

World TRIBUNE

IN THIS ISSUE



The SGI-USA responds to the Sept. 11 tragedies with prayer and action.

Pages 2 and 3

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SGI-USA Subscribers, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

No. 3364

\$2.00

SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S POEM

SGI President Ikeda wrote the following after the Sept. 11 tragedies.

To my beloved American friends,

I offer my heartfelt prayers

For the peace, happiness and brilliant future

Of the United States.

September 12, 2001

MESSAGE FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR
DANIEL NAGASHIMA, WOMEN'S LEADER MATILDA BUCK AND
MEN'S LEADER TARIQ HASAN

WE CAN CREATE PROFOUND CHANGE

'Now is not the time to be intimidated. The darkest moment offers the opportunity for the most profound change.'

We share with our fellow Americans the sense of shock and horror that goes beyond words in response to the apparent terrorist attacks on Sept. 11. We offer our prayers for the victims, and support to those who have lost loved ones and friends and to those injured as a result of these tragedies.

SGI President Ikeda immediately responded with the following message: "I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the people of the United States. Let us work for kosen-rufu in order to create peace in the United States and in the world."

The great evil of terrorism is intended to threaten and intimidate. It creates a feeling of helplessness and attempts to splinter society. Now is not the time to be intimidated. The darkest moment offers the opportunity for the most

profound change. In "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land," Nichiren Daishonin states: "If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquility throughout the four quarters of the land" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 24). As Bodhisattvas of the Earth, let's arouse great confidence in the power of our united prayer and action for peace.

This tragedy awakens us to the stark reality that our movement for world peace is crucial. Our district activities and Victory Over Violence campaign are exactly the kind of engaged Buddhist actions that are making a difference. As President Ikeda writes in *For the Sake of Peace*, "Peace is not something to be left to others in distant places. It is something we create day to day in our efforts to cultivate care and consideration for others, forging bonds of friendship and trust in our respective communities through our own actions and example" (p. 212).

At this time, let us give our fellow members and citizens hope, courage and confidence,



Three New York City firefighters raise the American flag from the rubble of the World Trade Center, Sept. 11. During massive terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., both towers of the World Trade Center collapsed and part of the Pentagon was destroyed. Hundreds of emergency workers risked their lives—many of them perishing in the effort—to rescue victims of the disaster. People across the country and throughout the world were moved by the tales of heroism that emerged and stunned by the horror of the events, aware that this must be a historical turning point. SGI President Ikeda immediately sent encouragement to the SGI-USA members to deepen their determination to change the course of history: 'I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the people of the United States. Let us work for kosen-rufu in order to create peace in the United States and the world.'

inspired by the conviction that our efforts for kosen-rufu are clearly the antidote to all suffering.

Please use your best judgment in canceling or scheduling activities in your respective areas. We continue

to pray for the health and safety of every SGI-USA member, their families and all humanity. **WT**

Tragedy Affects SGI-USA Members

After the recent terrorist attacks on the United States, SGI-USA members grieve, pray and determine to continue their efforts to build a peaceful world.



Photo by JEAN PRITCHARD

David Seima Aoyama served SGI-USA as a staff member and a vice leader in Southern California Zone.

The members of the SGI-USA, along with the rest of the world, are mourning the loss of friends and family members, and are praying for those not yet accounted for in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C.

David Seima Aoyama, who served SGI-USA as a staff member and a vice leader in Southern California Zone, died on American Airlines Flight No. 11, which struck the World Trade Center in New York City. He was returning to Los Angeles from Boston on official SGI-USA business.

Born in Hokkaido, Japan, in 1953, Mr. Aoyama came to the

United States in 1977, and managed restaurants in Dallas and Memphis before becoming a member of the SGI-USA's staff in 1983. Since 1995, he worked at the organization's national headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., after serving in its Chicago, Philadelphia and Kansas City regional offices.

"David was my dear friend and a hero in the truest sense of the word," said SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. "He dedicated himself to the

cause of American kosen-rufu for 24 years. I know many people across the country had deep, personal relationships with David based on his many efforts to encourage members. Now is the time to consider what we can do to repay our debt of gratitude for his immeasurable contributions to our movement. Based on the way he lived his life and the Buddhist view of life's eternity, my deep conviction is that he will immediately be reborn in America, and continue to fight together with us for kosen-rufu."

A memorial service honoring Mr. Aoyama was immediately planned for Sept. 15 at the SGI-USA's Los Angeles Friendship Center.

At press time (Sept. 13), several other SGI-USA members thought to be in or near the World Trade Center during and after the attack, including some rescue workers, had not been accounted for. "The very spirit of Buddhism is hope," said SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck. "Our prayer, without a doubt, is reaching those people not yet found. Let's continue our united prayer for those affected

by this tragedy and our support of each other in faith."

In addition, at the time of the attacks, 41 SGI-USA youth were en route to Los Angeles from Tokyo, returning from an SGI training course. Three of the youth flew directly to their home state of Hawaii and one to the Philippines, where they landed safely. The remaining participants, together on one flight, were diverted to Vancouver, B.C., Canada, where they landed safely and were awaiting transport back to Los Angeles at press time.

"We are all in good health and high spirits," reported SGI-USA Youth Leader James Herrmann from Vancouver. "The SGI members in Vancouver

have been amazing in making us feel welcome and safe. We still feel like we are on the training course, studying and praying together constantly. These youth are completely determined to return to their respective areas with a renewed conviction to lead the kosen-rufu movement and ensure that nothing like this ever happens again."

SGI-USA will continue to provide updates to members through official memos sent to community centers. In addition, whenever possible, updates will be sent to subscribers of the *WT E-Mail Express*, a free service. Please see the box below for information on how to subscribe. **WT**

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

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Diminishing Our Suffering, Amplifying Our Joy

WORDS To WIN By

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

From "Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 317-20.

Because I once disparaged the Lotus Sutra, the highest of all sutras, I am now looked down on, and my words go unheeded. The "Simile and Parable" chapter states that other people will neither concern themselves with one nor have sympathy for one, even though one sincerely tries to be friendly with them. (WND, 318)

As a result of his unyielding propagation efforts, day in and day out, month after month, year



after year, for more than 20 years, Nichiren Daishonin was subjected to verbal and physical abuse. Yet he says in "Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment" that he had no regrets—he found profound meaning and value in everything that he went through.

From the viewpoint expressed in the "Encouraging Devotion" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the Daishonin knew that by meeting the three types of enemies, each difficulty he experienced validated his purpose and proved the righteousness of his teachings. This gave

him immense joy and satisfaction while undergoing the tremendous hardships he faced.

The quote above represents this standpoint in regards to lessening karmic retribution. The Daishonin teaches that in experiencing opposition, he could lessen the karmic retribution for his own negative causes in the past, eventually completely eradicating it.

In "The Opening of the Eyes" the Daishonin quotes the Parinirvana Sutra: "Good man, because people committed countless offenses and accumulated much evil karma in the past, they must expect to suffer retribution for everything they have done. ... It is due to the blessings obtained by protecting the Law that they can diminish in this lifetime their sufferings and retribution" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 281).

The Daishonin then applies the passage to his own life: "This sutra passage and my own experience tally exactly. By now all the doubts I have raised earlier should be dispelled, and thousands of difficulties are nothing to me" (WND, 281).

