



Continuing coverage of the SGI-USA's response to the Sept. 11 tragedy.

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Importance of Dialogue Cannot Be Overstated

The following is a translation of SGI President Ikeda's comments on terrorism excerpted from the Sept. 16 issue of the Seikyo Shimbun, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

- Ignorance is a dangerous thing. Without factual knowledge, stereotypes and the imagery they spawn invariably assume a momentum of their own, proliferating out of control.
- Just because the perpetrators of the appalling terrorist attacks are believed to be of Arab descent, I pray that people will not immediately jump to the conclusion that all Arabs are dangerous and that Islam encourages violence. It is in no way true that all 1.2 billion Muslims in the world are violent. Even the recent revival of Islam, which is sometimes confused with Islamic fundamentalism, is not a monolithic mass movement. The extremists constitute a very small minority; the vast majority are moderates.
- Obviously, every act of terrorism is reprehensible and wrong, regardless of its motive. Yet we absolutely must not treat terrorism as an inevitable consequence of faith in the tenets of Islam.

reprehensible and wrong, regardless of its motive. Yet we absolutely must not treat terrorism as an inevitable consequence of faith in the tenets of Islam.

- The Middle East issue is one in which the Palestinian issue, the Gulf War and vested interests in the oil industry and military-industrial complexes have become entangled with other factors in a massive and complicated snarl. To view this as a conflict between good and evil is simplistic and dangerous.
- Humankind will never see the light of peace as long as one party seeks to subjugate the other by force, both sides caught in a vicious cycle of reprisals that exacts an eye for an eye, a life for a life.
- It is because we cherish and admire the values and ideals of Western civilization that we urge humanity to resolutely pursue the path of nonviolence, which is truly worthy of the civilized world. We insist that a just and equitable international tribunal be established to try those responsible for acts of war and terrorism. We insist that every effort be rendered so as to transform distrust into trust. I believe this is the most effective and fundamental antidote against terrorism and its repugnant worship of violence.
- The importance of dialogue cannot be overstated. Nothing must be allowed to impinge upon its free exchange. For unless we put an end to an era dictated by sheer force of arms, the 21st century will be no different from the 20th, and we will regress once more into a century of war.
- There are a number of short-term measures that may be implemented to combat violence and terrorism, but the only viable and fundamental long-term solution is education. There is no other alternative but to educate people on the loftiest humanitarian values and views of life in order to establish a foundation of peace and stability for humankind in these times of tumultuous change. What we must strive to bring about is a century upholding the dignity of life, a century predicated upon humanistic education. **WT**

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Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI-USA ACTIVITY CENTERS

New Beginnings in Gulf Coast and Wisconsin

By **JAMIE LIPTAN**
STAFF WRITER

Two new SGI-USA activity centers were recently opened in Mary Ester, Fla., near Pensacola, and in Milwaukee.

More than 250 members gathered Aug. 12 for two meetings celebrating the opening of the Gulf Coast Activity Center, which will serve as the center of activities for members in western Florida and southern Alabama. The members, some of whom traveled two hours for the opening, enjoyed performances, congratulatory words and a great feast.

"Many members here have dedicated themselves to our movement for several decades," said SGI-USA Senior Vice General Director Frank Nakabayashi, on hand for the opening. "The opening of this activity center is the realization of their steadfast efforts for kosen-rufu. We also see their children becoming estab-

lished members of society, showing actual proof of their victory."

On Aug. 18, members from throughout Wisconsin celebrated their past, present and future, beginning with the opening of the SGI-USA Milwaukee Activity Center and culminating with a vibrant Family Music Festival full of youthful energy.

For many of the pioneer members who have been practicing in the area for years, the opening of the activity center was a dream come true. Located in a beautiful westside neighborhood, the center will provide a place for members to gather and encourage one another, as well as a central location from which the local SGI organization can unite and reach out to the residents of their area.

The new activity centers are part of a plan to open many such facilities across the country. Activity centers are intended for the use of local organizations that are not yet able to support



(Above) Members from western Florida and southern Alabama gather for the opening of their new Gulf Coast Activity Center, Aug. 12. (Right) The Milwaukee Activity Center opens amid joyful performances, Aug. 18.



a full community center, but whose members are still sincerely working to advance the SGI's movement.

—Tracy Quarino contributed to this article.

The following are excerpts of messages received by SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima and the national headquarters from various SGI countries on behalf of all American members in the wake of the tragic events of Sept. 11. At press time, SGI members in 20 countries had sent messages. To view all of them, please visit the SGI-USA's Web site (www.sgi-usa.org).

Message From SGI-Belgium

Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of deep sadness. We mourn the loss of so many precious lives and feel in our hearts the suffering of their family and friends.

Both yesterday and today, the Belgian members have come together to participate in 10 hours of daimoku. We pray that this tragedy not become the match that ignites countless other acts of inhumanity and destruction throughout the world.

Let us take upon ourselves the mission of those who have perished, making the impossible possible, until we have touched the hearts of human beings throughout the world to stop violence. Let us unite with President Ikeda and all members throughout the world, full of hope and courage.

General Director Kiyoshi Shimura,
SGI-Belgium
Women's Leader Mieko Udagawa,
SGI-Belgium

Message From SGI-Canada

On behalf of your fellow SGI members in Canada, we express our deepest sympathy and our most profound sorrow in the wake of yesterday's tragic incidents. We pledge to you our support through our sincere prayers and any other ways we can help. We will continue to send our prayers to all the people of the United States who have lost their lives and their loved ones.

With our heartfelt prayers for the safety and well-being of the members of SGI-USA, and all the people who have been touched by this tragedy,

Chairperson Elizabeth Izumi,
SGI-Canada
General Director Tony Meers,
SGI-Canada
Women's Leader Yuriko Skillan,
SGI-Canada

Message From SGI-France and SGI-Europe

French members, as well as American citizens who practice in France, watched with horror and were stupefied by the terrible events of Sept. 11

in your country. As soon as we learned about it, we began chanting daimoku and offered prayers for the repose of the innocent men and women who lost their lives in this catastrophe.

We want to assure you all of our sympathy and understanding in this difficult time.

General Director Shoichi Hasegawa,
SGI-Europe
General Director Yoshio Chiba,
SGI-France
Women's Leader Betty Mori,
SGI-France

Message From SGI-Germany

We could not believe our eyes when we saw on television the horrible scenes of the attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. We are so saddened about the huge loss of irreplaceable lives through an insane act of terror on the American people. And we mourn and chant together with you.

Now, at the beginning of the second phase of kosen-rufu, let us become even closer, in one mind with SGI President Ikeda, to realize our goals for

worldwide kosen-rufu.

On behalf of the members of SGI-Germany,
Senior Advisor Peter Kuehn,
SGI-Germany
General Women's Leader Tsuruko Kuehn,
SGI-Germany

Message From SGI-New Zealand

We are sending our heartfelt daimoku and earnest prayers from New Zealand. Our hearts go out to everyone affected by these horrific events. Please pass our sincere condolences on to those who have lost family and friends.

Although Sept. 11 will be recorded as a tragic day in world history, we are furthering our resolve to definitely create a peaceful and harmonious world and determine that peace and goodwill will become the prevailing force.

With you in our hearts,
General Director Jimi Wallace,
SGI-New Zealand

Message From SGI-United Kingdom

I would formally like to send you all the heartfelt condolences of your fellow members of SGI-UK, following the shocking events on Sept. 11. We join with all SGI members in the world in our determination to double our efforts to combat the negative forces threatening humanity. Through our combined efforts, we will win.

General Director Ricky Baynes and all the SGI-UK members



Out of Context: Manipulating the Teachings



By JEFF KRIGER
SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPT. LEADER



In a sense, religious scripture is not absolute. That is, different people may derive different inspiration or act differently in response to the same text or passage. Upon reading a religious teaching, some may respond with selfless love and compassion, others may behave arrogantly, and still others lash out destructively.

