

**SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS**

## 'LIVING AS CHAMPIONS' IN ATLANTA

Photo by EMIKO TOMITAKA

By BEVERLEY REMLAND, ANN SEIDL,  
TALMADGE BROWN, LINDA MARTIN  
AND GLORIA SYLVESTER  
ATLANTA CORRESPONDENTS

On July 28, more than 1,000 members and guests were warmly welcomed to Southeastern Region-Tri-Area's Family Youth Festival. Although the sunshine was punctuated with rain, the spirits were high and smiles were bright throughout the festival. It was truly a family event—a celebration with picnics, booths and a show featuring stunning performances.

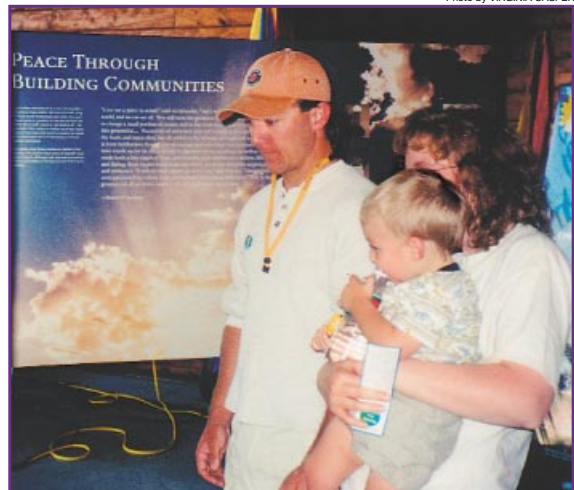
Youth division members from the Atlanta Area, Northside Area and Atlanta South Area were the driving force that planned, researched, implemented, communicated, monitored and protected the activities from beginning to end. All the committees approached their responsibilities with a sense of mission and a "daimoku first" attitude. They included a Performance Committee, Booths Committee, Hospitality Committee, Transportation Committee and Promotion Committee.

The festival was held at the historic Lynwood Park Community Center, in the heart of one of the first African American home-owning communities in the South. Ms. Pat Martin, executive director of the Lynwood



PLEASE SEE ATLANTA, 12 The Fortune Fan Dancers perform 'Happy Face' at the Lynwood Park Community Center in Atlanta, July 28.

Photo by VIRGINIA CASPER



The Idaho Family Youth Festival features the Gandhi, King, Ikeda and Victory Over Violence exhibits, July 28.

**SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS**

## Idaho Members Join With the Community

By SHARON BARNES  
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO, CORRESPONDENT

The SGI-USA youth in Idaho set sail on a historic journey with Idaho's first SGI-USA youth festival, July 28. Fremont Park in Idaho Falls came alive with exhibits, dialogue and music as the Family Youth Festival celebration exploded onto the scene. With such high spirits,

even the blustery conditions — wind gusts reached 40 mph — did not disrupt the youthful determination.

Preparations for the event began several months ago, including a poster contest with the theme "Peace Begins with Me," held in several junior high and high schools. The winning posters were on display at the festival. Idaho members were very excited to

also share with the community the Gandhi, King, Ikeda and Victory Over Violence exhibits. Guests viewed the displays with extreme interest, asking many questions about the SGI movement.

An enthusiastic announcer, Boise District Young Women's Leader Amelia Unione, went over the agenda for the day,

PLEASE SEE IDAHO, 12

# What It Really Means To Inherit the Lifeblood



By JEFF KRIGER

SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER



ing the Soka Gakkai's "Counterfeit Object of Worship": 100 Questions and Answers, p. 15).

The Goshu passage quoted in the above is from the Daishonin's famous letter "The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life and Death." In *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* it reads: "Even embracing the Lotus Sutra would be useless without the heritage of faith" (WND, 218).

Nichiren Shoshu seems to suggest here that belief in its

high priest is equivalent to the heritage of faith. The Daishonin, however, never equates the heritage with a formal lineage, and even less to belief in the primacy of a religious hierarchy. In this writing he discloses what it really means to inherit the lifeblood of faith.

Addressed to Sairen-bo, a priest of the Tendai school who became the Daishonin's disciple, it's a response to Sairen-bo's question about *shoji ichidaiji kechimiyaku* — the "heritage of the ultimate law of life and death." The Japanese term *kechimiyaku*, literally lifeblood or bloodline, originally meant the transmission of authority, spiritual and legal, from master to disciple in Japanese Buddhist schools.

In the Tendai school, such formal rites of transmission were veiled in secretive esoteric ritual. They involved the transfer of doctrine, proprietary knowledge, real property, and even political power in much the same way as es-

tates and titles were transferred from father to son among the nobility. The Daishonin roundly criticized the Tendai school, originally founded upon the Lotus Sutra-based teachings of T'ien-t'ai of China, for mixing esoteric beliefs into its doctrines.

In response to Sairen-bo's question about the heritage of the ultimate Law, the Daishonin casts an entirely new light on the idea, defining it as the essence of the Lotus Sutra and as faith itself.

For example, in this letter he writes: "Shakyamuni Buddha who attained enlightenment countless kalpas ago, the Lotus Sutra that leads all people to Buddhahood, and we ordinary human beings are in no way different or separate from one another. To chant Myoho-engekyo with this realization is to inherit the ultimate Law of life and death. This is a matter of the utmost importance for Nichiren's disciples and lay supporters, and this is what it means to embrace the Lotus

Sutra" (WND, 216).

The heritage lies in praying with the conviction that we are no different from the eternal Buddha and the Law that leads to Buddhahood — Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Overturning the idea that the heritage of faith is passed down exclusively or secretly, the Daishonin also writes, "Nichiren has been trying to awaken all the people of Japan to faith in the Lotus Sutra so that they too can share the heritage and attain Buddhahood" (WND, 217).

In its literature, Nichiren Shoshu often divides the heritage into two: the heritage of the entity of the Law, which they say is possessed and passed on by only one person, the high priest; and the heritage of faith, which they hold to be inferior. Here, though, they associate the heritage of faith, as well, to belief in the high priest. Either way, their arguments contradict the Daishonin's words, which place primary importance on the faith of the practitioner. **WT**

## The Gods Same Birth and Same Name



By DAVE McNEILL

WEST HILLS, CALIF.



They get their names, according to the Great Teacher Miaolo, because Same Birth is born at the same time as you, and Same Name has the same name as you do. There is no escaping cause and effect.

Such personification, of course, is simply myth, but mythology plays an important role in human society; such a vivid illustration can help us keep in mind the ever-abiding law of cause and effect. In America, with our distrust of any Big Brother-esque watchdog, we may think that Same Birth and Same Name are here only to catch us doing the bad things, to make us "pay" for even the slightest digression. But as the Daishonin repeatedly points out, they are really here to protect us: "Same Birth and Same Name, the two heavenly messengers who have been with each of them since birth on their shoulders, will guard them" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 778). "A person's body has a left and a right shoulder, on which there are two gods, one called Same Name and the other Same Birth. These are two deities whom Brahma,

Shakra, and the gods of the sun and moon have assigned to protect each person" (WND, 464).

Same Birth and Same Name protect us by making sure that heaven, or the universe, "knows" about each one of our good deeds, even the smallest ones. For if the Buddhist deities, the universe's protective forces, know what good we've done, they cannot fail to come to our aid at the crucial moment. In a time when simply practicing the Lotus Sutra correctly could get you persecuted or killed, such an image could give great peace of mind.

