



Performers enjoy the finale of the Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival, July 14.

SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

True Heroes Emerge from Northeast Festival

By SEAN AND YUKO K. GROVER
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

What is a true hero?" This was the compelling question that propelled the SGI-USA Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival, titled "Heroes of Life, Champions of Humanity," held July 14 at the Theater at Madison Square Garden in New York City. More than 1,000 Northeastern Zone youth members and friends from New York, New Jersey and New England presented two electrifying performances, and more than 10,000 SGI members and their guests filled the theater to cheer on the youthful performers.

Certificates of honorary citizenship signed by Virginia Fields, president of the Borough of Manhattan, were awarded to SGI President and

Mrs. Ikeda. They were the first such honors given in the borough's history.

During the performance, ten fictional superheroes searched through the real world to find what it means to be a true hero. Through a series of 12 scenes, they journeyed through different cultures and environments, encountering the obstacles that young people face today. With an explosion of music and creativity that bridged hip-hop dance, African dance, step dance, modern dance, orchestral performance, singing and rap, the festival created a modern tapestry of culture and art.

Gradually the

scenes expanded from America to a global scale, with a passionate and moving dance based on the life of assassinated advocate against child labor, Iqbal Masih. When the "Pyramids of Humanity" emerged, formed by a gymnastics team, the stage was transformed to create the "Rhythm of Peace." The chorus and the orchestra beautifully accented the performers through-

out the show, charging them with energy and vitality. While three teenage members shared their essays about the heroes in their families, modern dancers entered behind them and emphasized their stories with dramatic flair. At

PLEASE SEE FESTIVAL, 6



New York Times Features SUA



The July 26 edition of The New York Times.

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER

On July 25, *The New York Times* featured a front-page article on Soka University of America's new Aliso Viejo, Calif., campus. The article, titled "New West Coast College, Born of the Far East," quotes extensively from SUA faculty, the campus's architects and members of the surrounding community, who all speak glowingly of the new university.

The article clearly communicates the SUA staff's enthusiasm at starting a new university from the ground up. "You don't get to start up new liberal arts colleges," Anne Houtman, SUA's professor of biology, is quoted as saying. "It just isn't done. The idea of being able to start from scratch and say, 'What is it that a global citizen should know about science?' was just incredible."

Also clarified is the SGI's interest in supporting the univer-

sity. "The fact is they are a very engaged kind of Buddhism," says Phillip E. Hammond, a professor of religious studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara and co-author of *Soka Gakkai in America: Accommodation and Conversion*. "They are not trying to escape from the world, they're trying to change the world."

The SUA staff is already reporting an increase in East Coast applications for its second class, and the *Times* article has been picked up by many other newspapers around the country.

"*The New York Times* is perhaps the most well-respected voice in the American media," says SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. "This shows that the world is carefully watching our activities. As SGI-USA members, we need to be prepared to answer our friends' questions about these kinds of articles, confidently sharing the value of Soka education and the intent of our kosen-rufu movement." WT

THE SOURCE OF WISDOM

Back to the Basics

By JOHN KASAHARA
NORTHEASTERN ZONE
STUDENT DIVISION LEADER



Have you ever been in a situation where you felt as though you were up against a wall and did not know which way to go? Or maybe you had to make a decision that would have a great impact on your life and you were unsure of what to do?

Many people spend hours and hours wondering what to do about such a situation or even suffer with anxiety when faced with difficult challenges. This is where the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism lies — as Buddhist practitioners, we

awaken to the fact that under any circumstances, through our strong prayer to the Gohonzon, we are able to pull tremendous wisdom out of our lives and thereby take the correct action.

The actions that we take, after all, determine the quality of our lives. This is why it is so important to have the wisdom to do the right thing.

In order to obtain this wisdom, we must develop our faith. Nichiren Daishonin thus teaches: "When the skies are clear, the ground is illuminated. Similarly, when one knows the Lotus Sutra, one understands the meaning of all worldly affairs" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 766). In other words, unless our minds are filled with the wisdom of Buddhism, we cannot see which way to go.

Our minds often get clouded with all sorts of illusions — delusions, even. We start to think that merely implementing various strategies will solve our problems. And then, instead of solving our problems, we find ourselves in a deadlock. We might even create more problems for ourselves than we had before. It can become a vicious cycle, and we can do ourselves in.

We need, instead, to first pray sincerely to the Gohonzon

and face the reality of our present situation. If we cannot see the true nature of what we are faced with, how can we resolve it? What is it that is stopping us from winning? With confident prayer and a strong determination to find this out and to win over it comes the wellspring of wisdom.

"For what purpose should we cultivate wisdom?" SGI President Ikeda recently asked. "For what purpose is our faith? The answer is to win — to win in life, in society and as human beings. It is to win without fail, so that we may secure happiness and create peace" (June 15 *World Tribune*, p. 5).

Of course, wisdom does not come without study. It is essential that we study Buddhism — reading the writings of the Daishonin and SGI President Ikeda — and develop and refine our intellect. Otherwise, we cannot derive

deep wisdom from our lives. Study helps us to bring out the wisdom of the Buddha nature in our lives by reminding us again and again that it is there.

And it is important for us to remember in this respect that wisdom alone is not enough to lead us to ultimate happiness. The Daishonin's Buddhism is, above all, a religion of compassionate action.

In other words, true wisdom is the outgrowth of courageous action taken for the sake of the happiness of other people. This is the principle the Daishonin based his life on and that he encourages us to live as well. Such compassionate action for the sake of others is the *raison d'être* of Buddhism.

When we care for and sincerely pray for others' happiness, we tap into the source of limitless life force and wisdom within our lives. In such *bodhisattva* practice, regarding other people's sufferings and happiness as our own, we discover the surest way to bring forth the pure, dynamic life within — the wisdom that reveals our eternal selves. **WT**

The Spirit To Give One's Life

WORDS To WIN By

By RONNIE SMITH
MID-ATLANTIC ZONE LEADER



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

"One's body is insignificant while the Law is supreme. One should give one's life in order to propagate the Law." Because my body is insignificant, I am struck and hated, but because the Law is supreme, it will spread without fail. If the Lotus Sutra spreads, my mortal remains will be respected, and if my remains are respected, they will benefit the people. Then I will come to be revered as highly as Great Bodhisattva Hachiman is now. You should understand that, at that time, the men and women who supported me will be honored as greatly as Takenouchi and Wakamiya. (WND, 615)

In this passage, Nichiren Daishonin quotes from "The Annotations on the Nirvana Sutra" by the Great Teacher Chang-an of China, which states: "One's body is insignificant while the Law is supreme. One should give one's life in order to propagate the Law." The Daishonin proclaims that he has indeed lived up to the spirit of these words, risking his life to establish the Law that opens the path of Buddhahood for all humanity.

To be willing to carry out one's practice even at the cost of one's life is the fundamental spirit with which genuine Buddhist practitioners dedicated to

the correct teaching should spread the Law. Buddhism has spread to the extent it has thanks to people who had this spirit.

The Daishonin, whose compassionate vow to save all people from unhappiness brought forth persecution by the three powerful enemies and put him in constant danger of losing his life, serves as the foremost example of practicing with this indomitable spirit.

Seven hundred years later, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the Soka Gakkai's first president, upheld the same conviction, remaining resolute in the face of persecution by the Japanese military government during World War II. Refusing to compromise the true spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism, he died in prison from malnutrition. Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, staunchly endured persecution together with his mentor, Makiguchi, following him to prison and emerging from its brutality two years later, awakened to the Buddha's mandate.