This is perhaps why Nichiren Daishonin states that actual proof—the reality of how practitioners live and behave—surpasses documentary or scriptural proof in evaluating a religious teaching. Nevertheless, the principal writings of any religion are extremely important. In them, the

deep heartfelt intent of the author is surely present.

Differing interpretations arising from a sincere desire to seek the truth are understandable. Through dialogue, sincere people can reach some common understanding.

Unfortunately, religious writings are sometimes purposefully used in a manner that is utterly self-serving and blatantly at odds with their original intent.

One tool often employed to accomplish this is the out-of-context quote. This involves taking a short statement, assigning it a meaning independent of its

context and using it to support one's own aims or agenda.

The following citation in Nichiren Shoshu literature of the Daishonin's words could qualify as a textbook illustration of this technique: "The Daishonin states in Ichidai Shogyo Taii ('An Outline of the Sacred Teachings Taught by the Buddha During His Lifetime'), 'Unless one is included in the transmission, it is difficult to know this sutra' (*Shinpen*, p. 92). At the current time the Soka Gakkai slanders and denies the High Priest who alone inherits the lifeblood of the Law while asserting that they are 'based on the Goshu.' Their claim of being based on the Goshu is not in accord with the transmission, so they cannot correctly understand the Goshu's meaning" (*Refuting the Soka Gakkai's "Counterfeit Object of Worship": 100 Questions and Answers*, Nichiren Shoshu Temple, 1996, p. 18).

Here the priesthood wants us to believe that the term *transmission* in the quoted Goshu sentence refers to a formal transmission of the authority of

its high priest. Only those individuals who receive that transmission can "know the sutra," that is, understand the Goshu, the writings of the founder. Only priests, they assert—specifically, the high priest—is qualified to interpret the Goshu.

However, reading this passage in context leaves us with quite a different impression of its message: "Question: As we see with other sutras, some are expounded for bodhisattvas, some for those of the human and heavenly realms, and some for voice-hearers and cause-awakened ones. Each of these groups, according to their capacity, understands these respective teachings differently and derives differing benefit from them. For what kind of persons is this [Lotus Sutra] expounded?"

"Answer: Unless one is included in the transmission, it is difficult to know this sutra. Ultimately, this sutra is expounded for evil persons, good persons, persons of wisdom, persons without wisdom, those who observe the precepts and those who keep no precepts, for

men and for women, for those of the four paths and for the eight kinds of beings; it is for all of the beings of the Ten Worlds.

"Evil persons are [represented by] Devadatta, King Wonderful Adornment and Ajatashatru; good persons, by Vaidehi and others of the

PLEASE SEE KRIGER, 3



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HONORING OUR PIONEERS — GRACE TAKAKUWA, LOS ANGELES

Growing Under My Mentor's Wings

After moving to the United States in the 1950s, Grace Takakuwa learns the importance of working with SGI President Ikeda and leading members to the Gohonzon.

In 1949, I married Robert Takakuwa in Tokyo. He was 20 years older than I and was working at U.S. General McArthur's headquarters. I had already begun practicing Buddhism with the Soka Gakkai.

In 1953, Robert and I came to the United States with our three sons. (In America, we had our fourth son.) I could hardly speak English, had no friends and every night shed tears of homesickness as I gazed up at the moon. My only wish was to divorce my husband and return to Japan.

After moving to the United States, I developed severe headaches because of financial worries. But in 1960, members began preparations for SGI President Ikeda's first visit to America. When I began to participate in these activities, I found myself filled with a sense of mission to spread Buddhism in the United States and the headaches stopped completely.

When President Ikeda arrived in Los Angeles, he formed Los Angeles Chapter and appointed me the women's leader. I was stunned by the unex-

pected appointment, but President Ikeda reassured me, saying: "You'll be all right. I'll give you my full support."

What he said was meant not only for me but for everyone in the United States. We had begun our organization with a handful of people, and we all felt somewhat lonely and helpless. When President Ikeda took us under his wing, however, he envisioned a magnificent picture of the future of our American movement.

He later said: "You are not appointed to a position because you are a capable person; you are appointed in order to gain experience and to improve your ability by practice."

After my appointment, my daily life completely changed. I began to visit people every day, partly because I was eager to see Japanese faces. At first, my husband warmly supported my activities. But as time went on, he began to hold a grudge against my practice.

But I could not blame him. Every time I went out, he had to take care of our four children. Moreover, our home was used as an activity center, with members continually coming in and out. Our telephone bills soared—my husband paid them secretly so that I didn't have to see them. Finally, after I left for a training meeting in Japan, my mild-mannered husband reached the limits of his patience and exploded. His opposition to my practice strengthened, troubling me deeply.

President Ikeda knew of my



Grace Takakuwa (center) shares her experience with Lisa Kirk (left) and Kim Herrmann.

family situation, and when he came to Los Angeles again in 1963, he visited my home. Upon his arrival, he immediately greeted my husband. Instead of giving him guidance as I expected, he expressed his appreciation, politely and in a dignified voice, saying: "Hello, Mr. Takakuwa! I appreciate the support you always give to your wife's activities. Thank you very much. I am sorry to have put you and your family to so much trouble. But in 10 or 20 years, you will surely come to realize what a great path your wife has embarked upon."

The meeting with President Ikeda was the turning point of my husband's life. He began to do gongyo voluntarily and formally joined the organization. He soon developed his own passion for the practice and was appointed a district leader. Nichiren Daishonin states, "The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 852). In this spirit, President Ikeda set a great example of how to behave toward non-practicing members of a family.

My next major problem was the "language barrier." As I said, I could barely speak English. So when English-speaking members began to practice, I told them to receive guidance from other leaders who could speak English, avoiding the task myself.

One of my seniors in faith noticed my attitude and said to me, "You are the women's leader, so you should encourage the women's division members yourself." That very night, there was a member at the community center who wanted to receive guidance about her problem. And I was left with her in the Gohonzon room.

I didn't know what to do. There was nothing else to do but to listen to her story. No matter how I strained my ears and eyes, I just could not un-

derstand what she said. If you can't speak English, all you can do is listen. Mistaking my attentiveness for genuine compassion, the member continued talking earnestly.

When I saw that she was finally finished, I said in broken English, "Is that all?" She replied, "Yes." I said, "Let's chant together," and we started to chant.

Though I couldn't understand what was troubling her, I could teach her about the Gohonzon and daimoku. I chanted more sincerely than I ever had before. By the time we finished chanting, the member felt satisfied and left.

The next day, she called me and said, "Thanks to you my problem was solved!" I was shocked.

Learning from my mistakes, I have developed my English skills as well as my faith. Today, I fully understand what the members are saying, but my faith and encouragement style remain unchanged—to listen thoroughly and then chant together.

President Ikeda once gave me a guiding principle, "The best guidance is to show resolutely that the power of the Gohonzon is absolute." Today, I have full understanding of and confidence in his guidance, and I am determined to give my full support to the generations to follow, dedicating myself to a "life of kosen-rufu." ■

FROM KRIGER, 2

human and heavenly realms; persons of wisdom, by Shariputra, and those without wisdom, by Chudapanthaka; those who keep the precepts, by the voice hearers and bodhisattvas; those who keep no precepts, by the dragons and beasts; and women, by the dragon girl.

"All of them, the beings of the ten worlds, are enlightened to this one perfect teaching. Scholars who fail to understand this say that the Lotus Sutra is not intended for us ordinary mortals; but they should fear the Buddha's will" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 398; tentative translation).

The persons and beings the Daishonin lists above are among those depicted as attaining en-

lightenment in the Lotus Sutra.