The Daishonin's Buddhism is called the Buddhism of the True Cause, because we emphasize the importance of each moment as we strive to make causes toward the desired effect. We continue to make such causes even when we do not see the immediate effect, because we believe that every cause, even the smallest, is important. No cause is wasted in Buddhism. No action, unimportant. Yes, cause and effect is strict, and we are sure to reap the rewards. The god and goddess on our shoulders deserve our thanks. **WT**

Cause and effect is strict," we often hear. Usually it is intended as a warning ("If you do that bad thing, you'll get a bad effect") or as an I-told-you-so ("I knew he would get that bad effect after what he did").

While such statements can be silly — or even harmful — if taken to the extreme, cause and effect is strict in this make-a-bad-cause-get-a-bad-effect way. But the opposite is just as true. Every good cause also gets a good effect. And even the smallest good that you do registers in your "karmic bank" to produce benefit for you. Nothing is ever forgotten.

When Nichiren Daishonin wanted to emphasize this "good side" of cause and effect, he sometimes cited the story of two gods, Same Birth and Same Name. These two gods, or heav-

enly messengers as they are sometimes called, are said to be the personification of the Mystic Law of cause and effect. They are mentioned in various sutras.

The story goes that these two, one male and one female, sit on your shoulders and each time you make a cause, one of them reports it to King Emma, the lord of hell, who judges you when you die based on your deeds while alive. According to the Ten Kings Sutra, Same Birth, the male on your left shoulder, reports all your bad causes; Same Name, the female on your right, reports all the good ones.

And they are always there.

### Correction

Virginia Fields, borough president of Manhattan, was unable to attend the SGI-USA Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival on July 19 due to other commitments (Aug. 10 *World Tribune*). But the proclamation she signed, naming SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda honorary citizens of Manhattan, was read at the conclusion of each of the two performances.

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EXPERIENCE — ELIZABETH VENGEN, HOPE, N.J.

# Protecting My Son Through Prayer

**Determined to protect her family, Elizabeth Vengen uses her Buddhist practice to help her son hear.**

When I began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism 16 years ago, I dreamed of having a happy family with lots of children. In this dream, however, I never imagined the kind of obstacles I would face and the human revolution that awaited me. Thankfully, I had nine years of the practice behind me when I became pregnant with my first child.

During my pregnancy, I chanted for a beautiful, intelligent, creative, artistic, athletic and happy baby who would become a capable person for kosen-rufu. I also introduced someone to the practice and helped her receive the Gohonzon. Fortunately, when Joseph was born, he was everything I had chanted for. As he grew, his great qualities became increasingly obvious. What also became obvious was that he was not saying "Mommy," which I longed to hear. By the time he was 15 months old, we

confirmed what we feared: Joseph was born profoundly deaf in both ears.

Because of my strong practice, I only spent a few seconds asking "Why me?" and then determined to do what I could to help him. I resolved that, somehow, Joseph would hear 100 percent.

Shortly after, my husband and I learned about a miracle: the cochlear implant. We were told this could possibly provide some hearing to Joseph, but we would not know how much until after the implant surgery. We also learned the procedure would cost \$60,000 and might not be covered by insurance. But because we wanted Joseph to fulfill his potential in the hearing world, we quickly decided to have him evaluated for candidacy. Again, I turned to the Gohonzon and prayed that Joseph would receive the implant quickly (and not have to wear the required FM system for six months). I determined that insurance would provide complete coverage and, most importantly, that Joseph would hear 100 percent and make the best use of the implant they had ever seen.

To support me during this time, Andy and Lynn Rajekkas met with me every week to chant for Joseph. Every day, I read the letter from the Daishonin, "Reply to Kyo'o." Specifically, I focused on the passage "Kyo'o's misfortune will change into fortune. Muster your faith, and pray to this Gohonzon. Then what is there that cannot be achieved?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412).

Replacing Kyo'o's name



Elizabeth Vengen and her son Joseph attend a Mother's Day tea at his kindergarten.

with Joseph's name, I demanded that Nichiren Daishonin keep his promise and protect Joseph.

Within only three months of the initial diagnosis, Joseph was implanted at the young age of 18 months. At the time, he was one of the youngest children ever implanted. We also received complete insurance coverage, even for auditory verbal therapy for the next two years. The surgery was a total success. However, it was still too early to tell how well the implant would work and how much Joseph would actually hear.

For the next two years, Joseph plunged right into speech therapy and early intervention and my husband and I began training. I'd be lying if I said this wasn't the most stressful period of my life, especially since I was pregnant with baby No. 2, and it seemed that Joseph would never catch on to listening and speaking. So, I kept chanting and making as many causes as I could with my fellow members.

One day, at a group meeting when Joseph was 2, he took an apple from the altar, brought it over to me and said "a'le." When he was 3, he sat down in front of the Gohonzon one day and chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with us for five minutes.

After this, Joseph continued to make great strides in his language development. With the aid of the implant, he tests between 25 and 40 decibels, which is normal conversational level. Outside of the testing situation, he hears even better. Without the implant, he couldn't even hear at 120 decibels.

When Joseph was 4, his auditory verbal therapist told me he made the best auditory use of the implant she had ever seen. By 5, he started kindergarten at our local public school with his same-age hearing peers. Mid-year he reached major social and language milestones such as talking in complete sentences. At some point, he started saying "I love you" to me, but by then I was taking his speech for granted. He recently turned 6 and despite some initial doubts, he graduated from kindergarten on schedule.

It is now four-and-a-half years since he first heard anything and, despite all the obstacles, he is starting the first grade with his class this fall.

This road has not been easy for any of us, and Joseph has experienced levels of frustration that I will never understand. He still has many language gaps to fill in before first grade starts, yet slowly

but surely, Joseph has become more and more capable of articulating his thoughts, feelings and ideas. It is beautiful to watch his personality emerge through what he says. As my mother says, every word he utters is a gift.

Throughout the past five years, I have always done my best to use the strategy of the Lotus Sutra to help Joseph reach and surpass every milestone. My many hours of desperate prayer for him have also helped me in doing my own human revolution. He constantly forces me to face my flaws as a human being and become the best mother I can.

My son is actual proof of my deepest prayers. He is beautiful, beyond intelligent, funny, gifted artistically, creative, athletic and capable, and he can hear. Most importantly, he is freer and happier than he has ever been. He is like a caged bird let loose to explore the expansive, limitless skies of his life. The qualities he has, together with his depth of character, have not only allowed him to face and overcome his obstacles but have also allowed me to realize my dreams and resolve any doubts about this practice. Beyond my own expectations, I am proud of Joseph and I am proud of this incredible victory for my entire family. **W**



Joseph Vengen will start first grade this fall.

FROM 'MY DEAR FRIENDS IN AMERICA'

# Walking the Path of Mentor and Disciple

'When one is completely dedicated to the path of mentor and disciple,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'he or she experiences no doubt or confusion, no uncertainty or fear.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech at an SGI-USA representatives conference, Los Angeles, July 3, 1996.

I am delighted to meet with my friends in the United States on this significant day, the 51st anniversary of July 3, the SGI's Day of Mentor and Disciple. On this day in 1945, at 7:00 p.m., my mentor, Josei Toda, was released from prison. Alone, he courageously initiated a struggle to prove the righteousness, truth and greatness of his mentor, Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi, who had been unjustly incarcerated and humiliated by those in power and who had died in prison.

On the same day, 12 years later, July 3, 1957, also at 7:00 p.m., I was jailed on entirely groundless charges. I went to jail to protect President Toda and the sincere and courageous Kansai members. [SGI President Ikeda, then Soka Gakkai youth division chief of staff, was arrested on trumped-up charges of violating the election law filed by the Osaka District Prosecutors Office. He was later cleared of any wrongdoing.]