And as the successor of this relentless spiritual struggle for the happiness of all people, SGI President Ikeda has been

unbowed by a hail storm of criticism and slander heaped upon him by powerful forces in Japanese society, as well as insidious opposition by the third of the three powerful enemies in the form of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood.

Just as the three presidents have done, we can make the phrase "One should give one's life in order to propagate the Law" our own. Although at this time, we may not have to face the life-threatening persecutions that some of our predecessors underwent, by striving to practice and spread the true Law with the same fearless, uncompromising spirit, we, too, manifest the Daishonin's sublime state of life.

It is none other than the SGI, under President Ikeda's leadership, that has proven the Daishonin's words "If the Lotus Sutra spreads, my mortal remains will be respected, and if my remains are respected, they will benefit the people" true. The Mystic Law has now spread to 165 countries and territories throughout the world precisely because the SGI has always correctly upheld the Daishonin's teachings. **WT**

Read the WT E-mail Express

The WT E-mail Express is a free, weekly e-mailer for *World Tribune* subscribers. It features excerpts from SGI President Ikeda's new speeches, essays and dialogues, as well as previews of other upcoming *World Tribune* articles.

To subscribe to the WT E-mail Express, just follow these three easy steps:

- 1) Open a new e-mail message
- 2) Enter to: ListManager@sgi-usa.org
- 3) Enter message text (first line): SUBSCRIBE wtexpress

• You can also see the WT Express on the web, with pictures, at www.sgi-usa.org/publications/wtexpress

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org SGIUSUBS@aol.com
Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907
Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$125 for Three Years

Printed on 100% recycled paper
Copyright © 2001 by SGI-USA.
All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

EXPERIENCE — PATRICIA COLOMBO-BEYELER, LOS ANGELES

Overcoming Obstacles With Waves of Daimoku

Facing a dire situation at work, Patricia Colombo-Beyeler uses prayer to break through the ceiling of obstacles.

For the last six years, I worked for a company that specialized in the training and placement of people who were laid off or unemployed. As a business development executive, one of my most satisfying accomplishments was to design a program that helped integrate welfare recipients and war veterans into society. My job was going well, and I really felt I was making a difference in people's lives.

In February, I had a closed-door meeting with the CEO of the company. She broke down and started crying. She told me the company was in terrible debt and needed immediate capital to keep going and avoid layoffs. I was devastated by the news. The only thing I could do was to ask her to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Even though my boss knew I was a Buddhist, she was a devout Muslim and had no idea where I was coming from.

I later invited her to our Beverly Hills District Women's Division General Meeting. It was exactly what she needed. Afterward, she told me that the warmth and the openness of the members' experiences gave her

hope and confidence to win over her circumstances.

I loved my job and wanted my company to survive, so I went for guidance. And the guidance I received was strict. I was encouraged to win with daimoku and told that daimoku was the only way I would break through the ceiling of obstacles.

Based on this advice, I began a three-hour a day daimoku campaign. Every day, I woke up at 3:00 a.m., so I could complete my goal in the morning. I knew that I had to radically adjust my lifestyle to keep this up because, in addition to my job, I had recently gotten married, had a beautiful 5-month old baby boy and an 11-year old daughter. My life was definitely full.

At times, it was tough waking up before the crack of dawn, but I could definitely see the results. Every phone call I made at work connected me to the right person. My co-workers fed off my energy and began to feel confident we could

overcome this situation. My boss observed that the office began to function just like it had before my maternity leave.

Each day was crucial, and things were not always rosy. Our staff went from 65 to 15 employees. Within a two-month period, different employees were laid off every other day. I kept chanting furious daimoku. Unbelievably, within a one-and-a-half-week period, I was able to raise \$169,000 for the company. This allowed us to make payroll, pay off some immediate bills and relieve some of the pressure in the office.

We decided that the company needed to change direction in order to survive.

Instead of training people, we decided to lease out our training space to other companies. A university expressed interest in leasing out the space for adult classes for the next three years. This contract with the university stabilized our company's financial condition.

Two months into my campaign, I continued chanting three hours a day. It was also at this point that I had a realization. Even though I was glad I could help our company survive, I was not happy doing sales work. And as sad as it felt to consider it, I knew I had to move on. I wanted to make more of an impact on people's lives.

While closing out contracts with organizations that funded our programs, I spoke with a woman who mentioned she had a position opening in

weeks. The woman, an attorney, said I would work as her protégé and assist her as a vendor contract analyst. In addition to analyzing contracts, I would monitor vendor training for people who were laid off or unemployed. And some of the contracts were with welfare recipients and veterans.

This new job would also pay my way through law school and enable me to achieve my nearly forgotten dream of becoming an attorney. Unfortunately, I still had to go through a process of passing tests and numerous interviews — a process that usually takes three to four months to complete.

I took a deep breath and began to chant even more. I remembered the quote from Nichiren Daishonin that says: "The journey from Kamakura to Kyoto takes twelve days. If you travel for eleven but stop with only one day remaining, how can you admire the moon over the capital?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1027). During this period, some of the members of my district were kind enough to come to my home to chant and do gongyo with me.

After chanting so much daimoku, my life-condition was really joyful. Very naturally, I started introducing many people to this practice.

After continuing my campaign and going through further testing for the new position, on June 25, I was chosen for the position at the exact salary I had asked for in my interview. And all this happened in only two months, instead of the three to four months it was supposed to take.

My prayer to be victorious has enabled me to change so much in my life. I feel stronger and more joyful, and I can now pursue my dream of becoming an attorney to make a difference in people's lives. I've also been able to keep in touch with my old boss, helping her any way that I can.

I am so thankful to the members who supported me and to my family for their undying support and love. I feel as though I have not only broken through the ceiling of obstacles, I have begun to see the wealth of fortune this practice has allowed me to create.

I am forever grateful, forever determined to win. **WT**



Patricia Colombo-Beyeler (right) with her daughter Brittanica and husband Didi.



COMING TO THE FNCC



Men's Conference Aug 23-26

Conference highlights include:

- Talkin' straight about relationships
- Keeping It Real: Group dialogue teams
- Putting the Gosho into action in the workplace
- The challenges and victories of fatherhood
- Fishing contest
- Basketball for sports enthusiasts

This conference is open to all SGI-USA men's division members. Leaders facilitating the conference will include SGI-USA Men's Leader Tariq Hasan, Men's Secretariat Leader Steve Saparstein and Vice Men's Leader Ronnie Smith.



Upcoming conferences at the FNCC:



Japanese Language Conference	Sept. 6-9
Thai/Cambodian/Vietnamese Language Conference	Sept. 13-16
Mentor and Disciple Relationship Conference	Sept. 20-23
Victory Over Violence Conference	Sept. 27-30
Spanish/Portuguese Language Conference	Oct. 4-7
Chinese Language Conference	Oct. 11-14

For more information: Please contact your region leader or your SGI-USA zone office for details on how to sign up for a conference. You may also visit the SGI-USA Web site at www.sgi-usa.org.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MAY 22 MESSAGE

Strong Prayer and Determination Can Change Everything

'A leader's strong prayer and determination will infuse everyone's lives,' SGI President Ikeda writes to this leaders conference. 'Please do your utmost to help our fellow members practice with boundless confidence in the justice and eternal victory of our movement.'

SGI President Ikeda's message to a nationwide prefecture leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, Shinanomachi, Tokyo, May 22.



SGI President Ikeda meets President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the Akasaka State Guesthouse in central Tokyo, May 22.

My sincere thanks to everyone for attending this nationwide prefecture leaders conference.

Today, I will be meeting with President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the Akasaka State Guesthouse in central Tokyo. President Obasanjo is a champion of democracy who has long struggled for his convictions. Not even three years in prison or a death sentence could deter him. This will be our fourth meeting.

