

Legendary Peace Activist Receives Honor at SUA

By JAMIE LIPTAN
STAFF WRITER

Nobel Peace Prize recipient Dr. Joseph Rotblat was honored by Soka University with the conferral of an honorary doctorate at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, Oct. 16. Held on the majestic third floor of the university's Founders Hall, the ceremony included a stirring lecture by Dr. Rotblat titled "Quest for Global Peace," in which he strictly warned against relaxing efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

"It is a great honor to receive this doctorate from the school founded by Daisaku Ikeda, who has dedicated his life to the realization of global peace," said Dr. Rotblat, who is also the first recipient of the SGI-affiliated Toda Institute for Global Peace's Toda Prize for Peace Research.

Dr. Rotblat was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 after 50 years of effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons. The 93-year-old physicist is renowned for his work in nuclear radiation, including his 1934 discovery of the element cobalt 60, still used today in the treatment of cancer.

In his lecture, Dr. Rotblat



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

Dr. Joseph Rotblat receives an honorary doctorate at the Aliso Viejo, Calif., campus of Soka University of America, Oct. 16.

described the evolution of humanity's loyalties, from a time when looking out for one's own well-being was paramount to

today, where "we have stopped at loyalty to one's nation."

"If we are to move beyond the violence and destruction

of the last century and ensure that all the world's people benefit from the advances of modern society," he contin-

ued, "we absolutely must begin a movement of deep loyalty toward humanity throughout the world." **WT**

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 10 SPEECH

PROPAGATION IS THE HEART OF THE SGI

'Propagating Nichiren Daishonin's teachings, sharing Buddhism with others, is the heart of the SGI,' says SGI President Ikeda. 'Toward that end, we as leaders must first of all pray earnestly and challenge our own human revolution.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a Soka Gakkai nationwide executive conference, held at the Gumma Taho Training Center in Kusatsu, Gumma Prefecture, Japan, Aug. 10.

A true Buddhist is one who rushes to the side of those suffering the most, those in the most painful circumstances.

Propagating Nichiren Daishonin's teachings, sharing Buddhism with others, is the heart of the SGI. Toward that end, we as leaders must first of all pray earnestly and challenge our own human revolution. We must lead the way by

taking action ourselves, while at the same time fully supporting our fellow members in their efforts to introduce others to Buddhism.

The path of kosen-rufu is the path walked by the Daishonin. It is the supreme path of happiness. Let us cheerfully, wisely advance in harmony along this path, as we steadily expand the scope of our kosen-rufu movement.

The secret to helping young people develop is taking action together with them.

Happiness is determined by our state of life and by the depth of the philosophy we live by. To be happy requires strength. Weakness leads to unhappiness.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 6 SPEECH

Great Benefit for Now and the Future

'Kosen-rufu activities require enormous effort,' SGI President Ikeda says, 'but for that reason we can accumulate great benefit—not only for ourselves in the present but for our descendants well into the future. Therefore, to pass up the opportunity to take on this struggle would be our infinite loss.'

SGI President Ikeda's speech at a nationwide executive leaders conference, held at the Soka Gakkai Nagano Training Center in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture, Japan, Aug. 6.

Life is a drama. Since we are going to perform on the stage of life anyway, we ought to live vigorously and joyfully, enacting an inspiring drama of successive victories. We have to win in life. We have to win in society. We have to win a resounding victory for kosen-rufu.

Toward that end, we need a "supreme strategy" that will assure victory. What is required is iron unity—everyone uniting in spirit. We need to take courageous and meticulous action.

We need the determination of an indomitable leader. In a sense, it was the great determination of Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, which resulted in the Soka Gakkai's present development.

Also, by seizing the initiative, we can gain the upper hand. In any struggle, it is necessary to be proactive. These are the secrets of an ever-victorious leader—these are the timeless, universal principles of victory.

President Toda used to say: "When we have won, we tend to sow the seeds of future defeat. Conversely, when we have lost, we can create the cause for future victory." He used to always admonish us, "You must keep up your guard, even after a victory." When we are victorious—that is when we should rebuild the organization and solidify our own footing.

Take the example of someone with a regional leadership position: The person may vaguely imagine that he or she is keeping watch over the entire region, but that is too general and abstract. We need to clarify the specific prefecture and sphere of activities for which the person is responsible. We need to decide the person's home base. On that

foundation, he or she can then carry out activities spanning the entire region.

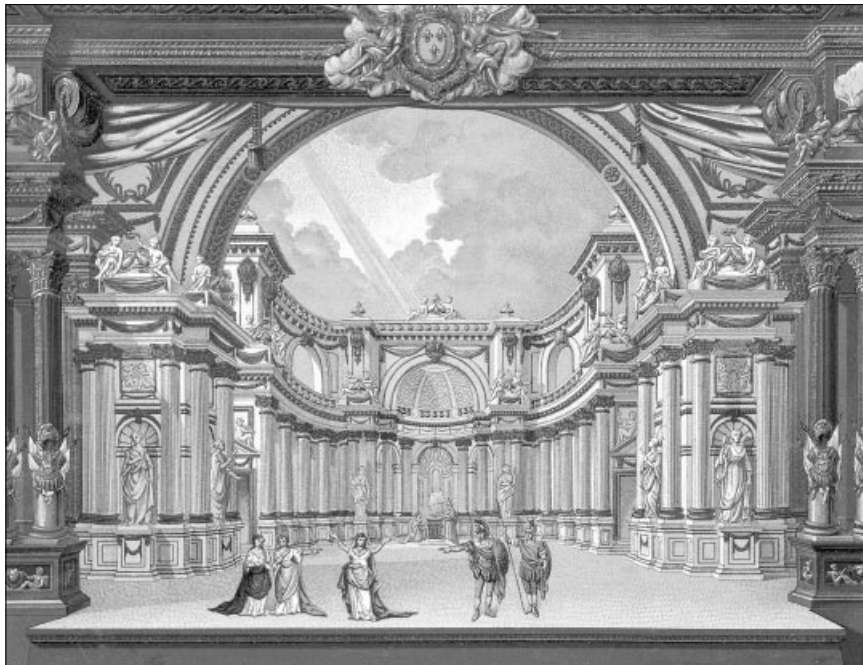
To keep your own responsibility vague, so as to avoid having to do anything while making others work hard—and then putting on an air of self-importance—is sneaky and cunning. SGI leaders must not have such an attitude. When leaders have such an arrogant attitude, everything comes crashing down.

