



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

Pages 8-11

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DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL

SGI President Calls for Peace

SGI President Ikeda was recently interviewed by *Sankei Shimbun*, one of the largest newspapers in Japan. This issue features a summarized translation of the interview (see page 5). "I am unequivocally opposed to any form of violence or terrorism," President Ikeda declares, "not only that perpetrated in the name of religion. It must never be tolerated."

In response to a question about religious conflict, he responds: "I can say with certainty that it is possible to reach mutual understanding even if our religious beliefs are different. We must re-



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda

main committed to dialogue, no matter what. The foremost challenge for religions in the 21st century must be to realize a wider, more active commitment to dialogue."

100 Young Leaders Emerge in Hawaii

Photo by GEORGE FUJIOKA



One hundred new young men's and young women's district leaders were appointed Aug. 19 at the SGI-USA's Hawaii Culture Center. The appointments are part of a national effort to appoint young leaders in each SGI-USA district and ensure the future of American kosen-rufu.

DISTRICTS, BOOKSTORES PARTNER TO SHARE BUDDHIST MESSAGE

By DAVE McNEILL
MIDDLEWAY PRESS

SGI-USA districts in several cities have started to discover just how powerful a tool Middleway Press books can be in helping spread the peaceful and empowering message of Buddhism in their communities.

Walt Whitman District in Camden, N.J., is just one of several districts that have had or are planning activities at neighborhood bookstores centering on Middleway Press books. Readings from and discussions about *For the Sake of Peace* and *The Buddha in Your Mirror* will highlight their introductory meet-

ing at La Unique, an independently owned bookstore.

"This adds a whole new dimension to our activities," says Bev Roberts. "Times are moving, changing, evolving, and we can't do things only the way we've always done them. Trying new things, like this event, is important, to reach people in any way we can."

Members in Gaithersburg District in Germantown, Md., found that their discussion on *The Way of Youth* at a local Barnes and Noble attracted guests who might have been intimidated by the idea of a meeting strictly on Buddhism. "It's sometimes easier to bring young people to an open forum in a public

place like a bookstore," says Emily Walch, 13, who was one of the event's moderators. She says that because the event exposed the kids to Buddhism, many have felt comfortable enough to come to regular meetings since then.

These partnerships between districts and local bookstores benefit everyone: SGI-USA members, who have another type of event to enjoy; invited guests and people happening by, who get to hear the Buddhist message of happiness and peace; and the bookstore owners, who can create stronger relationships with their customers and community at large by offering such informative programs.

Each of the four Middleway Press titles—*The Way of Youth*, *For the Sake of Peace*, *The Buddha in Your Mirror* and *Soka Education*—can be the start of a wide variety of events at bookstores coast to coast, which are generally happy to host them. Interested districts can contact local bookstores directly, expressing their interest about holding such book discussions. (For those areas with several districts in the same geographic area, please coordinate well with chapter or area leaders so as to avoid any confusion.) Or, for more information, contact Middleway Press at middlewaypress@sgi-usa.org or 310-260-8900. **WT**

DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL ★ DISTRICT SPECIAL



Violence Is Weakness, Prayer Is Power

Buddhism in a New Light

Soka Spirit Dialogue for the District

By SHIN YATOMI

SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER



It is hard to tell what thoughts were running through the minds of the terrorists as they plunged airplanes into the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon and a field in western Pennsylvania on Sept. 11. Judging from their irrational acts, however, it seems that they surrendered their own power of reason and human decency to a higher power of their imagination — whether it was their political ideal or God. Such perversion of philosophy and religion occurs when people subordinate the sanctity of life to ideology and dogma. As Nichiren Daishonin admonishes, “Life is the foremost of all treasures” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1125).

What we saw on that day was the destructiveness of the human tendency to give up oneself to external authority. This deep-seated human weakness is called authoritarianism, which many people, if not all, share to some degree. As the recent tragedy illustrates, violence is often an outcome of an authoritarian orientation — a willingness to give up our freedom and independence to external authority in exchange for the false, temporary sense of security that may be felt upon our release from the burden of responsibility to seek self-knowledge and shape our own destiny, as Erich Fromm suggests in his *Escape from Freedom*.

Violence

Violence is a deliberate wish for the destruction of life; it is a symptom of the weak, passive self that seeks to validate its existence through dominating and destroying other lives or things of value to others. Violent people are weak, for they cannot find the inner strength to overcome their insecurity of aloneness and, therefore, must destroy others so that they may feel

empowered. Their power, however, is an illusion since it is *over* others, not from *within*. Power derived from subjugating others is merely a fancy because it requires others and is dependent on them. On the other hand, power from within is genuine because it is independent and free. Despite their aggressive appearance, violent people are passive at the core of their existence because violence is essentially an easy escape from an overwhelming sense of inner powerlessness and isolation, from the responsibility and effort required to make personal change. It is easier to hurt someone else than get real about oneself. A person who resorts to violence as an escape from his or her real challenge is not the originator of self-willed action and is passive in his or her mental reality. The sense of power felt by violent people, therefore, is actually a sign of their weakness and passivity.

Moreover, the sense of power derived from destructive acts is short-lived and addictive; it can only be sustained through further destruction. Compelled by their inner powerlessness, violent people con-

tinue to destroy, and when they find nothing more to destroy or find themselves prevented from further acts of destruction, they destroy themselves to escape from themselves, which is the source of their powerlessness. In this sense, violence is not a reaction to external objects per se, but rather a destructive drive arising from inner weakness simply waiting for a convenient outlet.

Self-defense

In order for us to better understand the relationship of violence and authoritarianism, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the ideas of self-defense and sacrifice. *Pure* self-defense is not violence because it is based solely on the affirmation of life, rather than its negation. It has been reported that one of the hijacked airplanes crashed short of its intended target in an unpopulated area of western Pennsylvania, probably because some passengers struggled with the terrorists for control of the airplane. Their action was courageous and noble; it was not violence but self-defense since they were motivated by their desire to protect and preserve life. Quite often, however, so-called self-defense is disguised aggression in which one's real motive for the destruction of life is suppressed consciously or unconsciously by self-deceptive rationalization.

