



NEXT YEAR'S THEME ANNOUNCED

'YEAR OF EXPANDING DIALOGUE'

Photo by BYRON COHEN

At a time when dialogue for peace has never been more important, the SGI has set dialogue as its theme. At the 10th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held Oct. 11 in Tokyo, SGI Deputy President Einosuke Akiya announced the SGI's theme for 2002, "Year of Expanding Dialogue."

President Akiya stressed three aspects of this undertaking: 1) expanding dialogue with our friends; 2) expanding dialogue with our fellow members; and 3) expanding dialogue with people in our local communities. He then cited Nichiren Daishonin's words "Teach others to the best of your ability, even if it is only a single word or phrase" as expressing the spirit of next year (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 386).

Mentioning that we will soon celebrate the anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's foundation, Nov. 18, for the first time this century, President Akiya called on SGI members to expand the network of people dedicated to good and to strive to bring the remaining weeks of 2001 to a successful close. **WT**



New York Youth Take the Lead

Photo by DANNY SZE



Furthering the SGI-USA's goal of appointing young leaders in each SGI-USA district, 160 young men's and young women's district leaders are appointed Aug. 26 at the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center.

IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Panel Discussion on Prayer and Dialogue

The SGI-USA youth division has initiated a nationwide campaign to respond with prayer and dialogue to the international situation originating from Sept. 11. This week's issue contains part one

of a panel discussion among the SGI-USA national leadership exploring the significance of this campaign, which is entitled "10 Billion Daimoku and 1 Million Heart-to-Heart Dialogues" (see pp. 2-3).



NATIONAL LEADERS PANEL DISCUSSION — PART 1

Uniting With ‘10 Billion Daimoku and 1 Million Heart-to-Heart Dialogues’

During recent conference calls with SGI-USA national and zone leaders, everyone unanimously embraced the ‘10 Billion Daimoku and 1 Million Heart-to-Heart Dialogues’ campaign proposed by the youth division (see p. 3). This idea arose in response to many requests from SGI-USA members, who expressed their desire for a unified response to the Sept. 11 tragedies and a concrete way to express our conviction for peace to society.

The following is part one of a panel discussion highlighting the essence of this SGI-USA campaign. Participants include SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, Women’s Leader Matilda Buck, Men’s Leader Tariq Hasan, Youth Leader James Herrmann, Young Women’s Leader Wendy DeSouza and Young Men’s Leader Steve Mortan.

Danny Nagashima: I believe this nationwide daimoku and dialogue campaign is a wonderful way to unite members throughout the SGI-USA — to communicate with and empower everybody based on the faith and practice of Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings and SGI President Ikeda’s guidance. To know that our prayer every day is resonating with waves and waves of daimoku being chanted by people throughout the United States has a powerful impact in giving us the confidence to create peace in our own communities and the world. I especially want to respond to voices like one of a mother who called to tell me, in tears, that she did not want to send her son to war. I know many of these individuals will initiate the daimoku and dialogue campaign in their own areas and become sources of unlimited encouragement and power.

Matilda Buck: I think it’s great you got that phone call, Danny, from one member who said from her heart: “What are we going to do as an organization? What will you do?” Then you talked with the youth leaders, who immediately responded with something so concrete, so doable and so encompassing. I think there is great meaning in the fact, that

from one woman’s voice, in a sense one plea for peace, your immediate response was your dialogue with the youth and then a clear, focused action that we can all take.

In our discussions, we realized that if each member chants 45 minutes a day for peace and has two meaningful dialogues each week, by Jan 2., 2002, we will achieve our goal.

Danny: I think women are a symbol of peace. On my recent trip to New York and Washington, D.C., I could really see the great courage and power of women. It was amazing!

Matilda: I’m very grateful that the underlying point of this dialogue campaign is daimoku. Without daimoku, we may speak to people, but it can end up in just conjecture or debate. Our prayer wakes up our bodhisattva nature, and through that we can have a dialogue that is expansive and compassionate.

Religion should transform our hearts. That is, in a sense, the purpose of religion — to bring forth the greatest humanity from a person’s heart, having a positive effect on his or her actions. When millions of people are doing that, developing a more humanistic view of things and behaving in a value-creative way, that means humanity is changing.



Danny Nagashima



Matilda Buck



Tariq Hasan

President Ikeda talks over and over about this transformation of the individual life. Social or political solutions are only effective when individual transformation takes place, and this daimoku and dialogue campaign can really help us to transform society.

Steve Mortan: Sometimes during times of struggle, like we are facing now, there is a tendency to keep things bottled up. I have that tendency myself, and what really helps me is having someone to talk to that sincerely cares about my life. It changes everything in that moment. I believe that dialogues like that are what solidify peace in our hearts and become the foundation for world peace.

In college, my friends had various struggles and many times I encouraged them. They knew I was a Buddhist, but our relationship was not based on religion, just simple friendship. We had incredible conversations and, years after graduation, I get calls out of the blue from these friends wanting to talk.

Eventually they ask me about Buddhism. Not only has our friendship deepened, but their lives are gravitating so naturally toward Buddhism. Some of them have begun attending SGI-USA meetings.

Wendy DeSouza: On the subject of prayer, I was very encouraged by what you shared, Matilda, during a phone conversation we had while I was in Whistler, Canada, along with the other SGI youth training

course participants after our plane was diverted on our return from Japan on Sept. 11. At that time, many of us had mixed emotions. Though we were in high spirits because of our determination to go back to our local areas and work for peace, we were also worried about the safety of our friends and family. We were not certain when we would be returning home, and the estrangement we felt was amplified because we were witnessing this whole drama unfold from afar. You mentioned the power of prayer, and read an excerpt from SGI President Ikeda’s book, *Learning from the Goshu*, where he says that “Prayer is not a feeble consolation; it is a powerful, unyielding conviction” (p. 92).

As youth, I think we are frequently moved to take immediate action, to respond to the needs of the present moment. I am always learning from the women’s division members that, in addition to the noble spirit to take immediate action, we have to start with prayer as our prime point.

Matilda: And combined with prayer, dialogue is essential. You know what I love, James, is your explanation of the purpose of the dialogue. I think that is really important. Could you expand on that?

James Herrmann: Relieving suffering and turning it into joy?

Matilda: Yes. Sometimes, people feel pressured that they

have to convince somebody to become a pacifist, or convince them that they should embrace Buddhism. Relieving suffering and bringing forth joy is so broad.

James: I think based on this prayer — and as you were saying, to really elevate our state of life, bringing forth our genuine compassion and highest humanity — we need to engage people in dialogue. It’s one way that we can really relieve their suffering. The goal is to take away their suffering and give them a sense of philosophy that they can base their life on, that will help guide them through this difficult time. So many people have been affected by the terrorist attacks. Like never before, people are genuinely searching for something to relieve

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their suffering. I firmly believe that through our daimoku and dialogue campaign, we can give them something substantial and really helpful.