Kosen-rufu activities require enormous effort, but for that reason we can accumulate great benefit—not only for ourselves in the present but for our descendants well into the future. Therefore, to pass up the opportunity to take on this struggle would be our infinite loss.

Because there are enemies, we can exert ourselves. Because we energetically engage ourselves, we can accumulate benefit. And because we work hard, we can savor supreme joy.

At the start of the 21st century, human society must discover the sanctity of life.

The SGI movement is winning strong sympathy and support around the world. The other day, Dr. Winston Langley, acting provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, endorsed my 2001 SGI Day peace proposal in an interview with a correspondent of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper. [On Jan. 26, President Ikeda announced his peace proposal commemorating the 26th SGI Day, "Creating and Sustaining a Century of Life: Challenges for a New Era" (see the May *Living Bud-*



'Life is a drama,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Since we are going to perform on the stage of life anyway, we ought to live vigorously and joyfully, enacting an inspiring drama of successive victories.'

dhism magazine.)]

A prominent political scientist, Dr. Langley is a person of profound erudition and rich character. He serves as an advisor to the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, which I founded.

Dr. Langley observed that the world today is in many senses divided. And he credited me with keeping my focus trained on global society amid all of this division, and with bringing many disparate fragments together as part of a comprehensive outlook.

He also applauded my efforts to raise new questions and deepen the discussion on ways of thinking about events that people have come to take for granted. And he suggested I am advancing this work on the planes of philosophy, education and religion from a standpoint of universal humanism.

I have long affirmed that the 21st century will be a Century of Life. Needless to say, during the 20th century, human life was treated with savage disregard. Now, at the start of the 21st century, human society is at last earnestly searching for a philosophy that upholds the sanctity of life. People are beginning to seek

out a new humanism. In truth, the Age of Soka—an age in which the humanistic principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism gain wide acceptance—has arrived.

Our movement for kosen-rufu is a noble enterprise to put the Buddhist philosophy of the sanctity of life into practice in all areas of society. Let us take pride in advancing on the leading edge of the times.

'Humanitarian competition' means a shared struggle.

Dr. Langley observed that the concept of symbiosis, which I discussed at length in the proposal, means the creative coexistence in which each party seeks the good of all. Taking up the idea of humanitarian competition, which I introduced in my January 1996 peace proposal (see the April 1996 *Seikyo Times* magazine), he clarified that this does not mean competition in the usual sense but that all parties challenge themselves to achieve a common objective. It means shared struggle.

The educator noted that the English term *compete* originally referred to people coming together to face some

challenge. When we base ourselves on this lofty perspective, he said, we can overcome negative competitiveness and work together to achieve our spiritual evolution.

With regard to Japan's constitution, which is famous for its renunciation of war, Dr. Langley said that the essential question is not whether Japan ought to militarize but how the spirit of Japan's constitution can be spread to all

World The
TRIBUNE SGI-USA's
Weekly
Newspaper

The *World Tribune* (692-720) is published weekly by the SGI-USA, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907; (310) 260-8900; FAX (310) 260-8910; E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org SGIUSBS@aol.com

Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA, and at additional mailing offices. Return To: SGI-USA Subscriptions, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

Subscription Rates (subject to state taxes) \$15 for Three Months; \$28 for Six Months; \$50 for One Year; \$85 for Two Years; \$125 for Three Years

Printed on 100% recycled paper
Copyright © 2001 by SGI-USA.
All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

people. In that regard, he affirmed, Japan can make a very important contribution to the world.

According to Dr. Langley, Japan's constitution can serve as a model not only for Japan but also for all humankind, and he offers suggestions for the future scope of the United Nations. He also applauded my proposal that people should work together in liaison with the United Nations toward achieving lasting peace based on the principle and the spirit of Article 9 of Japan's constitution. [Article 9: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. 2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."]

Dr. Langley's generous words are praise for all of you who are working to promote the spread of peace and

humanism throughout the world. It is for this reason that I have taken the liberty of introducing Dr. Langley's comments. [Dr. Langley also said that while the development of modern thought has by and large excluded the spiritual side of life, people today are becoming aware of the need to revive spirituality and are genuinely searching for spiritual leaders. In that context, he felt that President Ikeda's proposals, while based on Buddhist thought, do not seek to impose any particular religion on people. The educator added that he was grateful for the existence of a leader possessing such a profound spiritual perspective.]

The only way to stop war is for the people to become strong.

Professor Takehiko Furuta, an authority on the ancient Japanese kingdom of Yamatai, sent me a copy of a paper that he wrote. In the paper he describes the essential nature of modern Japan's invasion of Asia as follows: "It seems to me that Japan was trying to play catch-up with the imperialist West. It was a matter of

imitation. Japan should realize the ugliness of its past actions and discard its posturing [in imitation of the West]."

He went on to say that even if the peoples of China, Korea and other countries in Asia did not seek an apology, Japan ought to apologize before all humankind. That would be the proper stance for the country to take, he said.

Professor Furuta stresses that the arrogance of Japanese militarism must not be revived. I entirely agree.

During World War II, my four older brothers were drafted into the army. My eldest brother died in the war. Our home was burned down in the air raids. The root evil that caused the war was nationalism.

To ensure that this tragedy is never repeated, the people must become strong. That is the only way. The people must become wise. And the people must keep a strict watch over power. That is why the Soka Gakkai's advance is itself the advance of peace.

As it is still quite hot, please be sure to get adequate rest, so that you can vigorously lead activities in good health. **WT**

Encourage Someone!