The difference between violence and self-defense lies not merely in the external circumstances, but more significantly in one's true motive. In this regard, Shakyamuni's injunction to “kill the will to kill” reveals the profound Buddhist insight into the nature of violence

(quoted in *My Dear Friends in America*, p. 129). Behind the passionate emotions or seemingly sound rhetoric of self-defense is often hidden the “will to kill.” Violence arises from a will to harm, and self-defense from a will to protect although both employ physical force as a means. So it is necessary to look inward and see one's true motive — whether it is solely to preserve life or to harm life. We become capable of self-defense with the ability of self-reflection, to which one of the greatest obstacles is an authoritarian orientation that looks outside for the motive of our action in order to escape personal responsibility.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is often praised as one of the highest virtues, but we witnessed in the recent tragedy that there are two kinds of sacrifice. One type is motivated by self-denial. Some people make such a sacrifice because in doing so they can lose themselves to an external power and thus become part of what is not *them*. They are motivated by a desire to escape from themselves whom they neither love nor trust. Through making such a sacrifice, however, they lose the freedom and integrity to think and act as individuals. This kind of sacrifice is authoritarian in essence, and it is a sign of one's weakness and inability to freely express him- or herself.

Another type of sacrifice is the complete opposite of self-denial; it is self-expression. Some people courageously choose — instead of being forced by external authority — to sacrifice their physical safety or even their lives as the utmost expression of their spiritual integrity. Their sacrifice is an assertion of individual freedom and will. The line between those two types of sacrifice was drawn clearly in the recent terrorist attacks. While the terrorists were giving up their own power of critical thinking and, with it, their humanity to external authority, it was shown that passengers on the hijacked airplanes and those trapped in the collapsing buildings valiantly faced their final moments in efforts to save others and in their prayers for their loved ones. The ter-

rorists' acts to blow up the huge structures may seem ‘active,’ but in their innermost reality they are most passive and feeble, while the quiet thoughts and prayers of those who passed away in the attacks — despite their appearance of helplessness and passivity in the eyes of the terrorists — were the greatest expressions of their will and love. In their final thoughts and prayers, they were strong and free.

Authoritarianism

As we came face to face with the destructiveness of authoritarianism, what happened on Sept. 11 may serve as an opportunity for us to gain deeper insight into the nature of violence and learn the meaning of freedom from those who made a true sacrifice. As violence stems from the authoritarian character of submission and domination, which is in turn a manifestation of the enfeebled self, any attempt to suppress violence with further violence may only be described as foolishness. How many times must humanity repeat the same mistake of trying to cure violence with more violence? In this regard, the Daishonin warns us, “If you try to treat someone's illness without knowing its cause, you will only make the person sicker than before” (WND, 774). This is the time that we must cure this greatest ailment of human civilization at its root. We must begin to seriously think about ways to em-

PLEASE SEE STUDY, 3

Food for Thought:

- Revenge is an act of violence because its chief motive is to harm, rather than preserve, life, and it is often used merely as an outlet for irrational emotions. What can each of us do to prevent America and the rest of the world from falling deeper into the cycle of violence and revenge?
- Authoritarianism is the abandonment of freedom and integrity to an external authority. Humanism is the encouragement of individual freedom and integrity from within. What can each of us do to make the Daishonin's Buddhism truly humanistic and prevent its potential degeneration into authoritarianism in the future?

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EAST DISTRICT — KANSAS CITY, MO.

Daimoku and Determination Are Keys to Victory

Photo by CHERYL UTLEY



By CHERYL UTLEY
KANSAS CITY BUREAU CHIEF

East District in the Kansas City Area was formed just after SGI President Ikeda's visit to the United States in 1990. It is a unique district, with members whose ethnic backgrounds include five different nationalities: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, American and Panamanian. Because communication is from the heart, language is not a barrier to understanding one another. Korean and Chinese members are encouraged to subscribe to the *World Tribune* in their own respective language, and women's division mini-study meetings are held in both Japanese and English.

East District members travel from short and long distances in Missouri — such as Belton, Independence, Kansas City, Raytown and Sedalia — to attend district meetings and daimoku sessions. A family-friendly atmosphere describes East District meetings. Yoko Starr, vice women's leader, said: "All members take responsibility in the district as a leader. Members want to call each other and help each other out. I believe that East District has a very bright future."

Over the past eight years, the



The members of East District, who hail from all over the world, overcome the barrier of language with heart-to-heart communication.

district has grown tremendously. The basis of their success is the determination, "Daimoku first." Kimiko Smith, vice women's chapter leader, stated that "without daimoku, there is no unity or goals accomplished. East District leaders and members attend daimoku sessions that are held three times a week and plan meetings, make announcements and bring new members and guests. Since April 1999, we

have chanted 81 million daimoku together."

When district goals are made, the members practice diligently together. They aim to be number one in propagation activities, contributions and publication subscriptions. For example, leaders and members have followed SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima's goal to bring two new members to the district.

This year, East District has already accomplished its own goal of four new members. Increasing subscriptions to the *World Tribune* by one person each month is another goal set by the leaders. This year, the district has increased its own subscriptions by 11.

East District is not a perfect district — it has its obstacles and challenges. Because it is a large district, raising capable

leaders is a constant challenge. And even though the district has an active Boys and Girls Group, the toughest age to reach seems to be youth from ages 15–20.

Despite these challenges, the members know they will be victorious because of daimoku and the determination to grow, to raise capable leaders and youth, and to move forward. **WT**

FROM STUDY, 2

power people not only economically and politically, but also spiritually so that we may control human destructiveness. Each one of us must deeply reflect upon our own authoritarian tendency to give up so easily our freedom and power of reason to external authority.

In one sense, the Soka Spirit movement lies in our efforts to understand the nature of authoritarianism; it is a process in which we develop our ability to both self-reflect and think critically about what is happening in our environment. As we have learned from the Nichiren Shoshu

priesthood, even the humanistic teachings of the Daishonin's Buddhism can become authoritarian depending upon its practitioners' understanding and action. This important lesson becomes genuine only when we realize that the absence of priesthood does not necessarily mean the end of authoritarianism, and that each of us is responsible to understand and practice the Daishonin's Buddhism as the humanistic teaching it is intended to be.

Likewise, although the vast majority of religions in the world are founded upon the principles of love and peace, through the recent atrocities

and numerous other tragedies in history, we have been repeatedly made aware how easily some irrational zealots can pervert any religion into authoritarian dogma that enslaves people. More than ever, it is crucial for us to reaffirm our commitment to the humanistic tenets of our beliefs and shun the forces of authoritarianism from within and without.

Prayer

One of the most concrete and powerful ways to oppose violence and authoritarianism is prayer that sincerely affirms the power of life — both within our lives and in the lives of others. The ideas of nonviolence

and humanism can change the way we live only when those ideas are understood not only intellectually but also felt deeply in our hearts' core. As Gandhi eloquently said: "Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being" (*Gandhi on Non-Violence*, Thomas Merton, ed., p. 24). Prayer is our precious tool to discover the dormant dignity of life as the Daishonin states, "One who chants Nam-myoho-rence-kyo enters his or her own palace" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 787).

