education: A Buddhist Vision for Teachers, Students and Parents**. This book, available in August, features the SGI leader's major speeches and papers on education, including a brand new paper he wrote for the Center for Dewey Studies. **Soka Education** will be available from your favorite bookseller or on-line at www.middlewaypress.com.

Our discussion meetings are strongholds of 'creative democracy.'

To Dewey, democracy meant that people should not discriminate against others or be discriminated against because of their color, birth, religious beliefs or other personal beliefs. It meant each individual believing in the possibilities of human nature and, based on close exchange and dialogue, leading lives of mutual growth and self-improvement. It meant each individual becoming strong and wise, resolutely opposing the enemies of democracy, and triumphing in that struggle. It meant everyone contributing and working continuously to create a more humane world.

Dewey called this "creative democracy."

What did Dewey regard as the strongholds of this living democracy? They were not the parliaments of power or the authoritarian cathedrals of organized religion. Instead, they were the street corners where neighbors gathered and discussed events, the living rooms of houses and apartments where friends and family freely conversed with one another. This was the conclusion of one of the world's great educators.

Soka Gakkai discussion meetings, which are held in every town and city throughout the land, are precisely this. The Soka Gakkai is leading the way in championing the true principles of democracy in Japan.

During World War II, Makiguchi was constantly tailed by Japan's infamous "thought police"—the Special Higher Police—and though they ordered him to stop his activities time and again, he courageously continued to engage in a dialogue for the sake

of peace and justice. He also traveled energetically throughout the Kanto area.

When my wife was a child, Makiguchi attended a discussion meeting at her home [in Tokyo]. She is a witness of his tireless efforts. His lion's roar is indelibly engraved in her life.

I declare proudly together with all of you that our indomitable alliance of humanity, which originates from our noble predecessor Makiguchi, truly represents the practical application of Dewey's creative democracy.

Women have great power to solve problems that others have given up on.

Dewey had profound respect for the well-known American social and peace activist Jane Addams. They worked together for various causes, and she was a source of immense inspiration to him.

A native of Illinois, the location of the Center for Dewey Studies, Addams was the first American woman to win a Nobel Prize [the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1931]. She was a great American woman who fought all her life for humanitarian causes and peace.

Everyone today praises the members of the Kanto women's division as the "great women" of the Soka Gakkai. Kanto shines with the spirit of valiant struggle. Keep up the good work, Kanto members!

Addams engaged in grassroots work to help the poorest and most disadvantaged in society. Fighting against self-serving politicians, she helped win the struggle for women's suffrage. She brought about tremendous reforms that benefited the lives of many ordinary people, solving problems that others had given up on as hopeless.

Women have great power.

Addams said [referring to one of the initiatives she launched with her colleagues]: "The undertaking 'marched,' as the French say, from the very first, and always on its own feet. Although there were difficulties, none of them proved insurmountable."

"On its own feet"—this is a perfect description of all of you, who are "marching" energetically for peace, without any thought of personal reward or praise.

Addams also said that however long and difficult the path to establishing justice might be, justice will only be secured if we keep working for it ceaselessly. This has much in common with the untiring spirit of "brave and vigorous exertion" expounded in Buddhism.

Fundamental to victory in life is having patience and perseverance.

In life, struggles and challenges lead to growth—they add zest to life. When we stop challenging ourselves, we stop growing. Stagnation sets in. Life feels empty and meaningless. Those who engage in Soka Gakkai activities are positive and filled with life.

As Dr. Hickman says, a happy person is one who is always growing. In other words, not advancing is regressing. The important thing is to win in the task or challenge at hand—to win without fail.

Life means struggle. Animals, plants and all living things are engaged in an earnest struggle to live and survive.

Democracy, too, is something that is won through continuous struggle. Through our determined efforts to ensure that democracy triumphs, we can create a solid cause for the

eternal growth, victory and prosperity of ourselves, our families and all with whom we have a profound connection.

When he was 80, Dewey said, "My philosophy of life is based essentially on the single word patience." Fundamental to victory in life is patience. No one can compare to a person who has patience.

The Soka Gakkai has encountered countless challenges and difficulties over the years, but it has overcome them all. None of the intrigues launched against us by the authorities has been able to bring us down. The Soka Gakkai has triumphed through patience and perseverance.

