

SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

VOV FESTIVAL LIGHTS UP HAWAII

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

By JOANNE TACHIBANA AND
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HAWAII CORRESPONDENTS

Hawaii's SGI-USA Family Youth Festival lit up the Neal Blaisdell Arena in Honolulu, June 7, with the theme "Youth Standing Together for Peace." Hawaii's governor, Benjamin J. Cayetano, proclaimed July 1-7 Victory Over Violence Week throughout the state, and proclamations and congratulations were received from dignitaries all over the state.

"Awesome," was the refrain echoing from the insiders and spectators as they described the festival. The event was ground breaking in many ways. It brought together a wide range of community co-sponsors and scores of exhibitors who support youth and nonviolence.

Renae Poarch, Teen Coordinator for the Domestic Violence Clearinghouse & Legal Hotline, which co-sponsored the

festival, enjoyed working with everyone and was a great spokesperson for the event on radio and TV. She commented that she is looking forward to working together with the SGI-USA in promoting VOV in Hawaii. Marsha Joyner, president of the Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition-Hawaii, another co-sponsor, set up an exhibit booth, enjoyed both performances and gave congratulatory remarks at



(Above) Performers grace the stage at Hawaii's SGI-USA Family Youth Festival, July 7, titled 'Youth Standing Together for Peace.' (Below) More than 8,000 people attend the two festival shows at the Neal Blaisdell Arena in Honolulu.

the evening show. Ms. Joyner was so impressed with the celebration that she has requested the VOV exhibit for the Nagasaki Peace Bell ceremony on Aug. 9 in Honolulu.

Hand-stamped purple VOV ribbons attached to bookmarks the festival were distributed to more than 150 locations throughout the state, including retail stores, malls, gas stations and restaurants.

The production team amassed an incredible amount of talent for the festival from a wonderful cross section of youth from the multiethnic groups of Hawaii. An impressive cast of 1,000 was drawn



PLEASE SEE FESTIVAL, 12



SGI-Cuba Music Festival in Havana, Cuba

On June 30, SGI-Cuba held a music festival at a theater in Havana City to commemorate the fifth anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's visit to their country. An SGI-Cuba leader gave opening remarks and another read President Ikeda's message. Young members presented dynamic, original and traditional dances of the Caribbean.

SGI Members from 24 Countries Participate in European Summit

On June 30 and July 1, SGI representatives from 24 European countries met for the 2nd European Summit Meeting at the SGI-France Culture Center in Charterettes, France. The meeting commemorated the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first trip to Europe. Participants discussed plans for holding small discussion meetings across Europe aiming to involve 50,000 people; a summer session for 10,000 focusing on the study of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism; and a European general meeting in Milan, Italy, in autumn 2001. The group also discussed the fundamental spirit of leaders to serve the members and foster capable people.

Representatives reported on activities conducted in their respective countries. In SGI-Italy, more than 30,000 at-

tended discussion meetings during one month, while 17,000 young people gathered for a meeting in March and 13,000 women gathered for their division meeting in June. In SGI-Germany, 4,000 members attended local discussion meetings during May. In SGI-France, discussion meeting participants during May exceeded 13,000 and about a month ago, the youth hosted cultural events in eight cities. Representatives from Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland also reported on activities in their respective countries.

SGI-Peru Engages in Relief Activities

In response to the June 23 earthquake that jolted southern Peru, killing at least 115 people and leaving more than 185,000 homeless, SGI-Peru members are engaging in emergency relief activities. The members are donating food, clothing and other daily necessities, which are transported by air to distribution areas for delivery by

SGI-Peru volunteers to earthquake victims. On June 7 and 8, SGI-Peru volunteers hand-delivered emergency supplies to about 6,000 families. Aftershocks are continuing and SGI-Peru is committed to helping rebuild the ravaged areas.

SGI-Thailand Hosts Education Lecture

On June 30, Samakom Sang Kunka Nai Prates Thai (SGI-Thailand) sponsored a lecture by Dr. Nibondh Sasidhorn, former education minister, at the Thonburi Center titled "Aiming for a Society for the Sake of Education." The lecture commemorated the 130th anniversary of the birth of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, educator and first Soka Gakkai president. More than 600 people attended the lecture, including Professor Maneewan Kamonpatana of Chulalongkorn University, president of the Thai Ideal Graduates Association.

Dr. Nibondh is an advisor to Siam University, which conferred an hon-

orary doctorate on SGI President Ikeda in November 2000. Touching on President Ikeda's education proposal made in September 2000, Dr. Nibondh said school is a place that allows children to exercise their creativity and flourish — a place that makes real contributions to society.

During the lecture, SGI-Thailand presented scholarships and grants to 10 Bangkok elementary schools and their students.

'The Prince and the Coral Sea' to be Published in Hindi

President Ikeda's *The Prince and the Coral Sea*, a book for children, will be published by the National Book Trust, India, in English and in 12 Indian languages, including Hindi. The National Book Trust publishes books considered to be of importance to society in English and 12 of the major Indian languages. In June 2000, it published a Hindi translation of *Education for Creative Living* by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, first president of the Soka Gakkai, and work is underway to translate it into 11 other Indian languages within the next two years.

Courtesy of SOKANET
(www.sokagakkai.or.jp)



Blue Deeper Than the Blue of the Indigo



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

From "The Supremacy of the Law," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 612-17.

Strengthen your resolve more than ever. Ice is made of water, but it is colder than water. Blue dye comes from indigo, but when something is repeatedly dyed in it, the color is better than that of the indigo plant. The Lotus Sutra remains the same, but if you repeatedly strengthen your resolve, your color will be better than that of others, and you will receive more blessings than they do. (WND, 615)

Depressed. Besieged with bills. Out of work. Buried in schoolwork. Major and minor health problems. These are just a few of the challenges many of us encounter today.



As human beings, we are all struggling with various problems, large and small.

The recipient of this letter, Nichimyo, was a single woman and parent living in the male-dominated, hierarchical, feudal Japanese society — difficult circumstances to say the least. As we empathize with her, we can see the relevance of Nichiren Daishonin's guidance as it applies to us today.

In the above passage, the Daishonin is encouraging Nichimyo and all of us to strengthen our resolve in faith and commitment to accomplishing kosen-rufu as the solution to our problems. The blue dye made from the indigo plant

represents this idea. Repeated soakings in the dye result in a rich blue color that is a far deeper blue than the plant itself.

In the same way, if we continually exert ourselves in the two ways of practice and study, we polish our lives more than we ever thought we could. This requires a tremendous struggle on our part, of course. However, by overcoming difficulties one by one, we become stronger and stronger. It empowers us with a greater wisdom from deep within our lives to view our circumstances clearly and forges us into people of genuine courage and compassion. We become people who truly care for and support others. This is how we soak ourselves in the indigo dye and the deeper color that results.

What we should always concentrate on, then, is making our faith deeper and stronger. This is how we can change any problem we face into a benefit. For the very reason that our life situations are challenging, we can develop our lives all the more. This is what Buddhism teaches as the principle of earthly desires are enlightenment. If we did not have strong desires, we would not be motivated. The

Daishonin thus tells us, "Burn the firewood of earthly desires and behold the fire of enlightened wisdom before their eyes" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 710).