President Obasanjo has expressed deep understanding for the SGI's movement for peace, culture and education. He has also identified the spirit of Buddhism as rejecting servility and oppression, and observed that Buddhism has the power to elevate humanity.

Leaders must have a clear focus and their own goals.

President Obasanjo, who has steadfastly fought for democratization while undergoing repeated tribulations, has argued that leaders must have a clear focus and their own goals. Otherwise, they will be readily swayed by others and pulled off course.

I hope that all of you, as kosen-rufu leaders, will establish clear objectives and advance

with indomitable courage. If you wage a half-hearted struggle, you will not be able to achieve anything. We have to take resolute action and realize complete, unequivocal victory.

President Obasanjo has told me that he wants to give the people of his country self-confidence. He wants to restore their faith in themselves, their government and their country.

A leader's strong prayer and determination will infuse everyone's lives. Please do your utmost to help our fellow members practice with boundless confidence in the justice and eternal victory of our movement.

Carelessness is a great enemy in our Buddhist practice.

Nichiren Daishonin prayed with all his heart for the peace and safety of his disciples. And he repeatedly reminded them to be as careful as possible in conducting their daily lives.

He admonishes Shijo Kingo: "When returning home [from work late at night], you must exercise prudent caution. For that is when your enemies will seize the opportunity to attack you" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1176).

As SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya mentioned at the 6th Headquarters Leaders

Meeting, I hope members of the young women's division and women's division, in particular, will be careful to avoid returning home late at night.

The Daishonin says, "The protection of the gods depends on the strength of one's faith" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 953). If we let down our guard, then even the Buddhist gods will desert us.

Carelessness is a great enemy. We must avoid carelessness at any cost.

We live in an evil world defiled by the five impurities. While reminding one another to be careful, while watching out for one another, let us continue advancing based on the principles that faith means not causing accidents, and that suffering no accidents is itself victory.

In the 21st century, women will finally gain the supreme respect they deserve.

The 21st century will be the Century of Women. A most interesting article on this point appeared in the *Haerbin Daily*, a newspaper in China, Japan's neighbor to the west. The article notes that in Chinese, the feminine pronoun *she* (*ta*) was only coined in the 20th century. By comparison, it explains, the corresponding English pro-

noun has been in use since the 12th century.

Even the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789), the manifesto of the French Revolution, used the term *man* in the gender-specific sense. In other words, the rights of women were excluded. And it is well known how a woman who protested this discriminatory treatment was executed. [In 1791, in protest against this declaration, Olympe de Gouges announced a Declaration of the Rights of Women and Female Citizens. Branded an anti-revolutionary, she was sent to the guillotine in 1793.]

In the 21st century, women will finally gain the supreme respect they deserve as women and as human beings. It will be an age when the power of women is manifested to the utmost.

The newspaper article further predicts: "The 21st century will be an 'age of knowledge economics.' It will not be a time when people compete through 'hard power,' as they have in the industrial age to date. It will be a time when people compete in such 'soft power' areas as drawing up plans and expanding their scope, providing services, working together in harmony, promoting exchange and pooling people's strengths.

"In other words, it will be an age when the sensitivity, subtlety, flexibility, tenacity, mercy, attentiveness and intuition — qualities that women possess in abundance — will be highly prized and utilized to the fullest."

Whether we are talking about a country, a company or an organization, it is those bodies where the talents and abilities of women are given full, free rein that will thrive. This is a global current.

The SGI has taken the lead in this movement. And I want to emphasize that we must continue to do so in the future.

The beautiful country Luxembourg is known as "the green heart of Europe" and as a "green diamond." Under the leadership of a female central figure, the path of kosen-rufu in Luxembourg has splendidly developed.

I visited Luxembourg in June 1991. At that time, I oversaw the formation of what was then referred to as the world's smallest chapter.

Immediately after the ceremony marking the chapter's inauguration, a great rainbow appeared in the sky. It was as though the Buddhist gods were celebrating the event. I immediately gave the chapter the nickname Rainbow Chapter.

The leader of Rainbow Chapter was Chizuko Asanuma Breden. A native of Tokyo, she determined to play an active part in world kosen-rufu while still in the high school division. I will never forget how she heroically threw herself into activities with her new-born child in arm.

At the time of the chapter's formation, her husband, John Breden, was a high school math teacher. While he is not himself an SGI member, he has profound understanding for his wife's faith and warmly supports her activities. Out of appreciation, I asked him to become an advisor to the chapter and to protect his wife and the members.

In the 10 years since, our friends in Luxembourg have steadfastly, sincerely and tenaciously advanced along the path of kosen-rufu. My wife and I have continued to send them our earnest daimoku.

During this interval, the Luxembourg membership has increased fourfold, and the organization has won remarkable trust in society. I recently heard the wonderful news that the SGI organization in Luxembourg has gained legal status as a non-profit corporation. The announcement was carried in the

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

April 28 issue of the country's official gazette.

Now that SGI-Luxembourg has been officially incorporated, it has been reorganized as a headquarters. Mrs. Breiden has assumed the post of general director of the organization, as well as headquarters leader. The two key people supporting her are also women. Their success is a delightful symbol of the Century of Women.

At present, Mr. Breiden is serving in the post of deputy mayor of Luxembourg, the capital. He also graciously accepted appointment as an honorary headquarters leader. I heartily applaud their achievements. Long live the Rainbow Family!

Mrs. Breiden takes pride in having her roots in Tokyo, the prime point of kosen-rufu. In a message, she writes: "I am praying for Tokyo's total victory. Please extend a great rainbow of victory over Tokyo. And please also convey my warmest regards to all members of the women's and young women's divisions in Tokyo and throughout Japan."

It is an infinite source of pride to be a member of this remarkable organization.

At present, I am conducting a dialogue for eventual publication with the American futurist and activist Hazel Henderson. We are planning a wide-ranging discussion on a number of themes that will become a focus of the 21st century, including the environment, the energy problem, creating a solidarity of global citizens, women's activities and peace, culture and education.

In the exchange, which we have only just begun, Dr. Henderson states that the most important lesson of the civil rights movement was persistence in reaching out to people—even powerful politicians and business leaders—appealing to the divine, or higher self, within each individual. Dr. Henderson continues: "This is what I admire about you and about members of the SGI I have met around the world. They are the best, most organized, most persistent group of people. I know lots of groups of people who are spiritually motivated who cannot make anything happen in the world. But it impresses me a great deal that SGI people actually make things happen, such as their great work for peace and to ban nuclear weapons."

These are the words of a noble champion who, as the leader of various popular movements, with an unyielding, indomitable spirit has strug-



A view of the old city of Luxembourg. Inset: SGI-Luxembourg General Director Chizuko Asanuma-Breiden (center) with her family.

gled to overcome many difficulties and ordeals. And the Soka Gakkai and the SGI are the organizations that she regards as the strongest, most effective popular bodies in the world. It is an infinite source of pride to be able to struggle as a member of such a remarkable organization.

If the 'one evil' is simply ignored, calamities are bound to occur.

In his treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land," the Daishonin says, "Rather than offering up ten thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one evil" (WND, 15). He is saying that rather than offering many kinds of prayers to eliminate various sufferings from the world, one should instead concentrate on removing the fundamental cause of society's misery.

"One evil" means the fundamental evil. It is because of the distorted spiritual foundation of human beings and society that all well-intentioned actions and strategies are futile.