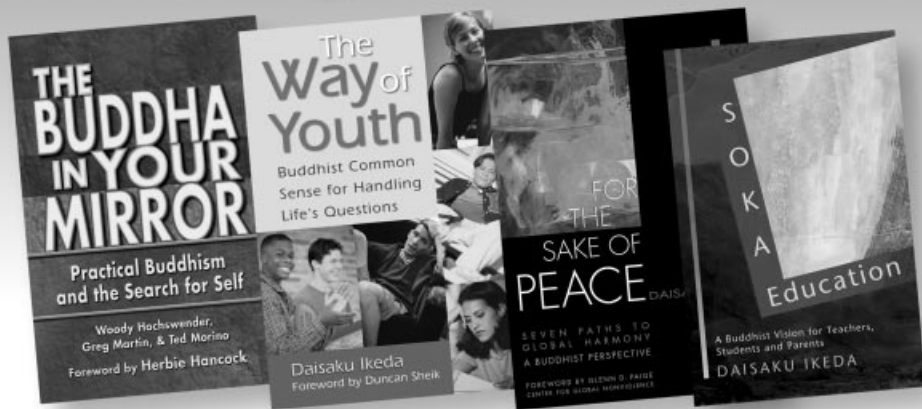
To subscribe, visit www.sgisubs.com or send in the order form below with your payment enclosed. No cash, please. Please check the appropriate boxes.

Call 1-800-835-4558 if you have questions.

WORLD TRIBUNE	LIVING BUDDHISM
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 months \$15 (13 issues) Save \$11	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 months \$15 (3 issues) Save \$3
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 months \$28 (26 issues) Save \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 months \$28 (6 issues) Save \$8
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year \$50 (52 issues) Save \$54	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year \$50 (12 issues) Save \$22
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years \$85 (104 issues) Save \$123	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years \$90 (24 issues) Save \$54
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years \$110 (156 issues) Save \$202	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years \$125 (36 issues) Save \$91

If you wish, please select one free optional language supplement of the World Tribune.
 Spanish Portuguese Korean Chinese Japanese
 Are you a new subscriber? Yes No U.S. rates only. International rates vary.
 Charge my VISA or Master Card
 Card # _____
 Expiration date _____
 Signature _____ All credit card orders are subject to bank approval
 Name _____
 Address _____ Apt. # _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
(For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver) District Source Code (if known)
SEND TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

Applying Buddhism to Daily Life



Available at your favorite bookstore or on-line at www.middlewaypress.com

The Buddha in Your Mirror
Practical Buddhism and the Search for Self

A practical, easy-to-read introduction to Nichiren Buddhism.

The Way of Youth
Buddhist Common Sense for Handling Life's Questions

"Readers of this book should emerge encouraged and with their confidence lifted."
—*Youth Today*

For the Sake of Peace
Seven Paths to Global Harmony, A Buddhist Perspective

"If all practiced the principles of empathy, dialog and awareness that Ikeda outlines, the world would experience a true peace."
—*ForeWord Magazine*

Soka Education
A Buddhist Vision for Teachers, Students and Parents

A fresh, spiritual perspective on the ultimate purpose of education.

SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

SAN DIEGO FESTIVAL PROMOTES UNITY

By LIZ ANDERSON
SAN DIEGO CORRESPONDENT

Members of the SGI-USA in San Diego united with organizations throughout their community to hold their first Victory Over Violence Family Youth Festival. Organizers hoped the festival would be a resource for the community in regards to nonviolence, highlighting like-minded organizations and speakers who share the SGI's goal of ending violence in all its forms.

The festival attracted more than 4,300 people, including California State Assemblyman Howard Wayne, San Diego City Councilwoman Donna Frye and U.S. Congressman Bob Filner. Each praised the SGI-USA for its efforts toward ending violence in the community.

In addition, Assemblyman Wayne's office presented certificates to the 25 other organizations that set up information booths at the festival. These included the Human Relations Commission of San Diego, the United Nations Association, the Tariq Khamisa Foundation and Soka University of America.

The event, held at San Diego High School on July 29, featured guest speakers addressing the root causes of violence, performances by SGI-USA youth groups and community cultural performing groups who performed



Performers grace the stage at an SGI-USA Family Youth Festival at San Diego High School, July 29.

everything from tango to Polynesian dance.

A powerful message was delivered by the founder of the Tariq Khamisa Foundation, Azim Khamisa, whose young son was killed by a 14-year-old gang member in an initiation rite. Instead of revenge, Mr. Khamisa chose to break the cycle of hate by embracing the family of his son's killer. Together, they hope to show

how people can end destructive cycles of violence.

Peace and unity were at the forefront as well as behind-the-scenes of the festival. Wishing to create an unforgettable event, hundreds of dedicated SGI-USA members worked tirelessly, making decorations, artwork and exhibitions and inviting guests and various groups.

The SGI-USA youth in San

Diego banded together, dedicating every weekend to perfecting dance and drill routines, practicing music and memorizing lines.

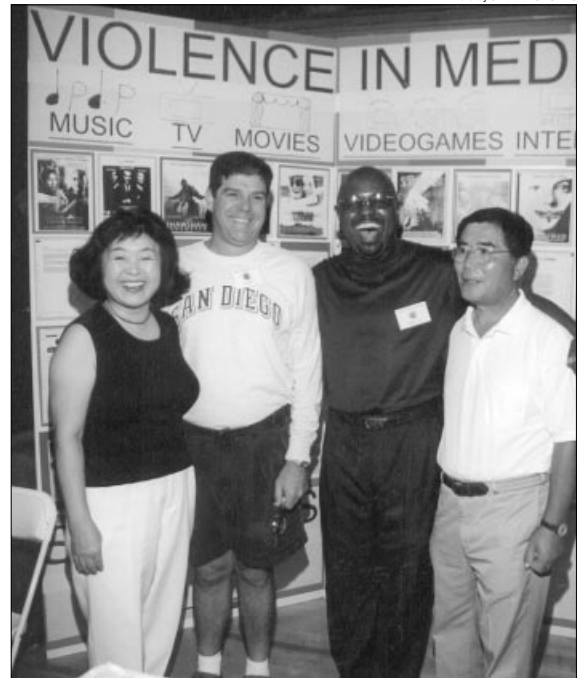
More than 100 youth participated on-stage in the festival's

grand finale, ending with an original song written for the event, "Century of Life," which incorporated Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." The festival came to a close with the audience singing along. **WT**

Photo by JANET MONOLIAS



Members of the SGI-USA's North Area in San Diego perform as part of the Polynesian Dance Group.



SGI-USA members create various information booths for the festival, including this exhibition on violence in the media.

Photo by RUSSELL MONOLIAS

EXPERIENCE — PAUL LIM, LOS ANGELES

Finding the Inspiration To Win

While struggling with finances and strife at home, Paul Lim determines to win and use his victory to inspire other young people.