May all of you, too, live your lives with tenacity and patience. Whatever challenges you may face, please proceed with composure and dauntless conviction—following the examples of Dewey and Makiguchi!

Walking the path of the disciple makes all the difference in our lives.

There are many paths in life. There are paths leading to decadence and corruption, and paths leading to unhappiness and misery. May you, my friends, walk the path of truth and justice, the path leading to growth and fulfillment. Growth and fulfillment are to be found in carrying out Soka Gakkai activities.

May you also walk the path of dialogue and hope. Please meet and interact with all kinds of people. As our personal network of dialogue expands, so does our state of life and our happiness. Hope and happiness are found in the midst of this noble activity. Hope is something we create for ourselves.

And may you always walk the disciple's path. The Soka Gakkai is strong and has achieved the development it has today because the mentor-disciple relationship underpins it. Whether or not we have this relationship makes all the difference in our lives.

Let us advance together cheerfully on the path leading to the triumph of democracy!

The Soka Gakkai is bright and positive—that is why it attracts so many people. It is filled with joy—that is why it has grown and developed! It is here that the path of kosen-rufu, of world peace, unfolds.

I close my speech with the earnest prayer that you will continue to advance together joyfully and harmoniously with friends who share our commitment to justice and truth, forging strong bonds of unity and trust.

Thank you so much. **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

A Philosophy of Action

‘John Dewey’s philosophy was a philosophy of action,’ SGI President Ikeda writes. ‘It was a democratic philosophy aimed at nurturing individuals who could contribute actively to society, rather than being isolated and removed from it.’

The obstacles which confront us are stimuli to variation, to novel response, and hence are occasions of progress.” These are the words of the American philosopher and educator John Dewey, for whom first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi had abiding respect and admiration.

Dewey’s educational philosophy brought profound changes to education in countries across the globe in the 20th century. His social philosophy also played a major role in America’s economic recovery after the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Dewey, born in 1859, was 12 years Makiguchi’s senior. These two men who lived in roughly the same era share surprising similarities in their ideas and actions.

Five years ago, I gave a lecture at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York City, in which I touched on Dewey’s philosophy of education and Makiguchi’s concept of value-creating education. Dewey, incidentally, taught at Columbia University for many years.

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In the auspicious month of June, we mark the anniversary of Dewey’s passing on the 1st and the 130th anniversary of Makiguchi’s birth on the 6th. It was my honor to meet with a noted scholar who has solemnly carried on Dewey’s intellectual legacy—Dr. Larry Hickman. He is the director of the internationally renowned Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

The epitaph on Dewey’s grave is inscribed with this passage from one of his works:



SGI President Ikeda meets with Director of the Center for Dewey Studies Larry A. Hickman, June 6.

“Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it.”

Dr. Hickman emanates the quiet pride of a person whose life and scholarly research are dedicated to carrying out this lofty responsibility. This path of transmitting spiritual treasures to the future also resonates with the path of mentor and disciple that is the essence of humanistic education.

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Education determines the future. Education creates a new world.

A century ago, Dewey called for the kind of education in which “the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized.” Placing the child at the center of education, the American educator said, represented “a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus when the astronomical center shifted from the earth to the sun.” This vision was born from experience gained through establishing an experimental elementary school attached to the University of Chicago, where

Dewey was then a professor, and putting into practice and testing his educational ideas and theories.

Makiguchi, too, from his long, strenuous experience in teaching, proclaimed that the happiness of children is the true aim of education. The more one studies the educational ideas and theories of Dewey and Makiguchi, the more conspicuous their similarities become.

In a thesis he wrote when he was 25, Makiguchi quoted a passage from *Psychology*, a work authored by Dewey when he was 28. Soka University graduate student Takao Ito kindly sent me the English original of this passage.

Mr. Ito, incidentally, is a graduate of the Kansai Soka School System and Soka University’s 22nd class. He is presently a doctoral student of Soka University’s Faculty of Letters. He is also working energetically as a vice leader of the education section of the Soka Gakkai student division.

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What were the words of the young Dewey that had special resonance for the young Makiguchi? It was this passage: “If we inquire under what circumstances any object or event enters into our intellectual life as significant, we find that it is when it is connected in an or-

derly way with the rest of our experience. The meaningless is that which is out of harmony, which has no connection with other elements. To have meaning, the fact or event must be related to some other fact or event. The isolated, the separate, is never the object of knowledge.”

