



### OUR DISTRICT

New series highlights districts around the country.

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DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL



Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima attends a district discussion meeting in Santa Monica, Calif., July 22.

## New Monthly Special To Focus on the District

With this issue, we begin a new monthly special edition focusing on the district. In these pages, we will include articles addressing practical issues, profile specific districts, share experiences and offer encouragement for district leaders and members alike.

SGI President Ikeda has said: "Our fellow members are all family with whom we are linked by deep bonds. If we support and protect this family, they will act as protective forces in our environment, supporting and keeping us from harm lifetime after lifetime. This is a profound principle of Buddhism" (*Faith Into Action*, p. 178). Nowhere are these bonds more evident than in the district.

It is our hope that this issue can support SGI-USA members' sincere efforts in their district activities. Please let us know if you have suggestions or comments on how we can make this monthly focus on the district as useful as possible.

— World Tribune Staff

FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR DANNY NAGASHIMA

# Our Precious Districts: Our Foundation

**'Let's expand the number of our districts in order to better care for each precious member of our organization,' says SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, 'ensuring that everyone gets the most personal support in faith possible.'**

This is the first of several issues to focus on the district, the most important unit of our organization. I hope that the articles contained in this *World Tribune* will help each of your districts in every way possible.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to all members of all districts throughout the country. It is my wish that each of you truly enjoy your daily Buddhist practice and receive many benefits. Please treasure your families and friends. Your joy and personal growth will spread and influence your respective commu-

nities, thereby enhancing the growth of everyone around you. As you make efforts to create harmony and well-being in your neighborhoods, you can naturally gain trust and respect from those whose lives you touch. This is a natural way to share Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism with as many people as possible.

President Ikeda always praises those who dedicate themselves to district activities: "No one could be nobler than these men and women who are devoting themselves earnestly to our multifaceted SGI activities on the very front lines of the kosen-rufu movement. I have no doubt that they would be praised by the Daishonin and that they are being protected by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions—the protective functions of the universe" (Oct. 22, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 7).

Let's expand the number of our districts in order to better care for each precious member of our organization, ensuring that everyone gets the most personal support in faith possible. A smaller district means that we can more easily connect with our members' hearts and advance together.

Let's also appoint young men's and young women's leaders in each district nationwide, providing opportunities to a new generation of Bodhisattvas of the Earth. And based upon this kind of nurturing, supportive environment, let's naturally invite our friends to join our organization and begin their own human revolution.

President Ikeda also says about the district: "The district is the home port of kosen-rufu. Just as ships take on fuel and supplies in a port before they set out to sea, our members set forth from the district and gather there again to refuel. When our districts flourish, the Soka Gakkai as a whole succeeds....It is the district leaders who keep our districts, our home ports, running smoothly. And their unity is a strong seawall that protects our members" (Nov. 27, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 5).

Once again, thank you for your amazing, priceless contributions to our kosen-rufu movement. Together, let's create an SGI-USA that can respond to each member's needs and support each person's faith, the true purpose of our organization. **WT**

DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL

# How Does the Gohonzon Teach Respect for All?

## Q&A ON FAITH

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT  
SENIOR ADVISOR



**Q** Can you describe the importance of the Gohonzon in terms of respecting ourselves and others?

**A** The object of devotion that Nichiren Daishonin inscribed manifests his inner enlightenment. It also manifests the Mystic Law itself. The Gohonzon thus embodies the true nature of his life; it reveals that his life-condition was one with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

The Daishonin's conviction in the Gohonzon's supremacy in Buddhist history was so unshakable that he said, "When it comes to the object of devotion, you should use a superior one

[the Gohonzon]" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 366). He also said that the Gohonzon is a natural outcome of what is expounded in the Lotus Sutra: "It is in no way my invention" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 831).

The Daishonin's Buddhism teaches us to absolutely respect this object of devotion that is physically outside of us. And this respect for the Gohonzon is synonymous with our respect for the potential of Buddhahood that is inherent in everyone's life.

In other words, the Daisho-

nin's message behind his inscription of the Gohonzon is that we should exert ourselves to respect the Buddha nature that is innate in the life of each individual. Hence, he stated: "The heart of the practice of the Lotus Sutra is found in the 'Never Disparaging' chapter. What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being" (WND, 852).

One meaning of Nichiren Daishonin inscribing the Gohonzon is to teach reverence simultaneously for oneself and others. It can be said that being able to respect one's innate Buddhahood, not one's small ego, and at the same time respect others' Buddhahood is actually what it means to embrace the Gohonzon.

Referring to the fact that the Buddhahood within our lives is the same as the life of the universe, the same as the power of the Gohonzon, the Daishonin

clarified the source of this greatest joy. He stated: "Realizing for the first time that our minds are originally that of the Buddha is synonymous to having a great joy. Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the greatest of all joys" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 788). The core of our lives is as respectworthy as the universe and the Gohonzon. This view leads to self-respect and respect for others.

If we are not respecting ourselves on the deepest level, it means we are not respecting others in the true sense. No matter how respectful we may sound or act, without true self-respect, we cannot show true respect to anyone else.

In other words, if we have respect for our fundamental Buddha nature within, we can have the same toward this same nature in others. In fact, nothing can prevent us, then, from respecting others. It becomes a natural part of how our lives operate. So, if we can truly respect others, we are surely coming from true self-respect.

The existence of the Gohonzon in our lives teaches us how immensely we can respect and rejoice over our treasure within. The Gohonzon is an incomparable gift to all humanity from the Daishonin.

In *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, SGI President Ikeda quotes the English poet John Donne in referring to the spirit of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a man of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (vol. 1, p. 150). **W**

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AUG. 24: SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ANNIVERSARY OF JOINING THE SOKA GAKKAI

## Starting on the Path of Human Revolution

### SIGNIFICANT DATES

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

By ALEXIS TRASS  
LOS ANGELES



**A**ug. 24, 1947, is the date that SGI President Daisaku Ikeda formally joined the Soka Gakkai. He joined only 10 days after his first discussion meeting, on Aug. 14.

It was a time in Japan when people had little hope for the future, with the devastating effects of World War II still lingering in their minds. Remembering the harsh reality that anything could change in an instant—and not necessarily for the better—was all that was needed to plunge people into despair. Young Daisaku was no exception, but at the same time, searching for the correct philosophy on which to base his life, he wanted to believe in something.

He agonized over how to

solve his problems and battled with feelings of inadequacy when he realized that he often was unable find solutions on his own. He was naturally intrigued when a school friend invited him to a meeting about "life philosophy." This meeting turned out to be exactly what Daisaku was searching for.

Upon arriving at the meeting place, he was immediately struck by Josei Toda, who was leading the meeting. Toda, who would later become the second Soka Gakkai president, had a very direct way of speaking and

an ability to answer questions in an ideological framework.

To young Daisaku, Toda's answers made sense. He felt that Toda was a man he could trust.

Daisaku asked people about Toda and learned that he had been imprisoned for two years for his opposition to Japan's participation in the war, and he protested the government-mandated allegiance to Shinto and the suppression of religious freedom. This was a decisive factor in Daisaku's decision to make Toda his mentor. Because Daisaku had lost a beloved older brother in the war several years before, he was determined to devote his life to realizing world peace.