Since I graduated from college, I have always worked for graphic arts companies. I have been fortunate in that I have always worked with great people, and my creative responsibilities and pay always increased each year. But deep down, I always felt the desire to run my own graphic design business.

In January 2000, after much deliberation and discussion with my wife, I decided to go out on my own and start my own business. With two young sons, a mortgage and other expenses, I was taking a risk. However, I had been freelancing off and on for a few years and had developed a roster of clients, so I felt confident in my decision.

The first eight months of business were great. Every single day I was working on different projects and even though I was working harder than before, I was able to set my own schedule and do SGI activities freely. Around September, things changed.

Projects began tapering off, and one by one, clients were giving me less work. One client was hit hard by the failure of Internet stocks, while another decided to cut back on their advertising budget and do all of their work in-house. Another had gone through four different production managers in four weeks. All of this occurred within a month. It was a bizarre time.

My suffering was not just professional. My wife and I were constantly arguing. It usually began with our finances and would spiral out of control to my other shortcomings. For the first time in our marriage, we were accumulating debt at a fast rate; my wife provided the only source of consistent income.

One night after a major blowup, I left the house and wound up staying overnight at a friend's house. During this dry spell at work and the conflicts at home, which lasted nine



Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI

painful months, I continued to do organizational activities and support my chapter as a young men's leader. Along with *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, I never failed to read SGI President Ikeda's guidance for encouragement. Every night, after everyone went to sleep, I would stay up to read *The New Human Revolution*. The history of the pioneer members and President Ikeda's daily struggles to fight for the members' happiness made my problems seem small. After studying each night, I determined silently to myself that I was going to win and show actual proof as a disciple of President Ikeda.

In mid-June, right around the time of the NBA finals, I was watching game four of the championship series between the Los Angeles Lakers and Philadelphia 76'ers. Being a big Lakers fan, I never missed a single game. That night, something came over me and I told my wife that I was going to work with the Lakers. She rolled her eyes and said, "Yeah right, just about everyone wants to work with the Lakers right now." And given the fact that just a month before, I was going from business to business passing out promo flyers with zero result, my statement seemed pretty far-fetched.

That night I chanted in front of the Gohonzon with a power-

ful conviction. And for the first time since I started my business, I determined to create value. It occurred to me that my wanting to start my business was simply to fulfill my small ego. I had lost my sense of purpose.

I pledged that when — not if — I worked with the Lakers, I would use my experience to encourage as many people as possible and to inspire the next generation of youth during the upcoming family youth festival. In the past it would have seemed like just mental lip service, but that night I was sincerely determined to win.

An idea came to me as I was chanting. As a side venture, I also do graphic design images for large event cakes and since it seemed inevitable that the Lakers were going to win and have a celebration party, having a cake there only made sense.

On Friday morning, I called the Lakers' office and pitched the idea. I was routed to three different people before I connected with the right person. She told me that if the Lakers won that night, they would need a cake the following Monday. The Lakers won the championship that night, and the next morning I was asked to come to the Lakers' office to choose the pictures I needed to design the image for the cake.

After much work over the

weekend on the design, with not even an hour to spare, I finished the graphics and the cake was delivered. At the party, the cake was placed in a room exclusive to the players, their wives and the organization. Just about everyone was amazed at the image and size of the cake and anyone who had a camera took pictures that included it.

The following day, the cake was the talk of the Lakers' organization. A few days later, I was asked to come in for a meeting in the office of Jerry Buss, owner of the Lakers. I was asked if the cake image could be used on their official 2002 calendar cover and if I would be interested in designing the entire 36-page calendar. I said yes, and the calendar has since been published.

As I looked around the office and saw all the championship trophies, the pictures of Jerry West, Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabaar, Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant, it dawned on me — I had won.

Soon, the NBA Headquarters called from New York and asked about a cake for their championship video release party. Then the director of marketing requested a cake for next season's NBA All-Star Game in Philadelphia. Within a very short period of time, New Line Cinema, USA Films and Sony Pictures all requested that I do work for them. What was once a side

business had now gained exponential exposure.

Not long after this, I helped arrange for five of the Laker Girls to come and encourage the youth performers and support groups preparing for the family youth festival in Los Angeles. Initially they came to encourage the youth who were practicing so hard, which they did. But by the time the Laker Girls left, they were just as encouraged. They were inspired by the united efforts of such a diverse group of youth and promised to share their experience with the entire Laker organization. My goal to encourage others and inspire the next generation of youth was coming together in a way I had never imagined.

I am so appreciative of my wife for always pushing me to improve — whether I wanted to or not. I realize now that had I experienced these events prior to my suffering, I could not have made such a strong determination to change poison into medicine. But I also have to say, as great as my experience has been, working with the Lakers is not an end.

My goals and determination for the 21st century have grown. I want to expand my business to include a team of creative artists who can create value for society. And I will continue to do what I can to share Nichiren Daishonin's philosophy with others.

And even though he is halfway around the world, during many dark hours, President Ikeda's encouragement was always there for me — all I had to do was seek it. This is something I will never forget. **WT**



Photo by PAUL LIM

Los Angeles Laker Girls support SGI-USA youth at a practice for the Oct. 7 Victory Over Violence Family Youth Festival in Los Angeles.

FROM SPEECH, I

I especially hope that the young women will become women of indomitable spirit and inner strength. And I hope that their seniors in life, the women's division members, will warmly support them.

What is the secret to helping young people develop their potential? It is important not to unreasonably take them to task. There are also times when praise alone will not adequately move people's hearts. While on occasion it is important that we give our juniors specific advice and direction, it is even more important that we work with them, together taking action for *kosen-rufu*.

Everyone is a capable person. The efforts we make now to raise outstanding capable people will determine the course of our movement for the next hundred years.

Here today, we have women's division representatives from every region of Japan. All of our triumphs and successes for *kosen-rufu* could not be possible without the women's division, the sun of our organization. I am deeply grateful for all of your noble efforts, and I offer you my highest praise.

'No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality.'

I am holding dialogues with leading thinkers around the world, one of whom is the futurist Hazel Henderson. Dr. Henderson and I have been collaborating on a dialogue for eventual publication, in which we are discussing the future of our planet, Mother Earth, while aspiring for a Century of Women, a Century of Children. In the course of our dialogue, Dr. Henderson has indicated her high regard for the social involvement of SGI members.