The Daishonin's point in this passage is clear: While the provisional teachings—those expounded by the Buddha before the Lotus Sutra—were tailored for specific groups of people and their specific capacities, the Lotus Sutra directly expresses the Buddha's will to save all living beings equally and without distinction. People of any capacity, any inclination, any race, culture, rank or status can attain enlightenment through the Lotus Sutra. It deeply respects the precious potential for Buddhahood innate in all human life. In saying so, the Daishonin states his will as the votary of the Lotus Sutra and the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law to save all peo-

ple from suffering and lead them to happiness.

There are those, however, the Daishonin points out, who are not included in the transmission: They are "scholars who fail to understand" this essential point and who "say that the Lotus Sutra is not intended for us ordinary mortals." The priests of Nichiren Shoshu hold that they alone are party to an exclusive transmission. They divide and distinguish themselves from "ordinary mortals" by insisting that only they can understand the Daishonin's words. For this reason, they most resemble the scholars the Daishonin describes above, who have removed themselves from inclusion in the transmission of his teachings. ■

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

Simon Wiesenthal: Champion of Human Rights

‘Simon Wiesenthal calls on us to transcend personal enmity and restore justice to our societies,’ SGI President Ikeda writes. ‘This heartrending cry emanating from the very depths of this great champion of human rights reverberates with a solemn message for us all.’

For a period of four months, starting from Sept. 12, the exhibition “I Am My Brother’s Keeper: The Life and Times of Simon Wiesenthal” will be held at the Soka Gakkai Toda Peace Memorial Hall in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture. The hall, which adjoins our Kanagawa Culture Center and is across from the famous Yamashita Park, has served as a Soka Gakkai facility for more than two decades. Renowned as one of the city’s historic buildings, it has hosted many peace, cultural and educational activities over the years.

Yokohama is also the starting point of the Soka Gakkai’s peace movement, for it was here that our second president, Josei Toda, on Sept. 8, 1957 — only six months before his death — delivered his epochal Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Simon Wiesenthal exhibition, being presented in Japan for the first time, commemorates the 44th anniversary of that event.

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Mr. Wiesenthal is 92 years old. He miraculously survived the inhumane Nazi Holocaust and has devoted his life since to pursuing those who perpetrated that heinous crime. People of conscience around the world have praised him as a true fighter for human rights; former Nazis and their collaborators speak fearfully of him as the “Nazi hunter.”

To date, he has investigated



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

SGI President Ikeda visits the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, Jan. 31, 1993.

REUTERS NEWMEDIA INC./CORBIS



Simon Wiesenthal

more than 6,000 Nazi war criminals and secured more than 1,100 convictions. His relentless crusade has also been a fight against people’s forgetfulness, against the Holocaust being consigned to historical oblivion.

His unchanging spirit is “I will not forget!” He is determined to keep alive the memory of that brutal slaughter — the bitter tears and anguished cries of his murdered comrades, the countless lives abruptly cut short.

As the Jewish poet Yitzhak Katzenelson, who perished in the Holocaust, declared, “We must not seek to heal eternal scars in forgetfulness.”

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Mr. Wiesenthal’s noble convictions are illustrated by his deeds. For several years after the war, young Jewish commandos and former underground resistance fighters sometimes came to Wiesenthal asking for information about Nazi fugitives. But Wiesenthal resolutely refused to give it to them — it was clear that they were seeking to take personal revenge by killing those individuals.

Wiesenthal believed that the Nazi war criminals had to be judged in a fair, public court of law. Retaliating in the spirit of “an eye for an eye” would only add to the cycle of evil and could never restore justice.

I have not yet met Mr. Wiesenthal, but I have spoken several times with Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. In an interview, Rabbi Cooper said that Mr. Wiesenthal believed that, after the Holocaust, the task before humanity was not to exact revenge but to restore trust between people.

Mr. Wiesenthal calls on us to transcend personal enmity and

restore justice to our societies. This heartrending cry emanating from the very depths of this great champion of human rights reverberates with a solemn message for us all.

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Justice only shines when we challenge and triumph over evil. The same is true of Buddhism.

I cannot emphasize enough, however, that bloody, hate-filled revenge is utterly foreign to Buddhism. As a famous passage from an early Buddhist text says, “Hatreds do not ever cease in this world by hating, but by not hating; this is an eternal truth” (*The Dhammapada*, p. 8).

Nichiren Daishonin, though the target of the harshest perse-

of *Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 402).

This does not mean, however, that it is acceptable to blur the distinction between good and evil or to condone evil. As first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who stood firm against oppression by the Japanese militarist authorities and died in prison for his beliefs, said, “Unless you have the courage to be an enemy of those who are evil, you cannot be a friend to the good.”

Indeed, good cannot be achieved without a struggle against evil. Overlooking and ignoring evil show cowardice and a lack of compassion — in the end, it is the same as doing evil oneself.

The great struggle to triumph over the pervasive forces of the devil king of the sixth heaven as well as the destructive tendencies within our own lives is what we call *kosen-rufu*, what we call human revolution.

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Mr. Wiesenthal has offered the following warning to young people: “In reality, culture and civilization are only a wafer-thin

‘I cannot emphasize enough that bloody, hate-filled revenge is utterly foreign to Buddhism.’

cution, also demonstrated a spirit of tolerance and compassion as vast as the great ocean. He says, “I pray that before anything else I can guide and lead the ruler and those others who persecuted me” (*The Writings*

layer, beneath which the beast continues to lurk within us.”

Forty-four years ago, on a day following a typhoon, with clear blue skies and a refreshing breeze, President Toda stood before 50,000 Soka Gakkai members and announced the first of his final injunctions, his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. He entrusted the youth with the mission of spreading its message throughout the world.

The crux of his declaration lies in clearly exposing, and stressing the need to eradicate, the “claws hidden in the very depths” of the idea of using nuclear weapons—in other words, the insidious devilish tendencies inherent in life. This is none other than “the beast within us” of which Mr. Wiesenthal speaks.

In his declaration, Mr. Toda states: “We, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster. I propose that humankind apply, in every case, the death penalty to anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons, even if that person is on the winning side.”

Mr. Toda was a Buddhist whose first and foremost conviction was the sanctity of life. He was absolutely opposed to capital punishment, yet here he called for the death penalty for anyone responsible for using nuclear weapons.

This was based on his wish to eternally immobilize the devilish functions inherent in human life that seek to possess or use nuclear weapons. He wanted to deeply establish in the minds of all humanity a way of thinking that denounced nuclear weapons as an absolute evil—a way of thinking that would serve as an inner restraint for the sake of “preventing wrong and stopping evil” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 744).

In order to defend life, Mr. Toda used the word *death*, its polar opposite, in an effort to crush the demonic workings of evil. It was an act of conviction directed toward the absolute good of rigorously protecting life.

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At the time, the general public paid no attention to Mr. Toda’s pioneering declaration. However, its undying brilliance, which has only increased with the passage of time, has grown into a great light that is now beginning to brightly illuminate the world in the new century. Says Dr. David Krieger, president of the Nu-

clear Age Peace Foundation, “I think Josei Toda’s declaration against nuclear weapons retains its importance today.”

This summer, Dr. Krieger and I published the dialogue *Choose Hope* [not yet available in English]. In that dialogue, the American antinuclear weapons campaigner says: “Young people are the future. They must have a say in the world they are inheriting and must play a major part in resolving the nuclear threat.”

Youth! Cry out ever more strongly and widely for justice! Youth of the SGI, of the new century! Resolutely extend our alliance for lasting peace—to the world, to the future!

This essay was published in the “Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*” series in the Sept. 7 *Seikyo Shim-bun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper.