Cause and effect are evident in the Daishonin's life, just as they are in our lives. However, the Daishonin focused on a deeper causality, and so should we. He revealed that it is our fundamental attitude toward the Mystic Law that is the single most important factor in determining our happiness or unhappiness in this lifetime. He taught faith in the Lotus Sutra as the highest good and slander of the Lotus Sutra as the greatest evil. The Lotus Sutra's essence, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, is the Law or truth that leads directly to enlightenment, enabling all people to attain Buddhahood just as they are. As SGI President Ikeda puts it, "Our mind of faith instantaneously becomes the cause, the effect—and the power—of eternal happiness" (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 93).

In the same way that the Daishonin overcame every hardship he faced, we can overcome any obstacle through faith and practice based on the Gohonzon. Upholding and protecting the Mystic Law brings great benefit and diminishes our suf-

fering. The greatest cause we can make right now is to share Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with another person. Whether that person chooses to begin practicing at this time or not, the benefit of sharing faith in the Gohonzon with another person is itself the cause to create a life of irrepressible joy. **WT**

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 SGISUBS@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

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Message to U.S. President

SGI President Ikeda sent the following message to U.S. President George W. Bush on Sept. 11:

My heartfelt condolences for these immeasurably tragic incidents. So many precious lives were lost. I deeply pray for the peace and happiness of all the victims.

No matter what hardships

may arise, the lofty spirit of freedom that the United States upholds is eternally indestructible. It is my sincere wish that the American people will surmount these trying times as soon as possible, under your leadership as the president of the United States.

September 11, 2001

Offering Our Support

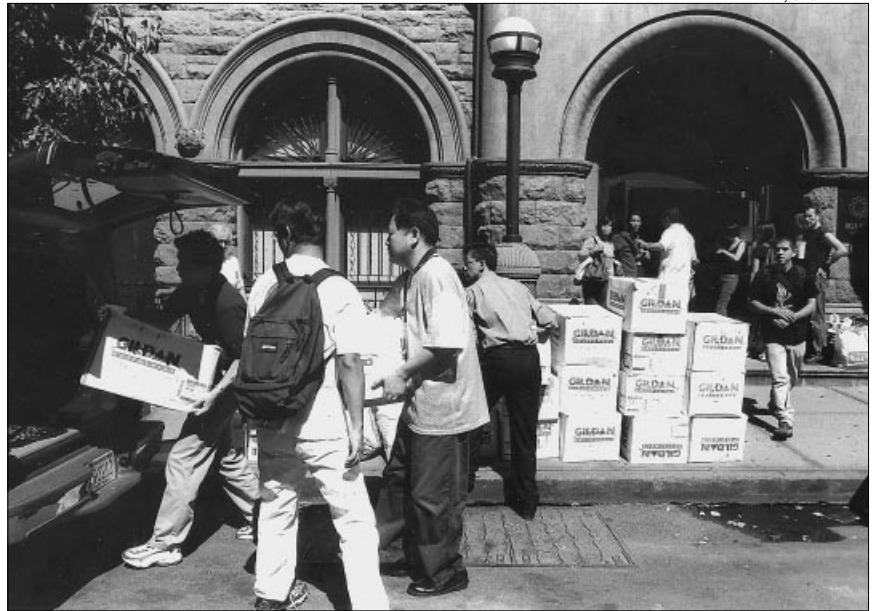
By IAN McILRAITH
SGI-USA DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

In support of our fellow Americans in need at a time like this, we all share in the desire to take constructive action. The SGI-USA has already made a \$10,000 donation to the American Red Cross to help with its ongoing relief efforts. While the current crisis imposes limits on what we can do, there are three specific areas in which we are encouraging SGI-USA members to lend their support during this national tragedy.

1) Financial donations to relief agencies like the American Red Cross are of great assis-

tance in their good work. Donations can be made either directly to such agencies or through the SGI-USA. Any such donations collected by the SGI-USA will be forwarded to the American Red Cross. Below is the American Red Cross address and the addresses of SGI-USA offices to which financial donations for this purpose can be sent. Please clearly indicate that such donations are for the "SEPTEMBER 11 RELIEF"

2) The American Red Cross has indicated that blood donors will be needed in the days and weeks ahead. Please call your local Red Cross or hospital to find out how to donate. In some



At the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center, youth load donations to emergency workers and those in need, Sept. 12. New York members contributed clothes, water, sandwiches, canned food, fruit, juice and other needed supplies.

cities, reservations and scheduling systems for blood donations are being set up.

3) We can reach out to people. We can begin with getting in touch with our fellow members — especially those who we may not see often. This is an opportunity to reconnect at a crucial moment. As we talk with members, friends and neighbors, we can build a network of hope. Now is the time to bring forth our courage and compassion to open a new future.

Finally, as members of SGI-USA, let's remain confident that our prayers permeate the universe and form the founda-

tion for a culture of peace, which is so desperately needed throughout the world.

American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund
P.O. Box 37243
Washington, D.C. 20013
or 800-HELP-NOW for donations and 800-GIVE-LIFE to give blood

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SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima and Women's Leader Matilda Buck, along with members of the SGI-USA headquarters staff, offer prayers for the victims of terrorism, Sept. 12, at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif.

FNCC Cancellations

The SGI-USA has decided to postpone two Florida Nature and Culture Center conferences to allow time for the domestic commercial transportation system to recover from the Sept. 11 tragedies.

The 3rd Southeast Asian Language Conference set for Sept. 13–16 will be rescheduled sometime next year, at the request of the coordinators for those language groups. Scheduled participants will be refunded their full package price

by the SGI-USA.

The Mentor-Disciple Relationship, scheduled for Sept. 20–23, will now take place Oct. 25–28. The originally assigned facilitators — Mary Cady, Sharon Redman, Ronnie Smith and Guy McCloskey — are expected to be on hand.

Airlines will, subject to their discretion, waive re-ticketing fees or give full refunds for tickets that have been issued for travel dates from Sept. 11 through Sept. 25. **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

We Are All SUA Founders

‘Soka University of America is a university that has been founded by the people, for the people,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Each and every person who has made an effort that contributed to its establishment is one of its heroic founders.’

I offer these words of the great American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson to my young friends starting out on a new journey: “The day is always his, who works in it with serenity and great aims.”

On Aug. 24, Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, in Orange County, Calif., held its first entrance ceremony. It was an event that I and SGI members around the world have been eagerly anticipating for a long time. I am extremely happy to see this day. A total of 120 carefully selected, outstanding students from 18 countries and 18 American states have entered as members of the historic first freshman class.

The future belongs to you. The construction of the future rests in your hands.

Awakened to a desire to participate in the creation of new value, you have turned down prestige and tradition to gather at SUA. I want to shake hands with each one of you and cry out with all my heart: “Congratulations! Do your best!”

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

I have been told that on the historic day of the entrance ceremony, the morning’s gentle mist lifted to reveal a bright blue sky enveloping the campus.

On May 3, the significant day when the new campus was dedicated, Southern California was also blessed with brilliant, cloudless blue skies. No doubt the protective forces of the universe were rejoicing on this wonderful occasion.

Unfortunately, my schedule prevented me from attending either ceremony, but I prayed earnestly from Japan for the success of both these important events.



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

The Class of 2005, the first entering class of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, poses for a commemorative photo on the steps of the Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda Library before the university’s first entrance ceremony, Aug. 24. Also pictured are Dr. Arun Gandhi (front right), the ceremony’s keynote speaker, and his wife, Sunanda. ‘The construction of the future rests in your hands,’ SGI President Ikeda, SUA’s founder, writes to the students.