What, then, is this fundamental evil? The Daishonin clarifies that it is slander of the True Law and correct teaching. It is a force that tries to destroy kosen-rufu, which is the great wish of the Buddha. It is jealousy toward, and betrayal of, the fundamental good that causes the infinitely noble lives of all people to shine, that inspires them to realize a peaceful society based on the principle of the sanctity of life.

Acting in league with those in power, people affected by such negative forces trample on the true teaching and persecute people of justice. This devilish function is itself the one evil,

the fundamental evil. In the modern age, the slanderous actions of Nichiren Shoshu are a case in point.

The Daishonin declares that if this one evil is simply ignored, the calamities of internal strife and foreign invasion are bound to occur. In other words, this one evil will ultimately drag the country down the path of war, which causes the greatest suffering to the people. For this reason, the Daishonin strictly admonishes that this one evil must be eliminated.

Buddhist practice means struggling against evil amid the realities of society.

The SGI today stands tall as a genuine force for peace that

represents the greatest hope for peace.

The practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism in essence means struggling against evil amid the realities of society and taking action to accomplish good for society. A religion that does not battle evil will be swallowed up by the polluted currents of an evil age. This is the reality of the Latter Day of the Law.

I have cited this passage many times in the past, but in the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" the Daishonin teaches, "The *ku* [of *kudoku* (benefit)] means to extinguish evil, and *doku* means to bring forth good" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 762). Benefit

functions to hold in check the tendency toward war. Well aware of this, intellectuals around the world look to us with trust and expectation.

At this time when dangerous undercurrents toward war continue to tug at society in Japan and other countries, let us boldly work to expand our solidarity with the awareness and pride that our determined ad-

cleanses our life, rendering it pure and unsullied. Benefit wells forth when we chant *daimoku* and battle evil. Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, strictly admonishes, "I will never trust a person who does not fight enemies."

And the Daishonin declares, "Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth" (WND, 618). "A single great truth" refers to the Daishonin's disciples who wage a united struggle to accomplish good. Now, in the Latter Day of the Law, this can only refer to us, the SGI members.

We must resolutely defeat the one evil that seeks to take advantage of and destroy the SGI—a supremely noble body that is working to accomplish the Buddha's will and decree.

We have the unity of many in body, one in mind. Nothing is stronger. Burning with a spirit of justice, a spirit to refute evil and a spirit to accomplish the widespread propagation of the Law, let us wage an exhilarating struggle. And let us win in every respect.

Please convey my heartfelt respect and gratitude to all of our noble comrades who are day in and day out exerting themselves as emissaries of the Buddha. I pray that all of your family members will enjoy longevity, safety and peace, along with great happiness and prosperity.

With courage and in good health, together let us set our sights on the Soka Gakkai's 75th anniversary in 2005. **W**

Subscribe yourself or share it with a friend.

To subscribe, visit www.sgisubs.com or send in the order form below with your payment enclosed. No cash, please. Call 1-800-835-4558 if you have questions. Please check the appropriate boxes.

WORLD TRIBUNE		LIVING BUDDHISM		If you wish, please select one free optional language supplement of the World Tribune.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 months \$15 (13 issues) Save \$11	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 months \$15 (3 issues) Save \$3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months \$28 (26 issues) Save \$24	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months \$28 (6 issues) Save \$8	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 year \$50 (52 issues) Save \$54	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 year \$50 (12 issues) Save \$22	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years \$85 (104 issues) Save \$123	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years \$90 (24 issues) Save \$54	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 years \$110 (156 issues) Save \$202	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 years \$125 (36 issues) Save \$91	
Are you a new subscriber? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		U.S. rates only. International rates vary.		
Charge my VISA <input type="checkbox"/> or Master Card <input type="checkbox"/>				
Card # _____				
Expiration date _____				
Signature _____		All credit card orders are subject to bank approval		
Name _____				
Address _____		Apt. # _____		
City _____		State _____ Zip _____		
(For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver)		District Source Code (if known)		
SEND TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907				



FROM FESTIVAL, 1

each show, a Boys and Girls Group chorus brought cheers and shouts of joy from the audience. At the conclusion of each performance, audience members and performers sang "Ode to Joy" together as the youth orchestra played.

Eleven-year old modern dancer Maya Ono noted: "The audience was amazing. We could feel their support all the time." Cynthia McCole, a Boston member, commented, "Today's performance gave me confidence that the youth are ready to carry the banner of the SGI-USA forward!"

For weeks, youth members and friends throughout the Northeast chanted and poured all their energy into creating original performances. Men's and women's division members supplied countless meals for performers, sewed costumes and provided transportation for rehearsals.

The day before the festival, the young performers rehearsed well into the night at a local high school in temperatures exceeding 95 degrees. Despite the heat and long hours, they united and determined to perform their best. SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima encouraged the youth, proclaiming, "Let's change the history of our move-

ment through this festival!"

Hours before the festival, as lines formed around the theater, young men in blue shirts appeared on every corner, holding signs, directing sidewalk traffic and answering questions. The welcoming committee presented live music and costumed dancers, who flowed onto the city streets, causing passers-by to pause and wonder aloud. "What's going on in there?"

In his closing speech, Dean Lawrence Carter of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College called the festival an "outpouring of joy and creativity." Emphasizing spirituality, empathy and nonviolence, he urged those concerned about improving the world to "be the change you wish to see."

While hundreds of SGI-USA youth had a great festival experience, so did about 10 percent of the performers who were members' friends. They and their families were able to learn more about the SGI and President Ikeda.

The festival participants learned that those who struggle to improve themselves in their daily lives are all true heroes. Alphonzo Terrell, 18, a Brass Band leader from Boston, noted, "Because of this festival, we learned to unite and become a community." Hip-hop dancer Jason Horton, 16, added, "If we can do this, we can do anything." **W**



SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE NORTHEASTERN ZONE FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVAL

A Clear Victory for the Youth

‘Our youth in America have grown splendidly, serving as the core of every aspect of our movement,’ says SGI President Ikeda. ‘You have scored a clear victory! I send my hearty respect and applause to all the members of SGI-USA’s youth division, who have now created a great history.’

My sincere congratulations on the Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival and other Victory Over Violence activities that signal the rising of the sun of hope over America in the new century!

It is a great honor for my wife and I to receive the title of honorary citizens from the Borough of Manhattan in New York City. This proves that my dear friends in New York and all of the Northeastern Zone have gained great trust from your communities through your devotion to their prosperity. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Virginia Fields, president of the Borough of Manhattan, and all of its citizens.

You youth have now stood up with a determination to build a republic of humanity in your society free from vio-

lence. Our fellow SGI members in 165 countries are sending you their heartfelt praise and congratulatory words.

Our youth in America have grown splendidly, serving as the core of every aspect of our movement! You have scored a clear victory! I send my hearty respect and applause to all the members of SGI-USA’s youth division, who have now created a great history.

Also, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the men’s and women’s division members who have been supporting the youth, sharing their work and struggle behind the scenes.

I also want to thank from the bottom of my heart all the organizations, friends and guests who have extended their support to us and our shared philosophy of nonviolence.

Our movement of nonviolence starts with one individual’s courageous self-reformation and action. Ours is a challenge against distortions in humanity and society that produce discrimination and violence, a grass-roots movement to expand a network of culture, education and peace.

I am convinced that VOV is a great movement, led by world citizens, that will help spread a solidarity of courage, a crucial factor to win over violence both globally and locally. It is an embodiment of the Buddhist principle that expounds the absolute sanctity of human life.