Only when it is connected to a greater whole can knowledge or learning create value. Dewey and Makiguchi insisted that education, rather than just cramming fragmented bits of information into students’ heads, be oriented toward helping students cultivate knowledge that serves humanity.

This is one of the reasons why Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, which was dedicated on May 3, will begin as a full-fledged liberal arts college with a commitment to fostering well-rounded individuals who will use their knowledge to contribute to humankind.

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Dewey visited Japan for two months from February 1919. He then visited China, arriving at the height of the anti-imperialist, anti-Japanese May Fourth Movement. [This was an intellectual and social reform struggle that took place in China from 1917–21, the pivotal event of which took place on May 4, 1919, in Beijing, from which

the movement takes its name.] After two years of lecturing in China, he again stopped briefly in Japan on his way back to the United States.

Around this time, there were growing calls in Japan to adopt democratic ideals and practices. Dewey observed that this rising public opinion lacked consistency and was at essence shallow.

The Japanese could turn even philosophy into an object of fashion. They seemed able to believe one thing one day and its opposite the next, without the slightest discomfiture.

As a result, though they might seem to be advocating democracy and reform, they had no real, practical grasp of these concepts. There was no knowing when they might suddenly slide back in the direction of nationalism or, just as easily, hurtle down the path toward extreme radicalism. With his keen insight, Dewey pointed out this dangerous aspect of Japanese society.

His observations apply with equal aptness to Japan today.

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Dewey’s philosophy was a philosophy of action. It was a democratic philosophy aimed at nurturing individuals who could contribute actively to society, rather than being isolated and removed from it.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Dewey participated in demonstrations for women’s suffrage in the United States. When the Sacco-Vanzetti case rocked American society, he rallied to the cause of the innocent defendants and refuted the falsehoods that had been spread about them. [In 1921, two Italian anarchists who had immigrated to the United States, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were convicted of murdering a paymaster at a shoe factory in South Braintree, Mass. It was widely recognized at the time that they were innocent and had been convicted and sentenced to death solely because of their radical political views. Dewey and many other leading American intellectuals spoke out against this miscarriage of justice, but Sacco and Vanzetti were executed in 1927.]

In the 1930s, when fascism was on the rise, Dewey said that “the liberals are divided in outlook and endeavor while reactionaries are held together by community of interests” and called for the organization of the forces who championed truth and

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, 10

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 19-20

Shin'ichi Yamamoto ponders how to help each student division member reveal his or her potential and raise each of them into a capable leader in the movement to spread Nichiren Daishonin's great life philosophy around the world.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto later learned that the Nomura brothers, two leaders within Kyoto University, had lost their father in a traffic accident eight years earlier. He had operated a pharmacy near Dotombori, downtown Osaka, and, although they were not wealthy, the family had enjoyed comfort and stability until his death.

Mr. Nomura was an atheist. He took good care of his health and was careful in everything he did. Even so, he died in an accident. After his death, the family's situation took a downward turn. They were left with a debt of millions of yen. For the first time, the Nomura brothers felt the force of destiny upon them.

Their mother was not well. Looking for relief from her suffering and for spiritual support, she began a religious quest. She learned about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism from a Soka Gakkai member who came to the shop on business, and though she had doubts, she joined in December 1955. At the start, she did not practice her new faith very energetically. Then a growth she had on her back became infected and she chanted daimoku in earnest for it to heal. When it did, she be-

came strongly convinced of the efficacy of Buddhism and she urged her sons to join the Soka Gakkai, too.

The Nomura brothers had witnessed their mother's recovery, and in 1957, partly out of a sense of duty to her, they decided to join. Their interest in the activities of the Soka Gakkai had actually been piqued the previous year when its participation in campaigns toward the Upper House elections had been the focus of much attention. To these two young men, these efforts of the organization to promote social reform revealed its energy as a religious group rooted in the lives of the people.

In 1961, both brothers were accepted into Kyoto University. Through speaking with them, Shin'ichi got the impression that Itaru, the elder, was a good-natured, easy-going person. He did not seem overly concerned with details. These are fine qualities, but without the ability to sharply discern between good and evil and a strong spirit to fight wrongdoing, such a person may end up being used by the ill-intentioned. It is therefore of utmost importance to cast off the shell of one's limitations and thoroughly develop the courage to refute falsehood and reveal the truth,

the heart of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The younger brother, Isamu, was small in physical stature, but he was a passionate idealist who strove to be the best in whatever he did. Passion-



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

ate idealists, however, may at times neglect to make steady efforts.