We received congratulatory telegrams for the entrance ceremony from more than 70 countries, and U.S. President George W. Bush and many others sent congratulatory messages and telegrams on May 3. SUA is beginning its history against a backdrop of high expectations from a multitude of supporters around the world.

I will never forget the warm words of encouragement Dr. Joseph Rotblat, world-renowned physicist and Nobel Peace laureate, sent to me on the occasion of the school’s dedication: “Your dream has come true.”

Establishing a university dedicated to Soka Education was the boundless dream of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, and it was my dream as their spiritual successor. Furthermore, to eventually establish a university outside Japan has been my dearest wish since the opening of Soka University in Hachioji, Tokyo, in 1971.

Actually, this determination was already burning in my heart three years prior to that, when I founded the Soka Junior and Se-

nior High School in Kodaira, Tokyo. As a disciple, I was resolved to fulfill my mentors’ vision without fail. And I patiently waited until the time was ripe.

Now we have realized the first step in the dream of a grand educational revolution, which presidents Makiguchi and Toda and I have cherished and worked toward over three successive generations. I am overwhelmed with emotion.

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On July 25, the *New York Times*, one of the world’s leading newspapers, introduced SUA in a large, front-page article, under the headline “New West Coast College, Born of the Far East” (see the Aug. 10 *WorldTribune*). In addition, the Associated Press, the world’s largest news-gathering organization, released an article on SUA that was picked up by some 40 U.S. papers. This is evidence that many people are deeply interested in the direction of higher education in the 21st century.

The SUA campus, surrounded by nature, sits on a hilltop with valleys on three sides. It rises gently to the southwest

from the gym, where the entrance ceremony was held. Just beyond a low mountain to the west lies the vast, sparkling blue Pacific Ocean.

The *Orange County Register* called SUA “the school on the hill.” A hill can be thought of as a symbol of striving and working to develop oneself in the pursuit of the highest ideals.

Founders Hall is the central building on the campus. I regard this use of the plural form—“Founders”—as a commemoration of all those who have to this day endeavored with me, in every possible way, as I pursued the educational ideals of presidents Makiguchi and Toda.

SUA is a university that has been founded by the people, for the people. Each and every person who has made an effort that contributed to its establishment is one of its heroic founders.

And to my dear students of the freshman class of SUA: I hope that you, as “youthful founders,” will channel your intellect and enthusiasm toward the development of our university and the creation of a magnificent self.

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Classes will be held in the Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall and the Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi Hall, named, of course, after the famous U.S. Nobel laureate and his wife, and India’s legendary leader of non-violence and his wife. The Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall was opened in May. The Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi Hall was opened on Aug. 23, the day before the entrance ceremony, with Arun Gandhi, grandson of the hall’s namesakes, and his wife, Sunanda, in attendance.

Some have expressed surprise that both of these buildings are named for people who are neither Buddhists nor Japanese, but this is only appropriate given the founding principles of SUA. We are free of the spell of narrow ideology; we value pluralism. While respecting differences of race, ethnicity and culture, we are dedicated to working for all humanity, for the people and for the dignity of life.

We are committed to actively carrying on the spiritual struggle of outstanding humanists in every part of the

globe, who have dedicated their lives to eliminating the root causes of unhappiness in this world rife with misery and suffering. And we will continue to advance together with people who share this spirit.

Naming our first two academic buildings after towering giants of East and West in the fight for justice and peace in the 20th century is an expression of our lofty commitment to fostering global citizens who will unite for the cause of world peace.



The great Dr. Pauling did not have an easy time when he was a student. After finally being accepted at Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University), he was forced to leave school for a time to earn enough money to pay for tuition and his living expenses. He was able to continue his studies because of the support of his teachers, who wanted to make it possible for the brilliant young man to bring his talents to full flower. Dr. Pauling was always grateful for the university's warm encouragement and support.

SUA is likewise completely student centered. Caring about students is the same as caring about the future.

Having excelled in his studies, Dr. Pauling could have attended graduate school at some prestigious university, but he chose instead the newly established California Institute of Technology. His many subsequent academic honors and accolades as a great scientist, including the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, became the honors of his school as well.

You, the members of the first class of SUA, also had opportunities to attend other institutions, yet you unhesitatingly decided to join in the creation of a new university. I am grateful to you young pioneers, and I am confident that outstanding leaders in all fields of human endeavor will emerge from your ranks.



In my message for SUA's first entrance ceremony (see the Sept. 7 *World Tribune*), I touched on the school founded by the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. It is also well known that Mahatma Gandhi, seeking to make education in India independent from the colonial powers, founded several schools, one of which was Gujarat Vidyapith, a national academy in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in 1920.

Gandhi was eager to build a new Indian spirit and a new

India. The French author Romain Rolland, praising the tremendous significance of Gandhi's endeavor, writes, "He is a builder of a new humanity."

SUA also aims to build a new humanity. Our goal is to produce pioneers of a truly global civilization!

The Gujarat Vidyapith students assisted Gandhi in preparations for the famous Salt March of 1930, one of the galvanizing events in the movement for Indian independence. They visited Gujarati villages in advance and gathered data, playing a crucial role in the success of the demonstration.

The following year, Gandhi visited the school to praise the students' efforts: "When the history of the fight [the Salt March] comes to be written, the contribution of our *vidyapiths* [schools] to the struggle will occupy a large space in it. Even the world will be proud of your glorious record."

I am convinced that the pioneering efforts of our wonderful, enthusiastic students of SUA — an institution that is my very life — will shine in the annals of history, too.



The great poet of the people, Walt Whitman, once dedicated a poem to a pupil, calling him

SUA Students Begin Classes

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



Students of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo's first class begin classes Aug. 27. 'Now the real work begins for both the students and the faculty,' said Ed Feasel, dean of students. The 120 freshmen hit the ground running, having already begun pre-class reading and essay assignments.

"dear friend" and urging him: "Commence today to inure yourself to pluck, reality, self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness, / Rest not till you rivet and publish yourself of your own Personality."

My dear friends of the first class of SUA: Everyone is waiting expectantly for your growth, victory and success! This brand-new century will unfold together with your spirited advance.

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on The New Human Revolution" series in the Aug. 29 Seikyo Shim-bun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

Orange County Members Donate Quilts

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



SGI-USA women's division members in Orange County, Calif., home of SUA's new campus, display the quilts they hand-made for each of the university's 120 incoming students. More than 60 members over an 18-month period contributed to the quilts, each made of 20 individually created squares. At a reception for the students on Aug. 22, the members presented the quilts as an expression of their commitment to support each student in any way possible.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 2 MESSAGE

Giving Responsibility to Youth

'Hope for the 21st century lies in giving responsibility to youthful successors and allowing them to freely take action,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Where young people are raised with the utmost care and respect, victory is assured.'

SGI President Ikeda's message to a nationwide prefecture leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, Shinanomachi, Tokyo, Aug. 2.

Thank you for all your efforts to attend this nationwide prefecture leaders conference, despite the intense heat.

As I said at the 8th Headquarters Leaders Meeting (see the Aug. 31 and Sept. 14 issues of *World Tribune*), you have all fought hard. Thanks to your sincere efforts, each prefecture and region of the country shines with benefit and victory.

Moreover, the wonderful unity of this conference of prefecture leaders has become the driving force for total victory throughout the country. This is most commendable. There is beauty and strength in maintaining harmonious relations with others. This is the world of the SGI.