He later wrote of his first impression of Toda: "A man who had locked horns with militarism and endured two years in prison glowed nobly with the strength of his convictions. It wouldn't be too much to say... that at 19 the question of whether or not a person had gone to jail for opposing the war had become a primary criterion for my trust."

So what is the significance of Aug. 24 for us? Let's imagine for a moment that President Ikeda was not able to attend that first discussion meeting. Or that he did attend but opted not to join the Soka Gakkai. Would the SGI be what it is today? Would most of us even be practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? The short answer to both questions is probably not, but there is so much more to Aug. 24.

We can think of Aug. 24 as the day that Daisaku Ikeda encountered the heart of the mentor-disciple relationship and began his path of human revolution. His decision to take Toda as his mentor in how to live a value-creating life would fundamentally alter the course of his destiny and ours as well.

We all want to be better human beings and effect change in the world—however big or small the outcome. One of the ways we do that is to find a model for what we aspire to be and dedicate our lives to putting his or her spirit and vision into action, building on his or her contributions to world society.

President Ikeda did that, and we can see that the results of his efforts for world peace go beyond what he could have ever imagined as he took faith in Buddhism 54 years ago.

Aug. 24 is also celebrated in the SGI as Men's Division Day.

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MISSION DISTRICT, RIVERSIDE, CALIF.

# Growing With a Sense of Mission



By GINA JONES  
RIVERSIDE, CALIF., CORRESPONDENT

Mission District in Riverside, Calif., is growing. In the past year, the district has seen six new members receive the Gohonzon, with three more preparing for conferrals in the near future. And there is usually a guest or two at any given

meeting in the district.

Steven Schiratis, a member who received the Gohonzon in April, says of Mission District: "It is absolutely great, a place of acceptance. I feel like the people there really take a stand for me. I have such a sense of hope after the meetings, and a sense of having contributed."

Formed in 1998, Mission District has continued to grow over the past three years, and is poised to split again this month into two new districts.

Hisako Duffy, the district women's leader, helped to pioneer the SGI-USA organization's growth from the 1960s until today. Recently, in a let-

ter to SGI President Ikeda, she wrote, "As long as my body is moving, I am going to do my best." Her prayers for the district from the very beginning were clear and specific. She determined that the members would be happy and enjoy their practice. She also prayed for people to rise up and take responsibility for the success of the meetings. Her honesty and ability to communicate with others, coupled with her boundless energy, have resulted in member after member rising up with joy and growing in faith.

The district leaders, Ken O'Ferrall, Hisako Duffy,

Michael Choi and Mitsuko Kinoshita, along with groups leaders Gina Jones and Naomi Warner, have worked hard to create a family atmosphere.

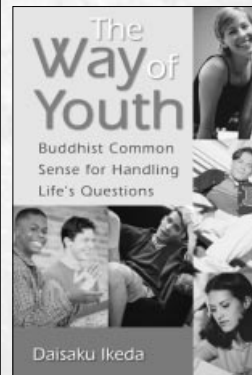
Vera Raica, who received the Gohonzon last year, says she has seen a huge improvement in her life recently due to coming to the weekly slow gongyo and study meetings at her group leader's house. Improving her gongyo was important, and studying together enhanced her understanding of Buddhism. "But," she says, "there is more. We bonded—everyone, with a sense of caring about each other and taking joy in each other's progress." **WT**



Mission District in Riverside, Calif., celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Soka Gakkai, November 2000.

## The Way of Youth

Buddhist Common Sense for Handling Life's Questions  
Daisaku Ikeda



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

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## LEADERS PANEL DISCUSSION

# Expanding Districts and Entrusting Youth

**SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima has set three goals for the SGI-USA's kosen-rufu movement for the remainder of 2001:**

- 1) District Expansion
- 2) Appointing Youth Leaders in Every District
- 3) Propagation

**In this panel discussion, leaders from the Virginia/Carolina Region share how they are taking on this challenge.**



Ana Cain,  
Fortune District women's leader.



Ronnie Smith,  
Mid-Atlantic Zone leader.



Steve Doty,  
Virginia/Carolina Region leader.

**World Tribune:** What started the Virginia/Carolina Region on the road to district expansion?

**Jo Reed:** When the Virginia/Carolina Region was founded in October 1999, we had 75 districts and 25 chapters. Of those 75 districts, 22 had a membership of more than 50. We had some chapters with eight districts, and areas with eight chapters or more.

So we began thinking about shaping smaller organizational units: a smaller district where people could receive more attention, which would mean more districts but would also mean more chapters and more areas — possibly two regions.

Each level of the organization would have a much smaller unit that is easier to care for, so the leaders would be able to assist people more and not be overwhelmed by their responsibilities.

**WT:** How much of a factor is the VCR's large geographical territory in your recent district expansion?

**Steve Doty:** It played a big part. For instance, just the organization in the state of South Carolina — which includes part of North Carolina and part of Georgia — is difficult to cover as an organization. When we split from the Washington, D.C., Region to form the VCR, it was clear that even after the split the VCR is still huge — even unmanageable, in a sense, in its current state.

**Ken Nelson:** We had been talking — particularly in Colum-

bia and the Greenville-Asheville areas of South Carolina — about creating smaller organizational units for geographical reasons and then making sure it is small enough: If you appoint somebody leader of a district with 75 people, it is a daunting task. But we had been unable to resolve this problem.

Then, after the last region planning board meeting, where Steve Doty again discussed district expansion, I realized that the stumbling block was that we had been looking at splitting from the top down. That brought out all kinds of defensive feelings.

So we said, "Let's start at the member level and determine how we can create the best organization for these members to practice in." And then it started making sense! We finally had the key to how to make this all work.

**Steve Shropshier:** The real key was bringing in the district leaders, because they know the membership better than anyone else. Through discussion with them and trying to think of each individual member's situation, we came up with a plan that everybody could agree on.

It is just like a planning meeting: The more people you get there, the more it becomes their meeting and the better that meeting is going to be. It's the same way with district expansion: The more people you get involved in it and share their ideas, the more it becomes their plan. And when it is their plan they want to make it work and

they're excited about it.

**Ken:** I was not so sure how great an idea that would be — bringing the district leaders in to discuss things. Having sat through many leaders meetings, I have found that the more people you have involved in discussion, the more difficult it is to get to a consensus. I was afraid that when we brought the district leaders in, the talk would just ramble on. But it worked out great.

**Ana Cain:** The members in our district were struggling to attend meetings. It took some of them many hours just to get to meetings. There were only two members at first, and now there are seven.

I have been chanting for Florence District to be a district for a long time. When the time came, the members were ready. There was no hesitation. I think it was just leaders who were kind of worried about it. [Laughter.] But I kept on urging them, "Why not!?" I think this organization is great because we do worry about who is going to help each individual.

**Ken:** Within Columbia, S.C., once we had the discussion, everybody realized district expansion was something we needed to do, we had a way to do it, and that this is the direction of the organization, then everyone's concerns vanished.

The Capitol Chapter leaders and the district leaders wanted the members in Florence to be their own district, but as they only had about seven people, we thought that was pretty

small, and we were not sure they should do it.