A New Look for the SGI Plaza

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda (center) joins SGI-USA members Aug. 22 for the dedication of a new fountain and courtyard entrance at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif., the national headquarters of SGI-USA. The fountain sits just outside the SGI Visitors Center, which welcomes members and guests from around the world.

‘SOKA EDUCATION’: EMPHASIZING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF HUMANISM

By DAVE McNEILL
MIDDLEWAY PRESS

Education for peace and happiness characterizes SGI President Ikeda’s essays and proposals collected in a new book, *Soka Education: A Buddhist Vision for Teachers, Students and Parents*. Just released, *Soka Education* contains a timely message in the aftermath of the recent terrorist attacks: Education’s most crucial role is in developing people of character who act as global citizens for the welfare of all humanity.

“[Daisaku Ikeda] demonstrates by example how the seeds of holistic and humanistic education can be nurtured, and how the flowers of peace, culture and global citizenship can be cultivated,” says Larry A. Hickman, director of the Center for Dewey Studies.

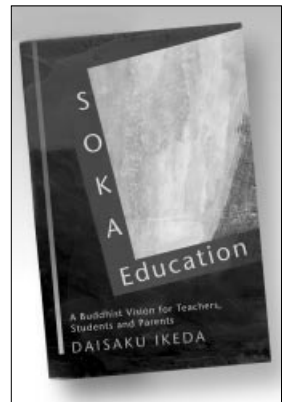
Soka Education contains works spanning three decades, including a brand new essay titled “John Dewey and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi: Confluences of Thought and Action,” which highlights these great educators’ ideas most relevant today.

President Ikeda’s writings

are a “source of great wisdom that challenges people throughout the world to examine the values that form the foundation of their actions,” writes Victor Kazanjian of Wellesley College in his foreword to the volume.

With peace and the state of education on the minds of everyone today, *Soka Education* provides inspiration in the search for deeper answers.

Soka Education (hardcover; \$29.95) is available at your favorite neighborhood and on-line bookseller, or from our Web site: www.middlewaypress.org.



Soka Gakkai Launches Wiesenthal Exhibit

On Sept. 12, the exhibition “I Am My Brother’s Keeper: The Life and Times of Simon Wiesenthal” opened to the public free of charge for four months at the Soka Gakkai Toda Peace Memorial Hall in Kanagawa, Japan. The exhibition, developed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center—the acclaimed Jewish human rights organization based in Los Angeles—and sponsored in Japan by the Soka Gakkai, is being shown outside the United States

for the first time.

The exhibition consists of photographs, documents, written reflections and memorabilia of Simon Wiesenthal, 92, the Jewish architect who survived the Nazi Holocaust to devote his life to bringing Nazi war criminals to justice. Having lived through repeated threats on his life, including a letter bombing in 1982, he remains committed to numerous human rights causes. Mr. Wiesenthal’s work has been cited for fostering international

condemnation of all war crimes in general, serving as an impetus to the founding of a United Nations agency that finds and arrests war criminals.

“We wanted to show Japanese viewers how a single person, despite daunting adversity, actually bettered the world,” says Masanori Otaka, director of the Soka Gakkai’s Office of Activities for Peace and Culture.

The exhibition is the second collaborative effort between the Simon Wiesenthal Center and

the Soka Gakkai. The first took place in 1994, when the two groups launched the Japan exhibition of “The Courage to Remember: Anne Frank and the Holocaust,” an ongoing program that has traveled to 51 cities and attracted some 1.7 million visitors. A third collaborative exhibition, to be sponsored by the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, is slated to open in Japan next year.

Courtesy of SGI Office of Public Information

PRAYER AND ACTION FOR PEACE

A Message

FROM MATILDA

By MATILDA BUCK
SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER



- A woman is carried, first by one and then by two co-workers, down more than 60 floors to escape the World Trade Center.
- A wife, buoyed by her family, searches for her missing husband.
- A firefighter, risking his life to save others, is himself pulled alive from the rubble of the World Trade Center.
- Twelve Malaysian-born New Yorkers band together to provide volunteer support at relief centers throughout the city.

There are thousands of such stories from last week's events. The ones I have listed here all concern SGI-USA members, and I am deeply inspired and humbled by them, by their demonstrations of heroism and humanity.

Along with everyone else, I watched with stunned horror as the events of Sept. 11 unfolded. I am still processing my reactions, still making realizations. I believe that the events of that day and the days that follow will lead to profound changes in our lives and our world. More significantly, I also believe that it is up to us—that we must choose—whether those changes will strengthen or defeat us.

SGI 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). This is precisely what we have been doing for the last few decades through the activities of the SGI-USA. And this is precisely the foundation that we can—must—continue to build on in the future. In this realization, I take a defiant pride.

In the aftermath of last week's tragedy, people in every corner of the nation feel a bond, a kinship. We see American

flags everywhere, people standing in long lines to donate blood, fundraising efforts, candlelight vigils where strangers embrace one another. In an editorial in the Sept. 16 *Los Angeles Times*, author Richard Rodriguez writes that all week long, people "seemed to feel closest when they were acting kindly to one another."

Will this last? Again, I believe it's our choice. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism has always stressed the interdependent nature of prayer and action. True progress occurs only when both ingredients are present. What kind of prayer we make will be reflected in our action.

So, how do we pray? I want to tell you a story that is nothing like the stories coming out of New York City but is no less humanistic. I was recently in Japan with Yumiko Hachiya, SGI vice women's leader, when she lost her wallet. She sent us on to dinner while she went back in search of her wallet. When she caught up with us, her face was radiant. "She's found her wallet—how amazing!" I said.

Her smile broadened: "No, I didn't find my wallet." When I asked her why she was not upset, but in fact happy, she responded: "I have been praying that your visit here would be completely successful and without mishap or accident. Because I prayed so strongly, I know that this is some kind of protection—a lessening of karmic effect. I feel so much appreciation!"

I was bowled over. All I could think was, "That's the kind of faith I want; that's the way I want to pray every day." To pray with such focus, such clarity, such conviction; to face each day with appreciation, under-

standing that whatever happens will have the best possible outcome because we work to make it so.

Before that, I sometimes reacted to obstacles either with a sense of frustration—"Hey, I've been chanting about this situation, and it's getting worse!"—or worthlessness—"It's my fault; I didn't chant enough." After watching Mrs. Hachiya, I realized I was being judgmental, which is a waste of time. I realized that my practice involves a relationship of trust and collaboration with the Gohonzon.

"Prayer is not a feeble consolation; it is a powerful, unyielding conviction," writes President Ikeda. "And prayer must become manifest in action. To put it another way, if our prayers are in earnest, they will definitely give rise to action. Prayer becomes manifest in action, and action has to be backed up by prayer. Only then can we elicit a response from the Buddhist gods and all Buddhas" (*Learning From the Goshu*, pp. 92–93).

Right now, many are fearful of war. But we can pray in the most proactive way about this. In his thesis "The Selection of the Time," the Daishonin writes, "Great struggles and disputes such as have never been known in the past will break out in the Jambudvīpa" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 542).

President Ikeda concludes that this passage refers to World War II: "Whatever happens, we cannot permit another world war to occur. Let us pray to the Gohonzon with strong determination to prevent such a thing at all costs, pledging to dedicate our lives ungrudgingly to the cause of propagating the Law. Let us definitely achieve kosen-rufu—the dream of lasting peace and happiness for all humanity!" (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 1, p. 166).

More than ever, this is a time of prayer, and action based on that prayer. This is a time to understand that we are peace activists in the truest sense—Peace that begins with each of us, and that helps us find our own stories of heroism. Let us not be intimidated or fearful. Let us pray wholeheartedly for exactly what we want—peace. **WT**

Media Coverage Embraces Buddhist Pacifism

By DAVE McNEILL
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.