Prayer is a process in which we transform the abstract idea

of life's dignity into a concrete reality that is felt in the depths of our lives and into our personal conviction that is displayed in how we treat others as well as ourselves.

Whatever faiths we Americans embrace today, our prayers must be united in our love for life and peace. If we are to hate anything, let us hate hatred and violence with a single heart. From such united prayer of true strength and patriotism will emerge a new America that is free of violence. As many people have shown through their courage in the face of the recent tragedy, violence is weakness, and prayer is power. **WT**

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 7 SPEECH—PART 1

BUDDHISM IS FOUND IN SOCIETY

'Buddhism is neither abstract nor a fairy tale,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'It is found and its truth is borne out in society.'

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at a nationwide executive leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Nagano Training Center in Karuizawa, Japan, Aug. 7.

Those who can always resolve "I will make a new departure!" "I will construct something new!" will be victorious in the end. By contrast, those who think "I've done enough already" are leading lives of defeat.

Buddhism is victory or defeat. Life is an eternal struggle. To the end, we should live with strength and vigor. In any realm of activity, reality is very strict. It is the power of Buddhism that enables us to win in any situation. Difficulties are inevitable in life—that is true for everyone. Herein lies a profound reason for our practice. We should always remember this.

The Soka Gakkai exists to widely propagate the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin. In the course of this struggle, there will naturally be times when we are faced with extreme hardship and difficulty. People throughout Japan fiercely attacked the Daishonin. Nevertheless, he dauntlessly took action to open a great, eternal path of hope for all humankind. We are carrying on the Daishonin's great legacy.

The Daishonin said, "A person of wisdom is not one who practices Buddhism apart from worldly affairs but, rather, one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world is governed" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1121). Buddhism does not exist within a vainglorious monastery somewhere. It is neither abstract nor a fairy tale. It is found and its truth is borne out in society.

The Daishonin's Buddhism is focused squarely on human beings. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, steadfastly spread the teaching among the people, who were laboring under extreme



SGI President Ikeda, at the Soka Gakkai Nagano Training Center Aug. 6, admires a monument dedicated to the center's caretakers.

suffering. Buddhism and the advance of the Soka Gakkai exist in dedicating ourselves to others and imparting joy, causing flowers of happiness and victory to blossom, and in unfurling the banner of justice in society.

Advancing kosen-rufu comes down to propagating the teaching. Through such efforts, we are laying the foundation for an age of the people. Those who can actually expand kosen-rufu are genuine leaders. Those who cannot do this lack courage and are self-centered.

It is important to offer words and take actions that abound with compassion.

The mission of a leader is to put everyone's mind at ease. Toward that end, it is very important to offer words and take actions that abound with compassion. This is in contrast to the authoritarian attitude of a person who tries to manipulate people as if they were machines, assuming that they will do whatever he says. The Soka Gakkai is a world of thoroughgoing humanism.

In all activities for kosen-rufu—such as the effort to expand subscriptions to publications—we should always maintain a warm, humanistic spirit, rather than trying to whip up people's motivation with a lot of shouting. Unless we appeal to others with a genuine

sense of camaraderie, with the spirit "We're going to do this together," we will not elicit any strong, warm resonance in people's hearts.

At any rate, as senior leaders you should earnestly pray that everyone in your region enjoy good health and can joyfully accomplish his or her mission. And you should set an example for others through your own actions. A leader who is indolent and who manifests the arrogance of authoritarianism is guilty of negligence [in denouncing evil and practicing good; one of the fourteen slanders].

If a leader attends a meeting and gives guidance but no one at the meeting feels joy or is motivated to take action, then it is not genuine guidance. To make matters worse, if the central figure is curt and unsociable, that makes a mockery of everyone's efforts in having gathered in the first place.

It is important to sincerely, cheerfully thank everyone for their hard work and offer warm, heartfelt encouragement. I ask that you use your ingenuity to effect a "meeting revolution" with the aim of making each activity really interesting and significant for all participants.

The goal of kosen-rufu is a most daring, ambitious undertaking.

Today, to mark your new de-

parture, I want to present you with insightful words from around the world.

Soong Ching Ling, wife of modern China's great leader Sun Yat-sen, was hailed as the conscience of China. Madam Soong said, "We must keep close to our people." The SGI likewise must always stand together with the people, advancing in the unity of many in body, one in mind.

Madam Soong also said: "If we let false rumors and alarms disturb us the revolution will be lost. But we shall stand firm, and the revolution will not be lost."

As leaders, we must not ignore malicious, groundless rumors. Without steadfastly refuting false allegations and those who propound them, we cannot protect the members.

Sun Yat-sen said, "To accomplish a great enterprise, above all one must possess great will, great daring, and great resolve." The goal of kosen-rufu toward which we are striving is a most daring, ambitious undertaking. There is no higher ideal of justice. All of you are leaders of a vast, historic enterprise.

President Toda strictly admonished: "No matter how painful the situation, as a leader you should always be high-spirited and vigorous when you are in front of oth-

ers. This will put your fellow members' minds at ease and win their support. Giving everyone hope and confidence is the role of a leader."

I hope you will be model leaders who exemplify the principles of faith manifesting itself in daily life and faith equaling excellent health. Each day, morning and evening, I strongly, deeply pray for your health and longevity.

I next want to introduce the words of the French literary giant Victor Hugo. In parliament, he issued this impassioned cry: "The people must not suffer! The people must not go hungry! That is the serious problem we face; that is the danger. That alone, gentlemen, and no other!"

Hugo's sole concern was the happiness of the people. He also said: "To be a nation of ideals is to be a nation of justice; to be a people of beauty is to be a people of truth."

True beauty is found in the world of faith. Things like money or academic credentials have absolutely nothing to do with faith. People with beautiful hearts are most respectable. Everyone admires such people, and all the Buddhas and Buddhist gods praise and protect them.

To be continued in an upcoming issue.

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S INTERVIEW

Violence Must Never Be Tolerated

Photos by KIRK CONDYLES

'I am unequivocally opposed to any form of violence or terrorism,' says SGI President Ikeda, 'not only that perpetrated in the name of religion. It must never be tolerated. Terrorism by a religious group is an act of suicide for that religion.'

The Sankei Shimbun, one of the largest newspapers in Japan, recently interviewed SGI President Ikeda on a wide range of topics. Following is a summarized translation of President Ikeda's responses to questions asked by Sankei concerning the recent terrorist attacks in the United States.

Sankei Shimbun: Concurrent terrorist attacks, the worst the world has known, took place against core establishments of the United States. While the facts are not entirely clear, what is your view on the acts of terrorism carried out by Islamic fundamentalists or other religious groups?