But they said, "We can do it!" And so, they are going to do it!

**Jo:** In some areas where there were problems in people's lives and they were chanting a lot of daimoku, that foundation of daimoku made them open and enthusiastic.

**Ken:** In Charlotte, N.C., a lot of people are fighting through financial problems or health problems, and so there is a daimoku level building that is higher than it has been before. They are becoming ready for anything. They have got this feeling, "We are going to make something grow."

**Jo:** It may seem counter-intuitive — one tends to think that people have so many problems, they cannot think about reorganization right now. But actually what is happening is that because they are chanting so much, they are really able to stretch and explore and be open to things.

**Steve Shropshier:** One man told me he knew this day was going to come, and he dreaded it, because he hated leaving that comfort zone: It made him feel real comfortable to go to the district meetings and have a house full of people.

Yet he knew we were not going to grow that way, because it was the same people there, the same few people were talking all the time, and other people did not have that opportunity to grow.

It is kind of like a root-bound plant in a pot — you have got to

spread it out for it to grow.

**WT:** Did you have any district leaders who were adamant about not wanting to split their district?

**Steve Shropshier:** We had one who was very reluctant, because he was looking at splitting the district in a negative light. If you take the attitude that you are splitting something, it puts kind of a negative connotation on it.

We helped him understand that it was not so much splitting the district as it was putting the district in a position so it could expand. That put a more positive light on it and helped him through it.

We also took special precautions so that our pioneers would not have to drive too far. At the same time, we wanted to spread them out a little bit, so they could help not only us but our young people. They are a tremendous asset for our area — it is the great fortune we have in this region.

**Ken:** What was central for this whole thing was dialogue, dialogue, dialogue. We talked about it, we thought about it, we chanted about it, we met on different levels, and continued to discuss and look at all the aspects. We did not just sit down one afternoon and chop 'em up and send 'em on their way.

**Steve Shropshier:** I think you have got to look at every area differently. From going to different districts, I found that districts are like people — they are all different, even in the same town, in the same area.

So when you look in an area, reorganization has to be done on an individual basis. You do not want to do something rash and alienate anybody, and it would be very easy to do that.

**Ken:** This needs to be an ongoing process. It is not like we can do this one time and will never have to do it again. You know, I want to get out in my garden but it is too wet today to do it, but even so you have to keep cultivating.

I think it is the same thing with the organization. We have to keep tilling the ground, and when districts get too big, split and keep cultivating the organization.

**WT:** General Director Danny Nagashima has been encouraging us to find youth leadership at every level. How are you finding leaders for the new districts, and how are you finding youth leaders?

**Steve Shropshier:** Danny said to be bold—to give people a chance and see what they can do.

**Ken:** Since we can recommend high-school age youth to district-level positions, we're really "mining" the organization to find youth who can take responsibility.

My own kids have told me the district meetings are boring. Well, if we give them responsibility, we can send them into



**Jo Reed, Virginia/Carolina Region women's leader.**

the districts and say, "OK, make it not boring anymore."

But the bottom line is, the people who can fill these positions are there. We just need to give them the opportunity.

**Ronnie Smith:** Of course, students' primary job is to study hard at school. As SGI President Ikeda always says, we should put priority on studying while young.

However, it is also true that people need to strengthen their lives by practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism while young. Through their Buddhist practice in their districts, young people will definitely develop strength in their lives and learn about the significance of the role of the SGI for the betterment of society and the world.



**Steve Shropshier, Capitol Chapter leader.**

**Jo:** When I was a new member of a district as small as the ones we are talking about now, because I was a college-age youth I had enormous care: I was visited often by my leaders, and they had me lead gongyo and make presentations.

In a smaller group, you are more likely to recognize people and take care of them in this way.

**Ken:** And that is why we are all here—somebody looked after us!

**Ronnie:** After I had been practicing a couple weeks, they asked me to explain the Gohonzon at an introductory meeting at the community center. I cannot tell you how scary that was for me.

After doing it the first time and blowing it, I thought, "Great, they'll never ask me



**Ken Nelson, South Carolina Area leader.**

again," but they asked me the following week! I remember thinking how much they trusted me, how much they cared about me, to allow me to continue to do that presentation, to develop confidence in myself.

That they gave me, and the other youth at the time—even though we were not "the best" at explaining things—a chance to participate meant a lot to us.

Sometimes we want to make sure the youth are polished, prepared and perfect, but as youth we were far from perfect ourselves. And yet, I think we made great contributions in spite of our lack of polish.

Let's continue our efforts at trusting the youth and giving them the opportunity to participate and put a new face on our organization to reflect the youth of today.

**WT:** What unique contributions do you think the members of Virginia/Carolina Region can make to kosen-rufu in America?

**Ken:** One thing I think we've learned through this process is that a few "superstars" can't accomplish kosen-rufu by themselves. Everybody has the feeling we have all got to make it together, that if everyone is on board, we can accomplish anything.

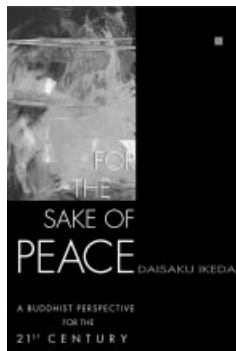
**Steve Shropshier:** It has really been a member-driven thing here, and we are really proud of that. I think that is what the SGI-USA is all about here—it has got to come from the people.

**Ronnie:** I want to respond to Danny's call that we really take individual care of each district member, giving youth a new sense of responsibility in their districts and setting in motion full-fledged propagation activity.

It has to start with sowing seeds of the Mystic Law in people's lives and raising them to the point where they can live up to their individual, noble missions for kosen-rufu. It is my determination to see many ideal districts emerge with many new, youthful Bodhisattvas of the Earth taking the lead.

—Robin Meader and Jim Wells of the Washington, D.C., Bureau conducted this interview for the World Tribune.

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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 27 SPEECH—PART 2

# TRANSFORMING OUR LIVES WITH NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS

**'We should strive to read Nichiren Daishonin's writings every day,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Busy as you may be, I hope you will all make renewed efforts in this sphere. Reading his writings changes our lives in enormous ways. Tremendous confidence that we can triumph in all life's struggles wells forth within us.'**

*The conclusion 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.*

Approximately half of all the species of living things on Earth are found in the Amazon basin, a rich repository of life. Recently, a new insect has been discovered in the Amazon region. Dr. Rosaly Ale-Rocha, a brilliant researcher of the National Amazon Research Institute, who dis-

covered the insect, has named it *Euhybus ikedai* after me.

Dr. Ale-Rocha is a symbol of the Century of Women. She has expressed strong agreement and sympathy with the movement to protect the Amazon that I have advocated and that SGI-Brazil has been advancing. The scientist said that as an

academic she named the insect after me with the profoundest respect. She is very gracious, and I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

**A new age of youth, a new century of youth, has arrived in the SGI.**

*Euhybus ikedai* is one-sixth of an inch long, with long, slim legs and wings, and a big head. He is light brown and shiny. He belongs to the insect order Diptera, meaning he has two wings. And he is said to fly energetically through the Amazon forests.