A strong, resolute spirit of "No matter what, I will not be defeated — I will prove the power of faith for the sake of kosen-rufu" assures us of victory in every aspect of our lives. A practice imbued with this deep "color" of appreciation for the Gohonzon and the SGI expands our fortune exponentially. This is why SGI President Ikeda says: "Strength is happiness. Strength is itself victory. In weakness or cowardice there is no happiness. When you wage a struggle, you might win or lose. But regardless of the short-term outcome, the very fact that you continue to struggle proves your victory as a human being. A strong spirit, strong faith, and strong prayer — developing these is victory and the world of Buddhahood" (*Faith Into Action*, p. 76).

By immersing ourselves repeatedly in the "blue dye" of the Lotus Sutra through resolutely chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo to the Gohonzon and participating in SGI-USA activities, our lives take on the

depth and hue of the Buddha's compassion. **WT**

Correction

Parts 17-18 of the "Jeweled Sword" chapter of *The New Human Revolution* were incorrectly labeled 13-14 in the July 6 issue. Parts 13-14 appeared in the June 15 issue.

CORRECTED ON CD-ROM



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HONORING OUR PIONEERS — DAVID KASAHARA, FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

Forging Ahead on the Path of Justice

Persevering through the difficult times of his Buddhist practice, David Kasahara now sees victory in his life and his quest to support the SGI-USA members.

This experience originally appeared in the March 2 Japanese edition of the World Tribune.

In 1966, I was a young jazz dancer who had been active on the stage and in TV musical programs in Japan. I had a serious dream of studying jazz dance in America, the birthplace of jazz, in order to further my development as an artist. But when I got to New York, reality was much more severe than I thought. I had a tremendous struggle figuring out what direction to take. It was around that time that I met a woman who was a Soka Gakkai member, and she introduced me to Buddhism.

In the beginning, I was very resistant and skeptical about the Soka Gakkai. In those days, the Soka Gakkai was often portrayed as a "violent religious organization" in Japan. But not many Japanese people lived in New York around that time, and I was lonely and anxious to see some Japanese faces, so I ended up attending the discussion meetings. Even as bashful and judgmental as I was, I couldn't resist the warmth of the members and began to practice.

In 1971, I became employed as a SGI-USA staff member working at the New York Community Center. Then, in the 1970s, the SGI-USA organization experienced a reformation that is sometimes referred to as "phase 2." Some insincere people took advantage of this situation for their own selfish motives. Many members, who had been fortunate enough to receive the Gohonzon, ultimately stopped practicing and left the organization.

I was the only SGI-USA staff member in New York at that time. All the complaints and criticisms against the SGI were directed at me. Day after day, I patiently endured slander and abuse. People would say to me: "We don't need any organiza-



SGI-USA Senior Vice General Director David Kasahara (center) enjoys a discussion with members of the FNCC staff.

tion! We don't need any leaders! We don't need the Goshō!" I keenly felt that, if left unchecked, this would destroy everything we had achieved in our organization.

That is why, in the current Soka Spirit movement, the courage to face evil and understand its intent is essential. Our courageous attitude to speak out regarding the justice of the mentor-disciple relationship is paramount. A leader must have a sense of responsibility. If he or she practices halfheartedly, without a sense of responsibility, he or she will become an enemy of kosen-rufu.

When "phase 2" began, I was in charge of the youth division in New York. There were many occasions when I felt deep anguish at my not being capable enough as a leader. I struggled hard during those seven years, determined, no matter what, to protect our organization in New York.

Finally, in 1981, SGI President Ikeda came to New York. It was on this trip that he wrote his poem "To My Young American Friends," heralding a historic new development of the kosen-rufu movement in the United States. The dark clouds, which had weighed so heavily upon the New York members, were blown away.

And as for myself, after those long years of struggle, I

joyfully threw my whole life into President Ikeda's visit. I was able to receive encouragement from him personally and felt embraced by the vastness of his life. This was the turning point for me.

In June 1994, my oldest son, George, was killed in an accident. He was 22 years old. President Ikeda, who was visiting London at the time, sent me words of encouragement immediately after the accident. He said, "Mr. Kasahara, it is for the sake of this very moment that you have been practicing this Buddhism!" His brief encouragement touched me very profoundly.

No matter how busy President Ikeda was on his European tour, he continued to send me constant encouragement. He wrote a poem for me: "How brave you are/ As you depart/ Taking on all the sufferings of your fellow members with all your life."

When I received this poem, I made a strong resolution: "There is a deep meaning to George's death. Our family will change this sorrow into mission and live our lives to the fullest for the sake of George. I will dedicate myself to kosen-rufu in order to repay my debt of gratitude to my mentor and fellow members."

The passing of George has

made the bonds of the remaining family members — myself, my wife, Patricia, my daughter, Margaret, my son, John, and my mother, who is 90 years old and has been living with us — much stronger.

Our family decided to donate George's organs to others who needed them. We were encouraged by a recent report that my son's organs are still alive and working in eight people who have since recovered from their illnesses.

The passing of my son also brought countless members to the community center, some of whom I had never met before, as well as many whom I'd worked together with over the years. In tears, they offered my family encouragement. Where else can you find such a wonderful, humanistic world but in the SGI!

On the other hand, when the chief priest of Myosetsu-ji temple in Flushing, N.Y., learned about the death of my son, he haughtily told people at his temple, "Kasahara got what he deserved—he did not follow the teachings of the high priest!" What a cold-hearted, inhumane thing to say!

Having heard this, I exploded in anger: "We will never be defeated by Nichiren Shōshū!" And the New York members also stood up in righteous anger for the sake of jus-

tice. We have since put even more effort into Soka Spirit activities, helping many temple members to find their way back to the Soka Gakkai.

I retired from working for the SGI-USA at the New York Culture Center at the end of January after having been fortunate enough to have worked as a staff member for 30 years. I have now started my new "third stage of life" as executive director of the Florida Nature and Culture Center, which was founded by President Ikeda. In my job, I have the pleasure of helping members from all over the United States and other countries who visit the FNCC.

As I look back upon my practice, it is President Ikeda's guidance that has supported and trained me. On one occasion, he told me: "Merchants must work to make money. Students must study to graduate. Likewise, you must practice hard to become a Buddha." His strict but loving gaze at that time is still engraved in my memory.

I cannot thank President Ikeda enough for guiding an immature person like myself into what I am today. Nor can I adequately thank the SGI. Today, I am deeply touched by the following passage in the Goshō: "A blue fly, if it clings to the tail of a thoroughbred horse, can travel ten thousand miles, the green ivy that twines around the tall pine can grow to a thousand feet" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 17).

This year, I made four New Year's resolutions: 1) to have a lifelong seeking mind; 2) to have a lifelong youthful spirit; 3) to strive for victory my whole life; and 4) to have lifelong appreciation.

With these resolutions in my heart, I feel stronger each day that my mission in life has just begun. In this year of 2001, I am making a fresh start once again! **W**

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 27 SPEECH—PART 1

BIG GOALS AND BIG VICTORIES

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda says that victory 'depends upon our determination. If we are going to do something, we may as well set big goals for ourselves and brightly and positively strive toward them.'