The "Devadatta" chapter contains the passage "Of great wisdom and virtue, brave and stalwart, / you have converted and saved immeasurable beings" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 186). This means that the Buddha instructs infinite numbers of living beings and guides them toward enlightenment with great wisdom, benefit, courage and with bounding life force.

A leader of kosen-rufu must always be healthy and have strong life force. Doing gongyo with my wife this morning, I strongly, deeply prayed for the excellent health and brilliant life force of all you leaders.

All our struggles for kosen-rufu return to us 10 million-fold as joy.

The German poet Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin sings, "All joy is born of hardship." All our struggles for kosen-rufu are Buddhist practice and contribute to our attaining Buddhahood. They return to us 10 million-fold as joy. That is the principle of cause and effect. All our efforts for kosen-rufu become our own happiness.

The great French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau says, "The source of true happiness is within us." The essence of this wellspring is the Mystic Law. Therefore, someone who accepts and upholds the

Mystic Law is an entity of happiness.

The American philosopher Henry David Thoreau opines: "It is wholesome advice,—'to be a man amongst folks.' Go into society if you will, or if you are unwilling, and take a human interest in its affairs." This is the way of the SGI.

We must connect each new victory with yet another victory down the road.

More than 2,000 years ago, there was a hero who set out toward the East with the aim of unifying all humankind. That was Alexander the Great of Macedonia.

A distinguished general, Alexander always stood at the front of his troops, without the least concern for his personal safety. However, the true brilliance of Alexander's leadership only became apparent after the battle.

When you have won, the important question becomes how you can connect that victory with yet another victory down the road. After a battle, with lightning speed Alexander would take the necessary measures to do just that. No matter how tired he was, no matter how deep the wounds he had sustained, starting the day after a battle he would throw himself into meeting with his soldiers.

For soldiers who had distinguished themselves on the battlefield, he would offer unstinting praise, justly rewarding each for his achievements. He also went to see the wounded soldiers who had risked their lives in battle. He would speak with them one by one, offering praise and encouragement. He also lost no time seeing to it that funerals were held for those who had died. And he would generously provide for their survivors.

Alexander was also quick to make new appointments, reshaping his organization and readying his forces for the next campaign. When you have won—that is when you must further strengthen your unity, refresh your spirit to struggle even harder and tighten up your forces of capable people for future campaigns.

The following episode

took place immediately after Alexander's victory over the forces of his mortal enemy Persia. Alexander dispatched someone to politely deliver a message to the mother of his foe. He explained that her son, the king, was alive and safe, putting her worries to rest.

After a victory in battle, Alexander would seek to further expand his forces, turning even former enemies into allies.

The next day, Alexander, accompanied by only one guard, paid a visit to the king's mother. When they approached, because the two wore similar attire, the mother, not knowing who Alexander was, approached the guard and dropped to her knees in a show of respect. As soon as she realized her mistake, she shrank back in shame.

But Alexander calmly told her: "You were not mistaken. For this man is also Alexander." As far as he was concerned, anyone who fought with the same sense of responsibility was every bit his equal. He did not feel above or superior to others. This anecdote well illustrates Alexander's conviction that everyone is a hero.

When his soldiers seemed to be growing discouraged from the fierce fighting amid the hardships of the Eastern campaign, Alexander stood before them and cried out, "What great or noble work could we ourselves have achieved had we thought it enough, living at ease in Macedonia, merely to guard our homes?"

In our great march for peace and justice, let us advance with indefatigable courage and joy toward victory after victory, burning with still greater passion.

Refuting evil and propagating the true teaching is the Soka Gakkai spirit.

Next, I want to read from Nichiren Daishonin's writings. During the Daishonin's lifetime, the priest Ryokan of Gokurakuji temple was the chief instigator, who out of jealousy, spread slanderous rumors about the Daishonin, causing him to be exiled and nearly beheaded.

This was the same Ryokan who caused so much trouble for disciples of the Daishonin such as the Ikegami brothers and Shijo Kingo. In a writing to the younger of the Ikegami brothers, Mune-naga, the Daishonin denounces Ryokan as follows: "But deluded by the Nembutsu priests, he [Hojo Shigetoki, who held several important posts in the Kamakura government] treated me with enmity, and as a result, he and his entire clan have been all but ruined.... You may think that those who believe in Priest Two Fires [Ryoka-bo, a play on the name Ryokan, alluding to large fires that broke out at his temple and in the neighboring shogunate building] are prospering, but you should see what has become of the Nagoe clan [Hojo Tomotoki's family, earnest Nembutsu believers; all six of Tomotoki's sons met tragic deaths] (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 638).

This is the Daishonin's strict warning. The same can be said of those who, in collusion with Nichiren Shoshu, have harassed the Soka Gakkai, an organization acting in complete accord with the Buddha's will and decree. Among those who have turned against the Soka Gakkai, which upholds supreme justice,



Sunflowers, whose seeds were donated by Dr. David Krieger, U.S. peace activist, bloom at the Okinawa Training Center.

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

I doubt there is even one who has led a fulfilling life as an upstanding individual. From this alone, right and wrong are only too apparent.

The Daishonin further instructs Munenaga as follows: "From this point forward, no matter what might happen you must not be swayed the least in your faith. You should admonish the enemies of the Buddha even more strongly" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1090). This spirit of refuting evil and steadfastly propagating the true teaching is the essence of the Soka Gakkai spirit.

True democracy only exists when the people become the sovereigns.

I next want to present you with a number of wise sayings. The American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. says, "When an individual is no longer a true participant, when he no longer feels a sense of responsibility to his society, the content of democracy is emptied." The Soka Gakkai is battling head on this "emptying" of democracy.

The Czech philosopher-statesman T. G. Masaryk declares, "Suppression of religious freedom naturally wreaks havoc on morality; and this has great social consequences."

And the revolutionary German poet Henrich Heine says: "My countrymen, you are the true emperors of the state, the true sovereigns.... My countrymen, your will is the sole legitimate wellspring of all power."

True democracy only exists when the people become the sovereigns. Conscientious intellectuals are justifiably concerned by the seeming lack of awareness on the part of the Japanese about the meaning of democracy. The people are the true emperors of society — let us always maintain this confidence and pride.

Commitment and compassion, when combined with courage, can change the world.

On the eve of the anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I have completed a new dialogue titled *Choose Hope* [not yet available in English]. In this work, I discuss the outlook for a peaceful 21st century that is free of nuclear weapons with David Krieger, president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, an American peace organization.

I am grateful for the assistance of the publisher, Kawade Shobo Shinsha, in realizing this volume. The same company published my dialogue with the German philosopher Josef Derbolav, *Search for a New Humanity*, and my dialogue with former Chilean president Patricio Aylwin, *Dawn Over the Pacific*.

As a token of my gratitude for his assistance, I presented the firm's president, Mr. Shigeo Wakamori, with a copy of the book that I had dedicated with a saying from a classical Chinese text of Zhuangzi. The saying consists of four Chinese characters that mean "The wings to fly over the Southern Sea." The image of the flapping wings of an enormous bird climbing high in the sky symbolizes a great project to be achieved.

This calls to mind a poem that I received from Josei Toda, the second Soka

Gakkai president, in July 1953:

*Live like a phoenix
Soaring through the sky
Over a thousand generations.*

"Live like a great bird serenely, joyously soaring through the sky. Live long and wholeheartedly exert yourself for peace." This was President Toda's spirit.

On the eve of the anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I have respectfully offered prayers for the repose of the victims.