Dr. Henderson mentioned that Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents, were both educators and people of action—with Toda a mathematician and businessman, as well.

Developing one's spirituality and listening to one's higher self are necessary, she observed, but should be complemented by engagement in socially concerned activism. In this respect, she said, she admired the positive, optimistic way of life of SGI members.

Buddhism teaches that "no worldly affairs of life or work



Ukrainian Ambassador to Japan Yuriy Kostenko and SGI President Ikeda talk on July 27.

are ever contrary to the true reality" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1121). The workings of politics and business in the real world do not run counter to the correct teachings and principles of Buddhism. The Daishonin, quoting the preceding passage [by T'ien-t'ai], comments, "A person of wisdom is...one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world is governed" (WND, 1121). In accord with these words of the Daishonin, the SGI has been engaged in society, contributing to peace and people's prosperity and welfare. We have succeeded in all our undertakings.

Thinking people around the world accurately perceive the significance of our socially engaged efforts.

Movements that change the course of history always start with friendship and trust.

Dr. Henderson began a fight against air pollution in New York City in the 1960s, when she was, as she describes herself then, an "ordinary housewife." In our dialogue, I questioned her in considerable detail as to how she expanded her personal protest into a widespread civic movement. She told me that she began by talking to other mothers at the neighborhood park, while they were watching their children play. Starting with the simple question "Don't you think the air here is bad?" she engaged them in repeated discussions, and eventually they formed a small group to challenge the problem.

Movements that change the

course of history begin with ties of friendship and trust formed between individuals. And it was in this way that Dr. Henderson formed a citizens group for clean air.

During her daughter's afternoon naps, Dr. Henderson began to write letters to the mayor of New York City and other city officials, asking them to address the issue of air pollution. In the beginning, she received only dismissive responses, but she refused to be discouraged.

This small group of activists, made up of about 10 members, first of all set a concrete goal: to have air-pollution forecasts included on TV weather reports. They divided up the task of writing to high-ranking executives at all of the major networks. They also wrote to the head of the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C., to the governor of New York and other public officials. They made steady efforts to win allies to their cause, tenaciously advancing their movement step by step.

The group also called on all of the top advertising agencies, hoping that some company would donate publicity work, but none were willing. After visiting 20 firms, the group members decided that they would try just one more—if that company refused as well, they would give up. Fortunately, the last organization they approached agreed to help.

As a result of their unflagging perseverance, these environmental activists finally achieved their desired goal of having the New York air-poll-

ution index included on TV weather forecasts. One network first led the way, and then all local TV stations, most radio stations and the local newspapers quickly adopted the practice. In a short time, the use of the air-pollution index also began to spread beyond New York.

Soon, the New York City Council enacted two laws concerning air pollution. And shortly thereafter, the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Clean Air Act [in 1970].

This was a historic struggle and an epochal achievement for the environmental movement.

A way forward can be found, if everyone combines forces.

In the struggle for improved air quality in New York City, Dr. Henderson realized that it was possible to change the situation through persevering.

She recognizes that ordinary people may often start out thinking that projects are impossible, or that the obstacles facing them are too big. But she asserts that a way can be found, if everyone combines forces. Not all walls, she says, are so thick and strong that we cannot find a doorway somewhere and make a breakthrough.

Dr. Henderson emphasizes the value of finding partners and expanding alliances. She also advises civic movements to make use of the power of the mass media, in the good sense.

In other words, to achieve what is just and right, we must have the strength and wisdom to win people over to our side and to turn everything to our

advantage. With some humor, Dr. Henderson says that to be an effective civic activist and global citizen, it is sometimes necessary to be bold and almost brazen.

She also stresses philosophy and spirituality. A civic movement, she maintains, must have a philosophy, and each of its participants must possess a noble spirituality. The SGI, she says, has such a philosophy.

In this, the Century of Women, the protagonists of the SGI's civic movement, which upholds a profound philosophy and lofty spirituality, are none other than the women's and young women's division members. How noble are women who embrace the Buddhist Law!

The Daishonin clearly states, "A woman who embraces this sutra [the Lotus Sutra] not only excels all other women, but also surpasses all men" (WND, 464). More than 700 years ago, the Daishonin loudly proclaimed the Buddhist view of respect for women. I hope all of you will cheerfully advance, filled with pride and confidence in this fact.

Let us expand our network, based on the principle 'Buddhism manifests in society.'

Citizens speaking out, empowering themselves, and working together—this is the lifeline of democracy. President Toda sternly declared: "There is no need to fear authority. There is no need to fear anyone, whoever they may be. The fear of authority leads to the destruction of democracy. If that were to happen, what a tragedy it would be for the ordinary people, who are the ones who will suffer! Ultimately, sovereignty rests with the people."

I especially hope that the women's leaders, as "shining suns of the SGI," will warmly encourage and embrace their fellow members, who are striving in their missions in their respective fields, and do their utmost to enable each person to bring forth his or her potential and grow.

The Soka Gakkai's network reaches out into society on a wide variety of levels. This includes such specialized groups as the Doctors Division, the Women's Division Nurses Group, the Young Women's Division Nurses Group, the Academic and Science Division, the Educators Division, the International Division and the Writers Division. Our splendid Arts

South Africa: The Hope of Humankind

During his visit with South African President Thabo Mbeki, SGI President Ikeda remarks: ‘Through the power of the people, South Africa has constructed a peaceful human republic, a “rainbow nation.” This represents the hope of humankind.’