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 7th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, June 27.

Let me begin my speech today with the words of the famous French philosopher Henri Bergson: "The future belongs to those who work diligently." Those who spend their lives in shallow amusements, who avoid difficulties and challenges, who are spiritless and apathetic—in other words, those who make no effort to create anything of value in their lives—will have no future.

A bright future belongs to those who keep striving and tirelessly exerting themselves. The Soka Gakkai is advancing in complete accord with these words of Bergson.

The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe writes: "Zephyrs [Gentle breezes] breathe, we breathe in answer, roll the thunders, ours go rolling / Stunning in reverberation, threefold, tenfold, after it." We return the roar of the thunder with even louder thunder. We respond to one wild accusation with sound counter-arguments twofold, threefold and tenfold. We must make the jubilant cheers of people of principle and conviction resound throughout the land.

Newspapers and books are our enduring history.

The father of modern China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, boldly declares the arrival of a new age: "[When the Republic of China was established in 1912,] the people became the master, and the emperor became their servant." These are well-known words. The people are the sovereigns.

In Japan today, too,



SGI President Ikeda attends the 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, June 27.

sovereignty resides in the people. We all have the right to vote, and every individual and group has complete freedom to support and vote for any candidate he or she chooses. The constitution guarantees such fundamental freedoms. Each citizen of Japan is a sovereign.

The Soka Gakkai, denigrated in the past as a gathering of the poor and sick, has become Japan's pillar of peace. This is an amazing time. The Soka Gakkai's victory is the proud history of the people arising as a great force of outstanding leaders. It is proof of the indisputable advance of kosen-rufu.

Congratulations on this 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting! First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda [whose portraits are on display in the auditorium] are smiling with special joy today, as if to say: "We are so happy to see all of you gathered here in triumph!"

Today, we have with us representatives of our "uncrowned heroes," the deliverers of the

Seikyo Shimbun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. Every morning, rising with the sun and illuminating all like the sun, they go on their paper rounds. It is the duty of our leaders to wholeheartedly encourage, support and treasure these noble individuals. Such is the realm of faith.

From the organization's early days, many kosen-rufu leaders have received their training through working as "uncrowned heroes" and delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun*. The true spirit of leadership is to do one's part, however small, in taking the lead—for instance, in delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun*. In this regard, relying on others or adopting a superior attitude is a lowly, base attitude. Let me take this opportunity to praise and to say thank you once again to my most esteemed newspaper deliverers. I deeply appreciate all your hard work.

The French writer Victor Hugo writes, "The press is a living bugle, it sounds the morning call that awakens the people, it announces in a ringing voice the advent of right." The

mission of the press—that is, newspapers and books—is an important one. The press is our history. It endures, unlike television, which someone has said is like a ghost that disappears into nothingness when we switch it off.

How truly praiseworthy are our *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper deliverers, who sound the morning bugle of kosen-rufu and awaken us!

Hugo also says: "Gentlemen, what is an aid to the patriot? The press. And what is a scarecrow to the coward and the traitor? The press." The *Seikyo Shimbun* is a newspaper dedicated to refuting the erroneous and revealing the true for the sake of kosen-rufu, and those who deliver it each day are working harder than anyone for the sake of truth and justice.

Delivering the *Seikyo Shimbun* produces the same benefit as working to introduce Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to others. From the perspective of eternal life, you will absolutely be a victor. You will achieve a life-state of supreme happiness without fail. Deliv-

ering the *Seikyo Shimbun* is *shakubuku*, kosen-rufu, working to spread our network of friendship and the expansion of our movement.

I hope that all our *Seikyo Shimbun* deliverers will take care of themselves. Please make sure you get enough sleep, and use utmost prudence and wisdom to avoid accidents at all costs. My wife and I pray earnestly every day for the safety, good health, longevity and good fortune of our "uncrowned heroes."

By achieving many victories, we gain confidence and good fortune.

Our fellow members throughout the world are overjoyed at the wonderful strides we in Japan are making in our struggle. Nonmembers, too—people of intelligence and good conscience around the globe—are congratulating us on our efforts. They are hoping, watching and waiting for us to score an even greater victory.

It is always enjoyable to win. By winning, we write a great record of achievement. We gain

confidence and good fortune.

It all depends upon our determination. If we are going to do something, we may as well set big goals for ourselves and brightly and positively strive toward them.

I hope that all of you, as leaders of our movement, will work together with the regional leaders and display brilliant leadership in your respective areas, advancing in such seamless unity that all will acclaim you in praise and wonder.

Incidentally, the unity of our members across Japan—in Kansai in particular—has been superlative. Thank you very much!

The honors the SGI is receiving symbolize worldwide kosen-rufu.

We have many SGI members joining us today, hailing from 12 countries and territories. Thank you for traveling from so far away! There is an especially large contingent of members from South Korea, Japan's neighbor across the sea. I am delighted to see all of you.

Now, let us fly to the other



The Amazon River basin is the largest of any river in the world. At its widest point, the Amazon River is 250 miles wide.

side of the world, to Brazil and the Amazon rainforest, which is known as "the womb of life." Congratulations for our successful struggle in Japan have also been pouring in from Brazil. Even in Brazil, the country furthest from Japan, members are imbued with the joy of our victory.

As you know, the area of the Amazon River basin is the largest of any river in the world. [It encompasses some 2.3 mil-

lion square miles.] It is 18 times the size of Japan. At its widest point, the river is 250 miles wide—the approximate distance from Tokyo to Osaka.

The SGI-Brazil's Amazon Ecological Research Center is located in Manaus, in the middle reaches of the river. In May, earthenware artifacts—a cooking pot and a section of a taller vessel—were excavated from the center's site. Both are thought to have been used by the original inhabitants of the region. The cooking pot, about 30 inches in diameter, was in particularly good condition. The section of the taller vessel indicates that the original vessel was about 25 inches in diameter. They are thought to date back 1,200 to 1,500 years. Experts at the University of São Paulo are scheduled to issue a detailed evaluation of their age and origin in mid-July.

A research laboratory is currently being constructed on the center grounds, and it was in clearing the land for construction that these precious artifacts were uncovered. Their discovery has stirred considerable interest within the archaeological community.

The SGI-Brazil's strong commitment to preserving the region's historical and cultural heritage, to transmitting that legacy to future generations, was evident in the way it has made every effort to ensure that the excavation was conducted with great care. These efforts have drawn wide praise and support from people in various fields.

I am deeply humbled to note that the site at which the artifacts were discovered has recently been named the Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Archeological Site. This was the idea of Dr. Francisco Jorge dos Santos, director of the

Amazonian Museum of the University of Amazonas in Manaus, who has been overseeing the excavation. [Director Santos writes in a letter of notification: "Because of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda's outstanding contributions to the Amazon and Brazil, and also because of his tireless struggle for world peace, we recommend that the site be named Dr. Daisaku Ikeda Archeological Site. In this way, we want to honor this great humanist, philosopher and thinker."]

Enthusiastic cheers of support for our movement have also arisen from the Amazon rainforest. It is for this reason that I share this news with all of you.