One of his special characteristics is that he keeps in check populations of other insects that destroy crops. In other words, he is what is called a "beneficial insect." He fights against the "bad guys" and is useful to human beings.

So, the next time you visit the Amazon, please be careful not to step on, squash or otherwise harm my little namesake! [Laughter.]

One of his other unique characteristics is that his compound eyes are located above his antennae, enabling him to attack harmful insects by flying up at them from beneath. One young Brazilian researcher said that we could think of *Euhybus ikedai* as a "bug hero" patrolling the jungle and fighting against bad bugs. Our SGI-Brazil members likened him to their trusty youth division members, who work to support and protect their region.

Today, the youth division has risen to take the lead all around the world. My hearty congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the youth division this July! [The young men's division was founded on July 11, 1951, and the young women's

division was founded on July 19, 1951.]

I am told that to celebrate this anniversary there is going to be a gathering of some 50,000 youth in Brazil, with youth representatives from various nations of Latin America attending. All across the globe, the youth are moving into action with a powerful momentum. A new age of youth, a new century of youth, has arrived in the SGI.

**Nichiren Daishonin's vast view of life is based on equality.**

In the Amazon, with its lush splendor and infinite wonders, the newly discovered *Euhybus ikedai* is believed to play an important role, together with the other living things that inhabit the basin, in terms of maintaining the delicate balance of the complex ecosystem. First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who possessed an ecological perspective that was far ahead of his times, writes of the significance of beneficial insects in his work *The Geography of Human Life*. ["Many insects," Makiguchi writes, "are the scourge of farmers in that they attack the leaves, stems, or roots of useful plants, but there are also a large number of beneficial insects."]

I am certain that Mr. Makiguchi would also be de-

lighted that I should have an insect named after me on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of his birth. As this event underscores again, the SGI's great movement to promote respect for the sanctity of life and the importance of protecting the environment now embraces the entire world.

Nichiren Daishonin also writes of insects, "We living beings, right down to crickets, ants, mosquitoes, and flies, all possess life that is without beginning or end" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 382). Some may think that the Daishonin is just going into great detail here, but he is actually refuting the True Word school of Buddhism. In their arrogance, they declared that the Buddha they worshiped, Mahavairochana, was without beginning or end and therefore superior to Shakyamuni Buddha.

The Daishonin instructs his followers to refute this claim by saying that the lives of all living things, even down to the humblest insects, are equally without beginning or end—in other words, eternal. To deny this fact, he says, is to take the position of a non-Buddhist teaching, to transgress the very spirit of Buddhism.

The Daishonin's view of life is one of equality and is vast in its scale.

It is important to respond im-



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

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

### Meeting Obstacles

From This Speech:

**As votaries or practitioners of the Mystic Law, the more we struggle undefeated amid daunting obstacles and hardship, the more our life-force grows, the more our good fortune multiples and the more our energy increases. We can use everything as fuel to power our human revolution and transform poison into medicine, becoming stronger and more compassionate people and developing an expansive state of life. That is why the Daishonin urges us to greet hardships with joy and fight even harder. He says we should regard meeting obstacles as "true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750).**

1) Nichiren Daishonin says we should regard meeting obstacles as "true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750). Why do you think the Daishonin makes this assertion? What principles in Buddhism does this idea correspond to? How does meeting obstacles relate to the true purpose of our Buddhist practice?

2) SGI President Ikeda says: "The more we struggle undefeated amid daunting obstacles and hardship, the more our life-force grows, the more our good fortune multiples and the more our energy increases." What was your view of encountering obstacles and hardship before you began chanting? How has it changed? Do you have an experience where, by continuing to struggle bravely in your practice amid daunting obstacles, you were able to become stronger and enjoy greater happiness?

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

mediately to false or distorted statements. I hope the youth in particular will acquire and polish the wisdom and strength to keenly and forcefully rebut every attack without pause in their struggle for truth and justice.

**Nichiren Daishonin urges us to greet hardships with joy and fight even harder.**

Today, June 27, is the birthday of the great Brazilian writer João Guimarães Rosa, a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. [SGI President Ikeda is a nonresident member of the academy, and he gave a lecture at the academy in Rio de Janeiro on the conferral of this honor in February 1993.]

In the speech he gave on his induction into that venerable academy, Rosa declared, "We die to prove that we have lived." This is a powerful statement.

How, and based on what guiding philosophy, have we lived and struggled, and ultimately won in life? In striving to leave a clear record of this, we find life's meaning and challenge.

That is why dedicated members of our organization who have died in the course of our journey to realize kosen-rufu are all great victors in life.

In the Daishonin's writings, the votary of the Lotus Sutra is likened to the kalakula (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 471). The kalakula is a mythical insect. Its body is very small, but it feeds on the wind, swelling to an enormous size and consuming all around it. The Daishonin writes, "A strong wind makes a kalakula grow larger" (WND, 471). This is a famous passage.

We should strive to read the Daishonin's writings every day. Busy as you may be, I hope you will all make renewed efforts in this sphere. Reading his writings changes our lives in enormous ways. Tremendous confidence that we can triumph in all life's struggles wells forth within us.

Now, then, what does the wind that makes the kalakula grow larger correspond to in the case of the votary of the Lotus Sutra? The Daishonin clearly states that it is persecution (see WND, 471).

As votaries or practitioners of the Mystic Law, the more we struggle undefeated amid daunting obstacles and hardship, the more our life-force grows, the more our good fortune multiplies and the more our energy increases. We can use everything as fuel to power our human revolution and transform poison into medicine, becoming stronger and more compassion-

# SGI-Tonga Friendship Expands

By GREG MARTIN  
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

The Tonga-SGI Friendship Monument was dedicated on July 4 to commemorate the historic meeting between SGI President Ikeda and His Majesty, King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in Japan in November 2000. This was, incidentally, the King's 83rd birthday, a national holiday in Tonga. An SGI-USA delegation led by General Director Danny Nagashima was on hand for the event.

SGI-USA Vice General Director Gary Murie designed the monument. The inspiration for the monument, which includes a sundial, came from the ancient Tongan solar time keeper, the Tongan Triathlon (*Ha'a-monga*), and the fact that Tonga is known as the "Land Where Time Begins," the first land west of the international dateline.

During the unveiling celebration, a lengthy poem written by President Ikeda to the King was presented and the Royal Tongan Peace Builders Award presented from the King to President Ikeda. In this way, their mutual respect and friendship was continued.

On July 5, General Director Nagashima and others met with the King for more than an hour. The King expressed his fond memories of meeting with President Ikeda and the kindness extended to him at that time. In the course of their conversation, the King commented on the linkage between Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President Ikeda, saying: "Men who advocate peace and equality all too often experience violent opposition at



The Tonga-SGI Friendship Monument, which commemorates the relationship between King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga and SGI President Ikeda, is unveiled July 4.

the hands of people who cannot believe in those things. Those who oppose equality amongst groups actually oppose justice. They believe that violence is the only means to achieve their goals."