One good that is beginning to come out of the recent great evil is that more people are hearing about Buddhism's wise, powerful and peaceful message through various media. Seeking a different viewpoint, more than a dozen TV, radio and print outlets have interviewed SGI-USA representatives about Buddhist pacifism.

"At a time when many are groping for meaning, asking where we go now, we have been part of the national dialogue," says Bill Aiken of the SGI-USA's Office of Public Affairs, who's been interviewed by three newspapers so far, including the *Washington Post*.

Several interviews have also aired to date on both national and regional radio. Greg Martin, a spokesperson for SGI President Ikeda's latest book, *For the Sake of Peace*, has shared President Ikeda's message of dialogue, self-restraint and inner reform-

mation as the keys to lasting peace on radio stations from Florida to California.

Even the death of David Aoyama, an SGI-USA staff member, has resulted in powerful messages of peace and the power of Buddhist faith. Several local media outlets in Los Angeles covered his memorial, which some 1,600 people attended. The sorrowful but hopeful and determined faces and words of his two children, Emily and George, were covered by the local CBS affiliate, causing the anchor woman to remark after the segment, "Those children are so positive."

Matilda Buck, SGI-USA's women's leader, spoke about Mr. Aoyama's life on National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition*. She said how day and night he worked for peace, and because of his dedication to kosen-rufu for so much of his life, there is a profound significance in the manner of his death.

More broadcast and print coverage is scheduled in the coming weeks. **WT**

PEACE STUDIES

Suggested Readings on Peace and Buddhism

For the Sake of Peace: Seven Paths to Global Harmony, A Buddhist Perspective
Daisaku Ikeda (Middleway Press, 2001)

Abolishing War Elise Boulding and Randall Forsberg (Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, 1998)

Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions Edited by Daniel L. Smith-Christopher (Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, 1998)

Choose Peace Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda (Pluto Press, 1995)

A Lifelong Quest for Peace Linus Pauling and Daisaku Ikeda (Jones and Bartlett, 1992)

Choose Life Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda (Oxford, 1989)

The SGI-USA Web site (www.sgi-usa.org) and the Victory Over Violence Web site (www.vov.com) also contain much valuable information on peace related issues.

New York Unites To Support Relief Efforts

Photo by MICHAEL ANTON

By SEAN AND YUKO GROVER
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

What can I do to help?" This is the question that continues to echo throughout New York City. Everywhere you look, ordinary people are flooding the streets to volunteer and offer assistance. The destruction and loss of life caused by the World Trade Center tragedy has caused the bodhisattva spirit to emerge in its citizens. As SGI-USA Men's Leader Tariq Hasan commented: "Amidst all this hell, you can truly see what kosen-rufu is like. The feeling generated in the city since the attack represents the true beauty of humanity."

Immediately following the heartbreaking news of the World Trade Center collapse, youth division members gathered at the New York Culture Center and began organizing relief efforts, designating the center a drop-off point for canned food, fruit, water and clothing for rescue workers. The youth donated 2,000 T-shirts from the Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival.

Northeastern Zone Young Men's Leader Ken Nakagawa noted: "The theme from the festival, 'Heroes of Life, Champions of Humanity,' is written on each T-shirt. It's amazingly fitting to think rescue workers are now wearing them. They truly are heroes."

Throughout the week, members delivered sandwiches, participated in blood drives, performed volunteer work at relief centers and provided medical attention to rescue workers and victims. Two members from New Jersey who are firefighters continue to work daily at "ground zero," where the buildings collapsed. And an American Red Cross Booth has been set up in the lobby of the culture center to collect donations.

At the city's major relief center, SGI-USA youth labored all week, from morning until night, delivering supplies and providing support. Kazu Toda, a region young men's leader who volunteered, reports: "I really felt people's positive energy. It was a total unified effort. Every single person displayed [his or her] Buddha nature."

Memorial gongyo for the victims of the attack was held at the New York Culture Center every evening beginning Sept. 11, set to continue through the

following week. Hundreds of members have been gathering at the center to chant, talk and receive encouragement. After their sincere prayers, members have also been invited to share their feelings at open-mike sessions.

"We want to provide a forum for people to relieve their suffering and anguish by talking and connecting with human beings rather than just watching television," noted Mr. Hasan. "By expressing their feelings with fellow members, they can refresh their determination to move forward and use this great evil to awaken to their mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth."

Additionally, the youth initiated weekly 10-hour daimoku sessions to support the rescue efforts and energize members' efforts for peace. Many members witnessed the attack, and more than 40 members escaped from the World Trade Center towers before they collapsed. All are struggling to overcome the horror they experienced. Many downtown members are not able to return to their homes due to the devastation of the area. For all members, the culture center remains a place to chant, heal, connect with friends and receive constant encouragement.

Youth division member Blane Charles, who witnessed the attack firsthand, noted, "I stopped everything I was doing, dried my tears and headed straight to the culture center to support." Misa Crystal, New Jersey Region young women's leader, spoke for many members when she said: "When I first found out about the attack, I was very shocked. But the more I chanted daimoku, the more I was able to turn the feeling into determination."

On Sept. 14, New York members came together for a candlelight vigil in front of the culture center, followed by gongyo, daimoku and dialogue. Heartfelt messages from various SGI or-



Hundreds of SGI-USA members and their friends gather at the New York Culture Center for a candlelight vigil, Sept. 14.

ganizations around the world were shared. A fellow member from Afghanistan was introduced to illustrate the importance of not blaming a particular culture for the evils of the world. He related that reaching out to embrace different people and cultures is what the SGI movement is all about.

"I think our resolve as Buddhists is going to be continually tested over the coming days, weeks and months," noted men's division member Bob Taliaferro. "In this crucial moment of deep and compelling crisis, let's all chant, study and seek encouragement and support from one another. Let's develop the kind of understanding—and take the kind of actions through our thoughts, words and deeds—that will qualify us as true followers of Nichiren Daishonin."

Actions of support and encouragement certainly continue throughout the city. As Mr. Hasan stated a week after the tragedy: "I feel New York is a city of great resiliency, and its occupants have shown that. They're fighting back with great spunk. The members are also visiting and encouraging each other, and are determined to stand up courageously for the sake of peace, even though their viewpoint may be in the minor-

ity. The members are not thinking revenge—they are thinking peace. I believe this point is

very important for the rest of the country and the rest of the world to understand." **WT**

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Full Text of Message to Bush

The Sept. 21 World Tribune quoted a message from SGI President Ikeda to U.S. President George W. Bush. That was a tentative translation. Here now is the full text of that letter. We apologize for any confusion. — World Tribune staff

Tokyo, September 12, 2001

The Honorable
George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C., 20500
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the twelve million members of the Soka Gakkai International around the world, I offer my deepest sympathies for and condolences to the victims of the unconscionable tragedies that struck New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on September 11. Our

thoughts and prayers go out to you, the victims, their family and friends, and to all the people of the United States in this time of national mourning and anguish.

It is my firm belief that, even as you face tragedy of this magnitude, the noble spirit of freedom cherished by your great nation remains undiminished and eternal. I am sincerely praying that the people of America, under your capable leadership, will be able to overcome these extraordinary hardships with all possible speed.

With my profound sympathies,

Daisaku Ikeda

FROM 'FOR THE SAKE OF PEACE'

Fostering Peace Through Dialogue



'We must not allow ourselves to fall captive to perceived differences,' writes SGI President Ikeda. 'We must be the masters of language and ensure that it always serves the interests of humanity.'

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 on-line bookseller, or at www.middlewaypress.org.

Our efforts for the sake of dialogue, in order to be worthy of the term dialogue, must be carried through to the end. To refuse peaceful exchange and choose force is to compromise and give in to human weakness; it is to admit the defeat of the human spirit. Socrates encourages his youthful disciples to train and strengthen themselves spiritually, to maintain hope and self-control, to ad-

vance courageously, choosing virtue over material wealth, truth over fame (p. 42).