Matilda: So, in some cases we might be imparting the philosophy of Buddhism, but when we talk about removing suffering and giving joy, that joy could be simply giving somebody hope. So those dialogues are not necessarily about encouraging someone to chant. But they could be just talking to people, saying, "Let's live with hope right now."

Danny: I really agree with what Matilda is saying—awakening to a deeper sense of our common humanity. We can talk about peace from the deepest part of our life, from



James Herrmann



Wendy DeSouza



Steve Mortan

our heart. We do not necessarily need to try leading other people to chant. We can help others awaken to the message that humanity must unite beyond religious and cultural differences, for peace.

Tariq Hasan: That is what I hear a lot from the members in New York, where I live. They do not want to be just an insulated group that simply helps each other feel better. A member recently said to me: "I have

seen so many people suffering all over the city. We need to reach out to them." And of course she had many different ideas how to do it. Our members want to take united action as an organization based on this

most incredible philosophy.

If you think about it, even if we are miserable, we can always chant to the Gohonzon and change that feeling. Not everyone has the power to do that, really. This dialogue campaign can help every member feel that "I am empowered to engage in dialogue and really help people overcome their suffering at this crucial moment."

We should not forget that we have something very unique to offer: We can chant daimoku and, based on our strong prayer, be that person at our job, at home, at school—anywhere we are in society—to give people hope with our life-condition, even if they don't chant with us.

To be continued in an upcoming issue.

Youth Initiate Daimoku and Dialogue Campaign

By JAMES HERRMANN
SGI-USA YOUTH LEADER

The tragic events of Sept. 11 will be forever engraved in the lives of people not only in America, but also around the world. SGI-USA members have been asking, "What can we do?" In response, the youth of SGI-USA would like to initiate a nationwide campaign of "10 Billion Daimoku and 1 Million Heart-to-Heart Dialogues."

With our deep prayer for world peace as the foundation, we can solidify our resolve to be in the best state of life to engage in meaningful and genuine dialogue. Only through deep and sincere prayer will our efforts to relieve the suffering of others be authentic and lasting. It is our sincere hope that this campaign will involve and be embraced by all generations of the SGI-USA membership.

Nichiren Daishonin wrote, "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" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1119).

The "great good" is nothing other than our strong prayer and action to engage individuals in society and carefully listen to them, sharing their suffering and joy. Through our prayer, we can share our conviction in the dignity of human life, our

humanistic values and our great hope for the future.

It is our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth to stand up with prayer first, emerging with joy as we engage our members, colleagues, neighbors, Hokkeko members, classmates, co-workers, friends and loved ones in heart-to-heart dialogue with the spirit to relieve suffering and impart joy.

Our daimoku, words and actions will transform hatred into love, destruction into the construction of humanism, and prove the victory of the human spirit. This campaign of joy and compassion based on prayer will be a genuine movement of great good to counteract the great evil that is constantly vying to move us toward hatred and destruction.

The "10 Billion Daimoku and 1 Million Heart-to-Heart Dialogues" campaign will last until Jan. 2, 2002, with the goal of reaching out to 1 million people. Imagine our SGI-USA community centers and district homes—where activities for peace are being held throughout our nation—filled with our children, young adults, pioneer members—all four divisions—united joyfully in creating our paper hearts to display at our meetings.

Each paper heart will represent a person that has been touched by a sincere individual reaching out to share his or her life. The number of hearts will

begin to grow in our centers in the form of a tree or a vine, or however local members decide to show living proof of the joy spreading in their communities. Each locale will be able to make color copies of the paper hearts and cut them out. Each heart would then have the name of the person who initiated dialogue and the name of the district this individual practices in.

We propose that these hearts be placed in community centers or activity homes according to what each area deems best. The youth can be responsible for gathering reports and all generations can work together to place the names and hearts in our centers. Weekly reports will be posted on the SGI-USA Web site (www.sgi-usa.org).

As SGI President Ikeda said in response to the recent tragedy: "Dialogue holds the key to any lasting solution. Now, more than ever, we must reach out in a further effort to understand each other and engage in genuine dialogue. Words spoken from the heart have the power to change a person's life. They can even melt the icy walls of mistrust that separate peoples and nations. We must expand our efforts to promote dialogue between and among civilizations" (Oct. 19 *World Tribune*, p. 9).

If you have questions about the new campaign, please e-mail James Herrmann at: jherrman@sgi-usa.org.



This heart can be used as a template to cut out and reproduce more hearts. Each heart creates a record of one heart-to-heart dialogue to be displayed at your community center or district house (see accompanying article).

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Now there are three ways you can get the most recent information and encouragement from SGI-USA:

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'MAINICHI SHIMBUN' INTERVIEW WITH SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

PEACE BEGINS WITH EMPATHY

'Buddhism is based on empathy, sharing another person's suffering as your own,' says SGI President Ikeda. 'When you see that someone is suffering or in pain, the most humane path in life is to share that pain, to work to help one another. Empathy is crucial.'

On Sept. 25, SGI President Ikeda was interviewed by Masato Kitamura, editor in chief, and Takao Iwami, special advisor, of the Mainichi Shimbun, one of the three major Japanese daily newspapers. The following is a translation of excerpts from this interview.

Takao Iwami: In its capacity as an ally country, Japan has to support the United States. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has promised such support. How do you view recent political developments?

President Ikeda: Frustrating in the extreme. Japanese politicians are always behind the beat and reactive. The Japanese government should take the lead in proactively promoting international public opinion for peace. They could make this appeal at the United Nations, for example.

The United Nations is important now as never before. I would like to propose that the member states join together and consider holding a special session of the general assembly devoted to responding to international terrorism. That is the direction in which Japan also should work.

Christianity and Islam share a long history of peaceful co-existence. I think that at heart the conflict is much more political than religious in nature. The whole of human civilization is being put to the test. Now, more than ever, I call out



for truly committed and sustained dialogue.

Masato Kitamura: The terrorist attack in New York can be considered the most recent tragedy indicative of the current of the times. The contemporary trend, in my view, may be characterized by a disregard for life. This is not necessarily limited to terrorism but is also evident in various aspects of Japanese society. The circumstances, thus, give rise to the question of why people can so mindlessly, so easily take another's life—even a child's.

President Ikeda: I think it stems from a lack of hope. There is a pervasive sense of having come to a dead-end, of being trapped in a tunnel from which there is no exit. Philosophy and religion exist to give life a sense of meaning. But those in positions of responsibility lack the conviction necessary to earnestly condemn war and violence. Everything is left up to someone else. People act as if these matters didn't impact them. They have lost their sense of purpose and responsibility.

Kitamura: Not considering such heinous crimes an attack against themselves, simply being relieved that they and their community was not directly involved—they don't see that peace and society itself are being threatened, so they are slow to perceive it as an assault against themselves.

President Ikeda: That is precisely the point, the attitude of "Let someone else take responsibility." In contrast, Buddhism is based on empathy, sharing another person's suffering as your own. When you

see that someone is suffering or in pain, the most humane path in life is to share that pain, to work to help one another. Empathy is crucial.

Kitamura: How can we encourage people who can't really understand one another to feel empathy for each other?