As Shin'ichi listened to the self-introductions of the students at Kyoto University, he thought about how to help each person reveal his or her potential and how to raise each of them to become capable leaders of the movement to spread the Daishonin's great life philosophy around the world.

Koichi Tagawa, a slender, bespectacled young man, sat in the front row. Having graduated from Kyoto University's Faculty of Medicine, he was now an intern in the department of microbiology doing research in immunology. He had joined the Soka Gakkai a little over two years earlier. Prior to becoming a member, he had suffered from chronic nephritis, at one point returning to his home in Kagawa, Shikoku, for hospitalization. As he struggled with his illness, he began to ponder questions about life and the human spirit. He devoured books on psychology, tried Zen meditation, and read *Passages Deploing Deviations of Faith* (of the Jodo Shin school of Buddhism) and the Lotus Sutra. No matter how much he read, however, he could not find the answers he was looking for.

Due to his condition, Tagawa often needed to lie down and rest. Seeing this, the older couple that ran the boarding house where he was staying became concerned, and they told him about the Daishonin's Buddhism. Tagawa attended a discussion meeting, where he heard someone say that the Soka Gakkai was based on the "true Lotus Sutra." He decided to join, more out of a desire to study the sutra than anything else. But as he became increasingly involved in Soka Gakkai activities, his nephritis improved, and this real demonstration of the power of faith gave him confidence.

Naomi Takaoka was also a medical student. Her face was lackluster and her eyes vacant. She became a member a year before at her mother's encouragement but had doubts about the organization and felt out of place. She also had a fear of speaking in front of others. She was a reluctant participant in this meeting.

Next to her sat Eriko Nakano, a student of pharmacology. She had participated in the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" lecture series in Tokyo and was now a leader of the Kansai young women's student division.

In the back row was a young man who appeared to be about

30. His name was Yasuo Takigawa, and he worked for Japan National Railways. He had received permission from his employer to attend graduate school while working.

One member sat hunched behind the others, as if he didn't want to be seen. Yoshiro Takagi had only joined a month before and had purchased his first copy of the Goshu just prior to the meeting. Sitting in front of Takagi was Takuya Okutani, who had introduced him to the practice.

Most of the participants had only become members of the Soka Gakkai a year or two earlier, and hadn't much experience with organizational activities. This was very different from the lectures given on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," where selected leaders of the student division, including standing secretaries and corps leaders, had attended.

Shin'ichi addressed a male student who was thin and pale: "Are you all right? Are you getting enough to eat?"

"Umm, actually, I often have to skip meals. I don't have very much money."

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



'Ode to Joy': Exalting the Human Spirit

PERSPECTIVE

By ROBERTA RIGNEY AND
BARBARA CEDARBLADE
MARIN COUNTY, CALIF.

SGI-USA choruses across America will perform the 'Ode to Joy' this summer at festivals in every zone. Roberta Rigney and Barbara Cedarblade will sing the artistic masterpiece SGI President Ikeda describes as 'a sublime, eternal hymn that links all humanity as brothers and sisters.'

To herald in the new millennium, SGI-USA has resolved to have a grand performance of the "Ode to Joy" sung by 100,000 voices. SGI President Ikeda has spoken many times about the con-



Barbara Cedarblade



Roberta Rigney

nection between this great musical work — penned by Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller and set to music by Ludwig Von Beethoven — and our Buddhist practice, our triumph over darkness as we enter the new millennium.

SGI-USA choruses across America will perform the "Ode to Joy" this summer at festivals in every zone. Audiences, as well as chorus members, will sing the artistic masterpiece President Ikeda describes as "a sublime, eternal hymn that links all humanity as brothers and sisters, a rousing paean of the people" (Feb. 5, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 4).

Schiller is thought by many

to be one of the greatest Western European literary figures. He was preoccupied with the idea of freedom. In his youth, it was physical freedom that found its way into his works. Later in his life, it was spiritual freedom.