When one is completely dedicated to the path of mentor and disciple, he or she experiences no doubt or confusion, no uncertainty or fear.

During the reconstruction of Japanese society following World War II, President Toda appreciated deeper than anyone the debt the Japanese owed the United States for introducing freedom of religion and other democratic institutions to Japan. Out of my desire to repay this debt, I founded Soka University of America.

Celebrating this occasion with us is Dr. Alfred Balitzer, an honorary president of Soka University of America [now dean of faculty at SUA, Aliso Viejo]. In fact, on May 3 this year, the Day of the Soka Gakkai, Dr. Balitzer sent me a sincere congratulatory message. I'd like to share part of it: "The Jewish tradition is replete with examples of the mentor-disciple relationship. This unique bond adds to the learn-

ing process motivation, commitment and loyalty, thus making education a transforming experience, completing the purposes of nature in man. It is, as I understand it, the soul of a Soka education....

"The mentor-disciple relationship is not a slavish relationship but, rather, is one that raises both mentor and disciple to a new level of humanity. A long time ago I knew this lesson but had forgotten it until I came to know you and the Soka Gakkai. For this great gift, I wish to add my thanks on your anniversary day. Also, you have taught me how this relationship can impact humankind so substantially as to alter the conditions that produce peace and happiness. It is in this sense that your anniversary marks the progress of humankind."

I am humbled by his generous words. I have taken the liberty of introducing this message to preserve for later generations an example of the trust and



SGI President Ikeda attends an SGI-USA representatives conference in Los Angeles, July 3, 1996.

expectations people of goodwill the world over place in the mentor-disciple relationship as we know it in the SGI.

**It is not up to others—everything depends on ourselves.**

Like the indomitable lion seeking no companion, President Toda launched a new struggle for kosen-rufu on July 3. He relied on no one but him-

self. Physically he was extremely weak. His businesses were in complete ruin. And in the majority of cases, the whereabouts of the former Soka Gakkai members were unknown. Under these adverse circumstances, President Toda started anew, based on strong and earnest prayer.

Nichiren Daishonin says: "I am praying that, no matter how troubled the times may be-

come, the Lotus Sutra and the ten demon daughters will protect all of you, praying as earnestly as though to produce fire from damp wood, or to obtain water from parched ground" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 444). Such was the prayer of the Daishonin, determined to resolutely protect his followers while exiled on Sado Island.

It's not up to others—everything depends on ourselves. As leaders of kosen-rufu, we should first pray ourselves. Being a leader is not a matter of getting others to do things; it is to become an engine and set oneself in motion. This is the key to victory in all endeavors.

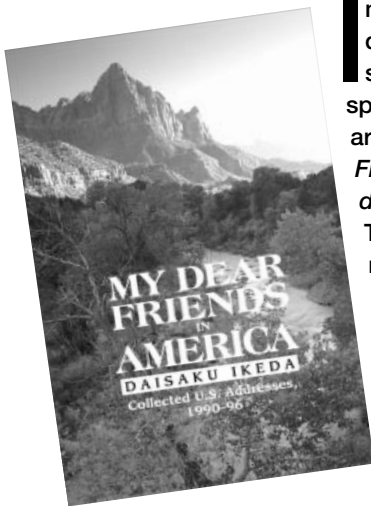
It is important that youth, in particular, actively seek challenges to forge and strengthen themselves. Those who enjoy material luxury from a young age and do not work hard cannot become people of outstanding character. They cannot become great leaders who protect the people.

I hope you will work hard, sparing no effort, and develop yourselves as indomitable champions whom nothing can shake or dishearten.

**Practicing Buddhism means being victorious.**

Today, a commemorative youth division gathering is taking place at the SGI-USA Headquarters in Santa Monica. I am delighted to see the growth

## 'My Dear Friends' Reprint Now Available



In this series, in response to readers' requests, we are reprinting excerpts from some of SGI President Ikeda's 1990s speeches in the United States. All of these are available in the new book *My Dear Friends in America: Collected U.S. Addresses 1990-96*, published by World Tribune Press. As was previously announced, an earlier edition of *My Dear Friends* was pulled from bookstore shelves because of some missing text. If you purchased a copy of *My Dear Friends* with a blue spine and back cover, you can now exchange it for this reprint, which has a green spine and back cover.

of so many strong successors in the U.S. youth division.

I praise them for their strenuous efforts in creating another momentous page in the history of our movement with the New York culture festival and the SGI General Meeting in Florida. It is my sincere wish that, in the workplace, at home and in the community, the youth will fully and freely manifest all that they have gained from this valuable training.

During an air raid not long after his release from prison, President Toda wrote to his wife's younger brother: "Chanting daimoku develops the state of Buddhahood. And developing the state of Bud-

**d h a h o o d** means devoting yourself confidently to your work while leading the most reasonable, sound and cheerful daily life. This sounds easy enough, although putting it into practice is difficult.

But it is possible! If this practice did not enable us to do so, it would not be a genuine faith. I would like you to be a person who can succeed in this. A young person's life, in particular, should manifest the true power of faith. I, your older brother, have awakened to an eternal life, blazing with a vibrant, youthful spirit, and I am living vigorously and cheerfully."

Practicing Buddhism means being victorious. In advancing one step at a time amid the realities of daily life while showing concrete actual proof and in becoming victors and successes—people who enjoy abundant good fortune—we demonstrate with our very beings the validity of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and serve as a source of hope and inspiration for those who will follow us on the path of faith.

I hope that the youth division members, while encouraging and supporting one another, will work courageously and cheerfully to realize the great American dream of the 21st century.

**The purpose of exchange should be to enhance the lives of both ourselves and others.**

Tomorrow, July 4, is America's Independence Day. Two hundred and twenty years have

passed since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which upholds the ideals of liberty and equality.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda both recognized the humanism that pulses in America. President Makiguchi discerned a need for humanity to move beyond military, political and economic competition and toward what he termed "humanitarian competition." His perceiving this in his *Geography of Human Life* as early as 1903 shows remarkable foresight.

Regarding both individual and international relations, Mr. Makiguchi asserted: "The purpose of interaction or exchange

are cheerful. They have a good sense of humor and are warmhearted and hard-working. In these qualities, I, for one, perceive the ideal characteristics of the human being. I deeply respect and treasure my American friends, who possess such pure and beautiful hearts.

As leaders, please strive to be great pilots of kosen-rufu who guide all of your fellow members without exception toward health, prosperity and happiness. The members are central. Their happiness has to be the prime concern and objective.

"Accord the practitioners of the Lotus Sutra with the same respect as you would a Buddha"—this, as the Daishonin says in "The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings," is the "ultimate transmission of the Lotus Sutra" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 781).

We must never lose the spirit to respect and trust one another.

It is vital for leaders to bravely take action at the forefront, ready to bear the brunt of any onslaught. It is the role of leaders to unflinchingly provide courage, hope and peace of mind to the Buddha's children. Only by advancing with a stand-alone spirit—no matter what happens—and resolutely leading the way toward victory can we fulfill our mission. This is the spiritual flame that infuses July 3. **WT**

**'All my American friends are cheerful. They have a good sense of humor and are warmhearted and hard-working. In these qualities, I, for one, perceive the ideal characteristics of the human being. I deeply respect and treasure my American friends, who possess such pure and beautiful hearts.'**

should not be simply to promote self-interest but to protect and enhance the lives of both ourselves and others. We have to choose a way to bring benefit to ourselves while working for the welfare and benefit of others."