When asked what he thought Tonga's greatest export to the world is, he replied, "The friendship and kindness of the Tongan people." Through these interactions, bonds of trust and friendship with a far distant land and people were nurtured; bonds strengthening the fabric of the world community. **WT**



King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga meets with a delegation from SGI-USA on July 5, including (l-r) Reid Bogdonoff, Vice General Director Greg Martin, Cesare Civetta, General Director Danny Nagashima and Jessie Bogdonoff.

ate people and developing an expansive state of life.

That is why the Daishonin urges us to greet hardships with joy and fight even harder. He says we should regard meeting obstacles as "true peace and comfort" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 750).

If we have the fighting spirit to work for kosen-rufu, we can attain Buddhahood. If we embrace the Gohonzon, but lack this crucial spirit, we will not be able to attain Buddhahood. Cowardice represents the life-

state of Animality.

The Soka Gakkai has always advanced with this powerful fighting spirit. That is why it has developed into the worldwide organization it is today. This fighting spirit is the essence of the Soka Gakkai and the very heart of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

**Youth should strive not just for ordinary success but for overwhelming success.**

Finally, I want to mention

Rio Branco, a great Brazilian diplomat, who was earnest and passionate in all his diplomatic initiatives. He strove not just for ordinary success but for overwhelming success. This was his spirit.

I call on the youth to emulate this spirit in their endeavors. I hope you will score a decisive victory of youth in the manifold day-to-day "diplomatic initiatives" of kosen-rufu. Let us set off afresh in our challenge to create a magnificent history

based on our overwhelming success.

To all of our members in Japan, I hope you will give your all to the upcoming challenge in July and then rest up and recharge in August. I particularly ask the men to ensure that the women get sufficient rest at that time.

Thank you for traveling so far in such hot weather. Please give my best regards to all the members who could not attend today. Stay well! **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# The Tatsunokuchi Persecution: The Buddhism of the Sun Arrives

In the first of two essays on the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, SGI President Ikeda writes that ‘this was the moment in which the Buddhism of the sun broke through the profound darkness of fundamental delusion to illuminate the earth with its brilliance.’

At last I'm here at the place that I have studied about in Nichiren Daishonin's writings—the place where the Daishonin cast off his transient status and revealed his true identity. I can just picture the Daishonin's great struggle."

This was the comment of one of our SGI members from Africa when visiting the SGI Study Center at Tatsunokuchi in Kamakura, Japan, for the first time.

Members from all over the world have voiced similar expressions of deep emotion on visiting this site. "The Daishonin dedicated his life to the struggle to lead all people to happiness," another member said. "I am proud that it is only in the SGI that the lifeblood of faith dedicated to kosen-rufu remains alive."

Members of the Soka Gakkai's Shonan Sub-prefecture, including the local Kamakura Zone, work hard to keep the study center in splendid condition and giving our overseas members a warm welcome.

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More than 10 years before the center opened, I visited the area. The building stands on a high plateau, and the garden on its southern side offers a commanding view of the blue waters of Sagami Bay stretching out into the vast Pacific. The sandy beach traces a graceful curve toward the island of

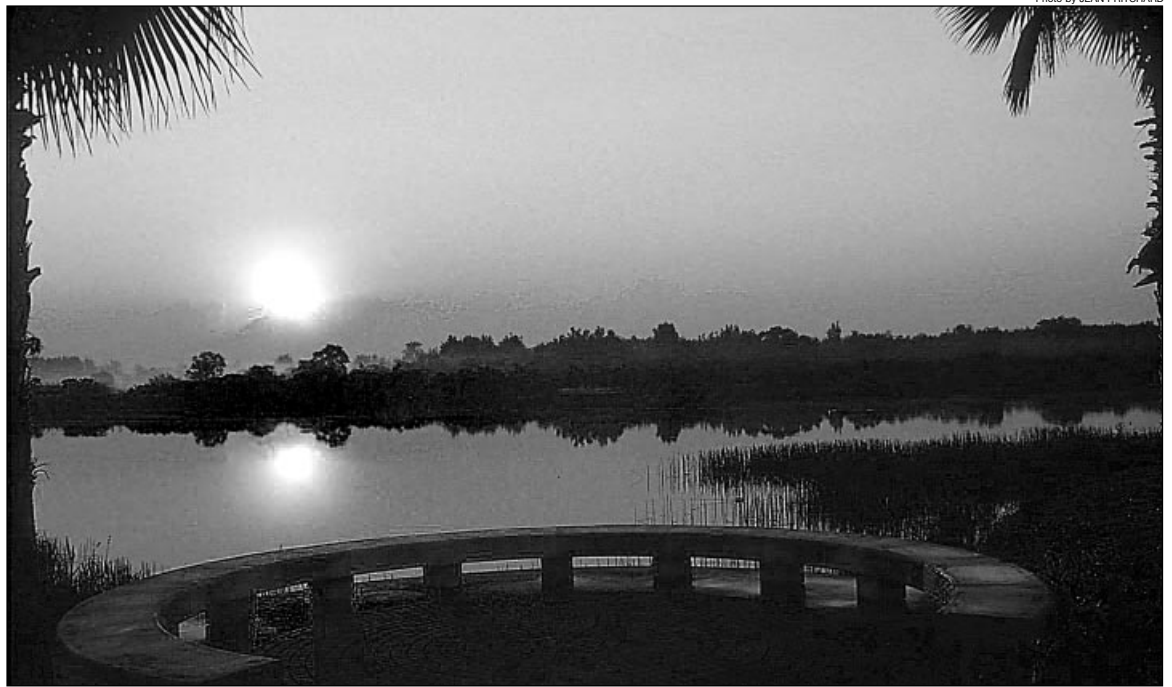


Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

The new day starts with a powerful sunrise over Toda Lake at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

Enoshima, in the right foreground. Following the coastline to the left, one sees the Shichiri and Yui beaches, and then, to the far left, somewhat inland, the city of Kamakura. On May 12, 1986, the day of my visit, the rose garden was in fragrant bloom.

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The building that is now the SGI Study Center was formerly the vacation home of the Japanese physician Dr. Shokichi Nagayo, a great medical pioneer who opened the first clinic for stomach and intestinal illness in Japan. The famous Japanese writer Soseki Natsume was among those who received treatment at Dr. Nagayo's clinic. Dr. Nagayo was also a friend of the Nobel Prize-winning German bacteriologist Dr. Robert Koch. When Dr. Koch came to Japan, he visited Dr. Nagayo's vacation home.

Shijo Kingo, incidentally, who accompanied the Daishonin during the Tatsunokuchi Persecution with the resolve to

die at his side, also had a profound mastery of medicine.

Dr. Nagayo's younger brother, Yoshiro Nagayo, was a writer and a member of the White Birch literary school. As a youth, I enjoyed reading his masterpiece, *A Teacher by the Name of Mr. Takezawa*. Through their association with Yoshiro Nagayo, many great writers and artists of the period visited the vacation house, including Saneatsu Mushanokoji, a noted White Birch writer, and the painter Ryusei Kishida, famous for his *Portrait of Reiko*. It was a center for lively discussions on art, literature and philosophy.