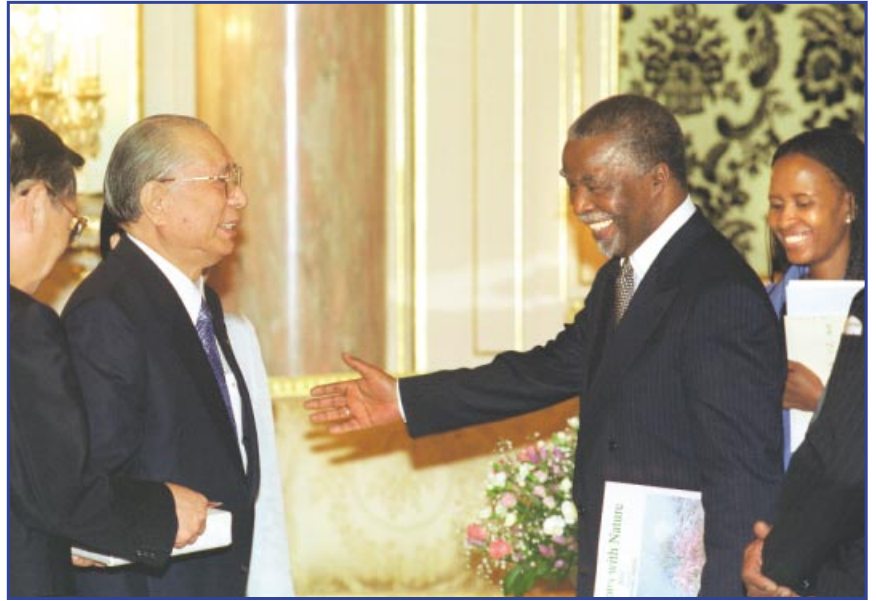
Meeting on Oct. 1 with South African President Thabo Mbeki, who had arrived just that morning for a three-day state visit, SGI President Ikeda congratulated him on his two years as president. President Ikeda took the opportunity to present the South African leader with a poem titled “Lion of the New Century Advancing Toward the African Renaissance,” that he had composed in Mr. Mbeki’s honor. He apologized for only being able to present him with the Japanese version at this time, having only finished writing the poem that morning, and promised to forward an English translation as soon as possible. Mr. Mbeki expressed his appreciation and, as he looked at the text of the poem, laughingly joked that perhaps it was a hint that he should learn Japanese.

President Ikeda expressed his condolences on the recent death of Mr. Mbeki’s father, Govan Mbeki, who passed away on Aug. 30 at the age of 91. He described the elder Mr. Mbeki as “a hero of the liberation movement who helped usher in the dawn of democ-

ocracy in South Africa.” He noted that Govan Mbeki spent 23 years in jail with Nelson Mandela. After Nelson Mandela was elected president in 1994, the senior Mr. Mbeki served as deputy president of South Africa’s Senate.

President Ikeda also commented that Govan Mbeki was known as “a warrior with a pen,” and recalled the famous story of his writing his celebrated work *South Africa: The Peasant’s Revolt* on toilet paper while in solitary confinement in the 1960s. For his activism and literary contributions, he was later awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Amsterdam.

Noting that both of President Mbeki’s parents were teachers and activists in the anti-apartheid struggle, President Ikeda stressed the paramount importance of education. “The success of later generations,” he said, “will be decided first and foremost by education.” He continued that he had been deeply moved by President Mbeki’s appeal: “For liberation—education! Every educator, a liberator! Every liberator, an educator!” The first



SGI President Ikeda visits with South African President Thabo Mbeki in Tokyo, Oct. 1.

and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, he observed, had also embodied these words, which captured the very essence of education.

The SGI leader touched on another anecdote he had heard about Govan Mbeki. Once the president’s father had been asked by one of his colleagues in the struggle how they could possibly fight without weapons, to which the elder Mr. Mbeki had replied to the effect, “The authorities may

have guns, but we have people.” Calling these timeless words, President Ikeda remarked: “Just as your father said, through the power of the people, South Africa has constructed a peaceful human republic, a ‘rainbow nation.’ This represents the hope of humankind.”

President Mbeki remarked that the members of his father’s generation had made enormous contributions to their country. For not only did they free South Africa from

the yoke of apartheid, he explained, they also played an important role in shaping the direction of the country’s future. He said he believed it was the duty of the members of his own generation to realize the vision that had been forged at great personal risk and sacrifice by their predecessors, including his father. President Ikeda declared that President Mbeki was doing precisely that—translating the ideals of his predecessors into reality. **WT**

FROM SPEECH, 6

Division also shines. The activities of the Business Professionals Division, the Executives Division, the Community Division, the Housing Complex Division, the Rural Areas Division and the Remote Islands Division are remarkable as well.

By expanding our diverse network built on the principle of “Buddhism manifests in society,” let us work toward the further growth of our kosen-rufu movement in the 21st century.

There is no power stronger than the power of our faith.

On July 27, I had the opportunity to engage in a memorable discussion with Ukrainian Ambassador Yuriy Kostenko, a wonderful ambassador. Ukraine celebrates the 10th anniversary

of its independence on Aug. 24—the same day as the anniversary of my joining the Soka Gakkai. In tribute to the deep friendship between the ambassador and myself, I want to share the words of some distinguished writers linked to Ukraine.

The Ukraine-born author Nikolay Vasilyevich Gogol, whose novel *Taras Bulba* I studied under President Toda, wrote, “Be living souls, not dead souls.” Those who strive to realize the great ideal of kosen-rufu, the most true and just of all causes, are indeed living souls.

Gogol also stated, “It is a certain truth that he who has been most sorely tried by life, constantly bearing the yoke of unhappiness, will be the happiest of men.” How true is this for us who embrace the Mystic Law of changing poison into medicine and lessening

one’s karmic retribution! Because of this, we fear nothing.

Elsewhere, Gogol refers to an axiom of human nature “that makes a proud, strong man weak and helpless in adversity and a weakling swell to become a giant in the depths of his difficulties.” The members of the Soka Gakkai, which was once dismissed as “a gathering of the sick and poor,” have demonstrated countless magnificent examples of human revolution—of fundamentally transforming their lives from within.

Gogol further wrote, “Only a profoundly good soul has the power of fresh, clear laughter.” That is why the SGI, a gathering of truly good-hearted people, is so cheerful, so filled with joyous laughter.

Anton Chekhov, who spent the last years of his life in

Ukraine, declared, “Indifference is paralysis of the soul, premature death.” It is the mission of our youth to save many young people from this death of the spirit.

The Daishonin wrote to one of his disciples, the lay nun Nichigon: “Whether or not your prayer is answered will depend on your faith; [if it is not] I will in no way be to blame.

“When water is clear, the moon is reflected. When the wind blows, the trees shake. Our minds are like the water. Faith that is weak is like muddy water, while faith that is brave is like clear water. Understand that the trees are like principles, and the wind that shakes them is like the recitation of the sutra [the *Lotus Sutra*]” (WND, 1079).