Where did Mr. Makiguchi find the seeds of this humanitarian formula of seeking the happiness of oneself and others? In America.

**We must never lose the spirit to respect and trust one another.**

All my American friends



**'Like the indomitable lion seeking no companion, President Toda launched a new struggle for kosen-rufu on July 3. He relied on no one but himself.'**

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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S JUNE 28 MESSAGE

# Unity Leads to Boundless Benefit

**SGI President Ikeda says that 'ultimate human solidarity can be forged only by the supreme unity of comrades who dedicate their lives to the great wish for kosen-rufu. Where there is such unity, members receive benefit that increases boundlessly.'**

*SGI President Ikeda's message to a nationwide prefecture leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, Shinanomachi, Tokyo, June 28.*

**T**hank all of you for your efforts to attend this nationwide prefecture leaders conference.

Through nationwide unity, we have crowned the month of June with brilliant victory. This remarkable triumph accords with Nichiren Daishonin's statement "If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 618). The kind of communication, rhythm and teamwork that derive from this prefecture leaders conference are the driving force for all victory.

**There is no world of greater human warmth than that of the SGI.**

The Great and Vast Buddha Flower Garland Sutra explains that the palace of the deity Indra is surrounded by a magnificent net of jewels known as Indra's net (see *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 634). At each knot in the net, a brilliant jewel is attached. And each one reflects all the other jewels. It is a brilliant artistic symbol of boundless mutual interrelation.

This magnificent image is a metaphor for a new kind of network of diversity and mutual respect toward which humankind should aspire in the 21st century. I discussed this in an address at Columbia University (see *My Dear Friends in America*, pp. 432-42).

The solidarity in the Soka Gakkai is the same. Different



Congresswoman Jeanette Rankin is presented with a flag flown at the House of Representatives during passage of the suffrage amendment, January 1918.

regions and prefectures encourage one another, carrying out exchange on many levels, mutually invigorating and inspiring one another. The power of each organization is then increased many times over, and a new force greater than anything previously imagined is born.

This ultimate human solidarity can be forged only by the supreme unity of comrades who dedicate their lives to the great wish for kosen-rufu. Where there is such unity, members receive benefit that increases boundlessly. Though unseen, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas definitely observe all of our sincere efforts.

There is no world of greater human warmth than that of the SGI. There is no life more noble than one dedicated to kosen-rufu. Please lead lives of joy with this profound confidence.

The great French author Victor Hugo says: "There is but one thing that I would like to seek of you. Through uniting, you should be able to win.... Unite, for then you will be unassailable." Even in today's information society, unity is power. In

any field, those who become isolated are left behind and will come to ruin.

I want each of you to become an "invincible General K'ung-ming of the Mystic Law." Uniting around SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya, please concentrate your wisdom while proudly, joyfully constructing a network of total victory in the 21st century that is without parallel in the world.

Hugo declares his intention to hound those who drive the people to misery: "Until my last breath, I will continue battling them on every front. They will no doubt discover me. I will continually appear before them as a citizen boldly making an address at the podium, or as a soldier in the streets."

I want all of you to become thoroughly eloquent, like Hugo. I want you to become courageous leaders who can defeat the enemies of the Buddha.

**We should read Nichiren Daishonin's writings each day, even a paragraph or sentence.**

The Daishonin says, "Em-

ploy the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other. 'All others who bear you enmity or malice will likewise be wiped out.' These golden words [from the "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra] will never prove false" (WND, 1001). No strategy surpasses the strategy of the Lotus Sutra. When we advance based on faith, based on the Daishonin's writings, we can defeat any enemy, no matter how powerful.

Please read the Daishonin's writings each day, even if only a single paragraph or sentence. Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, used to say, "When you are tired, that is when you should study the Daishonin's writings." His writings blaze with his brilliant life. When we expose ourselves to the Daishonin's writings, our lives change—wisdom, courage and confidence well forth.

I want to share a passage from "Revealing the True Spirit." Here, the Daishonin, after affirming that his predictions of internal strife and foreign invasion (made in "On Es-

tablishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land") have come to pass, strictly warns:

"Those [among my disciples] who are believers in name only, whose faith is shallow and whose minds are not wholly imbued with pure faith, will no doubt fall into the [Avichi] hell of incessant suffering for a certain period of time, though perhaps not as long as one thousand kalpas, but at least for one, two, ten, or one hundred kalpas.

"If you wish to avoid this suffering, you should burn your elbows as Bodhisattva Medicine King did as an offering to the Buddha, or tear off your skin to use as paper for transcribing Buddhist teachings as the ascetic Aspiration for the Law did. You should willingly sacrifice your body for the Law like the boy Snow Mountains, or dedicate your whole heart like King Suzudan. Or else you should throw yourself on the ground with sweat pouring from every part of your body. Or else you should pile up rare treasures in front of the Buddha. Or else you should be-

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come a slave and serve a person who practices the Lotus Sutra correctly. Or else.... Your practice should accord with the four ways of teaching [four ways in which the Buddha expounds his teaching depending on the situation], employing the one most suited to the time.

"Even among my disciples and believers, those whose faith is weak and shallow will manifest the state of hell of incessant suffering at the time of death. At that time they should not blame me" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 537).

Not advancing is to retreat. No matter what great hardships we might encounter, we can secure absolute happiness as long as we continue advancing with the faith of selfless, whole-hearted dedication.

**Organizations in which women energetically carry out activities will be victorious.**

The SGI movement is a struggle of popular liberation for happiness and peace. Within our advance, the members of the women's and young women's divisions are playing the most important role. From the bottom of my heart, let me express my gratitude to you. Thank you so much for your constant efforts!

After the long-cherished wish of India's independence had been achieved, Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister, remarked with pride: "There is no doubt that the part the women of India played was not only significant but of paramount importance. It made all the difference in the world in that struggle." Nehru added he was convinced that progress in India "can be and should be measured by the progress of the women of India."

Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress, struggled to refashion government to serve the needs of mothers and children. Alarmed by labor practices that forced pregnant women to continue performing hard physical labor and the exploitation of children, Ms. Rankin argued that politics should reflect womens' aspirations. She spearheaded efforts to pass laws that would be the ally of the weak, her conviction being that the greatest meaning derived from speaking out for justice and championing the causes of society's least fortunate. The members of the women's and young women's divisions, who are raising high their voices for justice, are on the leading edge of the Century of Women.

From prison, Nehru wrote to his daughter, Indira, of his joy in sharing the struggles and triumphs of Mahatma Gandhi: "We have the joy of working and struggling for a great cause; we have a great leader, a beloved friend and a trusty guide, whose sight gives strength and whose touch inspires; and we have the surety that success awaits us, and sooner or later we shall achieve it."

It is remarkable how even in the most difficult circumstances, the determination of a leader can draw forth irrepressible joy and courage, and can inspire profound confidence in everyone. You are all leaders of kosen-rufu and leaders of faith. Therefore, no matter what might happen, please continue to resolutely lead the way to victory, encouraging everyone and helping them advance with hope and high spirits.

Please give everyone the strength and joy to win. Toward that end, we must sincerely treasure the women in the organization and make every effort to help them freely, fully manifest their strength and ability.

The advance of the women's and young women's divisions is the advance of the SGI. Organizations in which women energetically, vigorously carry out activities will be victorious in the 21st century.