President Ikeda: Education has an indispensable role to play. People should be educated in a way that encourages them to feel the sufferings of others as their own—those suffering from misfortune, from poverty, in war...How can we learn to see the world through their eyes, to extend support, to treat them as equals? In this regard, Japan lags far behind.

Iwami: Over the decades, successive Japanese administrations have all called for educational reform. Various government agencies have looked at the issue, but have failed to come up with a truly effective plan. I would like to ask you about Japan's Fundamental Law of Education, which some are saying should be revised. It is my understanding that you take a "go-slow" attitude toward any revision.

President Ikeda: This is because it is so clear that those advocating reform have a strong nationalist agenda. I think it would be much better, for example, to have the issue discussed and debated by forward-looking scholars, people with new ideas. This feeling that everything needs to be done by political institutions reflects the strong prioritization of politics over people. Over the course of history, education in Japan has been made subservient to national goals. The role of education has been defined narrowly in accord with these national goals and priorities, whether military or economic.

The Fundamental Law of Education upholds as its objective "the full development of personality." I think that this could be rephrased as the happiness of children, of learners. This was a view stressed by an educator whom I hold in great respect and who died in prison for his views during the war.

Iwami: In theory, I believe the role of religion in education is immense. In actual practice, however, religion is disregarded in Japanese education.

President Ikeda: That's true. At the same time, however, it is also a fact that in the West to this day most families embrace some faith or creed. The situation in Japan is the fault of the religious authorities here. Religion, basically, is one of the necessities of human life, like air or water.

Kitamura: Seventy years after its founding, how would you describe the current phase of the Soka Gakkai? And what are your thoughts on having taken leadership for many years?

President Ikeda: The Soka Gakkai's membership has grown to become approximately 10 percent of the population. I believe the foundations of the organization have been consolidated. Naturally, leadership is necessary to keep an organization moving in the right direction. At the same time, unless the membership is given responsibility and efforts are made to foster youth, no organization can achieve continued stability and development. Dictatorship is an anachronistic impossibility. The administration of the Soka Gakkai is carried out democratically through the board of trustees and the central executive committee. All efforts are made to respect and reflect the views of the members. It is my basic policy not to attend such meetings, in order to promote the exchange of opinions without unnecessary reservations due to my presence.

Iwami: That gives me the sense of a new form of dictatorship! [Laughter.]

President Ikeda: Others are free to view or interpret this any way they wish. You absolutely have that freedom. But as honorary president, I carry out my duties in accord with the bylaws of the organization.

People don't develop or grow in a dictatorial regime. Nor would development of the organization outside Japan be possible. Dictatorship is cowardice and it inevitably collapses.

Soka Gakkai Youth Make Refugee Donation

In response to the anticipated outflow of refugees from Afghanistan as a result of ongoing military attacks, the Soka Gakkai Youth Peace Conference donated \$100,000 to the Japan-Korea Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Oct. 10.

"It is feared that as many as 1.5 million people may be forced to become refugees during the harsh winter season," said Soka Gakkai representative Hideki Sakamoto. "We hope our donation can help provide shelter and assistance to some of them." UNHCR figures show that there are already more than 3.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

The donation was made from funds collected in the Soka Gakkai's 21st Refugee Relief Campaign. Since

1981, youth members have conducted regular fundraising campaigns that have raised more than \$10.8 million in donations for UNHCR and non-governmental organizations working to assist refugees. The Soka Gakkai's aim is not only to provide basic necessities, but to empower refugees to become self-sufficient.

SGI President Ikeda states: "In any war, the greatest victims are always ordinary citizens, especially women and children. The SGI has long supported UNHCR's efforts to protect and rebuild the lives of refugees and displaced persons, people who have been forced by violence and fear to flee their homes. Their long-term needs must be addressed."

Courtesy of the SGI Office of Public Information

Courtesy of the SGI Office of Public Information

EXPERIENCE — TSUYAKO LIEBMANN, CHICAGO

Solidifying the Bond With My Mentor

After surviving the hell of World War II in Tokyo, Tsuyako Liebmann dedicates herself to peace with her fellow Chicago members.

This experience originally appeared in the June 8 Japanese edition of the World Tribune.

On the night of March 10, 1945, Tokyo was attacked by massive air raids carried out by U.S. B-29 bombers. With the roar of the bombers overhead, our house and the neighboring areas were soon engulfed in flames.

One moment, we managed to keep away from fierce flames and explosions, while in the next, we were threatened by debris propelled by hot air blasts. In the midst of people shouting and screaming, my whole family fled and wandered about the streets. After nine hours of trying to escape, we became separated from one another.

Some people who could not make it to the rivers burned to death. Even among those who managed to reach the rivers, some drowned. These hellish scenes were the consequences of a nation mad enough to start a war to expand its power.

Overnight, I lost both my mother and brother. Our family's financial situation had been quite stable, benefiting from the wartime boom prior to the air raids. However, in one day, our lives changed into a nightmare of deep grief. For the rest of my life, I will never forget the images of so many people losing their precious lives while pleading for help.

In 1953, I was invited to a Soka Gakkai discussion meeting in Yokohama, Japan. I was told that Buddhism could change the destiny of any person and that together we could realize world peace. I knew immediately this was the philosophy that I had been searching for. I began attending second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's lectures and question and answer sessions. On each occasion, my life would absorb the essence of faith, just as the dry earth soaks up water.

In 1955, I moved to the United States with my husband,



Tsuyako Liebmann visits Soka University of America on May 3.

Paul. With the news of President Toda's passing in 1958, I was at a loss, but continued to practice with members in the United States. As time went on, we heard that the young Daisaku Ikeda was to be inaugurated as the third president of the Soka Gakkai. In 1960, full of hope and excitement, I went to Japan to attend the inauguration. Moved by President Ikeda's impassioned speech, I determined, "Sensei, I'll dedicate my whole life to the kosen-rufu movement in America!"

Shortly after the inauguration, President Ikeda made his first visit to Chicago. At that time, I was appointed as the first Chicago district leader. Up to this point, my husband had not been eager in his Buddhist practice. Nonetheless, when President Ikeda met my husband, he encouraged him by removing the gold lapel pin on his suit and fastening it on my husband's jacket. This was a very significant moment in his practice.

I believe it was President Ikeda's wish that my husband and I work together in Buddhist activities. I did not know how to drive and my English was not that good, so on my own, my ability to participate in the organization was limited. But as a team, my husband and I were able to begin our kosen-rufu journey in earnest.

With my husband in the driver's seat, we visited the entire Chicago area. On weekends, we drove to outlying areas to

encourage members and introduce others to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Before we realized it, the groups in our district had expanded with members located in as many as 17 states. By the time Paul passed away in 1994, we had participated together in kosen-rufu activities for 40 years. This was our greatest fortune.

Whenever I had the opportunity to meet President Ikeda, he would always ask me, "Do you have any problems?" or "Do you need anything for your members?" His consideration touched and penetrated my heart. I have learned so much from him about what the attitude of a leader should be — thoughtful, considerate and sincere in their sense of responsibility for the happiness of others.