What can save us from the suffering

that arises from violence? Neither politics nor economics alone is sufficient to bring an ultimate solution to this most difficult problem. The answer must be found through an inner challenge to reform the fundamental darkness in one’s heart, the origin of the impulse toward violence. What is needed today is a philosophy that propels us to care deeply about others and enables us to establish lasting happiness for ourselves and others.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the poem “To My Young American Friends,” which I wrote in New York. Blessed with a wonderful mission in this lifetime, young Bodhisattvas of the Earth have emerged one after another in the lands of New York and Boston! I believe that your unshakable belief and united efforts for peace will surely toll the bell of triumph and jubilation for the future of America and all humanity.

I wholeheartedly love and trust my fellow members in the Northeastern Zone. I ceaselessly pray that you will take initiative in becoming a driving force to newly build a Century of Life, a Century of Humanism and a Century of Soka Renaissance. I am eagerly awaiting your victory.

With all my prayers for your good health and happiness,

*Daisaku Ikeda
July 14, 2001*

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

MAKING THE FUTURE BRIGHTER

'The future will always be bright for those who are committed to justice and truth, who strive passionately to uphold them,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'It will always be bleak for those whose lives are ruled by evil.'

If we wish to achieve extraordinary results, everyone must strive hard. When everyone strives hard, great success can be realized." I encountered this passage many years ago, but it still has a strong hold on my heart. These are the words of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, one of the forerunners of the Chinese people's revolution, who made Yokohama, in Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture, an important base for his activities.

Dr. Sun also says, "To accomplish that which we seek to achieve, we must take the initiative and not lag behind others."

◆◆◆◆

July 3 is an unforgettable anniversary for all of us in the Soka Gakkai. It is the day second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was released from prison in 1945, and also the day that I, his disciple, had the privilege of going to prison for the sake of Buddhism in 1957.

Over the years, it has become a tradition for us in July to step up the energetic momentum of our advance toward kosen-rufu, our earnest struggle for justice and truth. Our renewed, dynamic efforts in this cause have also made July a month when the lofty spirit of oneness of mentor and disciple burns even brighter.

◆◆◆◆

May 3, 1979—just after I stepped down as Soka Gakkai president—was a bright, sunny day. The commemorative general meeting held that day at the Soka University gymnasium with the attendance of High Priest Nittatsu, however, was subdued and somber. And no doubt the hearts of many of the participants even now are filled with deep remorse and self-di-

rected anger that they were unable to prevent the situation.

That day determined the future course of each participant, depending on what was in his or her heart. Their victory or defeat today—whether they have gone on to achieve a continuous series of triumphs or have grown corrupt and degenerate—was decided then. In both the good sense and the bad, those individuals have personally experienced the strict workings of the law of cause and effect in their lives.

It was a moment that was to sort out the genuine Soka Gakkai leaders, true champions of kosen-rufu, from cowardly, false leaders who exploited the world of faith for self-serving ends.

The future will always be bright for those who are committed to justice and truth, who strive passionately to uphold them. It will always be bleak for those whose lives are ruled by evil.

After taking my leave from that meeting, I headed straight for the newly built Soka Gakkai Kanagawa Culture Center in Yokohama.

◆◆◆◆

As you may know, President Toda one time called himself Jogai (literally meaning outside the castle). The name came from his assertion that while his mentor, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, could remain inside the castle (Jpn *jochu*), he, his disciple, was determined to remain "outside the castle" and fight against the enemy forces.

Therefore, following my mentor's example, I did not return to our "main stronghold" in Tokyo on that May day but went directly to our center in Kanagawa—"outside the castle," as it were. From there, I was determined to carry out a new struggle—the true, essential struggle for the Law that represented the purpose for my appearance in this world.

Though certain fellow members let me down or betrayed me, I have never betrayed my vow to my mentor. For I know that this is the most correct way of life, both from the perspective of Buddhism and as a human being.

It was from my beloved Kanagawa that I launched my first battle after becoming the Soka Gakkai's honorary presi-

dent, holding aloft the flag of truth and justice all alone.

On July 3 that year—the Day of Mentor and Disciple—I was also at our Kanagawa Culture Center, with its sweeping view of Yamashita Park and the waters of the port where ships sail into the Pacific Ocean.

I had met with an important guest that day, a university professor from Costa Rica. That discussion on the future of humanity, on peace, on culture, marked the start of a new page in our history of meaningful dialogue with leading world figures.

I also spent July 3, 1980, the following year, in Kanagawa. The Kanagawa members, in conjunction with Saitama representatives, held a special commemorative meeting on that occasion.

◆◆◆◆

Again in July 1984, I made the noble citadel of the Kanagawa Culture Center my base, from there launching a fresh round of activities. During that month, I visited the area of Misaki, in Kanagawa's Miura City, for the first time in many years.

Among the many meetings held in Kanagawa at the time of my visit, the high-spirited July 10 headquarters leaders meeting was a particularly historic one. On that occasion, I was able to personally present Soka Gakkai organizational flags—the banners of kosen-rufu—to representative leaders from throughout Kanagawa. I presented flags to the leaders of the Kanagawa, Naka, Nishi, Hodogaya, Asahi, Isogo and Kanazawa wards of Yokohama City; to the leaders of Kawasaki, Saiwai, Nakahara, Takatsu, Miyamae, Tama and Asao wards in Kawasaki City; and to the leader of Fujisawa Zone. I presented all of these ward and zone flags with the spirit of bestowing banners of glory upon every single Kanagawa member.

The Kanagawa members were filled with life and vigor. When I thought of how these noble comrades in faith were leading the way, fighting at the forefront of the struggle for kosen-rufu as true Bodhisattvas of the Earth, hot tears spilled from my eyes.

As I presented the flag to each leader, I tried to encourage them by saying things like "Do your

best!" "I am counting on you!" And I was convinced at that moment that our organization in Kanagawa was rock-solid.

The stirring sight of those spirited, noble champions of kosen-rufu remains fresh in my memory to this day.

◆◆◆◆

I am reminded of an occasion 30 years before that—back on Jan. 6, 1953. At a meeting held that day, I was appointed leader of the young men's 1st corps, and I received the corps flag directly from my mentor.

As he handed the flag to me, his eyes glittered brilliantly behind his glasses, asking, "Are you ready to fight together with me your entire life for kosen-rufu?"

The moment I received the banner of kosen-rufu from his hands, my spirit leapt up like a bright flame.

He said to me: "Fight hard to the very last battle, ever waving this flag high! I am counting on you, Daisaku!"

My great mentor treasured and cared for us youth. I can never forget the enormous debt I owe him.

At that meeting, I led Bansui Doi's famous song, "A Star Falls in the Autumn Wind on Wu-chang Plain," to respond to President Toda. I have written many times about singing this song for him.

As he sat listening with closed eyes, allowing the lyrics to reverberate in his heart, all of us present could sense how deeply moving he found it.

The song recounts the tragic demise of Chuko K'ung-ming, the Chinese regent who loyally strove to carry out the late emperor's wishes but in his later years was struck down by a serious illness in the midst of his campaign.

*The autumn wind, with deepening sorrow,
Blows from Mount Chi
Gloomy clouds gather over
the battleground
Of Wu-chang Plain.*

The Regent lies gravely ill.

When I finished, he said, "Again!" Overcome with emotion, he asked us to sing the song over and over. Tears streamed from his eyes.

*Though some may argue his success or failure,
He was loyal to the very end.*

*Do they [the stars] shine
their silvery light upon
The hero's lonely anguish?
Touched by his valor,
Even demons wail in the
autumn wind.*

No doubt, ever since his imprisonment by the military authorities during the war, President Toda had been searching with all his heart for young flag bearers to carry on his work.

From that day on, I have fought every battle—no matter how bitter—without retreating a single step, fighting, fighting and fighting until I have gained a firm victory.