As suggested by the title, Dr. Krieger and I had a wide-ranging discussion on "choosing hope." This refers to the hope that — in an age of nuclear weapons, when humankind is continually faced with dangers of all kinds — we definitely can change the world, that we absolutely can defeat evil.

Where, then, does the "hope power" even stronger than "nuclear power" reside? On this point, Dr. Krieger and I were in complete agreement. It lies within the lives of human beings.

The ultimate expression of this philosophy of hope is found in the Buddhist doctrine of 3,000 realms in a single moment of life. For this reveals that the spirit or determination of one person can change the world. Dr. Krieger expressed deep understanding for and agreement with this view.

What, then, is necessary to free and manifest the immense power contained in our life? Mr. Krieger stressed that it is courage — namely, the courage to steadfastly uphold one's convictions, the courage to stand alone. He argues in *Choose Hope* that commitment and compassion, when combined with courage, can change the world.

In recent struggles, you all have fought earnestly. You have fought with tenacity and commitment. Burning with a spirit to refute misconceptions, you said what had to be said. You united with your comrades with mutual concern. And as a result, you manifested enormous strength, and you realized great victory.

Our dialogue resounds with the conviction that hope is another name for youth. Dr. Krieger affirms this, saying: "Young people have played an active part in all historical transitions. Never before has the challenge to the young been greater than the one confronting them today. Never has the need for courageous action been more compelling."

I completely agree.

In the SGI, too, everything will depend on the present members of the youth division. In the recent campaign, the youth fought admirably. These are young people with a truly profound mission.

Hope for the 21st century lies in giving responsibility to youthful successors and allowing them to freely take action. Where young people are raised with the utmost care and respect, victory is assured.



SGI President Ikeda meets with Nuclear Age Peace Foundation President David Krieger and his wife, Carolee, at the Okinawa Training Center in Onnason, Feb. 26, 1998.

To expand the solidarity of young Bodhisattvas of the Earth is to expand hope.

On July 31, a research institute announced the results of a survey it conducted of junior and senior high schools in countries around the world. Asked whether they felt hopeful about the 21st century, 86.2 percent of respondents in the United States responded in the affirmative. In South Korea, the figure was 70.6 percent, and in France, it was 63.6 percent.

By comparison, only 33.8 percent of Japanese youth said they felt hopeful about the new century. Overall, Japanese junior and senior high school students were pessimistic about the future.

This is not the fault of the students themselves — adult society is to blame. In light of these findings, our efforts to foster the growth of youth take on increasing importance.

My heartfelt gratitude for the noble activities of all the members of the 21st Century Mission Group in Japan, youth leaders who are responsible for taking care of the younger members.

Dr. Krieger asks in *Choose Hope*: "How many bodhisattvas will it take to change the world? How much altruism will it take? We cannot answer these questions. We can only say that it will take more of both than currently exists."

He stresses that he will continue to embrace hope and steadily, resolutely take action toward this goal. As Dr. Krieger affirms, to expand the solidarity of young Bodhisattvas of the Earth is to expand hope.

The *Analects of Confucius* contains the passage "It is Man who is capable of broadening the Way. It is not the Way that is capable of broadening Man."

Let us put all our effort into expanding and strengthening the youth division. With profound emotion and expectation, I say to the youth: "My friends, I am counting on you for the 21st century! It will be your age! It is the stage for all of you!"

A Buddha is a person of absolute happiness, a victor of supreme justice.

A sutra passage says that a person experiences 804,000 states of mind in a single day (see *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 471). In the course of one day, it is true that many different thoughts occur to us. People's hearts change from moment to moment in response to various external relations. How can we still our minds, which are always changing?

The "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, which we recite in gongyo, contains the closing lines "At all times I think to myself: / How can I cause living beings / to gain entry into the unsurpassed way / and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha?" (p. 232). This is the Buddha's constant thought for the enlightenment of all people.

We need to continually fight on, focusing our thoughts on what we can do for the Mystic Law, for kosen-rufu and for the SGI. That is the path to becoming a Buddha.

A Buddha is a person of absolute happiness, whom nothing can disrupt, and a victor of supreme justice. Becoming such a person is your supreme mission and glory in life. To accomplish your own great history of human revolution, each day please do everything you can to lead the kosen-rufu movement in your region based on a steady practice of strong, resonant gongyo and daimoku.

During the hot summer months, please take care to stay healthy, managing your time wisely to get adequate sleep.

After you return home, please convey my warmest regards and heartfelt thanks to all my beloved fellow members.

And please continue cheerfully, vigorously advancing toward one victory after another, maintaining your high spirits and taking great care not to cause any accidents. **W**

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 41-44

'A close look at the history of Nichiren Shoshu reveals that, aside from Nichikan and a small number of priests who remained faithful to Nichiren Daishonin's teachings, over the centuries the heritage and lifeblood of faith had been lost time and again. The Daishonin's spirit had long been missing from within the priesthood.'

In October 1931, the Minobu school was moving ahead with its plan to have the emperor inscribe on a plaque Nichiren Daishonin's new title, Great Teacher Rissho, to be kept at Kuonji, the head temple of the Minobu school.

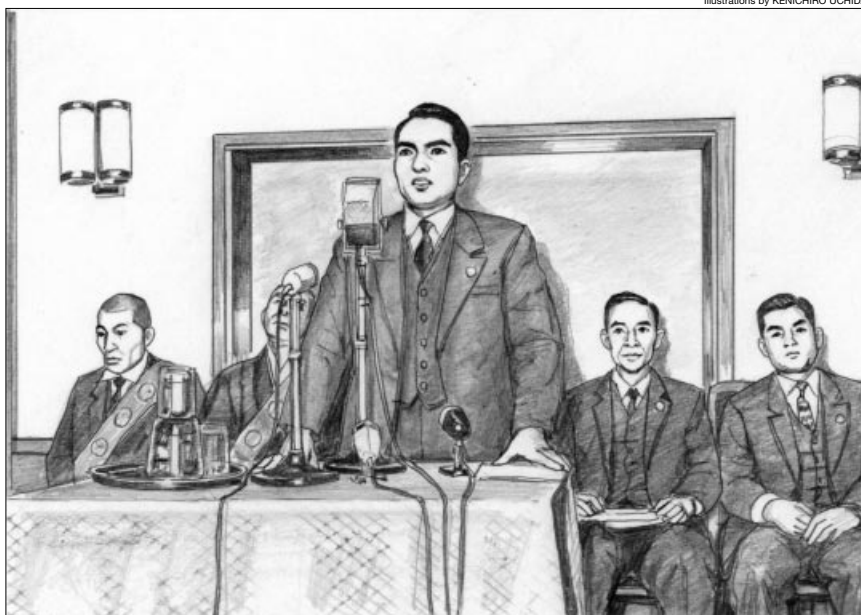
By being the recipient of the emperor's handwritten inscription of the Daishonin's new title, the Minobu school hoped to make itself appear to be the most important of all the Nichiren denominations. Before approving the Minobu school's application, however, the Japanese Ministry of Education required the agreement of the heads of all other Nichiren schools. The senior priests of Minobu therefore went to the heads of each school asking them to sign a memorandum giving their consent. This included Nichiren Shoshu, whose high priest at the time was Nichikai Abe [father of the current high priest, Nikken].

The memorandum stated in effect that since the Daishonin's tomb was located at Kuonji temple on Mt. Minobu, the undersigned supported the peti-

tion submitted by the temple's chief priest requesting that the plaque bearing the emperor's inscription be kept there. In other words, by signing the agreement, one assented to the claim that the tomb containing the Daishonin's remains — his grave — was located on Minobu. Yet Nichikai Abe signed and officially sealed the document as the chief administrator of Nichiren Shoshu.