**In denouncing the priesthood, presidents Makiguchi and Toda saved Buddhism.**

At the 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting (see the July 27 and Aug. 3 issues of the *World Tribune*), I could not help feeling that the portraits of Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda hanging in the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium were watching over us with great delight. We have won, and we have reported our victory to our mentors. There is no greater joy, no more solemn drama in life.

In conjunction with that meeting, general meetings for the Chubu region and Shizuoka Prefecture were held. It was 58 years ago, in June 1943, that first president Makiguchi and President Toda were summoned to the Nichiren Shoshu head temple Taisei-ji in Shizuoka Prefecture and ordered to accept the Shinto talisman, which would have amounted to great slander of the Daishonin's teachings.

But this mentor and disciple of Soka, fiercely indignant at the priesthood's cowardice, staunchly refused to accept the talisman. If at that time they had

not denounced the priesthood's errors, the Daishonin's great spirit of establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land would surely have been extinguished. And the lifeblood of kosen-rufu would have ceased to flow.

President Makiguchi and President Toda's determined, unrelenting struggles amounted to a supreme effort to defeat the "one evil" (WND, 15) of nationalism in Japan. On June 28—exactly 58 years ago today—President Makiguchi again admonished the high priest to his face.

The priests then took the remarkable step of severing ties with the Soka Gakkai, which was upholding the Daishonin's teachings. They probably feared that they would become the target of repression by the militarist authorities themselves.

Presidents Makiguchi and Toda were arrested in the early morning hours of July 6. In autumn of the year following his arrest—on Nov. 18, which commemorates the Soka Gakkai's founding in 1930—President Makiguchi died in prison, making the ultimate sacrifice for his convictions. His disciple and successor, President Toda, was released from prison on July 3 the following year.

Upon his release, he began a struggle for vengeance

against the devilish nature of power that had driven his mentor to his death. Each year when July comes around, President Toda's indomitable spirit to protect the Law blazes brighter than ever.

**The activities of youth light a fire, give buoyancy and bring vigor to our advance.**

It was in the month of July exactly 50 years ago that President Toda inaugurated the youth division. [The young men's division was formed on July 11, 1951, and the young women's division was formed on July 19.] July is therefore the month of youth.

A solid force of youth who will fight on without fear has now been formed. How elated presidents Makiguchi and Toda must be at this! And the activities of the younger members of the youth division are particularly reassuring.

Following the victory of the civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a great leader of nonviolence, remarked, "In most of the recent direct-action crusades, it had been the young people who sparked the movement." He credited young people and students with having "brought a new impact to the crusade, and the impetus that we needed to win the struggle."

This is also the principle for the SGI's victory. The activities of youth light a fire, give buoyancy and bring vigor to our advance. I ask that all men's and women's division leaders do their best to encourage and raise the youth, who will shoulder the task of responsibility for world kosen-rufu in the new century.

The bond of mentor and disciple is most solemn and profound. On July 3, the same date that President Toda was released from prison—and at the same hour, 7:00 p.m.—I, his disciple, was arrested and thrown in jail on trumped-up charges in 1957. Together with my beloved comrades in Kansai, I initiated a new tradition of "ever victorious" Kansai. July is therefore also the month of Kansai.

The Daishonin says, "If teacher and disciple are of different minds, they will never accomplish anything" (WND, 909). If mentor and disciple are not of the same mind, they will not succeed in any endeavor.

On the other hand, when mentor and disciple are united in spirit, there is nothing that will prove beyond them. They cannot fail to win.

When we steadfastly dedicate ourselves to the path of mentor and disciple, we can

PLEASE SEE MESSAGE, 11

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AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# The Tatsunokuchi Persecution: Obstacles Become Our Enlightenment

**In the second of two essays on the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, SGI President Ikeda writes: 'Obstacles lead to enlightenment. Persecutions lead to kosen-rufu. Nichiren Daishonin teaches us this with his very being.'**

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda often said: "Any place where the Gohonzon is enshrined is an infinitely sacred place. Any place where people have faith dedicated to kosen-rufu is a Buddha land. The spirit of Nichiren Daishonin resides there."

The most important thing is to carry on the true spirit of the Daishonin and to act in complete accord with his writings.

SGI members around the world, determined to realize the Daishonin's dream of kosen-rufu, are working hard to transform their respective communities into joyous lands of Tranquil Light. This is the path of a true world religion.

The SGI Study Center at Tatsunokuchi is a great citadel of symbolic significance in praise and appreciation of the efforts of such devoted friends in Kanagawa and everywhere else in the world.

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The exact location of Tatsunokuchi is described in the Daishonin's writings as "Tatsunokuchi in Kamakura" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1413), "Tatsunokuchi at Koshigoe" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 767) and "Tatsunokuchi in Katase" (WND, 196). In other words, it was located in the most general sense in Kamakura, near Koshigoe, at the southwestern entrance to the city, within the area known as Katase.

The site of the SGI Study Center straddles present-day Koshigoe and Katase. It thus



SGI President Ikeda meets with Mongolia's youthful prime minister, Nambaryn Enkhbayar, in Tokyo, Feb. 16.

completely matches the description in the Daishonin's writings; our SGI Study Center is unmistakably the Study Center of "Tatsunokuchi in Kamakura."

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The Daishonin says that since he had given his life at Tatsunokuchi, it was equivalent to a Buddha land (see WND, 196). Indeed, his towering state of life as the original Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law was brilliantly revealed at the site of this great persecution.

The luminous object that streaked across the sky, frightening the Daishonin's executioners was an acclamation from the universe celebrating and testifying to the start of his journey into the boundless future. The Tatsunokuchi Persecution was a ceremony in which the Daishonin revealed, on the level of phenomenal reality, a part of the infinite power of the Mystic Law that governs all things in the universe.

The Daishonin writes: "The Sun and Moon are the bright mirrors of the four heavens, and all the heavenly deities

definitely know of Nichiren. The Sun and Moon are the bright mirrors of all the worlds of the ten directions, and all Buddhas definitely know of Nichiren. There cannot be the least doubt about this" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 141).

The great struggle for kosen-rufu is reflected in the bright mirrors of the sun and moon, and all Buddhas and heavenly deities throughout the universe are watching. That is why the Daishonin was filled with the unshakable conviction that he was resolutely protected, even as he faced execution at Tatsunokuchi.

First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi always used to say, "The Soka Gakkai must cast off its transient status and reveal its true identity." What did this mean? President Toda taught us that it meant having a strong awareness spread throughout the entire organization that we are the true followers of the Daishonin who strive in our activities based on an unwavering commitment toward the realization of worldwide kosen-rufu.

Ten years have passed since

the treacherous and callous excommunication by Nichiren Shoshu. In that time the SGI, which has inherited the Daishonin's true teachings, has boldly cast off its transient status and revealed its true identity. The praise and recognition of intelligent and aware people the world over bears brilliant testimony to this fact.

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The Daishonin states, "Nichiren triumphed at Tatsunokuchi because the heavenly deities joined forces with him" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 843).

That morning, the light of daybreak brilliantly illuminated Tatsunokuchi. It was a dawn of truth and justice breaking through the darkness of conspiracy. It was the triumph of compassion for the people over the demonic aspect of power. It was the triumph of fundamental enlightenment over fundamental darkness. It was the triumph of Buddhahood, which struck fear into the devil king of the sixth heaven who reigns over the earth. It was the jubilant victory of life over the dark minions of mur-

der, who tried to kill the votary of the Lotus Sutra.

Obstacles lead to enlightenment. Persecutions lead to kosen-rufu. The Daishonin teaches us this with his very being. No matter how extreme the threat to our lives, as long as the furnace of strong faith burns hot, we will win, he tells us.