President Ikeda: I am deeply grieved by what has happened. I would like to express my deepest condolences to the victims. I am unequivocally opposed to any form of violence or terrorism, not only that perpetrated in the name of religion. It must never be tolerated. Terrorism by a reli-

gious group is an act of suicide for that religion.

Sankei: It cannot be denied that one aspect of religion, which should serve to cultivate one's humanity, drives others to murder one another instead.

President Ikeda: This is a very grave problem. I have friends in the Jewish as well as Islamic communities. I am also making efforts to help resolve problems in the Middle East. The issues are highly complex and convoluted, requiring an examination of every possible approach. One such possibility may be the intervention of the United Na-

tions. Now is the time for the leaders of the world's major powers to take action to end this cycle of hatred and violence. They must strive to create a massive groundswell of public opinion to this end, which will in turn transform both our times and the people who live in it.

Sankei: Is there any way to avoid religious conflict within international society?

President Ikeda: From my experience of having engaged in dialogue with people from around the world, I can say with certainty that it is possible to reach mutual understanding even if our religious beliefs are different. We must remain committed to dialogue, no matter what. The foremost challenge for religions in the 21st century must be to realize a wider, more active commitment to dialogue.

Courtesy of www.sgi.org.

For the latest information on the SGI response to the Sept. 11 tragedy, please visit the SGI-USA Web site: <http://www.sgi-usa.org>.



Family members and friends of the victims of the World Trade Center attack create an impromptu memorial at Union Square in New York City.



This group of New York City firefighters lost their truck and all their tools in the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, Sept. 11. The pickup truck seen here was also in the area of the collapse but still in working order. They bought some tools at a hardware store, placed the American flag on the pickup truck and are seen here returning to Ground Zero to help with the rescue and recovery operation.

Advanced Study Exam Postponed

The SGI-USA Advanced-level Examination scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 21, has been postponed until Jan. 13, 2002.

Responding to feedback from members nationwide since the Sept. 11 tragedies, the SGI-USA Study Department has decided that it is in the best interest of everyone taking the exam and those helping with exam preparations to postpone it. Due to previously scheduled events and activities throughout the country, Jan. 13 was the earliest the exam could be rescheduled.

More than ever, now is a critical time when all of us need to deepen our faith and understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and share it in our daily lives and communities.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

SUA Students Take Action Against Violence

Photo by CINDY YAMANAKA/The Orange County Register

By MARGARET KASAHARA
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

In response to the tragic events that shocked our nation on Sept. 11, the students of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, organized a candlelight vigil just hours after the attacks occurred. The students created flyers and posted them in various gathering places in the surrounding city of Aliso Viejo, Calif.

Along with the SUA students, staff and faculty, many members of the community attended the event, which took place by the peace fountain on the university campus. About 300 people shared their sorrow, anger, confusion, grief and hope with one another. Some expressed their emotions through vocal and instrumental performances, some read poems they had written during the course of the day, others just conveyed their sympathy for the many lives lost. Still others shared their determination to take this tragedy and turn it into something positive, working even harder for a peaceful world where such occurrences will never be repeated.

The students also sent a message of peace and nonviolence to U.S. President George W. Bush, with all 120 of their signatures included. During the course of the week, various local newspapers carried this message in their respective publications. The SUA students, who hail from 18 countries that cover five continents, exemplify a microcosm of the world. I feel the reason that all of our students, including our international population, were affected enough to respond in this way is because this attack was not against the United States alone.

In a message from Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, who is also the first recipient of the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builder's Prize, he stated the "attacks were aimed at one world composed of many nations and not at one nation alone."

Through their quick, humanistic and determined response to the recent events, the SUA students have made it quite clear that as citizens of many nations, they will take on the challenge of creating a peaceful global society. **WT**



Chrys Nuybal and daughter Stephanie Cohen attend a vigil at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, Sept. 11.

S U A A T A G L A N C E

	Calabasas Campus	Aliso Viejo Campus
Academic Program	Graduate School	Liberal Arts College
Dedication date	Feb. 3, 1987	May 3, 2001
Degree offered	Master of Arts (MA)	Bachelor of Arts (BA)
Major	Second and Foreign Language Education	Liberal Arts
Concentration(s)	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	Humanities; International Studies; Social and Behavioral Sciences
Program duration	1 1/2 years	4 years
Fall 2002 admissions deadlines	April 2002	Oct. 1, 2001 (Early) Jan. 15, 2002 (Regular)
Admissions e-mail	grad_admissions@soka.edu	admission@soka.edu
Admissions telephone	818-878-3717	888-600-SOKA (toll free), 949-480-4130
Fax number	818-880-9326	949-480-4151
Web page	www.soka.edu/calabasas	www.soka.edu/homeav.html
Address	26800 West Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, CA 91302	1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656



Q & A WITH SUA

Send in your questions, and we'll share the answers!

Question:

How do I, as a parent, handle questions from others about sending my child to SUA, Aliso Viejo?

Answer:

The best way to handle such questions is to bring people for a personal tour of the campus so that they can understand the level of preparation and commitment that has gone into making the SUA, Aliso Viejo campus so outstanding. Have them meet our faculty and catch the excitement and enthusiasm they have for mentoring students. Have them talk to students about their experience here. SUA will be hosting Family Tour Days on Oct. 20 and Dec. 15 from 9 a.m. to noon—and everyone is welcome to make a reservation (949-480-4150 or admission@soka.edu) and come!

Question:

I can't come to Family

Tour Days because the dates don't work for me. I have family visiting soon. Can I arrange for a tour of SUA?

Answer:

You can bring guests for a personal tour of the Aliso Viejo campus Monday–Friday at either 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. if you make reservations in advance by calling 949-480-4083. You can also make lunch reservations (\$7 each) by emailing Dave Davis at ddavis@soka.edu and letting him know how many people will be attending on which day. Lunch reservations require a minimum of 24 hours notice.

Question:

How should we describe SUA, Aliso Viejo to others?

Answer:

SUA, AV is a private, non-profit international liberal arts college located in Southern California about halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego. It is founded on the Buddhist principles of peace, human

rights and the sanctity of life. It offers:

- 9:1 student/faculty ratio
- Eastern and Western perspectives taught across the nonsectarian curriculum
- Every student studies a foreign language
- Every student does a semester of international internship/study abroad in the junior year
- Open to students of all nationalities and beliefs

See: <http://www.soka.edu> for more information.

Question:

My parents cannot afford to send me to SUA. Does SUA provide financial aid?