◆ ◆ ◆

Nichiren's faith in the power of language was absolute. If more people were to pursue dialogue in an equally unrelenting manner, the inevitable conflicts of human life would surely find easier resolution. Prejudice would yield to empathy, and war would give way to peace. Genuine dialogue results in the transformation of opposing viewpoints, changing them from wedges that drive people apart into bridges that link them together.

The human qualities necessary to put this principle into

practice go beyond mere diplomacy; the task requires an elevated state of life. What the Lotus Sutra describes as a Bodhisattva of the Earth is a person committed to the work of restoring a sense of cosmology to contemporary society. In concrete terms, this means being a master of the art of dialogue and a standard-bearer of soft power (pp. 57–58).

◆ ◆ ◆

We must not allow ourselves to fall captive to perceived differences. We must be the masters of language and ensure that it always serves the interests of humanity. If we force ourselves to review the nightmares of the twentieth century—the purges, the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing—we will find that all of them have sprung from an environment in which language is manipulated to focus people's minds solely on their differences. By convincing people that these differences are absolute and immutable, the humanity of others is obscured and violence against them legitimized (p. 116). **WT**

How Does Buddhism View Terrorism?

By JEFF KRIGER

SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

Q What is the perspective of Buddhism on terrorism or man-made tragedies such as we all witnessed on Sept. 11?

A Most everyone experienced deep shock, outrage and sadness upon witnessing this wanton destruction of human life. As Buddhists, and human beings, we cannot avoid sharing the grief and anguish of all Americans and people throughout the world at this tragic loss of life.

Buddhism has the highest regard for life itself. The supreme Law of the universe is innate and intrinsic to human life, and to destroy such life is a profound affront to this Law. This is why, since its inception, Buddhism has strictly prohibited the taking of life. This prohibition is intended not only to protect potential victims of violence but also potential perpetrators from sowing the seeds of their own enduring misery. The Buddhist Law of causality makes clear that to harm another is to

harm oneself.

Shakyamuni Buddha was no stranger to the horrors of terrorism. Not only was he personally targeted for death by the jealous Devadatta and others, his entire clan, the Shakyas of the city of Kapilavastu, became victims of genocide at the hands of a neighboring kingdom.

The Buddha struggled tenaciously and bravely to prevent violence, trying repeatedly to dissuade rulers from waging war on neighboring kingdoms.

Shakyamuni attributed the cause of violence to an invisible "arrow of division" piercing people's hearts.

That is to say, when we view others as separate and apart from ourselves, as different or lesser, we become susceptible to committing violence against them. At the same time, we wound our own hearts. Buddhism expounds the law of dependent origination, that all things and beings are mutually linked, intrinsically interdependent. It also expounds the principle of nonsubstantiality, that nothing has substance in and of itself, or is isolated from its sur-

roundings. Our true substance and identity exist only among the connective threads that tie us to all people.

From this perspective, any act of violence or malicious discrimination toward another is an act of violence against oneself. Any terrorist is his own ultimate victim, if not immediately, then certainly in the long term.

Recently, the United States was subject to an attack of unprecedented viciousness. Because of our connection to the deceased and injured, or to their grieving loved ones and friends, we all hurt. However, it is not merely our bond as fellow Americans that connects us—certainly, not all the victims were American citizens. It is our shared humanity.

If we allow this horrendous act, however reprehensible, to drive an "arrow of division" into our own hearts, then we become true victims of terrorism. This arrow may already have toppled some. Insinuations that we should mount a "war on Islam," calls for the use of nuclear weapons, for war waged with disregard for the lives of

civilians, and for intensified "racial profiling" may well be symptoms of this wound. Criminal acts against innocent individuals are a clear malignant outgrowth of a spirit damaged by this arrow of division. They arise from the same source as the acts of the terrorist, or any grave injustice.

Buddhism is a pacifist faith, but does not advocate passiveness. Perpetrators of terrorism should be carefully identified and held accountable for their actions. Furthermore, the wisest course of action must be pursued to prevent a repetition of such horror. On a more essential level, however, we need to tenaciously challenge and change the kind of hatred and distorted thinking that led to this tragedy.

In his book *For the Sake of Peace*, SGI President Ikeda writes: "The real seeds of peace lie not only 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 gradual-

ist—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).

Many held Shakyamuni deeply in awe because he was successful in subduing, pacifying and converting through dialogue the vicious murderer Angulimala, who wore a necklace of fingers taken from his nearly 1,000 victims.

We may not be successful in "converting" all of the most vengeful and brutal people on the planet to a humane perspective. We can, however, work to forge strong solidarity among all people who value life based on our shared humanity. This solidarity, which transcends differences in race, culture or religion, can serve as a

PLEASE SEE Q-AND-A, 11

SGI-USA Holds Memorials Across America

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Thousands of SGI-USA members and their friends and families gathered at community centers throughout the United States, Sept. 12–16, participating in memorial services for those lost in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

On Sept. 15, nearly 2,000 people gathered at the SGI-USA Los Angeles Friendship Center to celebrate the life of David Seima Aoyama, who died when American Airlines Flight No. 11 crashed into the World Trade Center in New York. Messages of condolence poured in for the ceremony, including from both the men's and women's divisions of the Soka Gakkai in Japan.

In his own message to the memorial, SGI President Ikeda lauded Mr. Aoyama as "a young leader whom I trusted with my heart. As my disciple, as an SGI-USA staff member and as a genuine human being, David continued to work for American kosen-rufu, battling injustices and serving his fellow members."

A powerfully moving eulogy was read by Mr. Aoyama's two children, Emily, 19, and George, 17. They expressed their deep appreciation for their father's care and dedication, and, despite their grief, determined to continue striving to exceed his expectations. "When you return, Dad," added Emily, "let's create even more happy memories together."

In his remarks, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima touched on the healing power of the SGI family. "This week, millions of Buddhists around the world are sharing in our prayers for David and all those affected by this

loss," he said. "And while we must insure that those who committed this horrible act are brought to justice, we must also fulfill our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth to embrace all people and uphold the dignity of life. I know David would want us to continue our efforts to rid society of divisiveness based on race, religion or anything else."

In Denver on Sept. 12, more than 500 people gathered for a memorial service at the Denver Culture Center. Among those assembled, a deep commitment to continue the SGI's work for peace was

'We must fulfill our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth to embrace all people and uphold the dignity of life.'
—SGI-USA General Director **Danny Nagashima**

shared. Commenting on tendency of people to resort to violence to solve their problems, Deanna

Grief, 13, said: "I do not want to live in a world of prejudice and bloodshed! I would much rather work for kosen-rufu and live in a world where we love and respect others."

Young people gathered at the San Francisco Culture Center for prayer and dialogue on the causes of and solutions to violence, Sept. 16. After intense discussion, the groups shared their conclusions. "The important thing is how to use our practice of Buddhism and to share it with people in our environment," reported one group. "We have to be strong enough to explain to people that even though this terrible thing occurred, through Buddhism we can create a greater future."

A memorial for Mr. Aoyama was also held in Chicago, where he practiced in the 1980s. Many members shared memories of their deep friendship with him and expressed their determination to dedicate themselves to their SGI activities even more in his memory.

Almeda Bailey shared reminiscences of how when she and Mr. Aoyama were leaders together, "we would fight like brother and sister," sometimes bickering but always with the same goal in mind. With raw grief and welling conviction, she concluded: "Violence is not the key! In David's name, I will dedicate my life to fighting against war!"

—Leisa Mills, *Dan Defensor and Ron Baird contributed to this article.*



Nearly 2,000 SGI-USA members and their friends gather for a memorial ceremony, held Sept. 15 at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, in the wake of recent terrorist attacks.