Indeed, we continue to receive a stream of honors from countries all around the globe. This is a symbol, I believe, of worldwide kosen-rufu in the 21st century. All of these honors will be passed on to the children and grandchildren of all of you, who are working so hard to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism. I accept them as your representative, hoping to promote the ideas of presidents Makiguchi and Toda. That is my sole motivation.

All of these honors are your good fortune, and will go on to be the good fortune of your children and grandchildren. Please also be aware that they constitute the good fortune of the Soka Gakkai, as well as proof of our victory and the rightness of our cause.

To be continued in the Aug. 3 issue.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Continually Striving

From This Speech:

The famous French philosopher Henri Bergson says, "The future belongs to those who work diligently." Those who spend their lives in shallow amusements, who avoid difficulties and challenges, who are spiritless and apathetic—in other words, those who make no effort to create anything of value in their lives—will have no future. A bright future belongs to those who keep striving and tirelessly exerting themselves. The Soka Gakkai is advancing in complete accord with these words of Bergson.

1) SGI President Ikeda says that "those who spend their lives in shallow amusements, who avoid difficulties and challenges, who are spiritless and apathetic—in other words, those who make no effort to create anything of value in their lives—will have no future." Why do you think Buddhism views avoiding difficulties and challenges as so destructive to a person's growth? Why, from the standpoint of Buddhism, does it run completely counter to human happiness to spend one's life pursuing shallow amusements? Do you have any experiences where, by confronting difficulties and challenges head on, you were able to experience the tremendous power of faith in the Gohonzon?

2) President Ikeda also says, "A bright future belongs to those who keep striving and tirelessly exerting themselves." Can you think of any passages from Nichiren Daishonin's writings or the Lotus Sutra that correspond with this spirit of continuously exerting oneself to create a valuable future for ourselves and others? Can you think of any experiences where, through having to exert yourself tirelessly in your practice, you were able to create great value and expand your life?

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JULY 11 ENCOURAGEMENT

Spiritual Reformation Leads to Nonviolence

'Spiritual reformation is the only way to realize the ideal of nonviolence in today's ailing society,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'If world public opinion supports this direction, the times will change dramatically.'

On July 11, SGI President Ikeda attended a conference with visiting SGI representatives, including SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, in Hachioji, Tokyo. "Spiritual reformation is the only way to realize the ideal of nonviolence in today's ailing society," President Ikeda said. "If world public opinion sup-

ports this direction, the times will change dramatically. Our mission to spread Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, which elucidates the fundamental questions of life and death, is immense."

The SGI president also emphasized that "Wealth does not guarantee happiness. To be concerned about appearances—constantly worrying about others' opinions, being obsessed about organizational position and so on—is to be a 'spiritual slave.' A true Buddhist is one who always remains undaunted and advances unceasingly toward kosen-rufu with the spirit of an unranked fighter on the front lines.

"While always taking good care of your health first and foremost, please steadily climb life's ascending path toward improvement and growth, one step at a time, and become people whose lives shine with victory in your local communities." **WT**

Introducing SUA's Development Team

Because, it's the greatest job in the world!" exclaims Carol Manley, SUA's new Development Director, when asked why she applied to work at Soka University of America. "Tears never cease to well up as I crest the hill to the campus. Every morning, we who work at SUA are greeted by this beautiful university floating in the ocean mist, fragrant and colorful flowers and smiling faces. The campus represents so much—the realization of dreams, hope for our future, a bastion of peace and humanity, and more.

"I, personally, am overwhelmed by the magnitude of generosity and spirit which has brought this idealistic plan into fruition. As a development professional for many years, I have been privileged to help expand services in education and the arts to children and adults; but I have never seen such positive support as I have witnessed at SUA."

Carol and Coleen Scherf-Ghara, Development Assistant, feel that development is a terrific vocation. "You enjoy the honor of working with people who are passionate to help and



Carol Manley (left) is SUA, Aliso Viejo's new Director of Development. You can reach her at cmanley@soka.edu. Coleen Scherf-Ghara is the Assistant to the Director of Development. Coleen can be reached at cscherfghara@soka.edu.



to give back to others," Coleen says. "We especially love working with older donors who have enjoyed lifetimes of experiences they often share to illustrate why they want to help young students. These ordinary people are brimming with amazing stories of overcoming hardships and survival. Often, they have gone through many difficulties in trying to achieve an education—and truly wish to make the way easier for others. Teachers are especially interested in how we at SUA will teach, as well as what knowl-

edge and skills our students will carry into the world. We are continually amazed that, once their families are secure, many people focus their attention on helping students they may never meet—because they believe that education is the best way to achieve a better world."

"We were happy to see the method the university set up so that donors, over a period of years, are able to combine their donations to eventually reach levels of giving where they can have scholarships named after loved ones," Carol adds. "This

Student Scholarships and Bequests —

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Soka University of America
Development Office
One University Drive
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-4105

Cash, Stock, Retirement, Estates, Donations of Property, Namings —

Questions to:
Carol or Coleen
949 / 480-4072 (phone)
949 / 480-4001 (fax)
cmanley@soka.edu

joy, even in the midst of loss."

When asked about fundraising, Carol states: "One of the great things about the United States is the generous reward contributors receive for supporting education. This gives the individual, family or foundation incentive to help others. I like that donors are rewarded as well as recognized for doing good deeds. U.S. tax laws favor charitable giving, and, with proper planning, can actually make terrific financial sense for donors in their stock investment, estate and retirement planning. We are happy to work with you, your family and/or your legal and/or financial advisor(s) to achieve your financial and charitable goals."

Carol adds: "To truly experience Soka University you should visit the campus. I love it best just after a rain, when lavender scent fills the air and rainbows frame the canyons—it is so magnificent, I cannot find words to describe it. You have to visit to truly appreciate what our donors have accomplished. Soon the students will be here, and we can truly get to work!" **WT**

Admission and Financial Aid Deadlines for SUA, AV Class of 2002

Early Admission Deadlines

Sept. 1, 2001	TOEFL exams must be completed
Oct. 1, 2001	All application documents postmarked
Oct. 13, 2001	SAT exams must be completed
Oct. 15, 2001	All financial aid documents postmarked
Dec. 1, 2001	Announcement of early admission decisions

Regular Admission Deadlines

Dec. 15, 2001	TOEFL exams must be completed
Jan. 15, 2002	All application documents postmarked
March 1, 2002	All financial aid documents postmarked
March 15, 2002	Announcement of regular admission decisions



Families enjoy a tour of the SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, May 5.

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUI

A M E R I C A , A L I S O V I E J O



Q & A
WITH
SUA

Send in your questions, and we'll share the answers!

Question:

The 2002 View book says that all international students need to send official transcripts to an agency called ACEI. What is ACEI and what does it do?

Answer:

ACEI stands for Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute, Inc. located in Beverly Hills, Calif. ACEI evaluates foreign student transcripts of grades, national examinations, mark sheets and certificates. SUA requires that all students complete the equivalent of 12 years of schooling in a college preparatory school program prior to Fall 2002. Since countries have different school systems, ACEI has become very important in helping SUA better understand other country's grading systems. To learn more about ACEI or to make application for an evaluation, please visit the agency's Web site at www.acei1.com or email acei@acei1.com. Please send certified true copies (in English) of your secondary school record to ACEI, not to SUA. It can take four to six weeks for the evaluation to be processed before it is mailed to SUA from

ACEI, so please "Plan Ahead!"