To understand Schiller is to understand the history of the French Revolution, which broke out in 1789. It was the culmination of a movement of people reacting against the authorities of the Catholic Church, who sought to dominate every phase of life, public and private. This Enlightenment movement was humanitarian, and skeptical of religious authority and

dogma. Its leaders believed in the dignity of man and sought the betterment of humanity through education, with an emphasis on reason and knowledge gained through experience and science. This sounds strikingly like the creed of Soka Education.

While Schiller's early writings were tragedies, his later plays dealt with freedom of the soul, enabling a person to rise above the pressures of the material world. They show the hero struggling between the material world and an eternal ideal, striving to maintain spiritual integrity. This, in fact, has much in common with our practice of Buddhism. By challenging our struggles in daily life with our practice, we forge our faith. Through this internal human revolution within each of our lives, we find spiritual freedom based on a deep, indestructible and unshakable peace and confidence.

Schiller also had great hopes for the humanizing force of art. His writings and poetry were concerned with how art can help humanity attain inner peace, and how, through the "aesthetic education" of each individual, a more humane and compassionate society may develop.

Again, this parallels the val-

ues of the SGI and President Ikeda's emphasis on all-inclusive culture festivals and performing arts activity groups. He continually stresses that cultural exchanges help people to appreciate the dignity of their lives and achieve harmony between themselves and their environment.

Schiller wrote several important treatises on aesthetics. In 1785, just four years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, he wrote "An die Freude" ("To Joy"). The piece is a joyous exaltation of the bond shared by all humanity, which has its basis in eternal, unlimited love. It is about world peace through individual happiness.

Through our Buddhist practice and study, we realize that all human beings have the world of Buddhahood within and are equal. We are able to transcend the barriers of discrimination and kowtowing to authority, not judging people through a system of vertical assessments. Rather, we can feel great joy in the glorious potential existing in every human being.

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

FROM ESSAY, 8

justice. He also noted that liberals were weak when it came to "organization for action," asserting that "without this organization there is danger that democratic ideals may go by default."

At that same time, as Japan was beginning its headlong march into nationalism, Makiguchi was decrying the fact that corrupt, unscrupulous people were busily forming alliances, while good people remained isolated and separated.

If we are to prevent the spread of evil, it is vital that good people join forces and unite, that they organize so they can act effectively. This is the way to defeat evil.

Now we, following in the footsteps of our great predecessor who laid down his life for his beliefs, are building a vast, ever-growing alliance of people united in the cause of good in our communities and throughout the entire world.

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"Democracy begins in con-

versation," Dewey said on his 90th birthday. Embracing the conviction that there is no retirement from life, he lived a full, fruitful life up until his death at the age of 92.

Dewey wrote, "What one person and one group accomplish becomes the standing ground and starting point of those who succeed them." This was the eminent educator's pro-

found conviction.

Let us, too, resolutely struggle and grow together, securing a glorious new starting point for democracy in the new century!

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the June 13 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

COMING TO THE FNCC

Raising Our Children Conference Aug 16-19

Impression from last year's conference by Joe Carr, St. Louis, Minn.

Last year's conference was a movement of concerned adults and parents to create a paradigm shift in the SGI-USA, to make children an integral part of our meetings. I was also deeply impressed by the conference organizers and how committed they are to our children.

Finally, I was so touched by SGI President Ikeda's message to us. He referred to the children as "messengers from the future," because the future will be determined by the condition of our children today.

Upcoming conferences at the FNCC:

Youth Performing Groups	July 19-22	Raising Our Children	Aug. 16-19
Student Division Conference	Aug. 2-5	Men's Conference	Aug. 23-26
Jr. High and High School Conference	Aug. 9-12	Japanese Language Conference	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.

General Director Stresses Three Goals

By **JAMIE LIPTAN**
STAFF WRITER

Throughout the months of May and June, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima traveled across the country, visiting with members from Seattle to the Caribbean, and from Boston to Hawaii. Mr. Nagashima was able to visit dozens of cities, many for the first time.

Central to the general director's message were three organizational aims: expanding the number of SGI-USA districts in order to better care for members; sharing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with as many people as possible and encouraging them to take faith; and appointing youth leaders in every district throughout the country.

In many locations General Director Nagashima visited, the



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima meets with vibrant young people in Kansas City, Mo., June 19.

local organizations were able to appoint new youth district leaders. For example, on June 2 in

Chicago, 40 new district leaders were appointed.