An overflow crowd attends the Los Angeles Friendship Center memorial.

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FROM Q-AND-A, 10

fortress against future violence, terror and war. Fostering division, on the other hand, plants the seeds for future bloodshed.

Terrorism aims to create fear and hopelessness. The purpose of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is to awaken in us profound hope and courage. To pray to do this ourselves, and to reach out to others and help them do the same, is our most basic course of action as Buddhists. **WT**

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'JEWELLED SWORD'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 45-48

'Shin'ichi Yamamoto knew that the corruption that had taken root in the hearts of the priests had not been severed. To prevent the priesthood from becoming the "one evil" that destroys Buddhism, he began to battle the demonic nature of authority that had clothed itself in priests' robes.'

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was always strict with priests who had fallen off the correct path. He gave no quarter to priests who had become spoiled and decadent. Sometimes he actually shouted at them. As a result, whenever he went to the head temple, priests with a guilty conscience would sneak away. But once he left, they would get together again and bad-mouth him over drinks: "He's only a follower, but he's constantly nagging us...."

Unable to put up with the abusive comments of the priests any longer, Soka Gakkai members working at the head temple would go to their leaders in tears and tell them what was going on.

President Toda fought against this evil trend among the priests because he wanted to protect Nichiren Shoshu. That is why he put tremendous effort into reconstructing the struggling head temple, which had lost many of its agricultural holdings in the post-war land reform of 1946. In addition, he led donation campaigns to secure a financial base for the temple, enabling it to repair its five-storied

pagoda and to construct many new buildings, including the Hoanden and the Grand Lecture Hall. He also spearheaded efforts to build Nichiren Shoshu temples all over Japan.

He did all of this because he wanted the priesthood, as guardian of the Dai-Gohonzon and inheritor of the noble spirit of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin, to awaken to their original mission. He hoped that they would strive to create harmonious relations with the Soka Gakkai in order to carry out the sacred task of kosen-rufu. Toda's main objective in working for the revival of the priesthood was a revival of its faith. That is why he so firmly and strictly rebuked "this one evil" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 15) of corruption among priests who were only too ready to defame the Buddhist Law for their personal interests. He acted in complete accord with the Goshu passage "If one befriends another person but lacks the mercy to correct him, he is in fact his enemy" (WND, 286).

This is the way of religious reformation that will lead to the



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

worldwide spread of the Daishonin's teachings. It is for this reason that on his deathbed, President Toda said to his disciple Shin'ichi Yamamoto: "Fight adamantly against any corruption that takes root within the priesthood. Do you hear me, Shin'ichi? You must never retreat a single step. Never slacken in your resolve against such evil!" It was one of his final instructions.

Having been imprisoned for his beliefs, and fully aware of the school's history, President Toda knew that these priests who draped themselves in the robes of authority but lacked any desire to develop themselves would become in a sense "possessed by demons" and cause the destruction of the kosen-rufu movement. However, he was firmly determined not to let this happen; he was utterly devoted to protecting the Daishonin's teachings.

In the car on his way to the Fuji Community Center, Shin'ichi decided that if he were going to act in accord with the spirit of his mentor, he absolutely could not ignore the corruption of the priests and their abuse of the Soka Gakkai. But he also knew that if he pursued the issue relentlessly, he would be inviting a hostile re-

action from many of the priests. Still, it was clear that if he overlooked the present situation, the corruption in the priesthood would continue and the problem would only be aggravated.

Shin'ichi was profoundly aware that he was the only one who could remonstrate with Nichiren Shoshu. He believed, too, that sensible priests would listen to his sincere protest and understand his intent. "I must fight," he thought, "for kosen-rufu, for the members and to protect the priesthood." He was firmly resolved. From the car window he could see Mt. Fuji rising majestically above the clouds in the sky.

When Shin'ichi arrived at the Fuji Community Center, he received a phone call from the priesthood official with whom he had spoken earlier. The official said that the priests whose behavior was in question would be individually censured, and he hoped things could be settled amicably.

Shin'ichi said: "I want to know what you think about the situation! We've heard you say this sort of thing time and again, but the same problem keeps arising! The priests and the Hokkeko have been attacking the Soka Gakkai, which has been practicing Buddhism just as the Daishonin instructed and working

hard to spread his teachings. They have discriminated against Soka Gakkai members and bullied them. We in the Soka Gakkai have done nothing to deserve this treatment.

"I want Nichiren Shoshu to understand this and take a clear stand. I want you to stop trying to evade the problem. That will only be the cause for more trouble later. I am not satisfied with your response thus far." Before long, the priest replied: "I understand. We'll discuss it," and hung up the phone.

Shortly after 3:00 that afternoon, Shin'ichi attended the inauguration ceremony for Shizuoka Headquarters. Not long after the ceremony was over, the priest Shin'ichi had been talking to arrived at the Fuji Community Center. Shin'ichi reiterated his complaint, citing concrete examples of unacceptable behavior on the part of priests, of abuse hurled at the Soka Gakkai and of problems with the Hokkeko. He explained clearly and in no uncertain terms just how Soka Gakkai members had suffered and been abused.

The priest, however, acted as though it didn't concern him, simply repeating, "That's really unfortunate." Finally he said, "Mr. Yamamoto, please don't be so hard on me." He showed no sign of regret.



Keeping his anger in check, Shin'ichi strongly argued that unless Nichiren Shoshu fought against the corruption within, it would eventually be destroyed by it. "Next spring the Grand Reception Hall will at last be completed and three million members will visit the head temple in celebration," he said. "Soka Gakkai members are exerting themselves wholeheartedly in the spirit that the time has come for priests and laity to work together in harmony toward the realization of kosen-rufu.

"There is evidence, however, that some priests are harshly criticizing the Soka Gakkai and inciting Hokkeko members to do the same. In addition, there are priests who continue to act licentiously, becoming the objects of ridicule. Their shameful and decadent behavior deceives pure-hearted believers. It is also a betrayal of Nikko Shonin's injunction, 'My disciples should conduct themselves as holy priests.'

"If Nichiren Shoshu has anything it wants to say about the Soka Gakkai — whether it be opinions, wishes or complaints — I would like you to tell me directly. The fact is, however, there are priests who vilify the Soka Gakkai in secret and pick on our members, without conveying a word to me. This is simply despicable.

"Soka Gakkai members have been verbally abused and even ostracized by society at large, yet they have continued to do their best to introduce others to the Daishonin's teachings and to work hard for the prosperity of Nichiren Shoshu. The Daishonin would embrace these members, these noble children of the Buddha, for their sincere efforts. But the words and actions of certain priests, who call themselves disciples of the Buddha, are like a kick in the face.

"This is unacceptable. If the

school administration says it can do nothing about this, you can be certain that I will!"

The priest hurriedly replied: "No — we will definitely take action. I will confer with the high priest and we will make sure such things never happen again."

"I can really believe you this time?" Shin'ichi asked, looking intently at the priest.

"Yes."

"All right. I'll leave the details up to you. But I expect the administration to really take responsibility this time and not try to gloss over the problem."

Shin'ichi escorted the priest to the entrance of the community center, thinking to himself, "The members don't deserve this kind of treatment...."

The high priest issued the directives to Nichiren Shoshu priests and Hokkeko members a week later, on July 15 (see the Aug. 24 *World Tribune*).

After the high priest's directive appeared in the July 25 issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper, the head of the Nichiren Shoshu General Affairs Office published his comments in the *Seikyo Shimbun* as well. He said: "As the directive states, it is due to the great power of the Gohonzon and the enthusiastic efforts of sincere Soka Gakkai members to share the Daishonin's teachings with others that Nichiren Shoshu has become an international religion.