Today, new flag bearers—our brave young men and women of Kanagawa—stand proudly before me.

◆◆◆◆

In 1991, the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, which we of the Soka Gakkai had trusted, protected and made the most wholehearted offerings to, arbitrarily severed ties with us. This was based on nothing but jealousy toward our organization and, specifically, toward me. The priesthood revealed its true ugly nature as an entity of base evil pervaded by arrogance and degeneracy.

That year, I led our movement time and again from Kanagawa, shining citadel of the spirit. "Let us embark on a new Soka Renaissance!" I cried.

I attended numerous events throughout the region: the Odawara Music Festival at the Soka Gakkai's Atsugi Peace Center, as well as the Yokosuka and Kawasaki music and culture festivals. I also visited our auditorium in Yokohama's Nishi Ward. In January 1992, I attended a joint Kamakura-Shonan choral festival.

In a famous speech, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declares, "But there is one bond which unites us all...that we are prepared to proceed to all extremities, to endure them and to enforce them."

No matter what unscrupulous plots or cruel persecutions an aberrant high priest has

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 27-28

'The entire universe exists within a single human life,' Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages a young woman with tuberculosis. 'The causes and effects of all phenomena are present within your own mind, and they are all a reflection of your life. That is why you will be able to heal yourself through faith.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto's voice grew stronger as he spoke to the Kyoto University students: "All of you will eventually become active members of society and experience the challenges and obstacles that go along with that. There may be times when you cannot participate in Soka Gakkai activities as much as you would like to. Herein also lie the essential and theoretical aspects of life. If you are determined to fulfill your unique mission for kosen-rufu, no matter what your circumstances, you are living the essential. But if you allow yourself to be defeated by your situation, lose faith and forget your mission, your way of living has only been theoretical.

"In one sense, it can be said that the difference between the essential and the theoretical is slight, for both boil down to one's state of mind, one's determination, and are invisible from

the outside. However, when seen with the eyes of Buddhism, everything is clear and the difference between the two becomes abundantly evident.

"In terms of our inner determination, the essential is our prime motivation, our commitment to spreading Nichiren Daishonin's teaching. It is the spirit to advance, the spirit of challenge. The theoretical, on the other hand, is inertia, compromise and retreat.

"The way that we can distinguish between the essential and the theoretical in our lives is by asking ourselves: 'Am I living for the sake of kosen-rufu and striving to do my human revolution? Am I thoroughly resolved to realize my goals?' The person who does this will triumph in life.

"Living the essential is a moment-to-moment struggle. Therefore, the place we are right now is the training ground for our Buddhist practice."

Shin'ichi's lecture on the essential and the theoretical made a deep impression on the participants, and became a very important support for them in later years. Shin'ichi did not want these lectures to be simply a lesson in Buddhist doctrine. He made a tremendous effort to help each student expand his or her life. With that in mind, he always left time at the end of the session for questions and open discussion, during which he offered guidance and encouragement to anyone who was struggling with a problem.

In January of the next year, 1964, after a lecture held at the Kansai headquarters, Eriko Nakano, a pharmaceutical student, announced: "Recently I went to the doctor because I was exhausted and I could not stop coughing, and I was diagnosed with tuberculosis. The doctor told me that I should be hospitalized."

"Tuberculosis?" Shin'ichi asked with great concern. "Do you have any appetite?"

"Not much," Nakano replied. "Are you sleeping at night?"

"I am, but I have a hard time falling asleep." Shin'ichi asked Nakano in detail about her symptoms. Having suffered through tuberculosis himself, he knew something about the nature of the illness.

Shin'ichi addressed Eriko warmly: "I recovered without hospitalization, but sometimes hospitalization is recommended. I think either way can work.

"You have a mission. If you dedicate yourself wholeheartedly to faith, you will definitely be



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

able to change your karma. In 'The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind,' the Daishonin quotes these words of Chang-an: "Great Concentration and Insight" reveals the teaching that T'ien-t'ai Chihche himself practiced in the depths of his being' (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 355). In 'Great Concentration and Insight,' T'ien-t'ai expounded the principle of a single life-moment possessing three thousand realms—the idea that all aspects of existence are present in the mind of each person. Chang-an is saying that T'ien-t'ai experienced this principle himself, in his own life.

"In other words, the entire universe exists within a single human life. The causes and effects of all phenomena are present within your own mind, and they are all a reflection of your life. This is the teaching of Buddhism. That is why you will be able to heal yourself through faith."

Nakano nodded, but she still looked uncertain.

"Getting sick," Shin'ichi continued, "is difficult and painful. But depending on the way you look at it, it may also provide you with a chance to discover the true meaning of faith and of life. The Daishonin said, 'Illness gives rise to the resolve to attain the way' (WND, 937). This is your opportunity to summon forth the power of faith.

"In that sense, your illness is a good thing, isn't it? Please take your time and rest well. We will be waiting for you."

Nakano felt the warmth and sincerity in Shin'ichi's words.

She obtained a leave of absence from school and entered the hospital. At first, she thought that all she needed to recover was a little rest, and she was even a bit glad to have the chance to take a break, even if it was in the hospital. She had been very busy up to that time as a student division leader and with her studies. Tired of her hectic schedule, she had privately wished for some time to just relax and read some good books.

Then, unexpectedly, her wish had come true. But she could only rest and enjoy her reading for a few days before she began to worry. The shadow across her lungs was not going away. She wondered why, even though she was young and strong and now receiving medical attention, she was not getting better. If she had to be hospitalized for several years, what would happen to her life? She became more anxious day by day.

She could then appreciate how happy she had been spending her days so busily engaged in study and Soka Gakkai activities.

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



VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE 2001

Mastering the Art of Dialogue

By DARIN NELLIS

SGI-USA YOUTH PEACE COMMITTEE
CO-CHAIR

'Across the United States this summer,' says Darin Nellis, 'let's utilize our VOV campaign to the fullest to spread the joy of the Mystic Law and, through dialogue, inspire millions of Americans to awaken to their greatest potential.'

In my last article, "Cherishing Young People Creates a New Future" (May 25 *World Tribune*, p. 11), I wrote about the importance of cherishing young people to overcome the problem of youth violence and the significance of the mentor-disciple relationship in addressing this. In this article, I want to share some thoughts on the mission of our Victory Over Violence campaign in helping us master the art of dialogue in order to create a new era of human rights.

Igniting a new nonviolence movement.

In preparation for our VOV Family Youth Festival this summer in Los Angeles, I have been working with several youth leaders in conducting a grass-roots VOV community outreach campaign. Our goal is to work with many other community and faith based organizations to inspire thousands of people to come together across all boundaries to address the issue of youth violence through dialogue and, in the process, create lasting bonds of trust and friendship.

Our hope is to create a groundswell of excitement in advance of the festival through a series of workshops, community dialogues, seminars and school outreach activities—enough to attract 50,000 concerned citizens to the festival. At the beginning of our campaign, we asked ourselves how we were going to achieve such an unprecedented goal.

After much anxiety, we began a unified early morning



daimoku campaign and studied past campaigns where SGI President Ikeda had been successful in creating a groundswell of excitement to accomplish a great goal. For example, at the young age of 24, he led the Kamata Chapter to an unprecedented record of 201 new member households in just one month. Then in 1956, at the age of just 28, he led the famous Osaka campaign, where he spearheaded the introduction of 11,111 households to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in a single month.

In each case, Kamata and Osaka, President Ikeda made a deep pledge to his mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, that he would win the campaign no matter what criticism or obstacles he encountered. In both of these campaigns as well, President Ikeda engaged in an all out struggle to have sincere dialogues with as many people as he could. My understanding is that he visited some 8,000 people in Osaka and went through three bicycles in less than one year. Talk about tenacity!