Question:

I live in Mexico. Is it true that all documents have to be sent to SUA in English? I asked my principal if he would translate my high school record, since it is written in Spanish. He is bilingual and has a high level of English understanding. Will SUA accept this?

Answer:

All application materials must be translated and sent to SUA and to ACEI in English. Your principal can translate your high school record only if he is a professor or instructor of English in your school or university. If he is not, then the Ministry of Education in your country does not recognize the translation as "official." Public translators may also be used so long as they are authorized and recognized by the Ministry of Education in any given country.

If you have questions of any kind about SUA, please send them to SUA at either admission@soka.edu or info@soka.edu. We will use this World Tribune column to share our answers with others who might have the same questions.

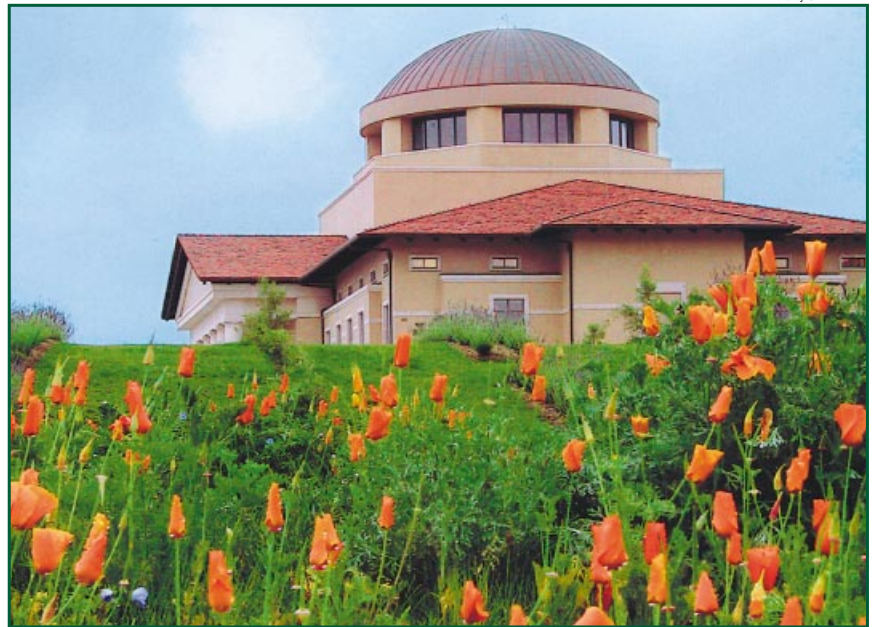


Photo by GERRY HALL

Founders Hall surrounded by wildflowers on the SUA, Aliso Viejo campus.

SUA Family Tour Day, Aug. 4

If you have been looking for a chance to see the new SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, Aug. 4 is your chance. SUA's staff and faculty will be on hand to answer questions and assist with self-guided walking tours that will give parents, students, interested friends and neighbors a chance to go inside key buildings.

Here is the schedule:

9:00 a.m. – Noon

Self-guided Walking Tours (SUA provides the map!)

10:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Student and Parent Q-and-A session

SUA Family Tour Day Reservation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Number of other people attending with you? _____

How many prospective students will be in your group? _____

Will anyone in your group need special assistance for the tour? _____

If so, please let us know how we can assist you: _____

Please return to: Family Tour Day Reservations
Soka University, Aliso Viejo
1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
Fax: (949) 480-4001

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- Grass has been planted on the campus green.
- All landscaping is near completion at residence halls, Alumni Center and Athenaeum.
- Temporary certificate of occupancy permit has been issued for Founders Hall.

Treasuring the World's Young People

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

Dialogues on Peace

‘Treasuring young people is the mark of a genuine leader. Authoritarian leaders sacrifice and skillfully exploit the youth. This was true in the past, and it remains true today.’

On May 22, SGI President Ikeda paid a courtesy call on President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the State Guest House in Moto-Akasaka, Tokyo. This was their fourth meeting, and the first since April 1999, at which time Mr. Obasanjo was president-elect.

At the outset of their 40-minute exchange, President Ikeda congratulated the Nigerian leader on the keynote lecture he had given that morning at the United Nations University’s 2001 Africa Day symposium on the “Millennium Africa Recovery Plan.” In the speech, President Obasanjo expressed confidence that Africa would make great contributions to the world. He affirmed that the continent’s abundant natural



SGI President Ikeda and other SGI leaders talk with President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and senior Nigerian officials at the Akasaka State Guesthouse in central Tokyo, May 22.

resources, unspoiled natural habitat, rain forests and rich cultural heritage are an asset belonging to all humankind.

Mr. Obasanjo stressed the importance of a strong commitment to nonviolence and cited Nigeria’s peaceful transition from military dictatorship to democracy. He described such developments in Africa as a sign of hope for both the present and the future. Praising these comments, President Ikeda agreed that Africa’s recovery would lead

to the revitalization of the world, and of humanity.

In 1976, Nigeria’s leader General Murtala Muhammad was assassinated, and Mr. Obasanjo, then 38, succeeded him as head of state. During the next three years, he introduced free elementary school education and established a number of universities. He also worked to promote agriculture and rebuild the nation’s finances.

In what was perhaps his most important achievement, Mr. Obasanjo promoted the adoption

of a new constitution enshrining the principle of the sovereignty of the people, thus opening the way to democratic rule. In 1979, true to his word, General Obasanjo transferred power to an elected civilian government and retired from politics, bringing an end to the military regime that had ruled the country for 13 years. He was the first Nigerian leader to step down to make way for democracy.

Nigeria’s first civilian government remained in power for only four years. The military regime that succeeded it, which swept to power with a 1983 coup d’état, was marked by corruption, embezzlement of public funds and brutal suppression of human rights.

In 1995, Mr. Obasanjo fell out of favor with the ruling regime for criticizing its dictatorial policies. He was arrested on trumped-up charges, sentenced to death by a secret tribunal, and then incarcerated in the notorious Yola prison.

In the aftermath of Mr. Obasanjo’s arrest, a number of world leaders issued appeals for his release, including then South African President Nelson Mandela, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. This resulted in his sentence being commuted to 15 years. He regained his freedom with the death of the dictator General Sani Abacha in 1998. And the following year he was elected president.

Mr. Ikeda brought up President Obasanjo’s address at the

Millennium Summit of the U.N. General Assembly last September, in which he had stated: “The new Millennium is being shaped by forces of globalization that are turning our world into a village. Thus the new millennium will demand of us, more than ever before, to live and work together as members of one human family.... Globalization has to be seen to mean the eradication of poverty. And then, and only then, will the true spirit of good neighborliness reign in the new global village.” The SGI leader praised this speech as articulating a philosophy for all people in the 21st century, and stressed that leaders must put these principles into practice.