Answer:

Meeting the costs of an undergraduate education represents a significant investment for many families. At Soka University we are committed to providing a comprehensive, need-based financial aid program, consisting of student loans and grants that make it possible for admitted students who meet specific requirements and deadlines to attend Soka University. SUA guarantees that we will meet 100 percent of an accepted student's demonstrated need. This need is determined using accepted federal formulas. For more information regarding the financial aid process please contact Maria Spangenberg at 949-480-4138 or atmspangenberg@soka.edu.

Question:

I thought I would apply for Early Admission, but I just can't get all of my recommendations (or other parts of the application) completed by Oct. 1. Do I need to start over for Regular Admission or can I just complete the already started application?

Answer:

No, you do not need to start over. We realize that it takes a lot of effort to get all of these materials to SUA. If you have a "partial file" at SUA after the Early Admission deadline of Oct. 1, 2001, we will keep it open so that you may complete it before the Regular Admission deadline of Jan. 15, 2002. You do not have to start over. SUA's admission process requires the application, an essay, two recommendation letters, transcripts from all schools attended, your SAT/ACT scores (sent in by the testing agency), TOEFL scores if applicable, and an application fee. If you miss the Early Admission period, please don't be discouraged. We will accept the majority of our class during the Regular Admission period and both groups are evaluated exactly the same.

Question:

If I apply for Early Admission and am not accepted, I know that my application will be rolled over to Regu-

lar Admission and reviewed again. Can I make additions or changes to my application at that time?

Answer:

You can make the following additions to your application: (1) You may add new SAT or TOEFL scores taken since the Early Admission deadline; (2) You must send SUA official school grades/transcripts for any coursework taken during the fall. You may not send another essay or submit new letters of recommendation or make other changes except for the test scores and grades.

Question:

Where can I find the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo college code for SAT, ACT and TOEFL?

Answer:

The codes are printed on your application form under Admission Applications Procedures. They are SAT-4066, ACT-0467 and TOEFL-4066.

With the SUA college code, the testing agency can send results directly to SUA.

If you have questions of any kind about SUA, please send them to SUA at either admission@soka.edu or info@soka.edu. We will use this World Tribune column to share our answers with others who might have the same questions.



- SUA has received a temporary occupancy permit for the Recreation Center.
- The fountains are flowing in Peace Lake.
- The game room is open in the Student Center.
- The SUA bookstore is open.

SUA Family Tour Day Saturday Oct. 20

If you have been looking for a chance to see the new SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, you will have an opportunity on Oct. 20. SUA's staff and faculty will be on hand to answer questions and assist with walking tours that will give parents, students, interested friends and neighbors a chance to go inside key buildings.

Here is the schedule:

9:00 a.m. – Noon

Self-guided Walking Tours (SUA provides the map!)

10:30 a.m.

Student and Parent Q-and-A session

SUA Family Tour Day Reservation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Number of other people attending with you? _____

How many prospective students will be in your group? _____

Will anyone in your group need special assistance for the tour? _____

If so, please let us know how we can assist you: _____

Number of lunch reservations, \$7 each (optional) _____

Please return to: Family Tour Day Reservations
Soka University, Aliso Viejo
1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
Fax: (949) 480-4151

MESSAGE FROM SGI-USA MEN'S LEADER TARIQ HASAN

OUR MISSION OF HOPE AND COURAGE

'This is the time for us to discard our transient identities as merely common mortals,' says SGI-USA Men's Leader Tariq Hasan, 'and reveal our true identities as Bodhisattvas of the Earth.'



On behalf of all New York members, I convey my heartfelt appreciation to all the SGI-USA members and SGI members around the world who sent condolences, prayers and words of encouragement during the last few weeks. I cannot overstate how much this constant outpouring of concern has meant to us as we cope with this tragedy. Once again, I feel so proud to be a member of the Soka Family.

I also want to say how proud I am to be living in this city. The people of New York have a tremendous resiliency and

ability to move forward in spite of horrendous circumstances. There has been an incredibly positive change in the midst of this most difficult time—the bonding among people in the city. I am especially proud of our SGI-USA youth, who sprang into action within hours and volunteered to help their community.

Of course, many of us are still recovering from feelings of horror, fear and anger as we try to understand these events from a Buddhist perspective. None of us will ever forget the disaster we witnessed—it was too

horrible to ever forget. One cannot help but be profoundly affected by the enormous number of hopes, dreams and families that have been devastated.

Because of this, some members are in a quandary, stuck between feelings of anger and the need to respond to the attack, and realizing that as Buddhists we advocate peace. This is a great challenge. I believe in the long run it is essential for our own development as disciples of Nichiren Daishonin that we chant, think and study about the Buddhist concept of peace when we are faced with the reality of terror or war.

During a recent meeting in Japan, President Ikeda mentioned once again that the mission of Soka University of America was to raise global citizens. He also said very clearly that without global citizens, we cannot achieve peace. Now, in the context of current events, it is becoming so clear what he meant. Of course, being a global citizen does not preclude us from having pride in our own country. But at the same time, we should learn about the cul-

tures of other countries so that we can understand the hearts of people everywhere.

I was also deeply touched by the profundity of President Ikeda's words in the Sept. 28 *World Tribune*: "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" (p. 1). It is easy to see everyone in a far-away culture as a group of people rather than as individuals and, therefore, assume everyone holds the same views as some extremist faction.

As many of you know, I was born into the Muslim faith in Pakistan. I am also proud to be an American who immigrated here 33 years ago. Because I have this bicultural background, it is natural that when I think about the people in South Asia and their culture, I hear music, I hear a language filled with humor, I recall their hospitality toward strangers. If I had not lived there as a teenager, I would never have been able to understand this

based merely on what is reported in the media.

On the other hand, I can also see how some people in other parts of the world may be unaware of the beautiful human traits that have made the United States, by far, the greatest country of tolerance and diversity in the world. As President Ikeda has been pointing out for so many years, without dialogue between countries and cultures, there can be no lasting peace. I can now clearly see the importance of the mission of SUA in raising global citizens and the need for all SGI-USA members to take on the challenge of becoming global citizens for the sake of peace.

It was perhaps a strange coincidence that this event took place right around the time of 730th anniversary of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, which took place on Sept. 12, 1271. Recently, while in Japan, I visited some of the sites associated with this incident in Kamakura. During this persecution, the Daishonin showed us

PLEASE SEE HASAN, 9

Things We Can Do

EDITORIAL

By GREG MARTIN
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Just imagine how tightly we can weave the fabric of a peaceful nation if each of us extended ourselves toward better knowing the people in our immediate surroundings.