There is no power stronger than faith.

Advancing with the conviction that faith equals health and faith equals daily life, please wisely create an exemplary home life.

Let us also resolutely encourage, train and wholeheartedly foster the youth, who are our successors. Let us together pledge to solidly construct new strongholds of capable people dedicated to kosen-rufu in each region, always maintaining a spirit of mutual respect and advancing together in harmonious unity. **WT**

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

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'PURE STREAM'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 9-12

Shin'ichi Yamamoto says that the secret to happiness is winning over oneself and practicing to the Gohonzon with doubt-free faith that flows like a pure stream, no matter what happens.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto asked another question at the Chubu No. 2 Headquarters Leaders Meeting at the Nagano Civic Hall: "How many of you have experienced benefit since becoming a member? Please raise your hands." "I have!" came the thunderous reply as they all raised their hands.

"That's wonderful," Shin'ichi said. "You can lower your hands now. Since that's the case, I can end my speech here. The purpose of faith, after all, is to attain benefit." Laughter filled the auditorium.

Shin'ichi then announced the construction of the Chubu No. 2 Headquarters Building. The members expressed their joy with thunderous applause. Shin'ichi went on to say that the secret to happiness was winning over oneself and practicing to the Gohonzon with doubt-free

faith that flows like a pure stream, no matter what happens.

"The Daishonin's Buddhism is made valid," he said, "by documentary, theoretical, and actual proof. But some people begin to have doubts as soon as their business suffers a little downturn, or say the Gohonzon has failed to protect them if, for instance, their child gets injured. And there are those who, when certain sectors of the mass media criticize the Soka Gakkai, begin to doubt the guidance of their seniors in the Gakkai, lose faith in the Gohonzon, and stop doing gongyo altogether.

"These are people who tend not to reflect on themselves or their faith. Instead, whenever the slightest problem or setback occurs, they start doubting the Gohonzon or the Soka Gakkai. However, this only erases the great benefit they would have otherwise accumulated.



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

"Babies thrive because they drink their mother's milk without question. If they stop drinking it too soon, however, their growth will be stunted and they'll become weak and susceptible to illness. In the same way, if we continue to have faith in the Gohonzon and chant daimoku throughout our lives, we will absolutely tap into the life force of the Buddha and the way we live will reflect a con-

dition of absolute happiness.

"Please do not doubt the Gohonzon, but continue to chant daimoku and work together with the Soka Gakkai, the organization dedicated to kosen-rufu. This is the way to enjoy a truly meaningful and happy life." Shin'ichi's guidance expressed his earnest wish that each of his fellow members would enjoy a life of great fulfillment, abundant benefit, and good fortune.

The Chubu No. 2 Headquarters Leaders Meeting closed with Shin'ichi leading the members in singing "Song of the New Century." Afterwards, Shin'ichi went to offer encouragement to the overflow of members waiting outside. He then attended a chapter leaders guidance meeting, presenting each participant with a separately handwritten copy of a poem that had been composed by his mentor, Josei Toda. It had taken him until late the previous night to write down each of these poems in his own hand.

After the chapter leaders guidance meeting, he visited the construction site of the new Chubu No. 2 Headquarters Building. He then attended a district leaders meeting being held at a local Nichiren Shoshu temple, where he spent nearly half an hour pouring his heart into offering guidance and encouragement to members.

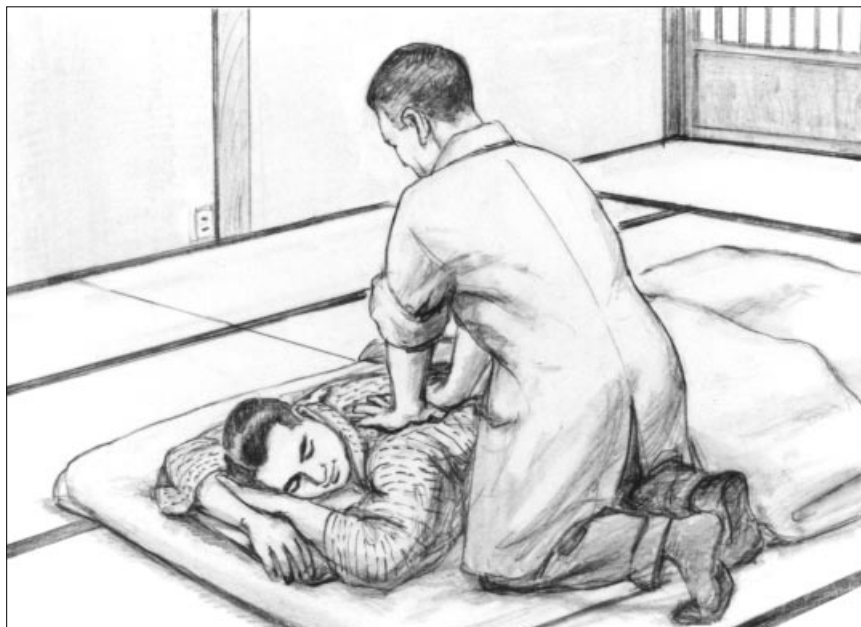
In the evening, Shin'ichi had a meeting with leaders of the local general chapters. By the time all of his engagements were over, his neck and shoulders were stiff and his back was sore. He asked the inn where he was staying to send a masseur, and soon a blind man in late middle age came to his room. As he massaged Shin'ichi's shoulders, the masseur said, "I'm surprised how stiff you are for someone so young. I have massaged many people, but I have never encountered anyone so stiff before."

"Really?" said Shin'ichi. "You are very skillful. It feels good. And you have so much energy."

"I joined the Soka Gakkai about six months ago, that's why I'm so energetic. I was born blind, but since becoming a member I am convinced that I will be able to see in my next life." Then he asked Shin'ichi, "Do you know about the Soka Gakkai?"

"Yes, of course," Shin'ichi replied. "If you practice your faith even harder, you will be able to see clearly with your mind's eye, even if you don't regain your sight." Realizing it would now be awkward to tell the man he was president of the Soka Gakkai, Shin'ichi did not mention it.

"I think I can already see



with my mind's eye," said the masseur. "Every day is just so wonderful."

"Is that so?" asked Shin'ichi. "Then I hope you'll keep up your practice, and receive even more benefits."