In addition, Dr. Nagayo's son-in-law, the politician Takeru Inukai, was the son of Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai, who in turn was a friend of Soka Gakkai founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. Prime Minister Inukai was one of the first to join the Soka Kyokugaku Shienkai (Value-creating Education Support Group), which was established

to promote the principles of value-creating education formulated by Makiguchi.

The SGI Study Center thus shines with many rich connections, a noble tradition and an aura of refinement and culture.

Looking back, it was in 1979, during the incredible betrayal by the priesthood then, that our Kanagawa Culture Center, a shining beacon of hope, was completed. And during the more recent attacks by Nichiren Shoshu, this profoundly significant SGI Study Center was opened, in 1999. I cannot help but look on both of these facilities as jeweled citadels of the correct teachings, which have been bestowed upon the SGI by the Daishonin.

I hope that all who visit the study center will forge lives as brilliant and indestructible as diamonds, triumphing over all obstacles and never being defeated for all eternity. This is my prayer and conviction.

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On the 12th day of the 9th

month of the 8th year of the Bun'ei era (1271), a noisy mob surrounded the Daishonin's dwelling at Matsubagayatsu in Kamakura. Hei no Saemon, the most powerful figure in the military government, stormed the building with several hundred soldiers.

The Daishonin declared in a ringing voice: "How amusing! Look at Hei no Saemon gone mad! You gentlemen have just toppled the pillar of Japan" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 766).

The arrogant priest Ryokan of Gokuraku-ji temple in Kamakura was behind this act of violence. The Daishonin had refuted Ryokan's erroneous teachings, exposed his hypocrisy and triumphed over him in a contest to pray for rain.

Ryokan was no match for the Daishonin—not in the teachings he preached, his personal character or the actual proof of his practice. Therefore, his only alternative was to paint the Dai-

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 25-26

*The 'essential' way of life is to dedicate ourselves to the widespread propagation of the humanistic teachings of Buddhism, explains Shin'ichi Yamamoto. 'In contrast, no matter what kind of social status or position you may acquire later on, that is all just the theoretical.'*

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's series of lectures to Kyoto University students on Nichiren Daishonin's "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" finished in August of the following year, 1964. They met a total of seven times, including the opening session. After that, Shin'ichi began a new lecture series on the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" for leaders of the student division in regions of Japan west of Kansai as well as Kyoto University students.

Shin'ichi himself had fond memories of studying "One Hundred and Six Comparisons." This was because his mentor, Josei Toda, had assigned it to him as study material when Shin'ichi was a Study Department professor (around 1955). Every evening after work, he would meet with Toda for a lesson on the treatise. Toda spent three days on the first comparison alone: "The theoretical three thousand realms in a single moment of life and the threefold contemplation in a single mind—theoretical and

essential." He then divided the section into key phrases—"The Buddhas of the three existences"; "Appearing in the world and attaining the way"; "The meaning of the Life Span chapter of the Buddhism of harvest"; "The theoretical three thousand realms." He lectured on each one in great detail, from many different viewpoints.

The lectures were like a guide for Shin'ichi into the infinite, boundless realm of Buddhism; at the same time, they constituted a transmission—a direct passing on of the teachings—from mentor to disciple. When the lecture on the first comparison had ended, Toda said to Shin'ichi: "Memorize everything I have taught you so far and engrave it in your life. If you thoroughly study this first comparison and understand it deeply, you will understand the remaining 105.

"In addition, if you understand this treatise, you will understand the rest of the Daishonin's writings. It is very important to grasp each and every word correctly and com-

pletely. It is unacceptable for a professor or assistant professor in the study department to make mistakes on matters concerning study."

The lessons continued, covering two or three comparisons at a time. Whenever Shin'ichi's attention seemed to wane in the least, Toda would snap the Goshu shut and say: "That's all! I'm not a machine!" Each time that happened,

Shin'ichi felt dejected and ashamed, but he continued to pursue his study, determined to etch every word into his heart. The pages of Shin'ichi's copy of the Goshu were black with the notes he took on Toda's lessons.

In his lectures to the Kyoto University students, Shin'ichi did his best to explain the Daishonin's teachings in the most accessible way possible, since many of the participants had not yet mastered the fundamentals of Buddhist study. "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" strictly distinguished the Daishonin's Buddhism from that of Shakyamuni, establishing which was theoretical and essential and which was superior or inferior. Shin'ichi therefore began by discussing the difference between the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching from every angle, and explaining how that applies to daily life.

What is the foundation of our lives? This question became the focus of his lectures.

The Great Teacher T'ient'ai of China compared the essential teaching to the moon in the sky and the theoretical teaching to a reflection of the moon on the water, thus pointing out that the essential is superior and the theoretical inferior. *Essential* means the actual substance of the truth—reality—while *theoretical* indicates a shadow, or reflec-



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

tion, of the truth. Just as theory derives from reality, the theoretical teaching derives from the essential teaching.

In one of his lectures, Shin'ichi introduced these concepts in detail, yet in a way that was easy to grasp: "Theory is a kind of measure. It is a model for explaining reality, but not reality itself. For example, a person's life is changing every moment. That ever-changing reality is the actual substance of life. Theory, on the other hand, is abstracted from this reality and universalized. It is very important to be able to differentiate clearly between reality and theory, and to remain firmly grounded in reality.

"The basis of all reality is life itself. And it is human beings who live in the midst of reality. There are countless examples in history of absolute trust being placed in theory and ideology, which then degenerate into dogmatism that results in oppression. I hope that you intelligent young people will put an end to this tragic legacy of history."

The last of the "One Hundred and Six Comparisons" says, "One must distinguish essential and theoretical, superior and inferior, in all things, even the swelling waves and the blowing wind" (*Goshu Zenshu*, p. 869). In reference to this, Shin'ichi said: "This passage tells us that the essential and theoretical are to

be found in our own lives, and that we must draw a distinct line between them.

"For example, when we are sleeping, we are in a 'theoretical' phase of our existence, but when we are awake, we are in the 'essential' phase. For students, whose job it is to study, indulging in fun and entertainment is the theoretical while studying hard is the essential. In addition, those who are studying with the sole aim of making money or gaining status are living only for themselves and are thus choosing a 'theoretical' way of life that is caught up in the pursuit of worldly things. In your case, as members of the student division, the essential is to be studying with a deep sense of purpose to develop yourselves so that you can contribute to kosen-rufu.

"Our real identity is that of Bodhisattvas of the Earth who have come forth to carry out the widespread propagation of the humanistic teachings of Buddhism. For us, the essential way of life is to dedicate ourselves to that endeavor. In contrast, no matter what kind of social status or position you may acquire later on, that is all just the theoretical. I hope you will never make a mistake about this."

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



# SGI-USA Districts: Communities of Joy

## EDITORIAL

By JEFF FARR  
MANAGING EDITOR

**When you take on the responsibility of being a district leader, you have the great opportunity to nurture a community of joy.**

Ask any of the top leaders in our organization, and they will happily tell you, "It was more fun when I was a district leader!" The reason being, in the district you get to work the closest with other members. You can really take care of them—and they can take care of you!