The president of the United States has declared war on terrorism around the globe, and already troops are amassing in various strategic locations. On the surface, this may bring comfort to many in our country. And yet, if armed conflict proceeds, there will be loss of life and the spreading of



misery far and wide—this is the nature of war, no matter how noble its justification may seem. For us who practice Nichiren Daishonin's life-affirming Buddhism, it is understandable if we are worried.

So what can we actually do? While present circumstances can shift dramatically, the basics of Buddhism do not. Therefore, some of the suggestions offered below will not be new ones, yet they warrant a fresh revisiting for their potential to

help us reach our nation with the timeless wisdom of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

• **Chanting daimoku:** It is easy to fall into the trap, when we chant for a big idea like world peace, of hoping that somehow the Gohonzon will "take care of things out there." A more proactive way of looking at it is to chant to become ever-more positive influences in our environment whose presence will bring about a change in the life-condition in those around us. We can chant to "bombard" our lives and our environment continually with positive energy.

• **Encourage our fellow members:** We already have in place this tremendous network for creating peace. And this network can further solidify as we extend our concern to all of our fellow believers, staying on the lookout for anyone who may be suffering. We can do this face to face when possible, and when not, there's always the power of a caring phone call. In fact, what better time is there to ring up those members we've been thinking about but haven't heard from for a while?

• **Reach out to our neighbors:**

After living in my neighborhood for six years, it dawned on me that I hardly knew the people living on my block. So, the weekend after the terrorist attack, I made a point of overcoming my own resistance and went door to door introducing myself, asking how they were doing in light of the current situation, offering to listen if they wanted to talk. While some were apprehensive, especially at first—and, admittedly, I felt awkward at first—most of the people I met were noticeably pleased that I had stopped by. In almost all cases, regardless of how long we spoke or the content of our dialogue, I feel confident that when I encounter these neighbors again, it will be very natural to say hello—a small, yet at the same time, huge enhancement in my living environment.

Just imagine how tightly we can weave the fabric of a peaceful nation if each of us extended ourselves toward better knowing the people in our immediate surroundings. We don't necessarily need to turn all our exchanges into dialogues about Buddhism and our pacifist view. Often just letting people pour out their hearts and vent

their pent-up feelings goes a long way toward building a new and vast array of friendship and peace. Our Muslim and Middle-Eastern neighbors may be particularly struggling right now, and being welcomed by us as their neighbors can be a great bridge across an otherwise deepening chasm of distrust and even hatred.

• **Study:** Now, more than ever, it is crucial that we expand our understanding of the Daishonin's teachings and President Ikeda's guidance. Not only will this provide nourishment for our own faith but, facing the intensity of our current situation, we can strengthen our courage to extend ourselves to others when we feel inspired about our Buddhist perspective on world peace and the inviolable preciousness of human life.

Amid all the turmoil, there is at least one heartening aspect. Throughout the media, we are hearing many voices from many quarters that echo our SGI perspective on peace. This is a clear signal that our society is thirsty for the expression of our views. Let's take advantage of every opportunity to express them. **W**

What I Know for Sure

By LINDA JOHNSON
SGI-USA VICE WOMEN'S LEADER

When I turned on the television on the morning of Sept. 11, I sat down on the couch immovable, my mouth wide open, telling myself that this could not be happening. Over the ensuing days since, it still seems surreal. I am having difficulty processing what has happened to our country, but I know that I must squarely grapple with reality.

I have listened to our political leaders proclaim that they are going to eradicate the evil that caused these catastrophes. They talk of war, of killing those responsible for these acts of violence. What I know for sure is that this will not be a lasting solution to the problem. First of all, it is impossible to kill all of the people who have such hatred



in their hearts. Second, killing in response to killing only perpetuates the karmic cycle.

What I also know for sure is that the only way to have lasting peace in the world is to change people's hearts from the inside. How do we do this?

Now is the time for each one of us to search our souls

to reaffirm why we practice Buddhism. What has become clear to me is that my Buddhist practice is more than just about me receiving benefits. No matter what I have or strive to achieve, I will never be able to enjoy my life without there being peace in the world. I am understanding on a much deeper level the connectedness of all things. I shared in the grief of those roaming the streets looking for lost loved ones or those that had received confirmation that their loved ones had died. My heart aches terribly, and solving the root cause of this act of terrorism so that it will never happen again has become my obsession.

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism makes it clear that only by reforming ourselves from the inside can we make lasting

change both individually as well as collectively. Negativity resides within each one of our lives. We must be given the tools to learn how to win over it.

Nichiren Daishonin clearly tells us: "Muster your faith, and pray to this Gohonzon. Then what is there that cannot be achieved?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412). He also warns us: "But your faith alone will determine all of these things. A sword is useless in the hands of a coward. The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra must be wielded by one courageous in faith" (WND, 412).

It is easy to be moved at the time of a crisis, but we human beings have a highly developed ability to avoid what is unpleasant. We too easily forget lessons learned. As a tribute to all of those who lost their lives, we must never forget Sept. 11, 2001 — we must ensure that the lives lost were not in vain.

We must seize this moment to change poison into medicine. SGI President Ikeda

states: "Adversity gives birth to greatness. The greater the challenges and difficulties we face, the greater opportunity we have to grow and develop as people. A life without adversity, a life of ease and comfort, produces nothing and leaves us with nothing. This is one of the indisputable facts of life" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 127).

What I know for sure is that each one of us can make a difference. One by one, let's pray deeply and profoundly to open up the Buddhahood within each person's life that we encounter, and to be able to share Buddhism with them naturally. Let's eradicate the root cause of hatred from within each person's heart. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the great medicine that can solve all ills. We must believe this like never before and, together, we will change our community, our state, our country and our world.

The time to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism is now. Of this I am certain. **WT**



At a staging area for relief workers, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani encourages those involved in the rescue and recovery effort, Sept. 12. 'Now is the time for New Yorkers to show the world — and especially those who perpetrated these attacks — how resilient we are,' Mayor Giuliani has declared.

FROM HASAN, 10

that courage was key to practicing Buddhism. He demonstrated how one individual can stand up to injustice and pave the way for humanity to fight against all forms of evil.

In his recent essay on the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, President Ikeda wrote: "This was the moment in which the Buddhism of the sun broke through the fundamental darkness of fundamental delusion

to illuminate the earth with its brilliance" (Aug. 3 *World Tribune*, p. 10). This is the time for us, as well, to discard our transient identities as merely common mortals and reveal our true identities as Bodhisattvas of the Earth who practice Buddhism at this time to give hope and courage to people beset with fear. The conditions for discussing the Daishonin's Buddhism are wide open at this time because people are desperately looking

for a way to create a peaceful and harmonious world.