President Ikeda also stresses that, as stated by the Daishonin, "The treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all." This phrase is always with me.

In the late 1970s, a group of priests from Nichiren Shoshu, the Shoshin-kai, began plotting against President Ikeda, attacking him with slander and false allegations. The members of Chicago resolved: "Now is the time for daimoku. We can do nothing else except to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo!" We gathered every weekend and chanted waves of daimoku.

As a result of our daimoku and actions to protect our mentor, we were able to host the Chicago Culture Festival, and welcome President Ikeda

during his unexpected visit to Chicago in 1980. Many capable leaders arose during those difficult, but joyful, activities, deepening the Chicago members' bonds of mentor and disciple with President Ikeda.

While the world of mentor and disciple is truly heartwarming, the world of those who have forsaken correct faith is truly miserable. As witnesses to their unhappy lives, SGI members in Chicago have been trying to visit and open dialogues with these former members, hoping that they will begin their practice anew.

On May 3, I was fortunate enough to attend the opening ceremony of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo. This was a day that I had long been looking forward to and it filled my life with joy to be able to continue advancing with President Ikeda toward the goal of world peace in the 21st century.

President Ikeda has given us the next goal, May 3, 2030. I will do everything in my power to repay my debt of gratitude to President Ikeda and give my full support to the next generation of leaders, who are as dear to me as my own children. **LV**

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INTRODUCING SUA's STUDENT ENROLLMENT SERVICES TEAM

The Office of Enrollment Services at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo has an important task ahead as the recruitment and application process has begun for SUA's second freshman class.

The office is comprised of four components: Admission Operations, Recruitment, Financial Aid and Accounts Receivable.

With recruiting taking center stage, the outreach has begun on many different fronts. Marilyn Gove, Manager of Recruitment, is responsible for development and implementation of various strategies to identify, attract and assist prospective student outreach programs within the Southern California area.

"This year is different," says Gove. "Superintendents, prin-

cipals, academic counselors, prospective students and regional organizations now know who we are! Their interest and enthusiasm for SUA's mission and the beauty of our campus is so exciting. I expect our Fall 2002 class to reflect our growing presence. Dialogue with different groups show a strong leaning toward Soka Education as a way to contribute to our world in new, constructive ways."

A national recruitment effort is also underway headed by Eric Hauber, Vice President for Enrollment Services and Long Range Planning. Hauber is supported by Andy Marcos, Admission Counselor for National Recruitment. Both will visit local SGI Community and Cultural Centers around the country.

"What we have learned from



(Back row, l-r) Susan Smith, Terri Marshall, Cindy Cohen, Andy Marcos, Eric Hauber, Margaret Kasahara and Cyndie Lam. (Front row, l-r) Marilyn Gove, Eiko Vogtman and Maria E. Spangenberg.

last year is that going out to the centers talking about SUA and answering questions has helped in our efforts to attract a highly diverse student body," says Hauber. "Our grass roots efforts paid off primarily because of our face to face contact. We're hoping for similar results this year."

Margaret Kasahara is also involved in recruitment as the Manager of International Ad-

mission; her responsibilities include assisting in developing and implementing a comprehensive international admission/recruitment program. She also oversees recruitment outreach to international publications.

Maria E. Spangenberg joined SUA in August 2000 as Financial Aid Manager. Her responsibilities include coordinating all aspects of financial aid admin-

istration and advisement.

Other staff who support the admission process are: Susan Smith, Manager of Admission; Cyndie Lam, Admission Counselor; Cindy Cohen, Financial Aid Advisor; Eiko Vogtman, Accounts Receivable and Student Accounts Representative, and Terri Marshall, Receptionist and Assistant to the Office of Enrollment Services. **WT**



Q & A WITH SUA

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

Question:

What kind of student activities have you held so far, and what do you see in the future?

Answer:

Students and staff have worked closely with the Director of Residence and Student Activities to hold a number of events. Under the heading of Midnight Madness, the staff cooked very early morning breakfasts at key times for students. Following the students' first immersion course, a masseuse

was enthusiastically welcomed to campus. There was a celebration with a dunk tank, and several professors, staff members and students bravely volunteered to be dunked (SUA President Danny Habuki was first to go!).

Several open-mic events have been held to address significant times, especially the Sept. 11 terrorist tragedies. Once each month during lunch in the Dining Hall, all students with birthdays in that month are recognized and get to cut their cake. Saturday night is movie night at the video wall in the Student Center!

What is coming up? Regu-

larly scheduled coffee-talk times without agendas will generate opportunities for dialogue outside of regular venues. Our first "In the Spotlight," where students get to demonstrate their unique or special talents, was held Sept. 28. Already in the planning stage is the first SUA Film Festival. Soon to be announced is our Leadership Program, in which students participate in nine seminars and related events that lead to certification at year's end. Sept. 24-Oct. 1 was campaigning week, and elections for the Soka Student Government Association were held on Oct. 2.

Question:

Athletics and sports are very important to me. If I attend SUA, what can I expect to find in the way of athletics facilities? Will I be able to participate in inter-collegiate competition?

Answer:

Soka University Athletics & Recreation is excited about

providing opportunities to the Soka community with modern facilities and a wide breadth of programming. With state-of-the-art facilities and Southern California's famed Mediterranean climate, Soka will provide extensive opportunity to those interested in a healthy, active lifestyle, or for those furthering their competitive playing career in particular sports. The Recreation Center includes two full basketball courts and can also accommodate three volleyball or five badminton courts, with outdoor patios overlooking the pool area and Aliso and Wood Canyons.

Additionally the Center has two weight rooms; one a complete circuit of selectorized equipment and the other a comprehensive free-weight facility. A wide diversity of aerobic and cardio equipment is also available, as are racquetball courts and multi-purpose areas for free-play, clubs and classes. The Athletic Complex also has an Olympic-size, 50-meter pool for those who want

aquatic training opportunities, six tennis courts, an all-weather 400-meter track and two multi-purpose fields to accommodate intramurals, team sports and other activities.

Particularly as the student population grows, expanded offerings in classes, instruction, group fitness and intramurals in both individual and team sports will be offered. Again dependent upon student interest, courses as widely divergent as aerobics, martial arts and dance can be accommodated, as Recreation will continue to be responsive to students' requests. Competition will always be offered via intramurals, with both team and individual sports throughout the school year.

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 Attracts Students With Big Dreams

The first freshman class at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo includes students from 18 countries on five continents. On Aug. 23, some of the international students sat down with WorldTribune Staff Writer Jamie Liptan and described their experiences in coming to SUA.

Gonzalo Obeillero Argentina



The main reason I decided to go to SUA was because I thought it was the right place to reach the maximum of my capacity as a human being. I was studying graphic design for two years in Argentina, and I found that this kind of education was not enough for me. When I heard about SUA, I thought, this is the kind of education I need.

In regular college institutions in Argentina, you get no sense of cooperation between students. It's more like competition. You basically are trying to survive, so you can market yourself. It's only for practical purposes. That's necessary, but it wasn't enough for me. There was no consciousness of fostering human beings.