Nichiren Daishonin teaches that in practicing Buddhism as a community, we experience together the "boundless joy of the Law." Those of you who have taken responsibility as district leaders have the great opportunity to help foster this joy by praying strongly for district members' happiness, setting concrete goals for your districts and making an action

plan to achieve these goals. If you have a great dream for your district and do these three things, others who are involved will feel things moving forward. People's lives naturally start to advance.

This is exactly how the Daishonin led the way. We can think of him, in fact, as the original district leader. From 1253, when he first declared the supremacy of chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, until his death in 1282, the Daishonin worked extremely hard to create a community of boundless joy among his followers. He prayed for each person, he had a clear idea of what he wanted the community to become, and, of course, he took action—he went out of his way to communicate with each person heart to heart.

While the Daishonin's community started out quite

small—and despite the fact that it was under constant attack from the authorities—it grew over the years into something big. By the end of his life, his "district" was solidified; it had many unique members of strong faith and practice, who often traveled long distances to visit him at Mount Minobu. The Daishonin thus came to the end of his life with a true sense of accomplishment.

In one of his last writings, to Nanjo Tokimitsu (who was like the young men's district leader), the Daishonin says: "When ordinary people in the latter age believe in even one or two words of the Lotus Sutra, they are embracing the teaching to which the Buddhas of the ten directions have given credence. I wonder what karma we created in the past to have been born as such persons, and I am filled with joy" (*The Writings*

of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 1108). He is saying, in a sense: "Isn't it amazing that we have brought together this community, where ordinary people finally have this chance to practice the true teachings? Aren't we so fortunate to have played a part in this?"

Those taking responsibility as district leaders—and those who will in the near future, as many new districts are created this year—are invaluable. If the district is our heartbeat, our lifeline, our reality check, you are the doctors who assure all systems are healthy. If the district is the most potent vessel to spread the Daishonin's teachings, you are the ones who are spearheading our advance.

Thank you for all that you have done. Thank you for everything that you do. Thank you for everything that you are going to do in the future! **W**

## FROM ESSAY, 8

shonin a villain.

And so he devised a scheme: He maligned the Daishonin to powerful figures and their wives, spreading incredibly vicious, base lies about him. The military government was already in an uproar over the impending invasion of Japan by the Mongols—the general punishment that the Daishonin had predicted would befall the country, if the government failed to heed his warnings in "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land."

True leaders, if they cared for their nation's fate, would humbly and earnestly listen to the truthful arguments of a great sage. But the rulers of the military government of the Daishonin's day cared little for the happiness of the people. They merely exploited the crisis that the nation faced to strengthen their own hold on power. And they plotted to destroy the person who was the nation's true treasure, because he stood in their way.

Priests mad with jealousy working hand in glove with authorities blinded by arrogance—this is the pattern that persecutions against the Soka Gakkai, an organization carrying out the Buddha's intent and decree, have followed in recent years.

After the Daishonin was apprehended by Hei no Saemon's

men, he was paraded through the streets of Kamakura like a traitor and taken to the residence of Hojo Nobutoki, who was the constable of Sado Island, the place to which the Daishonin was to be exiled. But Hei no Saemon's men came and removed him from the premises in the middle of the night. They planned to execute him at Tatsunokuchi.

This was not a legal sentence of death—it was an unsanctioned private execution plotted by Hei no Saemon and his cohorts. It all unfolded under the cover of darkness. They were jealous and afraid of the sun of truth. The darkness of the insidious nature of power seethed, sharpening its cruel sword.

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On Wakamiya Avenue, on the way to the execution ground at Tatsunokuchi, the Daishonin dismounted from his horse and, facing Hachiman Shrine, sternly reproved Great Bodhisattva Hachiman: "Now I, Nichiren, am the foremost votary of the Lotus Sutra in all of Japan, and am entirely without guilt....You had better do something about it [my predicament] right away!" (WND, 766–67). This was a lion's roar of rebuke at the heavenly deities—the protective functions of the universe—who had promised to safeguard the practitioner of the correct teaching at the assembly where the Lotus Sutra was preached.

When they reached Yui Beach, the Daishonin sent a boy named Kumao to inform Shijo Kingo of his impending execution. Rushing from the house, without even stopping to put on his shoes, Shijo Kingo hastened to the Daishonin's side with his three brothers. The Daishonin had called on his most trustworthy lay disciple to witness this momentous event.

Though Tatsunokuchi is called an execution ground, it seems that there were no special facilities or buildings. A mat was simply spread over the sand for the beheading.

The soldier had his sword raised and was ready to perform the execution. Shijo Kingo said, "These are your last moments" (WND, 767) and started weeping, but the Daishonin chided him, saying that he should laugh at such a joyful occasion.

Then it happened. Suddenly, from the direction of Enoshima, an orb as bright as the moon streaked across the sky. The pitch black was illuminated like a moonlit night. The soldier holding the sword was blinded by the object's dazzling brightness and fell to the ground, and the others, struck with fear, ran off into the distance.

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What was this shining object? Research has shown that it may have been a fragment from a meteor stream in the region of the Aries and Taurus constellations. This was the

theory of Dr. Hideo Hirose, an eminent Japanese astronomer, who was a former director of the Tokyo Astronomical Observatory and professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo. He hypothesized that the appearance of the bright object on the night of the 12th day of the 9th month of the 8th year of the Bun'ei era (1271) took place around the time the moon set, which he calculated to be 3:44 a.m. [on the 13th day].

The Daishonin writes that the brilliant orb burst through the darkness, shooting across the sky from southeast to northwest. After analyzing all the data, Dr. Hirose concluded that the object that appeared at about 4:00 a.m. was a huge meteor, moving at an altitude of 34 degrees and an azimuth of 79 degrees from south to west. Based on the time of the event, the astronomer determined that the bright object was probably a meteor from the Taurid-Arietid meteor stream that originated from Encke's Comet.

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A great light blazed in the darkness at the very moment that the Daishonin was about to be beheaded. He called out to the soldiers who had fled, telling them that if they were going to cut off his head they should do it quickly, before the dawn, but they were afraid and would not approach.

Eventually, from far beyond the waves, a dot of crimson

began to glow faintly, spreading out to the left and right, and swelling upward until the horizon could be seen. Dawn had arrived. The sun's rays gained rapidly in strength and radiance, making the sea sparkle and lighting the sky. The clouds were dyed in rainbow colors.

The shining, golden sun rose majestically.

This was the moment in which the Buddhism of the sun broke through the profound darkness of fundamental delusion to illuminate the earth with its brilliance.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the March 29 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

## We Want To Hear From You

If you have a comment or suggestion about the content of the *World Tribune*, please write to us via U.S. mail at WT Mailbox, P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907. You can also send an email to [wt@sgi-usa.org](mailto:wt@sgi-usa.org).

EXPERIENCE — FRANK HOTCHKISS, SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.

# Driving Toward Happiness Within

**Frank Hotchkiss realizes that true happiness does not lie in the smooth ride of a new car.**

I have always loved cars. In some ways, cars have been a measure of my practice. Not that a nice car meant a strong practice. No, cars could be a delight, but they could also provide a challenge.

Some years ago, I had a Porsche 944. It was the first Porsche I ever owned, and though it was used, I loved it dearly. The night I bought it, after dinner I was thinking about the Porsche sitting alone in the garage as we finished desert. My wife took one look at me and said to our teenage daughter, Lisa, "I think your father wants to go out and sit in his car."