We also read from President Ikeda that SGI-Bolivia had a remarkable success in attracting 110,000 citizens to see the "Nuclear Arms: Threat to our World" exhibition, which they hosted last year. And that they did this with a total of only 500 members in Santa Cruz, where it was shown. President Ikeda said with admiration, "The exhibit's great success was the direct result of their steadfast, earnest efforts to carry out dialogue with as many people as possible" (June 8 *World Tribune*, p. 4).

After learning from President Ikeda, we were determined to engage as many people as we could in a heart-to-heart dialogue. Since

then we have visited and spoken with more than 50 community- and faith-based organizations in Los Angeles County concerned with youth violence; this is on top of the many visitations to like-minded organizations made by many other engaged SGI members in our area. And we are just getting started!

One of our first visits was with a well-respected African-American church in Los Angeles to attempt to involve its membership in the festival. We were all wary of how we were going to approach them, and how they might accept the fact that VOV is spearheaded by a Buddhist organization.

I did my best not to panic and just thought of the thousands of people that President Ikeda had engaged one-on-one for the sake of world peace. If we could just connect to the church youth minister's heart and regard each moment of this encounter as a once-in-a-lifetime chance, I thought, everything would turn out great.

The minister accepted us into his church. Before and after our meeting, he held our hands, while he said a prayer to God. At the end of our meeting, he even thanked God for sending us and praised VOV. He didn't do this because he was fanatical about his religion or over zealous; rather, he seemed to be genuinely inspired by the sincerity and passionate resolve of the SGI youth to transcend racial, cultural and religious barriers for the sake of peace and to stop youth violence.

Our relationship with this youth minister and his church has become so strong that he now is hosting our festival organizing committee meetings at his church.

Believing in another's capacity for good.

What we have found is that the majority of people we speak to are open to hearing what we have to say. However, that is not always the case. For example: Our next meeting with a Christian church was

with the youth minister of the largest Christian congregation in Los Angeles.

We approached this visit the same as every other: We chanted powerful, unified daimoku, studied President Ikeda's guidance and put our entire lives into the encounter. It was not more than two minutes after introductions and a brief explanation of VOV when the youth minister asked, "Is this a Christian thing?"

When we proudly explained that the festival was interfaith, and that we were Buddhist, he immediately pulled out his Bible and began preaching to us how "even though some people don't believe it, Jesus really does exist." He went on to say that he felt strongly that we were really sent there to be saved by God and not just to talk about VOV. By this time, we were feeling a bit uncomfortable and a bit disturbed. I then began to close down myself and found it difficult to listen with an open mind.

But rather than letting my anger at the youth minister for not listening to us get the best of me, I remembered what President Ikeda had said about Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi's deep belief in the value of each person's life: "They believed ceaselessly in the capacities for good that reside in the human spirit. They uncovered and discovered the capacity for good in all people, equally and without exception" (April 27 *World Tribune*, p. 8).

I began chanting inside to

connect to the minister's heart, to believe deeply in his Buddha nature despite my negative reaction. This determination fortified my life-condition and prepared me for his next onslaught. He proceeded to tell us that if we did not accept Jesus into our lives, then we would be condemned to hell. But none of us flinched. Our determination and confidence in our cause was unshakable.

By the end of the meeting, we were able to turn the tide on the conversation; we talked about the intent of the festival and even asked the youth minister many personal questions about his life and why he is so passionate about his work. We left on very good terms and even more importantly, we had won over ourselves in the quest to live up to President Ikeda's example.

Across the United States this summer, let's utilize our VOV campaign to the fullest to spread the joy of the Mystic Law and, through dialogue, inspire millions of Americans to awaken to their greatest potential. I am determined to make this happen by challenging myself first to cultivate the three traits, according to President Ikeda, that summarize the character and mentality of a person who is a master in the art of dialogue:

- 1) To be rigorously strict toward oneself, like a sharp autumn frost.
- 2) To be warm and embracing toward others, like a soft spring breeze.
- 3) To be uncompromising when confronting evil, like a lion monarch. (May 1999 *Living Buddhism*, p. 18).

Coming up next in this series: "The Victory Over Violence Philosophy."



Irvine, Calif., Mayor Larry Agram presents a proclamation declaring July 29 Victory Over Violence Day in Irvine at the Orange County Family Youth Festival.

Photo by GERRY HALL

Finding Value in the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Exhibition

PERSPECTIVE

By AL ALBERGATE
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.

'Based on faith, practice and study,' says Al Albergate, 'SGI members all over the world are trying to exemplify the same values held by the three great men portrayed in this exhibition.'

I was recently invited to a monthly World Peace Gongyo Meeting where the youth members performed a skit to inform participants about the new "Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace" traveling exhibition.

The topic sparked some questions for me: "Although this wonderful exhibition is a great public relations tool for our organization, what importance does it have for the lives of our members as individuals? How can we, as common people, relate to the lives of these three outstanding figures in history?"

I found the answers in SGI President Ikeda's message to the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize Ceremony (April 27 *World Tribune*, pp. 8-9). I was inspired by the following points in his message: 1) human revolution; 2) interfaith relationships; 3) all life is related; 4) nonviolence; and 5) what we can do.



Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

Human revolution: Speaking about Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., President Ikeda described them as individuals "committed to the inner transformation of the individual, [who] worked with vibrant energy to inspire people to bring forth their very highest, their most noble potential." That's exactly what SGI members around the world are doing every single day through their practice for individual happiness and for others. We call it "doing human revolution."

Interfaith relationships: According to President Ikeda, "unfettered by any narrow nationalist or sectarian concerns, both Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi saw each of the world's inhabitants as fellow citizens equally lit by the inner brilliance of life." Dr. Lawrence Carter, dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, who inspired the prize and exhibition, fondly points out that Gandhi was a Hindu, King a Christian and President Ikeda a Buddhist. In spite of their different religious backgrounds, all three share similar ideals

with regard to human rights and their achievement through non-violent methods.

As SGI members and citizens, we are continually encouraged to develop good relationships with all people, regardless of religion, and to contribute to our communities. Each of us has the opportunity to improve relationships and create new ones almost every day based on the values of equality and respect for life.

All life is related: "To make the 21st century into a century of life, to create a new current of history, requires a clear guiding philosophy. 'All life is interrelated. We are all caught in a single garment of destiny,'—this was the inner voice that arose within Dr. King as an unwavering conviction over the course of his travels to India to study Gandhi's nonviolence movement," said President Ikeda. He explained that Buddhism calls this concept dependent origination, the understanding that all forms of life come into being through mutually supportive and sustaining relationships. SGI members pursue their dream of world peace and try to conduct their lives with the understanding that whatever one person does has the potential to affect others, perhaps many others.

Nonviolence: In his message, President Ikeda said: "The lineage of modern nonviolence can be traced from Henry David Thoreau and his study of Eastern thought to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It has grown into a vast movement that has transformed our world, as symbolized by the nonviolent de-

mocratic revolutions that have swept the globe, starting in the Philippines and Eastern Europe a little more than a decade ago." We SGI members are practicing ourselves and teaching others the most essential of nonviolent changes, the inner transformation of human revolution.

What we can do: As I read through these points, I realized that my individual mission may not be to lead a nation to independence as Gandhi did, nor spearhead a nationwide human rights movement in the tradition of King, nor build an educational system as has President Ikeda. There is something I can do, however.