As a young man, I would have to pursue my development into the kind of human being I want to become on my own. I found that the kind of preparation you need if you are planning to contribute to society and make a change is much

more demanding than just planning to get a good job. It takes a different kind of knowledge and experience, and I had a hard time finding that kind of training in my former school environment. It is possible to get it anywhere, but this is the ideal place. I find the expectations about being the first class at SUA amazing, and very motivational.

Academically, I seek the foundation to become a cultured man, fully cosmopolitan, who really understands the world and where we are at this time in history. I worry about South America because of the shame many people feel of being Latin American. I think I have that shame too, and I struggle with it. On the other hand, I am glad to share in that struggle. I want to work in the field of culture. I want to help to shape a strong South American cultural identity, maybe through governmental institutions or cultural activities.

In America, everything is big and amazing, yet the people here are warm. I would like to create deep friendships with my fellow students. When I first met them, I thought, "I don't know them, but I know they're going to be my best friends!" They have big dreams and high ideals, and that is so encouraging. I can't imagine being depressed here. I feel so encouraged walking the path through the campus from the dorms to the dining hall, seeing the great landscape and meeting all the students in the morning.

SGI President Ikeda is the person I admire the most. He has achieved so many goals. I am amazed at the way he realizes them. I consider him my mentor, and that is probably the reason I am here. When my experience about going to SUA was published in the SGI-Argentina newsletter, many students wanted to come here.

That is another main motivation for me; I am here for them as well. That is why I was able to break through the obstacles I had during the application process. It wouldn't make sense to just be here for myself. Sharing this experience with them is a way for me to keep my spirits high. The expectations people have for me make me feel lighter; without them it would be much harder for me. They give me a reason to challenge myself, to wake up in the morning and do my best.



Priyanka Sabarwal India

A friend in India gave me a brochure from SUA that began with this quote from Dr. Ikeda, "What our world most requires now is the kind of education that fosters love for humankind, that develops character—that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace, and empowers learners to contribute to and improve society."

And it just clicked. This is what I wanted, to work for peace. And I had been asking myself, "What is education really for?" It gives you an intellectual basis; it's not just for fame or money.

I was one of the top students in my school until the eighth grade, when the school started using the exam system. I could not cope with it at first. I was used to studying at the last minute, and I could not do that anymore. I had to start working hard. But it was all to come here.

The process was really tough. For example, getting my visa was very difficult. It also took a long time getting my school records, and then there was the language exam. These obstacles made me even more convinced that SUA is where I was meant to go.

I was also encouraged by the support I got from SUA. Any kind of question or need I had, they were right there. The more that I heard about the school, the more excited I became! It's a new century, it's a new school. A lot of people have pointed out that it's not well known, but we are going to make it recognized.

The college education in India is overpopulated, and

the concentration is not on the individual. The true purpose of education is lost. At the better institutions, it's like a rat race—very competitive. It is just to get ahead of the other, not to contribute to the world. One of my reasons for coming here is that someday I want to change the education system in my country.

The students here have deep bonds already. I think they were there since the day we came in. I did not know many of the students when I came, but in just minutes we were friends. It was amazing. I was homesick for only one night. We are united as a class, we all want to set the traditions and we are all very excited. This is home. We are like a family.

SUA has a great curriculum. I want to take so many courses! I plan to study very hard, give my best to my activities and make my country and Dr. Ikeda proud of me. I would also like to become a person of broad outlook and deep character, a world citizen.

Dr. Ikeda is so great. I have no words to thank him for this university. Since I have come here, it's a new feeling, a new relationship. He is my mentor, and to study at a university which is established by your mentor, to be learning what you always wanted to learn, I think this is great. So I consider myself fortunate to be able to study at this university, establish it and help make its mark in the world. I think we have a great responsibility as the first class; all eyes are on us. We have to determine what this university is really about, so what we do is very important. We have a great president, a great faculty and we are great students. I think we can do it.

I am very close to Gandhi's teachings. I read his writings often. To have a classroom building dedicated to him at SUA makes me really proud that I am from India. I think he has done a lot for India. His philosophy on education says that its true purpose is for the individual to become a great citizen, the ideal patriot to his family, community and nation. That is also the mission of SUA students, and that is what I aim to become. **WT**

SUA Family Tour Day Saturday Dec. 15

If you have been looking for a chance to see the new SUA, Aliso Viejo campus, you will have an opportunity on Dec. 15. 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:

9:00–11:00 a.m.

Guided Walking Tours leave on the half hour.

10:00 a.m.

Admission and financial aid counseling begins.

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

EXPERIENCE—SUSAN ANDRUS, NORFOLK, VA.

APPRECIATING THE STRUGGLE

Through her Buddhist practice, Susan Andrus learns that true happiness and freedom exist in the process of struggling to attain her dream of becoming a writer.

I began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism two years ago. In March of this year, I was fired from my job.

At the time, I was shocked that my attempts to work with my supervisor would result in my being escorted out of the building. As I walked toward my car preparing to have a big "pity party" when I got home, the SGI member who introduced me to this practice asked me why I was leaving so early. I told him I had just been fired. He said, "Congratulations!"

Immediately, he helped me change my perspective from self-pity to appreciation. At first it didn't last long, but that remark and other events, including going to the Florida Nature and Culture Center, helped me turn my life around.

The day after I was fired, I went to Raleigh, N.C., to a Culture Department workshop. I felt blue and irritable and did not really want to participate in the trip or the activities, but since I had already made the commitment, I went along. I tolerated the joyful attitude of the others in the van as we rode to Raleigh but could not appreciate or join in their good humor.

By the end of the day, after talking with other writers and artists, I became aware that many people were in transition either because of work, family or career changes. I realized that I was not alone and that it was possible for me to change careers and pursue my goal of being a writer.

A few days later, out of work, I determined to support myself as a freelance writer. I had saved some money intending to buy a car and figured that between my savings and unemployment insur-



Susan Andrus (left) with her mother, Phyllis Ball.

ance, I could support myself for about six months.

My district leader told me that she had registered for a writer's workshop at Barnes and Noble Bookstore but she couldn't attend because of another commitment. Because the workshop was full, she offered her registration to me.

I attended the workshop and learned how to submit my writing to publishers and how to get an agent for the book I had started writing a year ago. During this time, I chanted up to two hours a day to keep my focus on my goals and overcome the depression that told me that I was not worthy, not good enough, and could not be successful in work, relationships, or love.

Around the same time, another SGI member cancelled her reservation to the FNCC Arts Division Conference and I received an e-mail indicating that someone was needed to fill the slot. I remembered how the Culture Department meeting in Raleigh helped me overcome my doubts about becoming a writer so I decided to make the effort and invest some of my savings to attend the conference. Quite fittingly, the theme of the conference was, "Never Give Up On Your Dreams!"

In the meantime, I started working on getting an agent for my book. I found a list of 140 agents on a Web site and tried to set up a process on my computer to print them each a letter. What a struggle! Everything I tried presented a technological obstacle. I wanted to mail them before I went to the FNCC, but too many obstacles blocked my way.