"In accord with the high priest's wishes, the school administration is determined to proceed in unity with the laity. As the completion of the Grand



Reception Hall approaches, we vow to uphold the high priest's directive, as well as the instructions of the former high priest, and to work together with the Soka Gakkai."

The president of the National Hokkeko Federation also published his remarks in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, stating: "Every member of the Hokkeko, without exception, accepts and is prepared to carry out the high priest's directive. We are determined to respond to the high priest's deep consideration by overcoming any obstacle that stands in the way of kosen-rufu, and to dedicate ourselves to practice for oneself and others, following the Soka Gakkai's lead."

He concluded by expressing his hope that, under the compassionate leadership of President Yamamoto, whom he referred to as a senior lay Hokkeko representative and a "great and unparalleled leader," "each member of the Hokkeko would advance with strong faith toward victory in the struggle to achieve kosen-rufu and create a Buddha land."

With the announcement of the directives, Rengeji temple in Osaka and Daijōji temple in Kochi, which had consistently harassed Soka Gakkai members, eventually seceded from Nichiren Shoshu. Criticism of the Soka Gakkai by some priests and Hokkeko members abated for a time, and there were fewer incidents of Taisekiji priests seen drinking and partying in Fujinomiya. But essentially nothing had changed. Behind closed doors, verbal attacks on the Soka Gakkai continued, and the priests' profligate behavior just took place in less conspicuous locations. In later years, when Nikken Abe, who would prove himself to be the epitome of self-interest and hunger for power, assumed the

school's top ranking position of high priest and chief administrator, Nichiren Shoshu would be completely reduced to a den of iniquity and degradation of the Daishonin's teachings.

Shin'ichi was relieved that at least the high priest had published these directives, but at the same time he knew that the corruption that had taken root in the hearts of the priests had not been severed. A look at his history revealed that devilish functions would enter the priesthood, the very core of kosen-rufu, in order to halt the advance of that movement. To prevent the priesthood from becoming the "one evil" (WND, 15) that destroys Buddhism, Shin'ichi had picked up the jeweled sword of faith and begun to battle the demonic nature of authority that had clothed itself in priests' robes.

(This concludes "Jeweled Sword," Chapter 2 of Volume 8 of *The New Human Revolution*.)

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



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THIS BEAUTIFUL EARTH: PHOTO ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

Blue Skies Over Cuba

Rising columns of massive clouds — stately as an armada of tall ships with white sails — floated in the blue skies. In the distance lay the Caribbean Ocean, and the sweeping panorama of Havana spread out 460 feet below.

After presenting a wreath at the statue of José Martí, I took an elevator to the observation deck atop the José Martí Memorial, built in honor of this hero of Cuban independence. From there, I could see the whole city.

The Cuban Minister of Culture, Armando Hart Dávalos, encouraged me with a smile to take as many pictures as I wished. In his words I sensed Cuba's new confidence.

It was unthinkable in the past for a visitor to photograph the area surrounding the Memorial, the heart of the Cuban government where the ministries of Defense, Internal Affairs, and Communication as well as Communist Party Headquarters are located. The Memorial stood majestically in the Revolution Square, at the center of Havana.

June 25, 1996. The Caribbean sun was hot, full of energy. When I presented a wreath, the sun's glaring rays reflected off the marble statue scattered in the Square. The José Martí Memorial Hall, just built in the beginning of that year, is located underground, beneath the tower. Inside we viewed various items and works of José Martí. One hundred years passed since his death.

He continued to live, however, in the hearts of the people. It was as he once wrote: "Death is a lie when one has worked well in life. The thinking skull turns to dust, but its thoughts live forever and bear fruit" (Carlos Ripoll, *José Martí: Doctrines, Maxims and Aphorisms*; a bilingual anthology with a concordance, p. 94). Cuban President Fidel Castro told the Cuban people that if it took 100 years to win their struggle, he would fight with them for 100 years. In fact, he said, they had already been fighting for 100 years!

José Martí said: "My future is like the light of white charcoal that burns within me to illuminate my surroundings. I feel that my struggles will never cease" (*José Martí: Obras Completas*, vol. 20, p. 459; translated from Spanish). He fought and died for Cuban independence from Spain and to win freedom and equality from the giant to the north, the United States.

"There are men who do not tire, when their people tire; and they decide to fight before the people do..." (*José Martí: Obras Completas*, vol. 18, p. 305).

José Martí remained true to his own words.

Just as José Martí did, Cuba has continued its struggle. Around the time of my visit, the country seemed



to be facing difficulties more than ever. The U.S. economic embargo on Cuba had been in place for decades since the Revolution of 1959. Meanwhile, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba's important ally, the economy had plunged deep into recession. To make matters worse, "Cuba bashing" had renewed its strength, and rather one-sided anti-Castro propaganda intensified.

This is precisely why I decided to travel to Cuba.

From the observatory of the José Martí Memorial, I could see the red brick roofs of the Palacio de la Revolución, Palace of the Revolution, below. That night, I talked with President Castro there. Standing 6 feet 2 inches tall, his stature is manly, but his air unassuming. His friendliness seemed to make it easy for people to call out to him as a fellow countryman.

The once young revolutionary was nearing 70. I noticed the gray streaking his trademark beard.

"You have really struggled and endured," I said, deeply moved by his presence. This began our dialogue, our unhurried discussion of the future. Despite his age, he is a man who never shows fatigue. He firmly believes that having once stood up for his revolutionary cause, were he to complain even the slightest, he would be going against all that he had fought for.

In speaking with him, I conveyed my respect for his efforts while being straightforward in asking him about his successors, global arms reduction, prominent Americans who support his cause, increasing cultural exchanges between Cuba and Japan, and many other topics.

I am a Buddhist, and as a practitioner of Buddhism, I have no anti-U.S. or anti-Cuban sentiments in my heart. My sole concern is that the people living in these countries become happy. As long as we share the fundamental goal of peace, then I firmly believe that we should seek possibilities for humanitarian solidarity with any nation.

Being frank with the president, I said: "Politics are no more than a technique to help people become happy; socialism, too, is merely a means to the same end. These things are comparable to a runway. After a plane has lifted off the runway, it may encounter turbulence. While facing this tumultuous reality, the plane must be capable of carrying its passengers, the people, to their destination. What is necessary during such times of turbulence is the wisdom to fill the gap between harsh reality and the ideals, or destination, one is aiming for."

Our dialogue was at times intense and at times amiable, but it was a dialogue enveloped in friendship from beginning to end. I was deeply impressed with his warm hospitality.

From the observatory of the Memorial, I caught a glimpse of the green of trees beyond the rooftops of the Palace of the Revolution. Further beyond lay state-owned land farmed by residents, among whom economic competition was encouraged. I could see how this country was steadily transforming.

Cuba was facing a multitude of challenges. While trying to improve the economy, how should the country continue to pursue the humane ideals of the revolution, to live and struggle alongside the most impoverished people? How would they build a society rich with both material and spiritual wealth, without being poisoned by the worship of money and wealth overtaking the world at an alarming pace?

Because of its system of public education, Cuba's literacy rate is nearly 100 percent. Free public health care is available to everyone. The average life expectancy is comparable to that of developed countries. Above all, there is a noble sense of idealism in this country, of which material wealth is no measure.

There are those who criticize Cuba based solely on what they see of its economy.

Is it too critical of me to say that such people only expose the inadequacy of their view of humanity while remaining blind to Cuba's real character?

A young Martí once said: "One seeks the origin of the evil and goes directly to it, with the force of man capable of dying for man. The egotistical do not know of that light..." (*José Martí: Obras Completas*, vol. 2, p. 377).

This is a country of great pride. The people, knowing that money isn't everything in life, are cheerful and confident.

Their brightness matches that of the blue skies of this tropical country.

July 1999
Twenty-four in a series