I believe here, in New York, is where the movement for kosen-rufu must be strong enough to protect the entire nation. I am both optimistic and determined that we will rise from the ashes of this catastrophe and, together with our fellow members from around this nation, start a fresh wave of propagation to help create a great, peaceful and joyful America. **WT**

FNCC Cancellations

With concerns for their safety and the uncertain inconveniences SGI-USA members may face during their travels to and from the Florida Nature and Culture Center in light of the recent tragedies, the SGI-USA has decided to cancel the three remaining conferences scheduled through Oct. 15:

Sept. 27-30, Victory Over Violence Conference

Oct. 4-7, Spanish & Portuguese Languages Conference

Oct. 11-14, Chinese Language Conference No. 2

All conference participants will receive a full refund of participant fees through the SGI-USA office at which payment was received. Payments made with credit cards will be refunded as a reverse transaction (debit) to the same credit card account. A refund check will not be issued for credit card payments. Individuals who made credit card payments to either their respective SGI-USA office or the FNCC must contact that specific office to request their refund. Due to credit card company policies, credit card refunds cannot be issued without the request or confirmation of the credit card holder.

Until Oct. 31, a \$100.00 discount coupon will be issued to all individuals who purchased

airline tickets for these cancelled conferences, and is redeemable toward participation in any future FNCC conference. The discount coupon is not redeemable for cash.

The discount coupon is in consideration to the fees ticketed participants must pay to change or refund their airline ticket. Though SGI-USA is in no way responsible for these airline imposed fees, we extend this discount coupon as a gesture of goodwill.

To qualify, ticketed travel dates must coincide with respective conference dates; and airline tickets must have been issued on or before Sept. 22, 2001.

To receive your discount coupon, proof of the airline ticket purchase is required. Airline ticket holders must submit directly to the FNCC a photocopy of either the paid airline ticket invoice, electronic ticket purchase receipt or the 'passenger receipt' coupon of their airline ticket. Kindly forward your proof of purchase along with your name, mailing address and telephone number directly to the FNCC at the following address:

SGI-USA FNCC
Attn: Ticket Exchange
20000 SW 36th St., Bldg 4
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33332

New York Members Respond to Tragedy With Renewed Determination

By JEFF FARR
MANAGING EDITOR

SGI-USA members in New York are turning their turmoil into a new determination for peace. At a series of recent meetings with SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, many members who experienced the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks firsthand and who have loved ones and friends still missing at the World Trade Center shared their feelings and received encouragement from the general director.

On Sept. 24, Mr. Nagashima met with a group of members who live and work closest to the Trade Center site. While feeling tremendous protection for having survived the catastrophe, these members also feel they saw the worst kind of evil manifest that day and are deeply changed by the event. Many witnessed the planes hitting the towers; the people jumping from the World Trade Center; the collapse of the buildings; and the chaos that ensued, with New Yorkers trampling one another to escape the site.

All of them said that their first reaction was immediately to start chanting for people's safety. Their greatest concern now is that what happened Sept. 11 could lead to war and the possibility of more terrorist attacks in America.

"That day, I never felt so heavy in my life," Miriam Soriano, who watched the tragedy from her 5-year-old daughter's school, adjacent to the Trade Center, admitted. "At the same time, I felt that we have to create world peace right here, where we are at. It begins with how we treat one another, what we say to another."

This was the feeling among the more than 800 district-and-up leaders who gathered Sept. 24 at the New York Culture Center for a leaders meeting with Mr. Nagashima, the first large-scale meeting to be held in Manhattan since the attack.

Ned Robinson, who worked for a company on the 77th and 78th floors of 2 World Trade Center, shared his experience with the leaders: When 1 World Trade Center was hit, he and some coworkers decided to leave the second tower. But



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima (front row, second from right) meets with SGI-USA members who live and work near Ground Zero, the site of the recent terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, on Sept. 24 at the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center.

when they reached the 50th floor, they heard an announcement that it was OK to go back to work. Fortunately, they decided to go downstairs anyhow for a cup of coffee, as Ned chanted quietly to himself. They were at about the 43rd floor when the second plane hit their tower; they were able to safely exit the building 20 minutes later. Ned went straight to the Culture Center, where he was very happy to see New Jersey Region Leader Ethan Gelbaum greeting the many members who had come to chant daimoku as soon as they heard the news.

Mr. Robinson said that this experience made him feel like "Nichiren Daishonin was shaking me, reminding me that every moment of our lives is so precious." He also reflected that "Peace is not just the absence of war. We have to fight diligently to create a peaceful society, just as SGI President Ikeda has been saying."

Dolores Velez, who used to pass through the World Trade Center twice a day on her commute, said that she was 10 minutes behind schedule on Sept. 11, having gone to vote that

morning. When she got close to the Trade Center, she saw people running and screaming, and was witness to the second impact. She started chanting and running, deciding that somehow she would make it to the culture center. "I did some track that day!" she said. "Nam-myohorenge-kyo kept me going."

Finally arriving at the culture center after taking a circuitous route, she was relieved to see the many members there. She was especially encouraged when Patricia Kasahara, the Northeastern Zone women's leader, arrived after walking all the way from Queens to meet members at the culture center. Transportation had come to a standstill.

"Everywhere I go, I am sharing my experience," Ms. Velez said. "I have been a Buddhist for 30 years, and the great thing I have learned is

that somehow we have a solution. We have an answer. We have learned in the SGI that after every great evil there is great good—we know how to keep moving on!" There was a great sense of joy in the Culture Center as Ms. Velez then led everyone in the SGI-USA song "What Can I Do?," which expresses the idea that one person of resolve can change the des-

tiny of America for the better.

Mr. Nagashima shared his experience of visiting a member who lives very close to the Trade Center. He did gongyo from the member's apartment window, facing the site, for the more than 6,000 missing. "Visiting Ground Zero, I felt this incident may be the greatest turning point for America and the whole world, for all humankind," he said. "From this point, we can either create a path toward peace and construction or toward war and destruction. The terrorism that happened here on Sept. 11 can become the cause for humanity to unite toward peace beyond religion and beyond cultural and ethnic backgrounds."

He also paid homage to the two members of the New York Soka family who at press time are still missing: Robert Miller, who worked at the World Trade Center and is the husband of pioneer New Jersey SGI-USA member Mitoko Miller, and Vincent Kane, a fireman who had been attending SGI-USA activities in recent months as a guest. (National Public Radio on Sept. 16 incorrectly reported that 38 SGI-USA members are missing and has since broadcast a correction.)