Do not be defeated by persecution, by enemies, by sickness or by your own weakness. Only by winning will the sun of happiness rise. Only by winning will the sun of kosen-rufu rise.

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Later, the Daishonin was led from the Tatsunokuchi execution grounds to the residence of Homma Rokuro Saemon of Echi, a retainer of Sado Island's constable, Hojo Nobutoki. There, the Daishonin ordered sake for the soldiers who had accompanied him, to thank them for their services. As the time came for them to leave, some of the soldiers bowed their heads, joined their palms together in reverence and vowed to the Daishonin to discard the practice of the Pure Land school of Buddhism.

A profoundly humane act can melt the most frozen hearts, like the light of the sun, causing the mighty river of truth and justice to rise and grow in power.

Later, the military government executed five Mongol envoys at Tatsunokuchi. The Daishonin lamented this, saying how pitiful it was that the innocent Mongol envoys had been beheaded (see WND, 628). Had the government only heeded his words of warning, he says, it would never have come to this.

When I met with Mongolia's youthful prime minister, Nambaryn Enkhbayar in February, I shared the Daishonin's sentiments on this incident with him. Today, there is an ever-deepening understanding of the SGI's humanistic philosophy in Mongolia.

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The Kamakura military government marked the real start of military government in Japan.

PLEASE SEE ESSAY, 11

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 31-32

*Shin'ichi Yamamoto encourages a student division member: 'You say you want to protect me, but protecting the organization is protecting me. Protecting one, 10, a hundred or a thousand Soka Gakkai members is protecting me. This is because I have made the Soka Gakkai the sole purpose of my life.'*

Shin'ichi Yamamoto offered the following guidance to medical student Naomi Takaoka: "You must not isolate yourself from others. You will only become deadlocked if you do. The Soka Gakkai is an organization that provides us with inspiration and encouragement, enabling us to open our hearts. You need to have the courage to engage yourself fully in Soka Gakkai activities and to work for the well-being of others.

"One day you will be a doctor, a profession in which the spirit of dedication to others, the spirit of a bodhisattva, is most important. Without it, no matter how skilled you become, selfishness and egoism will prevent you from making a real contribution to society."

Another time, a Kyoto University student attending one of Shin'ichi's lectures said: "To be honest, I do not like the Soka Gakkai as an organization. However, through attending your lectures, I have developed a desire to grow into the kind of person who can protect you and work

together with you for the happiness of others."

Shin'ichi responded immediately: "You say you want to protect me, but protecting the organization is protecting me. Protecting one, 10, a hundred or a thousand Soka Gakkai members is protecting me. This is because I have made the Soka Gakkai the sole purpose of my life.

"Our aim of kosen-rufu can be called a bloodless revolution, but I am prepared to give my life for the sake of our members, for Buddhism and for society. Without such courage and determination, I could not lead our movement. I do not exist apart from the Soka Gakkai or its members. If you have even the slightest desire to protect me, I hope you will take a place at the front lines of this organization and work there to protect all our members."

Throughout these lectures to Kyoto University students on Nichiren Daishonin's "One Hundred and Six Comparisons," Shin'ichi paid close attention to the life-state of each student and gave guidance

accordingly, thinking hard about what he should say and what he wanted to impress upon them. He did this for their lives, for their futures. In this way, he was teaching them the essential path that human beings should follow. It is through such diligent, painstaking and wholehearted effort that others are able to grow.

In fact, almost all of the participants in this lecture series showed great development and began to shine as "jeweled swords" in the endeavor to achieve world peace based on the widespread propagation of the Daishonin's teachings. They went on to realize great achievements and make important contributions to society in their various capacities as leaders of the Soka Gakkai, as doctors, as scholars, as members of parliament, as well as in many other fields.

Shin'ichi devoted his life to educating youth. Life is limited. Only so much can be accomplished in one lifetime. That is why the fostering of able successors who would carry on his work in the next generation was indispensable for achieving kosen-rufu.

Many members of the Soka Gakkai who saw the headline on the front page of the July 25 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, were astonished. There, in big letters, were the words "High Priest Issues Directive to All Priests and Hokkeko Members." What was the reason for this sudden directive from the high priest, they wondered? Two subheads for the article read: "Priests and Laity to Join Forces for Kosen-rufu." "With the Unity of 'Many in Body,



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

One in Mind."

The newspaper's introduction to the directive began: "High Priest Nittatsu has issued a directive to all Nichiren Shoshu teachers [priests with the rank of teacher], general priests and Hokkeko members. The high priest has expressed his hopes that at this time of rapid development within Nichiren Shoshu and when the Soka Gakkai has initiated a fresh and brilliant advance toward the future, the priests and laity will further unite in purpose in order to spread the teachings of the school throughout both Japan and the world."

This introduction provided no clue as to why the high priest had issued a directive at this time. Only by reading the document itself could one get a sense, however vague, of what might be behind it.

There were actually two directives, one to all teachers and general priests, and another to Hokkeko members. The actual wording of both was very abstruse and literary, but the one to priests essentially said: "The Great Pure Law of the Daishonin, our founder and the sun of wisdom of the Latter Day of the Law, is flowing ceaselessly out into the world like a rising tide, and our school continues to flourish. For the sake of the Law and of Nichiren Shoshu, this is truly wonderful.

"The source of this tremendous development is the mag-

nificent power of the Dai-Gohonzon, to which all people of the Latter Day of the Law should devote themselves and base their lives upon. At the same time, it is also due to the dedication of the Soka Gakkai members, who, under the leadership of their president, have united in the endeavor to spread the teachings of the Daishonin and realize his wish of worldwide kosen-rufu as quickly as possible.

"Their wholehearted efforts deserve our recognition. Already, some one-tenth of the households in Japan have discarded their faith in erroneous teachings and embraced the True Law, and are basking in the light of the Daishonin's great desire to save all humanity. In addition, the sincere donations of Soka Gakkai members have built the Grand Lecture Hall of True Buddhism as well as the resplendent Grand Reception Hall, which is now near completion. Furthermore, the number of temples nationwide that have been built and donated by the Soka Gakkai has already reached 80."

The directive highly praised the hard work of Soka Gakkai members to realize the widespread propagation of the Daishonin's teachings.

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



# A PATH REVISITED

*A Message*  
FROM MATILDA

By MATILDA BUCK  
SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER

**'As Bodhisattvas of the Earth, we can use our past difficulties to fulfill the mission that is ours alone,' Matilda Buck writes. 'Past pain can help pave the path to happiness.'**

I recently returned from a weekend holiday in La Jolla, Calif., a picturesque beach town where I lived as a very young girl and have continued to visit every summer. It's where I have felt the deepest pain and the deepest happiness.

As my husband and I walked the familiar path through town, memories and feelings washed through me: There was the spot where my mother would meet her friends for drinks while I sat at a table with five maraschino cherries lined up neatly on a cocktail napkin, dreading how the alcohol would change her; the schoolyard where the big boys used to steal the Hershey bar from my lunch pail. Here was the beach where I told my children's father that I wanted to end our marriage; the beautiful cove where my friends and I floated for hours on inner tubes. Over there was the tiny Chinese restaurant where I first met President Ikeda in 1974.

On this walk, I thought about how happy I am today, and how every one of my experiences in La Jolla — especially the painful ones — have made me a sensitive person, have shaped me into a seeking person. What once were causes for my sadness have been transformed into treasures, personal treasures and treasures to be shared.