The second high priest, Nikko Shonin, left Minobu because Mimbu Niko, the chief instructor of priests at Kuonji temple, permitted the local steward of Minobu, Hakiri Sanenaga, to build a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha and make pilgrimages to Shinto shrines. These were violations of the Daishonin's teachings, and Minobu thus became a place of slander of the Law and a nest of devilish influences. Nikko Shonin could not allow such a place to be the residence of the Daishonin's remains, and so, heartbroken, he took them and left the mountain.

At the time, he wrote, "My pain and chagrin at leaving Mi-



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

nobu valley is beyond description" (*Hennetai Goshu*, p. 1733). There is no knowing the depths of his sadness. When high priest Nichikai Abe signed, sealed and assented to the memorandum stating that Minobu was the location of the Daishonin's tomb, he completely defied Nikko Shonin. More than that, he trampled on and betrayed the Daishonin's spirit and the correct teachings and doctrines.

It was the Soka Gakkai that finally removed this stain from Nichiren Shoshu's history. On March 11, 1955, a debate took place between the Soka Gakkai and the Minobu school in Otaru, Hokkaido. In proving that neither the Dai-Gohonzon nor the Daishonin's remains were located on Minobu and completely refuting the errors of the Minobu school, the Soka Gakkai side gained an enormous victory.

The moderator for the Soka Gakkai was Shin'ichi Yamamoto, the youth division chief of staff. From the get-go, Shin'ichi pointed out the fact that countless followers of the Minobu school were joining the Soka Gakkai, and he sharply illuminated the opponent's erroneous doctrines. This opened the way to the Soka Gakkai's victory, and the correct teachings of Nikko Shonin were protected.

During World War II, when the military government drew up a plan of uniting all Nichiren schools under its policy of thought control, there were some priests of Nichiren Shoshu who consented. But Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the Soka Gakkai's first president, emphasized that in order to protect the correct teachings and doctrines of the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin, Nichiren Shoshu should apply to the government for independent status. Finally, in March 1941, through President Makiguchi's tireless efforts, Nichiren Shoshu was granted status as an independent religious body.

In September 1941, two years before the arrest of President Makiguchi and his disciple, Josei Toda, the Nichiren Shoshu administration had 14 important passages excised from the *Goshu*, including "I, Nichiren, am the foremost sage in all Jambudvīpa..." (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 642). They were afraid of being charged with *lèse majesté* by the military government, which had made State Shinto its spiritual foundation.

This act of deleting passages that were, in essence, the Daishonin's great declaration of his true identity, was on a level equal to the actions of the five senior priests at the time of Nikko Shonin. Thinking that

the Daishonin's writings in the easily readable kana syllabary, which he had scribed for the sake of the lay followers he was addressing, were a disgrace to his name, these priests destroyed them, reprocessed the paper on which they had been written or burned them.

Finally, the head temple enshrined the Shinto talisman and ordered Soka Gakkai members to do the same. But the Soka Gakkai stoutly refused to do so, and as a result presidents Makiguchi and Toda were arrested and imprisoned. Fearing being linked with the two Soka Gakkai leaders, the priesthood expelled them from its followers and prohibited Soka Gakkai members from visiting the head temple.

Though the priests proclaimed that Nichiren Shoshu preserved "the direct heritage of the Law from one high priest to the next" and that it was as perfect as if the "water of the pure Mystic Law had been transferred from one vessel to another without a drop being spilled," they completely discarded the Soka Gakkai, which was fighting in the genuine spirit of the Daishonin. This astonishing act revealed the school's true nature.

There is deep significance in the priesthood's slanderous acts and cold treatment of the Soka Gakkai. According to the Dai-



shonin's writings, those who devote themselves to spreading the true teaching in this defiled age of the Latter Day of the Law are certain to face persecution. That is why kosen-rufu is a sacred undertaking that can only be achieved by those who are determined to work selflessly. Nikko Shonin therefore says, "Until kosen-rufu is achieved, propagate the Law to the full extent of your ability without begrudging your life" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618). However, many of the priests of Nichiren Shoshu have demonstrated not the faintest shadow of that spirit. Caring only for themselves, they have hidden away from persecution and, guided solely by narrow self-interest, sought to live in the lap of luxury.

Those who make self-interest their guiding principle will naturally forget the lofty goal of realizing peace and happiness for all people and instead curry favor with the authorities.

These professional priests, who cared only about protecting themselves, ended up repeatedly distorting and seriously disgracing the Daishonin's teachings. Having grown completely accustomed to keeping up the appearance of authority and passing themselves off as guardians of the correct teaching and doctrine, they showed not the slightest remorse or regret for their slanderous actions. Their lives were based not on the Buddhist Law but on their own interests.

When one abandons the lofty goal of kosen-rufu and seeks only to protect oneself, one loses the foundation of one's life and becomes a slave to desires. The priests' betrayal of Buddhism and their debauched way of life were two sides of the same coin. They had reduced themselves to the level of what the Daishonin described as "animals dressed in priestly robes" (see WND, 760).

A close look at the history of Nichiren Shoshu reveals that, aside from Nichikan and a small number of priests who remained faithful to the Daishonin's teachings, over the centuries the heritage and lifeblood of faith had been lost time and again. The Daishonin's spirit had long been missing from within the priesthood.

In sharp contrast, even in prison, both presidents Makiguchi and Toda continued to uphold their belief in the Daishonin's teaching. And President Makiguchi gave his very life for it. In this way, the true light of Buddhism, the spirit of the Daishonin, had been protected by the Soka Gakkai, which carried on the heritage of faith. The Soka Gakkai had prevented the Daishonin's Buddhism from being extinguished.

When President Makiguchi stood up to take the lead in realizing kosen-rufu, priests who were not inclined to work for that noble endeavor attacked him viciously. What's more, when Soka Gakkai members introduced this Buddhism to suffering people and brought them to a temple to receive the Gohonzon, most temples refused. With their cold, heartless attitude, these priests seemed to be ridiculing the great compassion with which the Daishonin strove to rescue all people from suffering. At the time, there were only two temples that would confer the Gohonzon on Soka Gakkai members. In contrast, the priests gave special consideration to believers with wealth and high social status.

Though the Daishonin had declared, "This is the correct Law in which every single person from the ruler down to the common people should take faith" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1301), most Nichiren Shoshu priests never treated the people with any compassion nor did they make any effort to share the Daishonin's teachings with them. Be-



cause most ordinary citizens at the time were suffering from sickness and poverty, the priests regarded them as an unprofitable bother.

They also feared the attacks and persecution that attempts to spread the teachings might stir up. How much trouble and concern these priests must have caused President Makiguchi! It was in fact the priesthood itself that posed the greatest obstacle to the religious revolution he envisioned.

President Makiguchi once said, "The Tendai school of Buddhism at the time of the Daishonin corresponds most with Nichiren Shoshu of all the Nichiren Buddhism schools today."

The Tendai school during the Daishonin's day showed signs of corruption and degeneracy. The Great Teacher Dengyo founded the Tendai school of Buddhism based on the Lotus Sutra and the teachings of T'ien-t'ai of China, and endeavored to establish the first Mahayana Ordination Platform in Japan on Mt. Hiei. [Until that time, even Mahayana priests in Japan were ordained only in the Hinayana precepts. Dengyo struggled against opposition by the established Buddhist schools to gain the necessary approval from the emperor to establish a Mahayana ordination center, a goal that was finally realized soon after his death.]