I jumped up from the table, gave her a big kiss and flew out the door—to sit in my wonderful new sled for a half-hour, going over its every facet. As I said, I have always loved cars.

But then times got rough. My business partner—I had a small public relations agency in Los Angeles—walked out and left me with considerable overhead and a few less clients. My daughter was headed for college, and money was scarce. I asked my wife and daughter to cut back, and I had to face reality. What was I doing in such a fine car when we were in the red?

It took six months of chanting to reach the conclusion that the Porsche had to go. With great reluctance, and some personal fears and hang-ups, I sold it. Many people will think I was a fool to be so attached to a car, and they are undoubtedly right. But I suspect Buddhism is meant for fools like me, so that one can turn a bad thing into a good.

Some months later, sitting alone in my office with the phones deathly silent, I turned to the computer keyboard and wrote a brief story about my Porsche experience, and what I learned from it. I believe I gained real insight into human values—enlightened human values—thanks to my painful parting with my Porsche. I sent the story off to a few publica-

tions, and eventually the *Los Angeles Times* called me. "We love your story. We do not know where to print it, but we want to. May we?"

They did. Friends called and commiserated with my loss and gain. Then strangers found my number and phoned to reveal they knew just what I had gone through. There were messages from unknown people on our home phone, and even a note from a young lady who said she would love to meet me. At that point, my wife said, "Enough is enough."

From this loss came a whole new direction for me—fiction writing.

First I wrote a screenplay based on my short story. Then I wrote another screenplay. I got a Hollywood agent. Then I turned to novels, and wrote two. An agent in New York called to say she couldn't put the first one down, and she liked the second even more. The subject matter of both came from my Buddhist practice. The first contrasted passionate love (rapture, we Buddhists would rightfully term it) with deeper, long-lasting love between two people. The second book was about dying, and how that could be a fulfillment to living, contrary to most American beliefs. Neither have sold yet, but I remain confident.

Recently, financial prospects returned to the grim stage. Looking at the future, I could see only uncertainty and failure. In fact, my view of myself became one of failure, in complete contrast to Buddhist reality. I found the days filled with a gnawing knot in my stomach, and hopelessness in my heart. Once again, there was more red ink than black. Clearly I was a failure in life, a loser.

It was at this point that things really began to change for me. A human revolution, if you will. I heard a lecture reminding me that the true identity for those



Frank and Sandi Hotchkiss with their daughter, Lisa.

practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is that of a Bodhisattva of the Earth, and that our other identities—writer, businessman, even husband and father—are lesser identities upon which our true happiness does not depend.

The second injection of truth came in the form of a brief talk at our local World Peace Prayer Meeting about treasures of the heart vs. treasures of the storehouse and body (see "The Three Kinds of Treasure," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 848-53). Clearly I am a storehouse-type, despite growing up in the 1960s and practicing Buddhism since 1970.

I realized that the financial security I longed for was illusory. In fact, there is no kind of real security like that. Even those well off face grave problems, problems that for them are as real and as heart breaking as those the rest of us encounter. The greatest insecurity is that life itself, for any of us, can be over in an instant.

My mistake was to yearn for a false goal, the measure of its counterfeit being my unhappiness. I shouldn't be looking for security "out there," but "in here." How many times have we heard this in our practice in one form or another? Real security comes from depth of life, not duration. Separating my transient self from my real one was enormously liberating.

With that realization, a black cloud lifted from over my head and moved on. I felt light and happy—and immensely rich.

It wasn't that I didn't care that my books hadn't sold, or that I needed more clients for my business. It was that those things didn't matter so much. They didn't dominate me.

As for my writing, I continue to write an ongoing column for the *Los Angeles Times* syndicate, "America on the Road." The *Chicago Tribune* has just asked me to do an interview with actor Tim Matheson of *The West Wing*, as well as write for a new auto section they plan to put out this summer.

For any materialist who might read this, there was another benefit very much in keeping with the line from the Daishonin: "When the body bends, so does the shadow" (WND, 1039).

I had long needed to replace my aging car, but felt for various reasons that I could not. I dreamed of a sports car that would be wonderful to drive and affordable at the same time. No longer plagued by doom and gloom, I took another look at my circumstances, and they were in fact pretty good. Cash flow might be down, but we had accumulated significant savings. My old car would contribute half of the cost of the new car. With a small loan I could actually make the purchase quite easily. Though my circumstances didn't change at all, my perception of them did. I am now the proud owner of an Audi TT. My wife, Sandi, loves it, too.

As I said, I have always loved cars. **WT**

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GANDHI, KING, IKEDA: A LEGACY OF BUILDING PEACE

# GKI Exhibit Continues To Inspire

The “Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace” exhibition continued its world tour in the months of June and July, stopping at Lewis University, Roosevelt University and the world-renowned Riverside Church in New York City. The exhibition portrays the common vision of humanity and nonviolence of three leaders — Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and SGI President Ikeda.

From June 2–16, Lewis University, located just outside of Chicago and established in 1932, hosted the exhibition. The opening celebration featured a speech by Lewis University President James Gaffney, who said that the ideas of the three men regarding the inherent dignity of human life were respectable, and in line with the beliefs of the University.

Roosevelt University, with a campus in Chicago and another in Schaumburg, Ill., was established in 1945. Founded with the mission to provide quality education to students with a variety of backgrounds, the university prides itself on its student body’s diversity. Against this backdrop, the exhibition opened June 19 in the Roosevelt University Library. The opening started off with a greeting by Roosevelt University English Professor Daisy Balsley and, on be-

half of the SGI, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima presented 100 books to the university’s library.

On July 15, the exhibition debuted at New York City’s Riverside Church, where Dr. King delivered a powerful address denouncing the Vietnam War titled “A Time to Break Silence” more than 30 years ago. More than 225 people attended the opening from all walks of life, including Dr. Victor G. Alicea, president of Boricua College, a private Hispanic institution; representatives from the Philippine organization, the Knights of Rizal; and members of the Arthur Mitchell Dance Theatre and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, both of Harlem.

Charles Harris, a guest at the Riverside Church opening, noted: “This is a very moving event. Seeing people communicate across different racial and religious beliefs is wonderful. The diversity of the world is manifest in the philosophies presented here today.”

The exhibition will travel next to Montgomery, Ala., where it will show at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s annual meeting at the request of Martin Luther King III.

—Linnea Peery and Sean Grover contributed to this article.



Photo by RAJIV MISTRY

The ‘Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace’ exhibition was held at Lewis University, a Catholic university, from June 2–16.



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

Dr. Lawrence Carter, dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, confers the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Award on Dr. Vincent Winbush, a professor at Union Theological Seminary, July 15.



Photo by RAJIV MISTRY

Roosevelt University, which hosted the exhibition starting June 19, prides itself on its ethnic and cultural diversity.



Photo by RAJIV MISTRY

(L-r) Roosevelt University President Theodore Gross, ‘Ebony’ magazine Executive Editor Lerone Bennett and SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima at the exhibition’s Roosevelt University opening, June 19.