I have my own mission to contribute to peace and people's happiness. Through my practice in the SGI-USA, I can continue to undergo my human revolution and teach others to do the same. I have the opportunity to make new friends and relate to them on common, humanistic grounds, regardless of their religion. I try to treat each person that I encounter with respect, based on my understanding of their Buddha nature and the interconnectedness of our lives.

Based on faith, practice and study, SGI members all over the world are trying to exemplify the same values held by the three great men portrayed in this exhibition. Further, I believe the exhibition can help many individuals to awaken to their own individual missions, too. It sure served as a reminder to me.

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

Kanagawa towns and cities.

Kanagawa has already begun a fresh, resolute advance, leading the way for Japan and the rest of the world.



The great standard bearer of the American Renaissance, Ralph Waldo Emerson, says in his essay "Fate," "So women, as the most susceptible, are the best index of the coming hour."

More than 700 years ago, Nichiren Daishonin declared the equality of the sexes, saying, "There should be no discrimi-

nation among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 385).

It is in this spirit that the Soka Gakkai has begun to build the Century of Women. And Kanagawa is a model of that ideal.

I present the Kanagawa members with these words of Simone Weil, the French philosopher and political activist: "To act is nothing else, for me, than changing myself."

My beloved Kanagawa

members! Be courageous, determined and filled with invincible fighting spirit, and achieve absolute victory!

Let the great banner of justice and glory flutter triumphantly in the sky!

— On July 3, 2001, at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the July 5 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

General Director
Daniel Nagashima

Publisher
Fred M. Zaitso
Assistant Publisher
Greg Martin
Editor in Chief
Ted Morino

Managing Editor
Jeff Farr
jfarr@sgi-usa.org

Staff Writer
Jamie Liptan
jliptan@sgi-usa.org

Staff Photographer
Gregory Nakasuji

Contributing Artists
Stephanie Sydney
ssydney@sgi-usa.org
Linda Eberle

Staff Translators
Jeff Kriger
Shin Yatomi

Contributing Photographers
Gerry Hall
Jean Pritchard

Bureau Chiefs
Angela Harris, Atlanta
Fletcher Dalton, Boston
Veronica Evans, Chicago
Jim Dreisbach, Florida
Joanne Tachibana, Hawaii
Kathleen Slattery, Los Angeles
Cheryl Utley, Midwest
Robert Taliaferro, New York
Dave Shadovitz, Philadelphia
Irene Owada, Rocky Mountain
Liz Anderson, San Diego
Ron Baird, San Francisco
Bill Lawrence, Seattle
Troy Murrain, Texas
Robin Meader, Washington, D.C.

Foreign Language Pages
Chinese: Ingrid Yeh
Korean: Charles Lee
Spanish: Martha Maury
Japanese: Katsunori Umezawa

READERS COMMENTS

Send to:
Mailbox
606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427
Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907
or e-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS

1-800-835-4558
e-mail: SGISUBS@aol.com
or on the Web:
www.sgisubs.com

FRIENDS FOR PEACE

ffp@sgi-usa.org
SEIZE THE DAY
seize@sgi-usa.org

SPANISH PAGES

wtspanish@sgi-usa.org

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

FROM ESSAY, 8

launched against us, the unity of the Soka Gakkai, fighting for truth, has not been shaken in the slightest.

Exerting themselves with even greater energy, the Kanagawa members adorned the final decade of the 20th century with brilliant victory.

Now, the second Seven Bells—which will determine the direction of the 21st century—have started to ring joyously in Sagami-hara, Yamato, Atsugi, Hiratsuka and all the

CELEBRATING PRIDE ACROSS AMERICA

All over the country, thousands of SGI-USA members and their friends took part in annual Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Pride celebrations.

In his message to the pride activities all over the nation, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima wrote: "Your actions to commemorate the annual Pride events as Bodhisattvas of the Earth are truly wonderful! I hope all of you live lives of splendid beauty and unrivaled happiness. And I hope that through your brilliant activities, you will show the world the true image of the beautiful and diverse SGI family."

In San Francisco, more than 150 marchers handed out 7,000 pieces of literature along the parade route June 24, which provided information on the SGI. A beautiful float also provided a stage for a powerful taiko drum performance and a dance from the Mystic Flava troupe.

Hard work from more than 20 members at an SGI information booth during the course of the weekend resulted in many new guests at a July 8 introductory meeting. All told, about 300 people visited the booth with sincere seeking spirit.

SGI-USA members joined New York City's 32nd Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride March and hosted an information booth at PrideFest, the accompanying street fair.

There were more than 200 members and guests in the march. One of the marchers, Trish Har-

tog, shared her impressions of the day: "I watched the faces of the people lining the streets, some looking as if they were studying us, and I imagined they were thinking: 'So this is what Buddhists look like. Look how happy they are.' And we were!"

On June 24 in Seattle, more than 50 SGI-USA members, along with an amazing 10-member drum corps, celebrated by leading the Seattle Freedom Day Parade. The drum corps, which had been practicing for three months, never stopped drumming as the other members passed out more than 3,000 invitations to introductory meetings. The parade was followed up by tremendous performances by SGI-USA members at the opening of the rally.

SGI-USA member Pat Bunevich rode the lead motorcycle down Central Avenue in the parade celebrating Gay Pride in downtown Phoenix on April 21, with an SGI flag on one side and a rainbow flag on the other, while members of Phoenix's SGI-USA Pride Group lined the streets to cheer and encourage the more than 70 entrants in the Gay Pride Parade.

SGI-USA's involvement also included sponsoring a booth at the Gay Pride Festival—a first for Arizona. People were lined up two and three deep while they waited for an opportunity to ask questions about Buddhism, spiritual equality and the Victory Over Violence campaign.

A small but mighty contingent of SGI-USA members and friends marched in this year's



San Francisco

Columbus, Ohio, Pride Parade. People along the route cheered and took more than 3,000 SGI-USA brochures.

This was the Chanting Out Loud group's third year in the parade and first year to have a booth. Members at the booth talked with hundreds of parade goers, collected 79 signatures for the VOV pledge and handed out introductory material.

More than 150 SGI-USA members participated in Chicago's 32nd Annual Pride Parade, June 24. Nearly a half million people were uplifted and embraced by the sights and sounds of Buddhists engaged in one of the largest community events in the nation.

The SGI-USA unit was led by a rousing drum major and five youth members carrying a banner.



New York

The marching unit followed with some 50 members in red, yellow and blue tee-shirts. The marchers passed out 10,000 postcards to enthusiastic spectators. Dance SGI brought cheers from hundreds of thousands of spectators with a jazz dance to "Ode to Joy."

SGI-USA Vice General Director Darnell Pulphus told the Chicago participants that "this is what happens when people

are allowed to be who they are and get their groove on. Don't ever let anyone mess with your groove!"

—Diana Elrod, Bill Endsley, Whitney Rank, Lois Litvin, Sally Ann Marks, Kelly Simerman and Linda Thornburg contributed to this article.

Photos by JAVIER P. BERRIOS, LLOYD CARLSON, DIXON HAMEY, LEONNYA HANKS, LORI McDANIEL, JEAN PRITCHARD and others



Denver



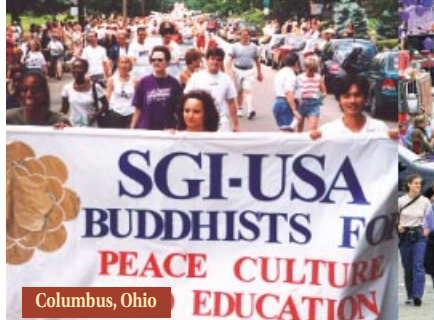
Houston



Phoenix



Chicago



Columbus, Ohio



Seattle



Los Angeles