Mr. Obasanjo demurred, saying that he was simply a “child of a village.” In a village, he explained, people know one another, they help each other, they exchange greetings, they treasure each person, and they seek to help those who are facing difficulties. He said he wished to expand this model to the global community; to make it possible for all people to value one another as they do in a village. President Ikeda observed that the idea of taking a practicable principle and expanding it throughout society is analogous to the way the teachings of Buddhism are expounded.

The SGI leader praised President Obasanjo’s speech at the celebration marking the 40th anniversary of Nigeria’s independence last October, in which he said: “I entertain great hope in and have much respect for our youth. I do not disdain the youth or youthfulness.... I know that the young must have a voice and that the young shall grow, which is what keeps the world going.”

Lauding the Nigerian president’s spirit of love and respect for the youth, Mr. Ikeda said: “Treasuring young people is the mark of a genuine leader. Authoritarian leaders sacrifice and skillfully exploit the youth. This was true in the past, and it remains true today. There is an unmistakable difference between a genuine leader and a despot. Whether someone loves the youth is clear from whether they put energy into education.”

He also quoted President Obasanjo as saying that education is the ultimate means for changing society, and called these profound words. **WT**

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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 23-24

'Students today tend to be concerned only with their personal happiness,' says Shin'ichi Yamamoto. 'We mustn't live without beliefs, without philosophy, ignoring the questions of how to improve society and the world and what it is to live a meaningful life. If young people live this way, in the end they will suffer, as will society at large.'

Next at his Kyoto University lecture, Shin'ichi Yamamoto invited questions from the student division members. The first person to raise his hand was Eikichi Uehata, a sophomore in literature. He had thick, dark eyebrows and strong features, and there was a pensive air about him. "I'm thinking of studying modern philosophy," he said, "and am wondering if, from the perspective of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, there is any value in that." Uehata had been questioning the meaning of learning philosophy at the university level for some time.

Shin'ichi's response was clear: "Philosophy taught at universities today is for the purpose of broadening one's knowledge; it is training for the intellect. To put it plainly, the

purpose of studying such subjects these days is to enable you to acquire a degree or title. This is the problem with current university education in general.

"What is the true purpose of studying philosophy? It is to learn how to live, and how to establish a state of unsurpassed joy and fulfillment. Only the Daishonin's Buddhism offers such a great philosophy. Buddhism is a supreme philosophy of life. It is a teaching firmly rooted in daily life that can bring happiness to all people. So Buddhism is the basis. If you study the Daishonin's Buddhism thoroughly, you will gain penetrating insight into all things.

"However, you will still need to acquire knowledge and intellect to become active leaders in society. Faith is the key to tapping the wisdom that will

help you put that knowledge to the best use. If you base yourself on faith, nothing you do will be wasted."

Shin'ichi then looked straight at Uehata and said: "In your case, now is the time to put energy into your university studies. Your time at university is short. If life

is like a marathon, then school is like a sprint, don't you think?"

As soon as Shin'ichi had answered Uehata's question, another hand shot up. This time it was Isamu Nomura, who asked: "At the student division general meeting the other day, you encouraged us to be people of 'backbone' and life force who always base ourselves on faith. What exactly do you mean by being a person of backbone?"

Shin'ichi smiled, nodded and said: "I mean to live magnanimously, with strong conviction and composure. People are easily affected by their cir-

cumstances. For example, if you spend your days working part-time jobs, living on nothing but junk food, narrowly squeezing in time for your studies, you yourself are likely to become a person of narrow vision and capacity."

The members listened intently to Shin'ichi: "Students today tend to be concerned only with their personal happiness. I am worried about this trend among young people. We mustn't live without beliefs, without philosophy, ignoring the questions of how to improve society and the world and what it is to live a meaningful life. If young people live this way, in the end they will suffer, as will society at large.

"So how can we become people of backbone, of great caliber? We need to revolutionize the state of our lives. We must do our human revolution. If you chant daimoku earnestly and work for kosen-rufu together with the Soka Gakkai, your life will naturally develop and you will become a person of real substance.

"The Soka Gakkai is the only organization that is nurturing people in this way and taking responsibility for the future of humanity. That's why I urge you to stick with the Soka Gakkai!

"You are young, and you may think that there is still a long, long road ahead of you, but life passes by in a flash. Time really does fly. It has been said that life is a one-way

ticket, and that is very true. We may wish to return to our younger years, but we can't.

"But you have encountered this faith and are striving to create the best life possible. It is my sincerest wish that you will all live wonderful and dignified lives to the very end."

After responding to a few more questions, Shin'ichi continued to express his feelings: "I hope that great scholars, scientists and political leaders will emerge from this group. I will be supporting you wholeheartedly, so please be confident and follow my lead. At times I may be strict about matters concerning faith, but that is because I have your best interests in mind. I am truly praying for the growth and progress of the youth, of all of you. I intend to do everything I can to ensure that in 10, 20 or 30 years you will be playing active roles in all spheres of endeavor the world over.

"You are my treasures. You will build a new century with your own hands. Let's do it together. Let's always stick together. Please keep that spirit, even after you've graduated."

Shin'ichi then shook the members' hands. Praying in his heart for the growth of these young "eagles," he grasped their hands firmly, warmly encouraging each one.

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

Illustration by KENICHIRO UCHIDA



EXPERIENCE — SAMUEL COHN, AUSTIN, TEXAS

CREATING SOKA EDUCATION IN A MAJOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

I am a professor of sociology at Texas A & M University and have practiced Buddhism since 1990. Before I started chanting, I was an extreme example of the arrogant, elitist professor. The only thing that mattered was research, and research was meant to show how everyone else in the universe was wrong. My mission in life was to be smarter than anyone else and to demonstrate this by pointing out the intellectual errors of other students, professors and the general public.

I was very smart, and I did find a lot of errors. This brought me great occupational success, isolation from virtually everyone in the world and a life-state alternating between learning, anger and despair.

One of the consequences of chanting is that it changes your priorities, often not in ways that you expect or plan. I had gotten into Buddhism for intellectual reasons. I wanted answers to deep, metaphysical questions. I got the original benefit I sought practically immediately. The Gohonzon taught me more about how the universe operates in my first year of chanting than I had learned in 18 years of college and university study.

Surprisingly, however, my personality began to change as well. Suddenly, I was not at war with everybody trying to show they were idiots. Research and truth continued to matter — as they continue to matter to me to this day. But helping people also began to matter — even people who were not going to become college professors.

One day, my chair asked if I would become an undergraduate adviser. This is viewed as an unprestigious job in many universities. In the old days, I would have turned this down as an impediment to my research. Instead, I took the position and made a determination to commit myself to undergraduate reform. I wanted to create a sociology program that would make people happy and would help them achieve their life goals.

I had read the writings of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi before I



Samuel Cohn in his office at Texas A&M University.

made this determination. However, I had put them in the back of my mind and forgotten about them. It was only later, after the reform program was under way, that I reacquainted myself with Makiguchi's *Education for Creative Living* and realized how much that book had affected me. Almost everything that I had pushed for at Texas A & M came straight out of Makiguchi in some way. Study, like faith and practice, sometimes has inconspicuous effects; you do not realize what you have learned until it shows up later in your life.