At the FNCC I heard many experiences that guided and transformed me from the person I was on May 17 to the person I became by May 21. I learned to spend the first 15 minutes of chanting every day to appreciate my life—the negative as well as the positive. I especially chant to appreciate the negative because, just like my experience of being fired, these events turn me in a new and better direction.

During the conference, I heard an artist say that rather than chanting to do better works of art, he chants for his clients. I now chant for the agents, the publishers who will consider my manuscript, and my readers. I learned from another speaker that if I don't change my causes, the effects will make me continue to experience the same obstacles over and over again.

I also learned to keep a pad and pencil near my altar so that when I chant, I can write down my ideas so I'll remember them when I finish chanting. I have generated so many good ideas from doing this.

Some famous people attended this conference and through them I discovered that they are regular people with difficulties just like the rest of us, struggling to do their own

human revolution.

In the first two days after I returned from the FNCC, I figured out how to print the letters and mailed them out to the potential agents.

But today I am happy. I have received more than 100 rejection letters from those I mailed to the 140 agents and two letters from agents who were initially receptive, but then had to decline because too many books on similar topics had already been published.

I published an article on the Internet and began receiving royalties in September. My savings have dwindled but I have enough to pay my bills for a few more months.

At the writers' workshop, I learned that publishers usually give an advance to first-time authors of between \$25,000 and \$50,000. I'm chanting for \$75,000. My days are bright. I am executive director of my office at home and every day is a dress-down day.

In "The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1001), Nichiren Daishonin states: "A coward cannot have any of his prayers answered." Every day I pray for fearlessness so that I can use my writing skills to work for the happiness of others.

I read in the *World Tribune* that there are more than 10 million SGI members practicing in the world. When we say the last prayer in gongyo, we pray for "peace throughout the world and the happiness of all humanity." Every day I feel those 10 million members praying for my happiness, propelling me forward to realize my dream of becoming a writer! **WT**



Susan preparing to perform at a Culture Department meeting in July.

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

CONFRONTING THE ABYSS

PERSPECTIVE

By RICK WILSON
WELLESLEY, MASS.

Rick Wilson is the Academic Division Culture Department leader for the New England Region. For 15 years, he has both the conductor and director of the SGI-USA Boston Renaissance Chorus. He studied music at Harvard and received his master's degree in orchestral conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music. Below, Rick ponders the role of the SGI arts division member.



Richard Wilson (right) and son Sam.

A couple of nights ago, I went to a performance of "James Joyce's The Dead," a musical adaptation of Joyce's famous short story. A theater critic who attended a performance a few days after the Sept. 11 trade-center attack wrote in his review that the final scene in particular was a profoundly cathartic experience for everyone in the audience. Even watching the play now, with the horrors of Sept. 11 somewhat less immediate, I was

moved, touched and heartened. In the final scene, the main protagonist, Gabriel, and his wife, Gretta, are alone in their room following a Christmas party. Gretta has just told Gabriel a shattering story from her girlhood involving the death of a young man she once knew. Hearing it has caused Gabriel to question the very foundation of their relationship. He sits in the darkened room, gazing out the window as the snow gently falls, while his wife sobs on the bed. He slowly and quietly sings, "The

snow is falling, all over Ireland, it falls on the living and the dead." Other characters from the play appear like apparitions; together with Gabriel they sing these words over and over. As the curtain closes, Gabriel walks to the bed, and tentatively touches his wife. They embrace.

In this final embrace, Gabriel and Gretta confirm something we have come to care about, and with which we can identify: their own commitment to each other, and thus to carrying on in the face of difficulties. But it

goes deeper. We feel Gabriel and Gretta's commitment as not merely mutual, but extending to everyone they know and care about—an acknowledgment of the need we all have for each other. And it goes deeper still, with the image of the silently falling snow outside the darkened room. Does it represent the implacable forces of the universe, before which everyone, living and dead, fade into nothingness? Does it represent the tears of an eternal and compassionate cosmos?

In the end, who can say? What matters is that we are moved and changed. It is the power of art to touch us in ways that include our intellect, but go beyond it. No matter how gloomy or dismal the subject matter—think of Shakespeare's tragedies—the act of creation itself, and our sharing in its outcome, is, at its best, powerfully affirming.

As SGI-USA members, we are so fortunate. Our Buddhist practice regularly connects us with our own creative center, "the flowing movement of life" (August *Living Buddhism*, p. 42), as SGI President Ikeda has described it—Buddhahood itself. As SGI-USA members involved in the arts, we

are blessed again: We can channel our revitalized, awakened creative self into the work we do, and into an open, deeply satisfying enjoyment of the work of others.

Early in the play, Gabriel says something like this: "Life often reminds me of ice skating on a pond. You slip and you slide, you try not to fall, you hold each other up. Every so often a crack opens in the ice beneath you. You look down, and you are reminded that beneath this thin layer of ice lurks a dark abyss."

The art that touches me most deeply comes from artists who—their work tells me—acknowledge, confront, accept and savor this abyss, this darkness, without fearing it. They have uncovered and come to identify it in its depths with what President Ikeda describes as "the inexhaustible creative source" (August *Living Buddhism*, p. 40.)

Let us strive to be like that. Let our own work embody our ever-deepening sense of the wonder, sanctity, indomitable power and indestructibility of life. Let us understand, and convey, each in our own way, this truth of truths. No matter how ferocious the forces that oppose us, there is nothing to fear.

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

The Art of Healing, The Art of Peace

Washington, D.C., healing arts division members Whitney Rose, senior medical student, and Dr. Iris Davis, who specializes in AIDS research, gave the following determination and vision at the SGI-USA's Washington, D.C., Community Center in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

What is our dream? Peace in the healing professions. From neurosurgery to massage, psychiatry to shiatsu—we see a common goal of providing the patient with the best care that we can give. We see a sharing and mutual respect not only for the patient and their goals and needs, but an environment where each of the professionals involved respects the other's traditions, capacities and skills.

This means that we will need to learn more than just our traditional skills, but also learn to create an atmosphere and a structure that allows dialogue to enhance the capacity for knowledge, differences and various practices of healing.

Peace in the healing professions could be based on helping our society to focus on wellness and take the focus off of making large profits while limiting vital therapies. Peace in our profession would help us to overcome our collective fear of death, so that we can better share and learn from the traditions and mores that celebrate and accept the cycle of life and death. Releasing our rigidity and mutual arrogance will allow us to begin to soften our lives and be less judgmental, so that every human being who

comes to us can learn to maximize their health in one of the many traditions of treatment and in the paths of wellness and health. Mutual respect implies that the patient is the healer, not only an agent that we "act" upon or impose our views upon.

In the healing arts based on peace, respect would flow freely between everyone involved in the healthcare process from the most senior physician to the support staff. Hospitals would transform into true asylums, places of rest where human beings can "recharge," heal, awaken to their inner strength, and become active participants in their own healing process.