However, his disciples, who should have inherited and transmitted his teachings faithfully, incorporated erroneous esoteric teachings into Tendai Buddhism and lost Dengyo's origi-

nal intent and true spirit.

President Makiguchi continued: "We must ask ourselves who among the followers of Nichiren Shoshu through the ages 'has actually encountered the three obstacles and four devils' (WND, 501)? Isn't one who claims to lead others on the correct path without summoning forth such obstacles no more than 'a warden of hell who drives others toward the evil paths' (see WND, 501)?"

The "followers of Nichiren Shoshu" in this passage refers not to mere practitioners of the Daishonin's teachings but to the priests whose responsibility it is to "lead others." In his writings, the Daishonin clearly states that if the three obstacles and four devils do not arise, it is because the struggle for kosen-rufu has been abandoned. President Makiguchi sharply points out the cowardice and evil of such priests' choice of self-interest over kosen-rufu.

His disciple, President Toda, also continuously fought against the corruption of the priesthood, stating the following: "A priest who doesn't propagate the Daishonin's teachings himself and then complains about those who actually do is worthless. A priest who has done nothing to deserve respect but hides behind the Daishonin's greatness and demands respect is cunning. A priest who only cares about donations is a beggar.

"There are priests who say, 'We're not going to hand out the Gohonzon to just anyone.' That's outrageous. If they won't grant us the Gohonzon even though we have built them temples, then we have not built temples at all,

only dormitories for priests.

"We must protect the Nichiren Shoshu organization at all costs, respecting the good priests, remonstrating with corrupt priests and refuting them, preserving the school from external enemies, and aiming for the unity of priests and laity.

"We mustn't allow the chief priests of local temples to become arrogant.... They have an unfortunate tendency to treat believers as if they were retainers or servants.

"There are priests who are incapable and irresponsible and who cozy up to powerful followers to try to solidify their position. Practitioners influenced by such priests always end up discarding their faith and coming to a sorry end."

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

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S SEPT. 1 ENCOURAGEMENT

Life Is the Most Precious Treasure

'There is no more precious treasure in the universe than life,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'But death eventually awaits us all. The important question, then, is to what do we dedicate these immeasurably precious lives of ours?'

On Sept. 1, SGI President Ikeda attended a conference with visiting SGI-USA leaders, including General Director Danny Nagashima, Women's Leader Matilda Buck and Men's Leader Tariq Hasan, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji. They discussed their vision for the development of the kosen-rufu movement in the United States in the 21st century.

"There is no more precious treasure in the universe than life," President Ikeda said. "But death eventually awaits us all. The important question, then, is to what do we dedicate these immeasurably precious lives of ours?"

"Buddhism teaches the spirit of not begrudging one's life and of selfless devotion to propagating the Law. It is the decree of the Buddha that we dedicate our lives to spreading the Mystic Law.

"When we do so, our lives fall in rhythm with the positive energy of the universe, enabling us to advance on a course of eternal happiness. We can savor the most wonderful state of being, where we can experience joy in both life and death."

President Ikeda also talked about the importance of maintaining our health: "We must give utmost priority to our health. That is why doing vigorous gongyo and daimoku is

extremely important.

"To create a harmonious balance between work, rest and play—like a seamlessly interwoven symphony—is a manifestation of the wisdom of the Mystic Law.

"If all you talk about is 'fighting and winning,' it may turn people off. Talking to people about their hobbies or interests, or about life in general, and listening to their complaints or what they have to say until they are satisfied can actually serve to inspire and invigorate them.

"In any event, our SGI activities are about sowing the seeds of happiness in people's lives. There is no greater joy than this. No life is more fulfilling or worthwhile.

"Buddhism is action. If we keep sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law, we can transform even the most seemingly barren and desolate expanse into a vast forest.

"While fostering one shining 'diamond' after another, please construct a new America." **WT**

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FROM 'FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE'

UNITING IN A SHARED MISSION



'Each of us must awaken to our unique mission as protagonists in the transformation of history,' writes SGI President Ikeda. 'And we must unite in a shared human struggle to confront and resolve the pressing problems facing our planet.'

The following excerpts are taken from SGI President Ikeda's book, *For the Sake of Peace: Seven Paths to Global Harmony, A Buddhist Perspective*, available from your favorite neighborhood or online bookseller, or at www.middlewaypress.org.

Now we stand at the start of the third millennium. At this moment in history, we should determine to eliminate all needless suffering from this planet that is our

home. In our efforts to realize this goal, we will find the key to ensuring that the new century does not mimic the last but begins an era of peace and hope. Now is the time to build a new age that shines with the glory of humanity and culture by focusing again on the sanctity of life.

We are charged with the task of achieving not just a passive peace—the absence of war—but of transforming those social structures that threaten human dignity in order to realize the positive, active values of peace. Efforts to enhance international

cooperation and the fabric of international law are, of course, also necessary. But more vital are the creative efforts of individuals to develop a culture of peace, because it is on this foundation that a new global society can be built. (p. 4)

The real seeds of peace lie not in lofty ideas but in human understanding and the empathy of ordinary people.

While radicalism is fated by its nature to resort to violence and terror, the most potent weapon in the arsenal of the gradualist—the radical's opposite—is dialogue. We see in Socrates the steadfast commitment to dialogue, to verbal combat from which there is no retreat, and an intensity that is, in some literal sense, death-defying. Such dialogue can only be sustained by resources of spiritual energy and strength far greater and deeper than will be found among those who so quickly turn to violence. (p. 41)

I believe that the essence of goodness is the aspiration to-

ward unity, while evil directs itself toward division or sundering. The function of evil is ever to create divisions; to cause fissures in the human heart; to sever the bonds among family members, colleagues, friends and acquaintances; to engender enmity between countries as well as ethnic groups; and to destroy the human sense of unity with nature and the universe. Where divisiveness reigns, human beings become isolated and the victims of unhappiness and misery.

A person with a closed heart is one who is shut up within a self-imposed shell of selfishness and complacency. This sad and pointless act of severing self and other bears the hallmark of evil as I have attempted to define it here. This deep-rooted tendency, which has persisted throughout human history, is manifested in a singular way in our time, perhaps a fateful feature of our civilization. (p. 87)

The external manifestations of good and evil are relative and transmutable. They only appear

absolute and immutable when the human heart is in thrall to the spell of language and abstract concepts. To the extent that we can free ourselves from this spell, we can begin to see that good contains within it evil, and evil contains within it good. Because of this, even that which is perceived as evil can be transformed into good through our reaction and response. (p. 115)

Relying on the eternal law within to rise above the sway of evanescent authority in pursuit of nonviolence and humanity—it is in the course of this grand struggle that one experiences an indestructible life-condition of comfort and security. (pp. 146-47)

Courage and hope are essential; we must never lose these vitally human qualities. Each of us must awaken to our unique mission as protagonists in the transformation of history. And we must unite in a shared human struggle to confront and resolve the pressing problems facing our planet. (p. 180) **WT**

EXPERIENCE — KIMBERLY STRONG-FULLER, CHICAGO

Now I Know That I Can Do the Work

Determined to prove that she could become an engineer, Kimberly Strong-Fuller uses her practice to lead her to victory.