I owe that transformation to my Buddhist practice, which taught me to view my life from the perspective of my deepest identity as a Bodhisattva of the Earth. To transform our karma, to live powerfully, to



become profoundly happy, it is important that we seek this perspective. Too often we can only see our lives from their most transient aspect: what we aren't yet and what we don't have. We see ourselves only as common mortals.

Here's the truth: We are common mortals, but we practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, and this is what our founder says: "Now, no matter what, strive in faith and be known as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, and remain my disciple for the rest of your life. If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth. And if you are a Bodhisattva of the Earth, there is not the slightest doubt that you have been a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha from the remote past. The sutra states, 'Ever since the long distant past I have been teaching and converting this multitude'" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 384).

In another Gosho, "Letter to Jakunichi-bo," he writes: "It is extremely rare to be born as a human being. Not only are you endowed with human form, but you have had the rare fortune to encounter Buddhism. Moreover, out of the Buddha's many teachings you have encountered the daimoku, or the title, of the Lotus Sutra and become its votary. Truly you are a person who has offered alms to a hundred thousand million Buddhas in his past existences!" (WND, 993).

In these passages, the Daishonin is telling us of our deepest identity — great bodhisattvas who strive in the human world.

Why does he say that it's great to be born a human? Only humans can reflect on past, present and future; can get beyond being merely instinctive or re-

active. We can make thoughtful choices. We can chant Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. We can choose a mentor. We can live with an ideal. These are only some of the things humans can do, that each of us can do.

Even more amazing, we have met the ultimate teaching.

In fact, the Daishonin tells us that to have met the ultimate teaching is proof that we have made profound efforts and created good fortune to get where we are today.

In a sense, he tells us we should remember our greatness, but often we feel something else: our unworthiness, lack of fortune based on current circumstances. We collect "evidence" that we must be bad, that we made bad causes. Of course, we have made good and bad causes in our lives, but the Daishonin is talking about our foundation. We should look deeper than our problems today to this deeper cause, our deeper identity as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, votaries of the Lotus Sutra. With this view, which is validated over and over by the Daishonin, we can challenge the view many of us have deep down — that of guilt or blame or hopelessness. These are not our deepest foundation; they don't have to produce our most lasting effect.

Psychologists tell us that our emotional foundation is formed in our earliest childhood. Often, when we see that our family is not a healthy one and that we have certain encumbrances because of our early environment, we feel victimized or blame our parents. But the Daishonin tells us, "Hell is in the heart of a person who inwardly despises his father and disregards his mother" (WND, 1137).

From the higher perspective of a votary of the Lotus Sutra, we can appreciate our parents even if they were not perfect parents. Because of them, we were born as humans and survived as humans. They gave us life so that we can live out our mission to become happy. Our experience with them made us unique so we can be unique in our contribution to others.

The "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" states that "With regard to the Buddha in the world of Treasure Purity: When one sets aside the literal meaning of the sutra's words and interprets it from the viewpoint of inner enlightenment, then the world of Treasure Pu-

urity is one's mother's womb. One's parents are therefore the carpenters who build the treasure tower. The treasure tower refers to the five wheels of five elements that compose our bodies..." (*Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death*, pp. 29–30). Here, the Daishonin is saying we are the treasure tower, so certainly our parents are related to this! Close relationships function to help us do our deepest human revolution as we work to appreciate the humanity that is in everyone's life. And for many of us, it is work to do this, but living with blame weakens us, obscures our mission, and makes us live reactively. It drains us of the spiritual energy that we need to change old patterns. As Bodhisattvas of the Earth, we can use our past difficulties to fulfill the mission that is ours alone. Past pain can help pave the path to happiness. This is what I felt so deeply as I was walking in La Jolla.

When we chant each day, why not consciously remind ourselves of the meaning in all that we have experienced; remind ourselves that we can use it all positively. In *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, volume 2, SGI President Ikeda had this

to say: "People who have not experienced painful struggles or suffering cannot understand the hearts of others. Only if one has tasted life's bitterness can one lead people to happiness. To simply view your sufferings as 'karma' is backward looking. We should have the attitude: 'These are sufferings I took on for the sake of my mission. I vowed to overcome these problems through faith.' When we understand this principle of 'deliberately creating the appropriate karma,' our frame of mind is transformed; what we had previously viewed as destiny, we come to see as mission. There is absolutely no way we cannot overcome sufferings that are the result of a vow that we ourselves made" (pp. 208–09).

What an empowering view of our lives — our childhood, our current circumstances, our weaknesses, our strengths. If we pray from the point of view that we will use every aspect of our life to accomplish our desires, then truly our karma becomes our mission. Our parents become our great teachers. We can appreciate each part of the path that we have chosen and that without fail leads to our deepest happiness. **WT**

Dave G. Houser/CORBIS



Every summer, Matilda Buck revisits this path in La Jolla, Calif., where she has felt the 'deepest pain and the deepest happiness.'

## FROM MESSAGE, 7

boundlessly manifest the wisdom and power that is inherent in our lives. In this world, nothing is stronger than the united struggle of mentor and disciple. Nothing is more joyful.

President Makiguchi boldly declares: "Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat, while secular authority is based on the principle of reward and punishment" (WND, 835). Actual proof of benefit and punishment is the life of religion."

Let us proudly demonstrate actual proof of justice. To be victorious in every struggle—that is the purpose of faith. Kosen-rufu lies in establishing a rhythm of eternal victory.

**A person who embraces the Mystic Law can turn everyone and everything into an ally.**

President Toda cherished the dream of creating a solidarity for peace spanning the globe of more than 10 million people. He was convinced that constructing such a popular force for peace would ensure the country's stability, even in the face of resurgent nationalism, and would open an eternal path to world peace. This was Mr. Toda's grand vision and his dream.

The Daishonin cites the following Lotus Sutra passage:

"Although the devil and the devil's people will be there, they will all protect the Law of the Buddha" (WND, 750). A person who embraces the Mystic Law can turn everyone and everything into an ally. A leader should be able to make everyone he or she meets an ally of kosen-rufu.

Faith has to become manifest in action. Please initiate a powerful advance through strong faith, and please accomplish great development through taking bold action.

**All your efforts are for yourself, your family, the world and kosen-rufu.**

I mentioned this at the 7th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, but I want to reiterate my heartfelt gratitude to all those who are taking action and exerting themselves for kosen-rufu, beginning with the "uncrowned heroes" who daily deliver the *Seikyo Shimbun*, our Soka Gakkai newspaper.

To deliver this herald of kosen-rufu each day, even in the rain or snow, is to propagate the Mystic Law, advance kosen-rufu and carry out Buddhist practice. Shakyamuni walked far and wide expounding his teaching. The Daishonin, too, visited many different places in spreading his teaching. Those who deliver our publications are advancing along the path of kosen-rufu in their footsteps.

It is a noble enterprise.

The individuals who carry out this work certainly accumulate good fortune, develop vitality and become healthy. Please convey my warmest regards to these "uncrowned heroes" and to all who are struggling behind the scenes in your areas.

Lastly, I want to again cite the words of Hugo. When he was attacked and slandered, the great author calmly responded: "Later generations will view these mocking voices as reverberations of glory." "To be persecuted—that's fine. But whatever form this persecution takes, one thing is certain: we should face it with joy and with self-respect." "My friends, you must not weaken. You must continue charging on toward your goal."

With thoroughgoing enthusiasm, boldness, wisdom, cheerfulness

and courage, I urge you to demonstrate great leadership that will be remembered by future generations. And please advance brightly and joyously.