Makiguchi taught that education is supposed to involve value creation. It needs to have a larger purpose. It is supposed to address a student's real life needs. Education should incorporate experiences from the student's actual lived experiences, preparing them to be global citizens. Soka education, in its more modern manifestation, encourages students to embrace cultural diversity. There is also an emphasis on meaningful mentor-disciple relations. I wanted to see some version of all of these at Texas A & M.

I began to push for a set of changes in undergraduate policy that represented a manifestation of these ideas. Texas A & M is a public institution and, as such, avoids even the appear-

ance of including religious materials in its teaching program. To the extent that there is any religious expression at all, this expression is conservative and Christian. My chanting kept me focused on the humanistic features of Soka education — reforms that could be accepted by everyone regardless of religion.

I formed a committee and had it staffed with faculty who would be willing to work to make a difference in our program. The first reform however, was personal. I had to upgrade the quality of my own undergraduate advising. Most advisers in public universities see their mission narrowly as explaining the formal regulations of their respective major. My daimoku encouraged me to expand this role dramatically to include seeing that each student's education had a larger purpose.

Whenever a student enters our program, we now take an hour or more with the student, asking, "What do you want to accomplish with this education?" Sometimes students have an answer; sometimes they do not. I work to develop programs of courses for those students with a plan, to qualify them for their particular career or life-goal; I work with the indecisive students develop a long-term strategy and a sense of who they are.

Our committee then upgraded the quality of our internship programs. Internships deal with the need of students for occupational training, and also integrate schoolwork with actual life experience. We now have one of the largest sociology internship programs in the country.

Most schools treat internships as cheap off-site learning — in the spirit of "pay your tuition, then please go away." We instead put real content into our internships. Employers are expected to teach high-level skills to our students — or they do not receive another intern. Students must attend a seminar, in which they integrate past coursework with their observations, and write a paper that combines sociological theories with their experiences.

We created an undergraduate research fellowship. We take our top students and pay them to work one on one with our best professors. The professors have to compete for the rights to get a student by writing a proposal explaining what advanced skills they intend to teach their students. The normal outcome is that the student should be able to obtain publication in a legitimate scientific journal.

The mentoring in this program is clearly paying off. Texas A & M sociology undergraduates are developing a national reputation for research excellence. This year, several Texas A & M sociology undergraduates were invited to Puerto Rico and Los Angeles to present the results of their completed work.

We have also instituted programs in race and ethnicity, gender and global sociology. We have redesigned the introductory sociology course to emphasize the causal principles that affect American and non-American societies alike. We have put in six new courses, revitalizing faculty teaching by allowing them to teach what they love rather than what is on the books. Academic performance has gone sky high. Sociology department students used to have the lowest GPA in the college. In two years, our GPA

jumped to above the college average, as bright students have flocked to sociology as a major.

Our innovations are being widely recognized and imitated. Key members of our advising team have been hired away by other departments in our university who wish to change their policies to resemble ours. Our program has been written up in the American Sociological Association's professional journal *Footnotes* and is getting its own chapter in a book on innovative undergraduate education. We have been invited several times to speak to audiences of sociologists at other institutions about the improvements we have made in our program. A scholar from the University of Utrecht came to visit me recently to discuss prospects of introducing some of these reforms into Dutch higher education.

One of the surprising aspects of these changes is how uncontroversial they were. Nearly every Soka reform we suggested was enthusiastically supported by the university. My Buddhist practice not only encouraged me to be steadfast in my goal, but I was also generally in a high life-condition when I came to work. I also firmly believe that much of my victory is due to the fact that Soka education is just a good idea. Resistance is low when the programs you are promoting are fundamentally sound and benefit everybody.

Makiguchi's principles could be instituted in many institutions of higher education besides Texas A & M. We merely need to chant enough to want to make a difference, and then the intrinsic merits of Soka education will sell themselves. **WT**

SGI-USA On The Web!

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

Educators and Academics Conference Emphasizes the 'Power of One'

By **ARLAANA BLACK, DONNA DAVIS AND CHERYL UTLEY**
CULTURE DEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENTS

The inter-connectedness of oneself and nature and the importance of the single individual—the “majority of one”—were two themes prevalent and richly exemplified in this year’s Educators and Academics Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center, held from June 28 through July 1.

Attended by 135 members from the educators and academics division, including an international representative from Panama, 10 youth division members and one retired educator, the conference was filled with meaningful dialogue, important field trips and an exhilarating talent show.

The goal for this year was how to put the theories of Soka education into practice. SGI President Ikeda’s recent education proposal, entitled “Building a Society that Serves the Essential Needs of Education,” was used as the foundation for the conference, wherein he emphasized the human revolution of each teacher as the key component to revolutionizing education.

Kathleen Dockett, co-coordinator of the conference, devised the acronym PEACCCE GAP (Passion, Endurance, Affection, Courage, Compassion, Confidence, Effort and Glowing Appealing Personality) to



Participants enjoy the Educators and Academics Conference at the FNCC.

help everyone capture the spirit of the conference; and the participants selected the one quality they most wanted to develop in their lives.

There were five sessions and several experiences. Session 1, a panel discussion by Washington, D.C., members entitled “What is Soka Education?,” emphasized its essential five points: happiness of the learner; developing wisdom from understanding the inter-relationships in life; deep respect for the learner; the importance of learners becoming global citizens; and the importance of becoming truly humanistic educators. This was followed by a lecture by Masao Yokota, president of the Boston Research Center and senior advisor of

the Culture Department.

Mr. Yokota reported at length about the activities and bonds developing between SGI President Ikeda and the Thoreau Society as part of a global vision for the next 200 years.

“Thoreau’s idea of self-reliance was to rely on the divine power within oneself,” Mr. Yokota said. “This for us means Buddhahood. We need to deeply examine the self that exists in the depths of our lives. ‘The Majority of One’ means one person awakening to the meaning of life.”

Session 2, entitled “Trailblazing Soka Education,” by SGI-USA Educators Division Leader Monte Joffe, was followed by various breakout groups where in-depth discussions ensued. Sessions included school vio-

lence; flight from learning; restoring human bonds; alienation from nature; technology; testing; and bureaucracy.

Session 3, “Soka Educators as Change Agents,” allowed the participants to have a healthy exchange of experiences by splitting into affinity groups: academics; new teachers; high school; middle school; elementary education, early childhood; special ed/TESL; and community and family.

Session 4 gave in-depth glimpses of Soka Education and was entitled, “Soka Education: Models and Theories: Honing our Capability as Soka Educators.”

Session 5, “Creating Soka Education,” included workshops that demonstrated Soka education in action, and focussed on issues of diversity, nature, and the community. One workshop showed how Makiguchian principles are effectively being employed to generate excitement in the SGI-USA Boys and Girls Group.

This conference not only brought educators and academics significantly closer to permeating and infusing their own lives and society with the ideals of Soka education, it also clearly demonstrated that the dream to realize a Makiguchi-based educational system is quite attainable.