When I was 5, my mother joined the SGI. I remember very clearly being involved in the Junior Pioneers — predecessor to today's Boys and Girls Group — at an early age. By the time I was 16, I distanced myself from the organization and eventually stopped practicing. In 1994, I returned to the organization and received the Gohonzon, but my participation was inconsistent. As I began to experience difficult challenges and obstacles, I determined to practice harder and participate more.

One of my goals was to become a licensed stationary engineer, working with high and low pressure boilers. I thought it would be difficult to break into this field, and as I explored it more, I realized just how difficult. Most licensed stationary engineers are men, and to move ahead you need to know someone and have some general engineering background. I was a woman with no contacts and no experience. But the work interested me and I wanted to prove I could do it as well as any man. So I began to study.

One of the first things that is required is to pass a licensing examination. I joined an engineer association for assistance with the exam. I also volunteered for internships, the best way to get experience. I did the research, the legwork and whatever I could to learn more. I was determined to win, whatever the cost.

The first time I took the test, I failed. I told myself that it was okay, and I needed to study more. The second time, I failed again. I took a deep breath, and resolved to try once again. After I failed the test for a third time, I started a study group with five others. The fourth time, I knew in my heart that I had passed, but received correspondence telling me I hadn't. I also found out that all of the men in our group had passed, and all the women had failed.

I began to think that it wasn't just me; women were not moving ahead. Out of frustration, I began writing letters to various officials for their support but got no response. To say I was frustrated and negative would be an understatement.

During this period, however, I constantly received encouragement and reassurance from leaders and friends in the SGI-USA. One of the members, an engineer himself, made it his mission to get me through this ordeal. He would call me and read quotes from the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. I would listen, giving him as little encouragement as possible, but he never gave up. Though I didn't realize it at the time, his generosity was making me stronger and more determined to win.

The sixth time I took the test, I failed again. Afterward, I did not want to chant. Buddhism was not for me, I thought. But again, I was given encouragement about the importance of consistency in my practice and sticking through to the end.

One day, after a long day at work, it all hit me. I was frustrated with my current work situation, with failing the exam six times in a row, and with not feeling in control of my life. I was crying uncontrollably. I went to the Gohonzon and chanted with the demand that I see actual proof. From that point on, I began chanting two hours a day and consistently doing morning and evening gongyo.

My other motivation was my 12-year-old daughter, Shavonne. The last thing I wanted was for her to see her mother giving up on her dreams. I do everything I can to be a good role model, and I was not about to let her down now. Failure was not an option. I was going to take the exam and I was going to pass.

On March 31, after chanting two hours that morning with a friend, I took my licensing examination for the seventh time. I walked out of there knowing I passed. Not in a cocky or arrogant way but with complete confidence. Less than one month later, I found out that I got a score of 91. Just as I had prayed, I became a licensed stationary engineer in the City of Chicago.

Buddhism is win or lose, and I won. SGI President Ikeda has



Kimberly Strong-Fuller (left) is determined to be a good role model for her daughter, Shavonne. 'The last thing I wanted,' Kimberly says, 'was for her to see her mother giving up on her dreams.'

said the 21st century is the Century of Women. I plan to help prove this to be true.

In a recent speech at Soka University in Japan, President Ikeda read a poem that said: "Absolutely never give up! / While sharing profound exchange / With new acquaintances, While surmounting the wild flames / Of chaos and disarray, Decisively seize victory / With voices raised in song / Infused with hope — As heroes of learning, As champions of philosophy!" (May 25 *World Tribune*, p. 4). Doing my best to grow and share my experiences with others, I will do everything I can to live up to President Ikeda's words.

Now that I am licensed, I am actively seeking a position with the State of Illinois. Every time I see an opening, I apply and continually check on my status with each office.

My goal is to be the first African American stationary engineer to hold the position of commissioner of the Water Department of the City of Chicago.

I know this will not be easy, but with the Gohonzon, President Ikeda's guidance and my friends and family, this goal is not impossible. It's something I can work for and win. **WT**

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.

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

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

SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

New Orleans Festival Brings Community Together

By LISA A. LINCOLN AND VICTORIA SMITH

NEW ORLEANS CORRESPONDENTS

More than 700 members and guests of the SGI-USA's New Orleans, Memphis and Gulf Coast Areas held their Family Youth Festival Weekend at the University of New Orleans, Aug. 4-5. The event was co-sponsored by the University of New Orleans Office of Multicultural Affairs and titled "New Horizons: Joining Hands in Hope, Harmony and Happiness."

The weekend started with a Victory Over Violence event, featuring a panel discussion and artistic expressions by local youth concerning solutions to the epidemic of violence. Local art teacher Beverly Cook contributed artwork from her students depicting the violence they had experienced in their lifetime. Discussion ranged from youth related violence to the individual's responsibility to stand up against oppression of all types.

The Pep-Stars shared poetry and skits illustrating conflict resolution techniques and their hopes for a future free of violence. The Pep-Stars is a group of peer educators who use their personal experiences with

violence to educate and enlighten other youth in their community.

Guests toured the VOV exhibition and signed the VOV pledge. "I was really impressed by what you, as Buddhists, are doing to work with your youth and help them to grow," said guest Willie McGhee.

The next day's vibrant and joyous Family Youth Festival inspired laughter, tears and pride in the hearts of the audience and participants. The program included 19 performances, from skits to belly dancing. The unity and growth of the participants was evident with each performance. "The youth performers' preparation and caring for each other during the months prior to the festival led them to create strong bonds of friendship," said Terumi Saito, New Orleans Area women's leader. "Their actual performances reflected the true unity that they had created."

Dr. Mackie J.V. Blanton, associate dean of student life for multicultural affairs at the University of New Orleans, commented, "Guests to the event would come up to me and exclaim how exciting it was for them to experience the sheer joy they witnessed among SGI-USA youth and their families." **WT**



Photos by TERUMI SAITO

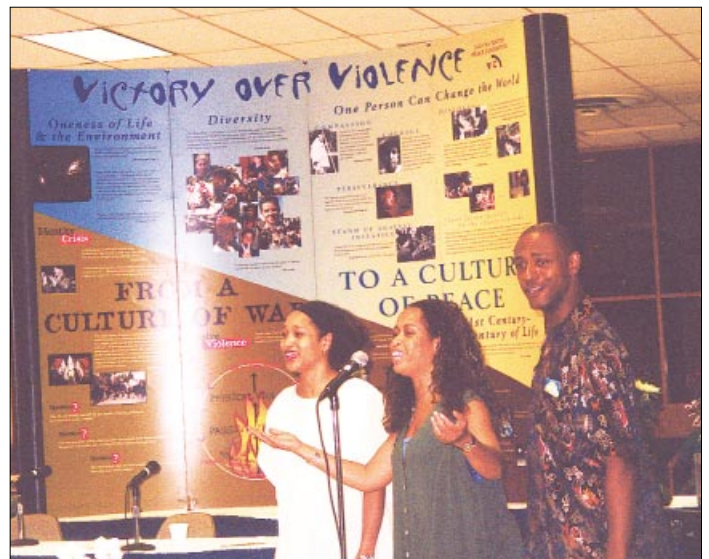
Members of the Boys and Girls group prepare to perform at a Family Youth Festival at the University of New Orleans, Aug. 5.



SGI-USA youth, who came together from the New Orleans, Memphis and Gulf Coast areas, celebrate their performance.



Young women, shown here after their performance, learned a traditional Japanese dance.



The Victory Over Violence exhibition serves as the backdrop for a day of dialogue, Aug. 4.