"Peace is not a matter of theory for us anymore," Mr. Nagashima concluded. "I know we lost some of our best friends on Sept. 11. This tragedy is your tragedy and my tragedy, and now we know that we have to be the ones to make peace!" **WT**



More than 500 SGI-USA members participate in a memorial service led by General Director Nagashima at the New Jersey Community Center, Sept. 23.

Photos by JEFF FARR

EXPERIENCE — RICHARD PEREZ, NORTH BERGEN, N.J.

A HERO'S PASSION FOR PEACE

World Trade Center rescue worker Richard Perez declares that everyone who takes action for peace deserves to be called a hero.

I started practicing Buddhism four years ago. My wife introduced me to the SGI while we were dating. Without a doubt, she is the best thing that ever happened to me. Before I met her, I was not religious. I meditated, but really didn't have any kind of practice.

One day she asked if she could chant while I meditated. When she chanted, it sounded like a beautiful bird singing. She asked me to sit next to her while she chanted. Then she asked if I would like to try chanting, which I did. Well, from that moment I was hooked.

Since I started chanting, the practice has helped me tremendously, especially when faced with problems. I never had the courage to go for the things I wanted in life until I started practicing Buddhism. So many benefits came into my life; I got engaged, bought a home and started a family. Today, I am the young men's leader in a wonderful district in New Jersey.

Buddhism also awakened in me a powerful desire to help others, save lives and learn about safety. I work for the New York City Department of Transportation as a staff inspector for the borough of Manhattan. I am what is known as a "Peace Officer," because, although I'm a law enforcement officer like a policeman, I do not carry a gun. The main function of my job is to inspect public areas, before a festival or marathon for example, to make sure everything is secured and safe.

About a month ago, I began to feel a powerful urge to study and learn more about Buddhism. I carried *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* to and from work everyday and tried to read at least one paragraph a day. I began reading the *World Tribune* and SGI President Ikeda's encouragement on a consistent basis. Also, during my lunch hour, I would walk to the New York Culture Center to chant daimoku. I joked with the staff



Richard Perez (center) with his wife, Elin, his son, Christopher, and his daughter, Clarissa.

that I was having a "daimoku lunch."

On Sept. 11, I was not far away from the World Trade Center when the first plane hit. I was on the Staten Island ferry crossing the Hudson River. During my years of studying CPR and other safety training, I always wondered why I had to learn so much. Now I was given a chance to apply everything I learned. I really feel I was meant to be working near the World Trade Center at this time. In my mind, it is no coincidence.

When I got off the ferry, my co-workers and I began running toward the towers. As I got closer, I saw a man lying on the ground. I approached him and discovered he was having a heart attack. In fact, he was on his way to his heart doctor for a check-up. His name was Joseph.

I spent a lot of time helping Joseph, and eventually was able to get a police car to take him to an uptown hospital. As we were lifting him into the car, the first tower collapsed. In seconds, we were covered in dust and ashes. If it were not for Joseph — if I had not stopped to help him — I would have been under the tower when it fell.

I have been working at Ground Zero ever since. I won't go into details about what I have seen. In a sense, that is not what is most important. One thing I have come to realize through

this whole ordeal is that there are two kinds of very strong emotions: anger and compassion. Each time I went home in the evening after working on the site, I encountered people who were very angry about what happened. But those of us working at Ground Zero, the firemen and other rescue mission units, are not motivated by anger. We are motivated by a much more powerful emotion: compassion. We see every day, close up, the destruction that results from anger. Everyone looks at us like heroes, but I believe anyone who takes action to create a more peaceful world deserves to be called a hero.

I have also been able to draw abundant strength from Nichiren Daishonin's writing, "Great Evil and Great Good." The Daishonin's words keep going through my mind during this whole period: "Great events never have minor omens. When great evil occurs, great good follows. Since great slander already exists in our land, the great correct Law will spread without fail. What could any of you have to lament?" (WND, 1119).

I feel so much appreciation for everything and everyone I have in my life. I am fortunate to have a family and people whom I love who surround me. But the people working on the bucket line, removing debris,

are also my family. We don't know each other's names, but we communicate with our eyes. It does not matter what culture we are from, what ethnic group we belong to; we are all working as one. We are constantly helping each other, constantly greeting one another. Each time someone is tired, another person jumps up to help. This is the way I feel the world should be. Sometimes it takes an obstacle for everyone to unite, for everyone to understand how precious life is.

Right now there is a co-worker on the site I want to tell about my Buddhist practice. It may take some time, but I am going to share my faith with him.

Through this experience, I am determined to develop myself as a human being and help others as much as I can. I want to keep fighting for kosen-rufu. And I want to thank everyone for every single daimoku chanted for world peace and unity. My conviction now is to speak to everyone I can about Buddhism whenever I get the opportunity; to share Buddhist philosophy and instill in others a desire for peace. I believe this is the time to unite not just the country, but the entire world. It is our mission, right now, to establish world peace.

—As told to Sean Grover,
New York correspondent

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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

San Francisco Youth Rev It Up

By **RON BAIRD**
SAN FRANCISCO BUREAU CHIEF

The SGI-USA Northern California Zone Family Youth Festival took place on Aug. 19 at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium across from San Francisco City Hall. Some 8,500 members and guests viewed exhibitions by scores of SGI-USA chapters, districts and areas, which featured their members' poster displays and artistic creations.

A video presentation featured several pioneer members of the SGI-USA in Northern California. The pioneers recalled campaigns of the 1960s and '70s, which enabled them to create a foundation of good fortune for their lives.

The highlight of the day, however, was the original musical production *Rev It Up*, featuring 500 youth, including the Boys and Girls Group, Taiko drummers, fife and drum corps, brass band, hip-hop dancers, chorus and orchestra. *Rev It Up* ran for 90 minutes and included 12 original songs written by local SGI-USA members. As writer Linda Wells explains, the title means "to get it going and rev up your engine for human revolution based

on the mentor-disciple spirit, study and taking action."

"We wanted to create something with a positive message, without a lot of clichés," said Northern California Zone Youth Leader David Eisenberg. "That's how we came up with the idea for a musical production that would include all of the performing groups."

Prior to the show, SGI-USA Vice General Director Richard Yoshimachi received a proclamation from San Francisco City Supervisor Leland Yee praising the Buddhist organization's efforts to take a stand against youth violence. Also attending the festival was SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, who received a proclamation from San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown. On the mayor's behalf, City Assessor Doris Ward made the presentation and exclaimed to the audience, "Anybody who wants to fight violence, as you do, and gather together with diversity and a multicultural practice...it's young people like you who will lead us further into the 21st century."

For more on this festival, please visit the festival Web site at www.sgi-norcal.org.



Photos by JACK ALDRICH, LLOYD CARLSON, PAMELA J and KINGMOND YOUNG