General Director Nagashima also shared his vision for the second Seven Bells and how each person can grow immeasurably through the relationship of mentor and disciple. He explained that animals are capable of developing all kinds of relationships but only human beings have the ability

to develop the relationship of mentor and disciple.

"The disciple chooses the mentor, not the other way around," he clarified. "It must be a choice we make. Once we choose to live as a disciple, the boundless wisdom of the mentor can be revealed. The mentor's heart should serve as the inspiration, but it is up to the disciple to take action." **WT**



General Director Nagashima speaks about the mentor-disciple relationship to members at the Portland Community Center, May 23.

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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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.

Thanks for All Your Daimoku!

The SGI-USA Soka Spirit Committee thanks everyone for sending in their postcards from the "Daimoku Victory" booklets. These were first passed out on New Year's Day, 2000, and have been continually distributed over the last year and a half.

The total daimoku chanted in support of the Soka Spirit movement toward May 3, 2001, surpassed 4.5 billion. (The latest count is 4,595,530,000, and postcards are still coming in.)

Postcards were received not only from throughout the United States but from

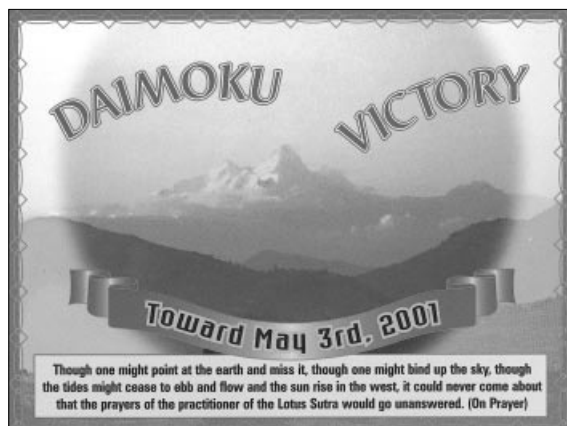
France, Ghana, Japan, Spain and other countries.

Many members reported experiencing tremendous benefits in their lives through this daimoku effort. During this period, the Soka Spirit movement has developed greatly in each area, involving the entire organization.

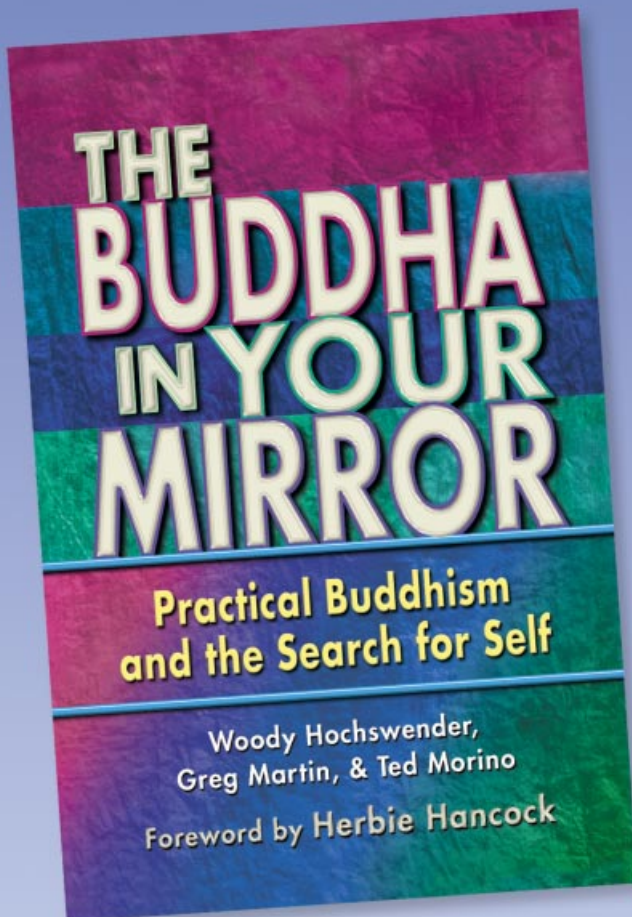
Although the booklet is now out of print, if you are still filling our postcards, you can send them to the address in the booklet. Your daimoku will be counted.

Thank you once again! Congratulations!

—SGI-USA SOKA SPIRIT COMMITTEE



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