The move toward a peaceful profession will allow us to take a fresh look at education in the healing arts, where

education is a healing process, not a combative practice. The training will attract compassionate, empathetic and committed students with the ability to enrich the professions they choose. Mentorship will flourish and true educators will be cherished and rewarded for their unique ability to inspire and teach. Unity and a shared vision for a healthy and happy society filled with people fulfilling their individual destiny will be at the center of the healing arts philosophy. Healing professionals will become woven into the fabric of their communities, building bridges and eliminating barriers to healthcare. All of the healing arts will be viewed as honorable vehicles for encouraging and supporting the lives of others. **WT**

Read the WT E-mail Express

It's the Quickest Way To Get SGI President Ikeda's Guidance

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

To subscribe to the WT E-mail Express, just follow these three easy steps:
1) Open a new e-mail message
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ListManager@sgi-usa.org
3) Enter message text (first line): **SUBSCRIBE wtexpress**

You'll receive a confirmation message and then a new issue every week!

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

SGI Representatives Attend Anti-Racism Conference in South Africa

SGI representatives attended the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. SGI Peace and Culture Committee Chair Kazuo Ishiwatari, SGI-South Africa leader Jane Roach and SGI representatives in the United Nations offices in Geneva and New York, Kazunari Fujii and Hiroyuki Sakurai, respectively, attended a preliminary NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) forum held on Aug. 28, prior to the opening of the main event on Aug. 31 in Durban, South Africa. Mr. Ishiwatari is scheduled to participate as a panelist at a symposium on education for peace and human rights.

New SGI Centers Open in South Korea

The SGI-Korea Kuri Culture Center in Kuri, South Korea, opened on Sept. 12 with the attendance of Mayor Pak Yon Sun and City Councillor Kim Gyon Son, together with 600 local SGI members. SGI-Korea General Director Yeo Sang Lak said at the opening that the center will serve as a citadel contributing to the welfare and happiness of the community. In addition, the SGI-Korea Incheon Sunrise Culture Center opened in Incheon, Seoul, South Korea, on Aug. 25. SGI President

Ikeda sent a message to the members who gathered at the opening, calling it a center for the cultivation of peace and culture.

SGI-Argentine Women Meet With Argentina's First Lady

On Sept. 19, SGI-Argentine women's division representatives visited Argentina's First Lady Ines Pertine de la Rúa at the President's second official residence in the suburb of Buenos Aires. The women wished to personally thank Mrs. De la Rúa, who had sent a message to the first SGI "Latin American Women Peace, Culture, Education Conference" on Sept. 8 and 9, which was hosted by SGI-Argentina. She stated that she identifies with the SGI women members' contributions to society and that she and the President fully support the SGI's activities for pursuit of peace.

Mrs. De la Rúa serves as an honorary public welfare advisor to the Foundation for the Republic's Research Center, a think tank founded to find solutions to problems concerning national growth and prosperity, which has expanded to direct



participation in resolving social problems.

SGI Celebrates World Peace Day

Forty-one years ago on Oct. 2, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda embarked on a worldwide journey for peace, based on the ideals of "global citizenship," which his mentor, Josei Toda, advocated. Soka Gakkai International members throughout the world celebrated Oct. 2, "World Peace Day," with prayers for the peace and happiness of all humanity at respective SGI centers. **Brazil:** On Oct. 2, 1,000 SGI-Brazil members attended a commemorative meeting at the BSGI Culture Center in São Paulo. BSGI General Director Eduardo K. Taguchi said peace will be realized through each individual's strong determination and courageous actions. **India:** Some 6,000 Bharat (India) Soka Gakkai members gathered in 50 cities throughout the country to jointly celebrate Oct. 2 World Peace Day and the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth. **Uruguay:** SGI-Uruguay members held a peace rally at the SGI-Uruguay Culture Center

in Montevideo City. **Hong Kong:** To commemorate World Peace Day, Hong Kong-SGI members invited guests and held friendship meetings at 50 locations throughout the country. **United Kingdom:** on Oct. 2, SGI-UK members gathered at the Taplow Court Grand Culture Centre, in Berkshire. SGI-UK General Director Richard Baynes encouraged the members to conduct dialogues for peace.

SGI-Canada Participates in National Book Fair

On Sept. 30, SGI-Canada participated for the first time in Toronto's 12th annual National Book and Magazine Fair, a one-day book and magazine street festival, at Queens Street West in Toronto, Canada. More than 150,000 people visited the street book fair, lined with over 250 stalls sponsored by local and national publishers, booksellers, organizations promoting literacy, and other groups exhibiting books and magazines to browse or buy. There were "event tents" offering children's activities, musical performances, readings and book signings by new and established Canadian authors. Some 2,000 people stopped by the SGI-Canada's booth introducing SGI President Ikeda's peace proposals, magazines and books on SGI's peace, culture and education activities.

Courtesy of SOKANET
(www.sokagakkai.or.jp)

THE VESSEL OF FAITH

WORDS To WIN By

By KATHLEEN OLESKY
NORTHEASTERN ZONE
VICE WOMEN'S LEADER

From "Letter to Akimoto," The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 1014-22.

But a vessel is susceptible to four faults. The first is being upset or covered, which means that the vessel can be overturned or covered with a lid. The second is leaking, which means that the water leaks out. The third is being defiled, which means that the contents can be contaminated. Though the water itself may be pure, if filth is dumped into it, then the water in the vessel ceases to



be of any use. The fourth is being mixed. If rice is mixed with filth or pebbles or sand or dirt, then it is no longer fit for human consumption (WND, 1014).

Nichiren Daishonin sent this letter from Mount Minobu on Jan. 27, 1280 to Akimoto Taro Hyoen-jo, thought to be a 20-year practitioner. He begins by ex-

pressing appreciation for Akimoto's gifts of thirty cylindrical vessels and sixty plates.

By referring to the vessels the Daishonin illustrates the importance of a correct attitude in faith. The vessels stand for our bodies and minds and the water for Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the Buddha's wisdom. He explains that vessels are susceptible to four faults, being overturned, leaking, becoming contaminated or being mixed.

There may be times when we are practicing diligently and are so filled with benefit it feels like we are going to burst. Conversely, if we become complacent, loose our seeking spirit and begin to practice merely from force of habit, we can cause the water of our faith to spill out. Or, we may encounter evil influences or various obstacles and out of short-sightedness or foolish emotionalism, abandon our faith at the crucial moment. In this way

"the vessel can be overturned or covered with a lid." Again, regardless of the amount of water poured into a leaking vessel, it will not fill up. Likewise, if we are inconsistent, practicing faith only sporadically, we will fail to realize the true benefit of the Mystic Law. This might be equated this with a "leaking vessel."

Another cause for concern is if we begin to hold grudges, jealousy, hatred or contempt toward other believers, who are all fundamentally Buddhas. In this way we are dumping filth into pure water and it "ceases to be of any use" — the benefit of the Law stops flowing in our lives.

"Or we may be the kind of practitioners of the Lotus Sutra whose mouths are reciting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo one moment, but Namu Amida Butsu the next. This is like mixing filth with one's rice, or putting sand or pebbles in it" (WND, 1014).