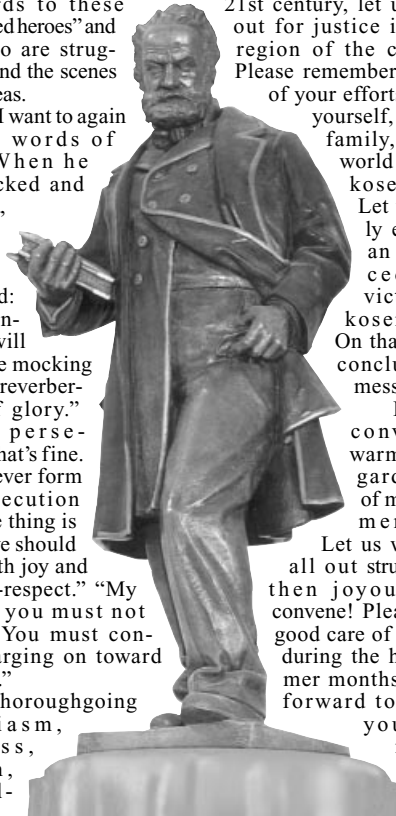
During the first July of the 21st century, let us strike out for justice in every region of the country! Please remember that all of your efforts are for yourself, for your family, for the world and for kosen-rufu.

Let us firmly establish an unprecedented victory for kosen-rufu! On that note, I conclude my message.

Please convey my warmest regards to all of my fellow members.

Let us wage an all out struggle and then joyously convene! Please take good care of yourself during the hot summer months. I look forward to seeing you soon in high spirits!

WT



A statue of Victor Hugo at Soka University of Japan.

## FROM ESSAY, 8

The structures and policies of the Kamakura military government (1192–1333), headed by a generalissimo, or *shogun*, were carried on by the Muro-machi military government (1338–1573) and the Tokugawa (Edo) military government (1603–1867). And even after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan effectively remained under military rule.

At the beginning of this 700-year period of military rule, the Daishonin established the foundation for peace that is the Mystic Law. Then, in the last days of that long era, stressing the validity of the Mystic Law, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda gave their lives to fighting against the military government.

Spreading Buddhism while struggling against persecution, leading others to happiness while battling against obstacles—this is the basic formula expounded in the Lotus Sutra. This is also the eternal path of the SGI. Our

fellow members in the endeavor of kosen-rufu, Bodhisattvas of the Earth, now live in 165 countries and territories. I am convinced that this proves that the SGI has inherited the triumphant legacy of justice and truth of Tatsunokuchi.

How wondrous it is that the Soka Gakkai appeared 700 years after the Daishonin, and that we are now 70 years into our great advance in the movement for worldwide kosen-rufu!

◆◆◆

The Buddhism of the sun that rose from the depths of darkness on that day seven centuries ago has now begun to shine ever more brilliantly, illuminating the entire world. Humanity thirsts for the light of this great philosophy of hope.

It is the dawning of a new millennium. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Now is the time for us to spread with all our hearts the Mystic Law, the source of limitless vitality, and

thereby adorn our lives with victory. Let us send this great light to one person after another, and transform our communities and societies into treasure lands pervaded by human harmony.

The Daishonin says to his disciples in Kamakura: "Though enemies lurk in wait for you, your resolute faith in the Lotus Sutra has forestalled great dangers before they could begin. Realizing this, you must strengthen your faith more than ever" (WND, 953). Those with resolute faith are true practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism and genuine pioneers of kosen-rufu. They are eternal, unparalleled victors.

The courageous, praiseworthy members of Shonan Subprefecture, which includes Kamakura Zone, where the SGI Study Center is located, as well as all the Kanagawa Prefecture members, are advancing proudly and strongly in this region that is so closely connected with the life and triumph of the Daishonin.

I am eager to visit the SGI Study Center in this significant place, but my busy schedule has made this difficult so far. I hope to realize this wish at the earliest opportunity.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the March 30 *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).

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Photos by EMIKO TOMITAKA and ANN SEIDL

**FROM ATLANTA, 1**

Community Corporation, has lived on the same street in Lynwood since she was 7 years old and was on hand with opening remarks. She said of the performances: "They were wonderful. I was excited even before everyone got here."

During the early afternoon, the park resounded with Latin American and West African rhythmic harmonies. The performances radiated with youthful zest and family participation. Chandra Reeves, age 28 and a member of the SGI-USA since she was 7 years old, choreographed the opening number, "Magdalena," a big hit that got everyone's blood pumping. The ecstatic young women had practiced for weeks and appeared in brightly colored skirts and leotards in this Afro-Cuban number.

The men's division, about 40 strong, performed "Beautiful Women," dedicated to the women in the audience. The "From Boys To Men" number included rousing hip-hop dance performances by the younger men.

A group of young women and women's division members known as the Fortune Fan Dancers performed the song "Happy Face." Their unity and grace sent pulses of happiness out to the audience. This group of more than 30 women, under the direction of choreographer

Julie Kang, practiced for more than a month to ensure they inspired unity.

The Bopping Buddhas, which included four brave women and one man, brought the house down with their sometimes hilarious rendition of Tina Turner's "Disco Inferno."

Rainbow District displayed its creativity with a fashion show depicting the life-conditions of the Ten Worlds. Their clever presentation had lots of style and a clear demonstration of the meaning of each of the different worlds.

Michael Rico, an SGI-USA member for 12 years, gave the audience a real treat with a performance on the Spanish guitar.

A swing-dancing couple brought energy and electricity to the stage, along with a chorus of five women dressed in 1920s costumes, who danced to the lively swing tunes. Audience participation escalated to an enthusiastic roaring ovation. It was a snappy, jazzy dance number, and the dancers seemed to be having the time of their lives.

The program closed with the Voices for Peace Chorus singing together with the audience a heartfelt rendition of "Ode to Joy." Their determination to keep advancing together with SGI President Ikeda was very moving to the audience. This was the perfect ending to Atlanta's wonderful family festival. **WT**

**FROM IDAHO, 1**

which included musical entertainment and a youth forum and discussion centering on Victory Over Violence. To kick off the festivities and introduce the SGI-USA and the purpose behind the Victory Over Violence campaign, Idaho Chapter Young Men's Leader Craig Green took center stage.

Audience participation was a key factor during the forum, including a short true/false quiz concerning violence. Many questions were asked and the time allotted for the discussion quickly dissolved.

The musical segment of the festival began by responding to

SGI President Ikeda's desire that each festival "celebrate their shared humanity" through Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," which resounded with a universal message of equality. SGI-USA member Ty Putnam began the festivities by playing the song on the flute. The strains of the melody floated throughout the park, heralding a new and youthful era for Idaho.

Craig Green and Nelson Soucek, local musicians and SGI-USA members who have performed throughout the country, also took to the stage with their own musical creations. Later joined by drummers Mike Hyatt and Voytek Zajczkowski, the band cast a

spell over the audience.

SGI-USA members circulated, greeting guests, answering questions and handing out literature. The festival was well received as verified by the nearly 50 signatures on the VOV pledges. KIDK-TV, a local CBS affiliate, dropped by to see what the excitement was all about. Craig Green gave an interview, answering questions about the festival and the SGI-USA.

The momentum generated by this ground-breaking festival will flow onward like the waters of the nearby Snake River, with an ever-seeking spirit, paving the way for a hope-filled 21st century throughout Idaho. **WT**



Photo by SHARON BARNES

Idaho members (l-r) Nelson Soucek, Voytek Zajczkowski, Mike Hyatt and Craig Green perform original numbers at their Family Youth Festival, July 28.