—Monte Joffe contributed to this article.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA’S MESSAGE TO THE EDUCATORS AND ACADEMICS CONFERENCE AT THE FNCC, JUNE 28–JULY 1

Shine With Life’s Abundant Vigor

To all of you, my dear friends of the SGI-USA educators and academics divisions, who bring the light of hope to the 21st Century through humanistic education—let me express my heartfelt congratulations on this gathering of seeking minds! I sincerely thank you for your noble, untiring dedication day in and day out.

First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi once said: “Education cannot be successful without the most excel-

lent, outstanding human resources. Education is the highest, most difficult skill and art of human life, for it is directed toward the most precious object in the world, that is, the supreme treasure called life.”

Education becomes possible only through earnest interaction and collaboration among persons of character. So I ask that each of you pray more than anyone for the development and happiness of your students and challenge yourself to revolu-

tionize the state of your life.

As Nichiren Daishonin states, “The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 852). The enlightenment of a Buddha becomes apparent nowhere but in his or her humane conduct. So shine with life’s abundant vigor and, through your wisdom, send forth the refreshing breeze of an

educational Renaissance into American society!

Upon your shoulders rests the noble mission to bring the future to blossom in the 21st century and beyond. You are so precious and worthy. I am seriously praying every day for your excellent health and further success. Please convey my sincerest regards to your families and friends, whom I deeply love.

June 28, 2001
Daisaku Ikeda

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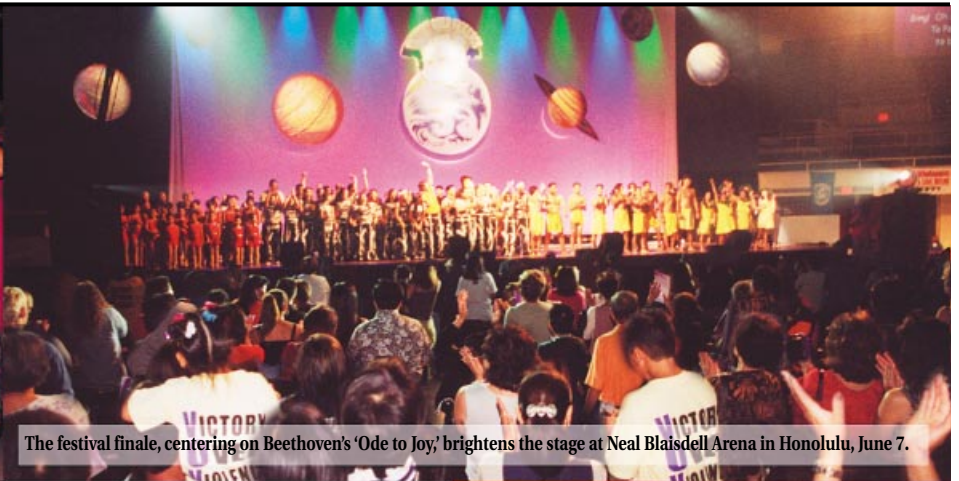
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King Tauf-Ahau Tupou IV of Tonga arrives in Honolulu to join the festivities.



The festival finale, centering on Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy,' brightens the stage at Neal Blaisdell Arena in Honolulu, June 7.



The Pure Blue Dance Group performs an original dance.

FROM FESTIVAL, I

from all over the state, with youth from the SGI-USA making up 20 percent. Duncan Sheik, SGI-USA member and popular recording artist, was the featured headliner, stopping in Hawaii from his world tour to perform at the two festival shows in support of VOV.

The blended voices of the performers and audience rang out Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" during the finale, with a very special version performed by the 200 voice First Samoan Congregation Christian Church of American Samoa in their native Samoan language.

"It was nice to see the efforts of so many people promoting and working for a better future for youth around the world," said Lance Ikawa of Kupono Kane, a Hawaiian band that performed in the festival. "We will always support VOV because it is our future and we need to take care of it."

"I enjoyed being part of the Samoan dance," said 10-year old Rashad Matthews. "My mother cried when I danced because we are Samoan, and she was so proud of me. The SGI-USA members treated me like I was part of their family."

Adding pageantry to the event was a very distinguished guest, King Tauf-Ahau Tupou IV, who traveled thousands of miles from his island kingdom of Tonga to join the evening festivities.

Promotion for the festival created many new partnerships. A ticket booth was set up at the Ala Moana Shopping Center, the largest mall in Hawaii, as well as a telephone hotline for information. Media coverage of the festival was outstanding, with newspaper articles appearing before and after the event. Another first was a public service announcement announcing the festival and VOV theme created by FOX 2 TV, which ran on all major TV stations. Interviews with SGI-USA youth gave local TV personalities opportunities to discuss VOV and the important concept of passive violence, the latent cause for active and physical violence. Duncan Sheik also appeared on both radio and TV supporting VOV, wearing his purple ribbon.

"I really enjoyed the festival," said Mel Whang, an exhibitor from Family Planning Services. "Everywhere I went, the staff was helpful and cordial. I was very impressed by everything. Now that I understand what VOV is all about, I will definitely promote others to join in."

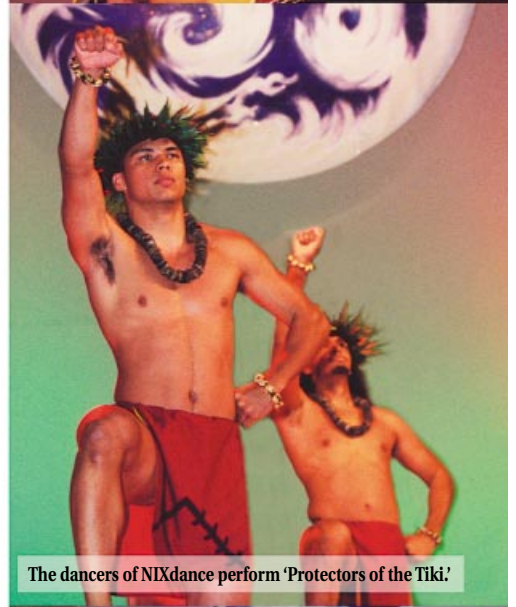
The commitment of the youth standing together for the sake of peace provided a model for all who witnessed their efforts. United in their stand against violence, they are looking forward to continuing the VOV momentum in Hawaii. **WT**



Popular recording artist and SGI-USA member Duncan Sheik delights the audience with a special acoustic set.



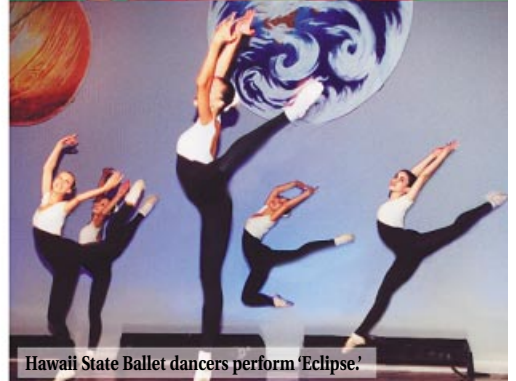
Dancing the hula 'Pua Tuberosa.'



The dancers of NIXdance perform 'Protectors of the Tiki.'



SGI-USA Boys and Girls Group members share their version of 'We Will Rock You.'



Hawaii State Ballet dancers perform 'Eclipse.'