This "mixing" occurs when we depend on something outside ourselves to attain happiness. It refers to combining the

practice of Buddhism with inferior teachings that place the Law outside ourselves. This could be anything that comes between us and the Gohonzon, that undermines or weakens our sincere prayer.

The Daishonin says: "If the embankments around a moat do not leak, then the water will never escape the moat. And if the mind of faith is perfect, then the water of wisdom, the great impartial wisdom, will never dry up" (WND, 1015). With an ever-seeking mind toward the Gohonzon, as we strive together joyfully with the SGI and President Ikeda for kosen-rufu, we are able to build a perfect vessel, enjoying the clean, clear water of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo flowing inexhaustibly within us. **W**

If you have any questions about your subscription to the *World Tribune* or *Living Buddhism* magazine, please call 1-800-835-4558

Remaining 2001 FNCC Conferences Cancelled

As a result of recent military actions taken by the United States and Britain in Afghanistan, an emergency meeting between SGI-USA national leaders, the SGI-USA Corporate Officers and the Florida Nature and Culture Center staff was convened to discuss the matter of FNCC conferences for the remainder of this year.

In light of this development, it was concluded that the safety of all FNCC conference participants is paramount. We wish to prevent the risk of any possible injury or unfortunate incident. Thus, it was unanimously decided that all remaining conferences for the year 2001 will be cancelled due to many concerns, including the following:

1) Inevitable changes and delays in flight schedules and increased security at airports result in inconvenient and time-consuming procedures. Conference participants arriving to and departing from Florida are subject to long delays at the air-

port and perhaps even an overnight stay in an unfamiliar city. In the event of these likely occurrences, the FNCC staff would be unable to facilitate or accommodate, in a proper and timely manner, the comfort and care of each participant.

2) Language barriers, which are an added obstacle to many of our members, will hinder the success of their travel at this time.

We truly regret the tremendous inconvenience that this causes, and we are committed to supporting you with any questions or concerns you may have regarding these recent developments.

Refund of Participant Fees

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 policy, credit card refunds cannot be issued without the request or confirmation of the credit card holder.

Discount Coupon

A \$100 discount coupon will be issued to all individuals who purchased airline tickets for the cancelled conferences. It is redeemable toward participation in any future FNCC conference. The discount coupon has no cash value and is not redeemable for cash. This offer is available until Nov. 15, 2001.

The discount coupon has been provided by the SGI-USA in consideration of the fees participants must pay to change or refund an airline ticket they have already purchased. Though the SGI-USA is not responsible for these fees, we are pleased to ex-

tend this discount coupon as a gesture of goodwill.

To qualify, ticketed travel dates must coincide with respective conference dates and the ticket must have been issued on or before Oct. 14, 2001. To receive your discount coupon, proof of airline ticket purchase is required. Airline ticket holders must submit a photocopy of either the paid airline ticket invoice, electronic ticket purchase receipt or the 'passenger receipt' coupon of their airline ticket directly to the FNCC.

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 33332-1929

Should you have any questions on this matter, please feel free to contact your zone office or the FNCC. Thank you very much for your understanding and support.

This decision affects the following FNCC Conferences:

Oct. 25-28	Mentor and Disciple Relationship Conference
Nov. 1-4	Women's Division Conference #2
Nov. 8-11	Culture Department Conference
Nov. 15-18	Youth Division Support Groups Conference
Nov. 29-Dec. 2	Korean Language Conference #2
Dec. 6-9	Study Conference #2
Dec. 13-16	Golden Stage Group Conference #3

'World Tribune' Revitalizes Bureau System

By TED MORINO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The *World Tribune*, the weekly newspaper of the SGI-USA, has reorganized its bureau system to better reflect the new organizational structure of the SGI-USA. Our new zone bureaus will be in a better position to work with local organizations, organize correspondents and photographers, and further our publication's aim to represent the whole organization.

The new bureau personnel also reflect a new generation of volunteer correspondents. A conscious effort was made to find capable, young people with strong writing and organizational skills, and, most importantly, a demonstrated

commitment to our kosen-rufu movement.

Our zone bureau chiefs will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of all our hard working volunteer writers and photographers in their zone, and work together with the zone leadership to ensure that

our coverage accurately reflects the local membership. In addition, they will function as the *World Tribune* office in their zone, receiving and processing member's experiences and perspectives articles.

Along with SGI-USA General Director Danny Na-

gashima, the *World Tribune* staff extends its gratitude and deep appreciation to our past bureau chiefs, without whom we could not have created the newspaper we have today. Many of them have agreed to continue serving the *World Tribune* as a bureau advisor,

sharing their knowledge and experience with a new generation. Please join me in congratulating them on their years of invaluable assistance and their new departure.

Thank you so much for your continued support of the *World Tribune*.

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Bureau Chief: **Dana Powe**
Vice Bureau Chief: **Dan Defensor**
Bureau Advisor: **Veronica Evans**

MID-ATLANTIC ZONE
Bureau Chief: **David Joray**
Bureau Advisor: **Robin Meader**

NORTHEASTERN ZONE
Bureau Chief: **Sean Grover**
Bureau Advisor: **Robert Taliaferro**

NO. CALIFORNIA ZONE
Bureau Chief: **Ron Baird**
Vice Bureau Chief: **Mark Kaplan**

PACIFIC ZONE
Bureau Chief: **Gary Nakamura**
Bureau Advisor: **Joanne Tachibana**

PACIFIC NORTHWEST ZONE
Bureau Chief: **Liza Javier**
Vice Bureau Chief: **Brenda Sawyer**
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Bureau Advisor: **Jim Dreisbach**

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Bureau Chief: **Jason Henninger**
Bureau Advisor: **Lisa Kirk**

WESTERN ZONE
Bureau Chief: **Irlene Owada**
Vice Bureau Chief: **Leisa Mills**



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Weekly Newspaper

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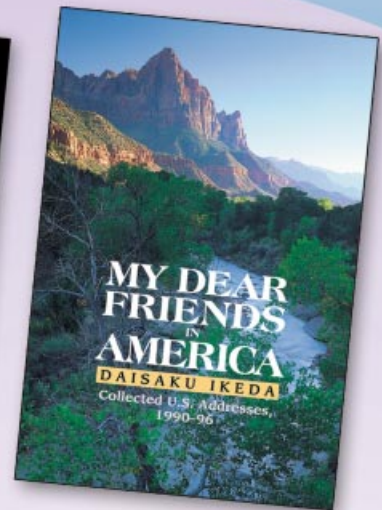
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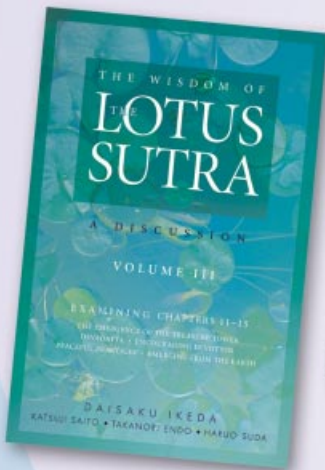


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