"You sound just like my district leader," said the masseur. "He is a very good man."

The masseur began to go on and on about the Soka Gakkai, but after a while Shin'ichi interrupted him. "I understand how happy you are to have found faith," he said, "but I am sure many of your clients want to rest quietly while you're massaging them. Maybe you should not talk about your faith and the Soka Gakkai while you're working."

"Yes, you are right," admitted the masseur. "My chapter leader says the same thing. You really sound like him, too."

After about 20 minutes of silence, Shin'ichi expressed his appreciation to the masseur: "Though you are older than I, you have worked hard to give me a fine massage. I am very grateful. You must be tired. Let's take a little break and drink some juice."

"This is my job," added the masseur, "so I always do my very best."

Shin'ichi went to the refrigerator, took out some juice, and offered it to the masseur, who gulped it down with gusto.

The masseur resumed massaging Shin'ichi. He said: "Actually, Soka Gakkai President Yamamoto attended a meeting here in Nagano today. Recently, one of the directors of the Soka Gakkai came to Nagano. He told us that President Yamamoto is a great leader whose vision and actions are indispensable to both Japan and the world. I really wanted to go

to today's activity and meet him.

"I kept praying that I would be able to, but then all of these jobs came in today that I could not refuse, and I could not go. I am so disappointed."

Hearing this, Shin'ichi began to feel awkward, and the tension seemed to return to his shoulders. "That is too bad," he said. "But haven't you been told that if you really chant in earnest, your prayers will be answered? Please do not worry. If that was your wish, I am sure it will come true."

Smiling, the masseur replied: "Thank you so much for your encouraging words. You are very considerate for someone so young. I almost feel as if I were meeting with the president of the Soka Gakkai right now."

After about 30 or 40 minutes, Shin'ichi finally felt relaxed. He politely thanked the masseur.

"You are very thoughtful," commented the masseur. "That must be why your shoulders are hard as rocks!"

"I guess that is it," said Shin'ichi. "But it is not good to have such rock-solid shoulders. On the other hand, having solid faith is a good thing!" Their cheerful laughter rang through the room.

When the masseur later found out that he had been massaging President Yamamoto, he deepened his appreciation for the remarkable power of prayer.

In July, Soka Gakkai membership had reached an astonishing 3.6 million households. Shin'ichi was happy to see Bodhisattvas of the Earth springing up across the country. These people of noble mission were practicing Buddhism joyfully and gaining great benefit. Kosen-rufu is an effort to bring hope and happiness to blossom



in people's hearts.

Shin'ichi returned to Tokyo on July 31, and that evening the August young men's division leaders meeting was held at Taito Ward Gymnasium. The new "Song of Worldwide Kosen-rufu" debuted at the meeting.

*Look! Grand and heroic
The Himalayan peaks
sparkle with snow
The Yellow River flows
Like the stream of human
history
We set out
Our hearts ablaze with
new ideals
Resolved to achieve world-
wide kosen-rufu!*

The lyrics to "Song of Worldwide Kosen-rufu" greatly inspired the audience. The music rose with each phrase, symbolizing a fu-

ture of unfolding possibilities.

Kenshiro Ishikawa had been appointed head of the young men's division at a general meeting of that division in December the previous year. Since then, there had been a growing demand for the creation of a new song. Beginning in January, members across Japan had been encouraged to submit ideas, but none of the submissions were quite what the leadership was looking for.

One, however, entitled "Song of Worldwide Kosen-rufu," caught their attention. Though some revisions would be necessary, the grand scale it expressed was what they had sought. It sang of the Pacific Ocean, the Rocky Mountains, and the Gobi Desert, and closed with the line, "Ah! The bell of worldwide kosen-rufu rings." A group of young men active in the chapter that included Ota City in Gumma Prefecture and Ashikaga City in Tochigi Prefecture had composed the lyrics. They would often gather at their chapter activity center after meetings and discuss ideas for the song.

Though preoccupied with the immediate demands of life, they were also aware of President Yamamoto's determination to accomplish worldwide kosen-rufu. For this reason, they agreed to break through the shells of their limitations and write a song that would inspire members to work actively on the world stage for peace alongside President Yamamoto.

After several late nights, they finally came up with some lyrics. These were then edited by a staff of leaders of the young men's division, who refined and

polished them over the next several months.

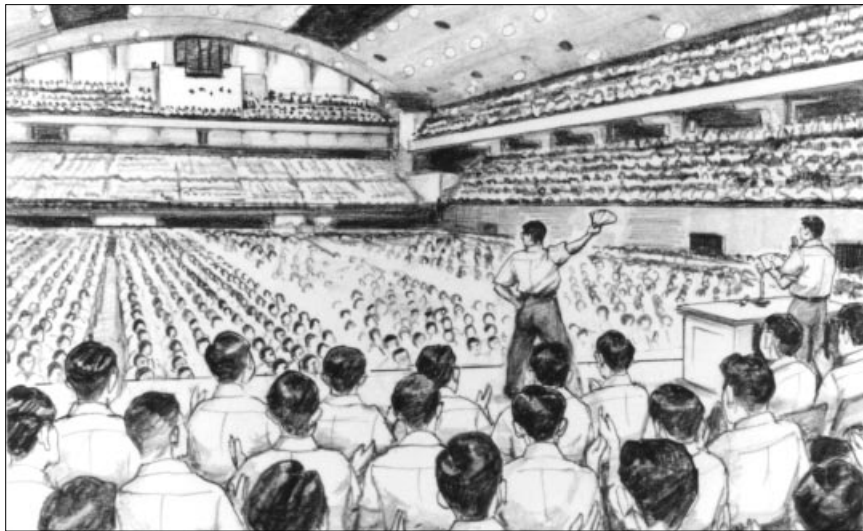
When the lyrics were ready, they were given to Takeshi Arimura, head of the brass band, who composed the music. The final product was new and original, unlike any Gakkai song until then. The song was ready, but when to introduce it was still undecided.

Then, to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the founding of the young men's division on July 11, President Yamamoto contributed an essay to the *Daibyakurenge* entitled "Youth, Become World Leaders!" This offered an excellent opportunity to introduce the new song. The young men's leaders decided to revise the song further to express their vow to respond to President Yamamoto's call, and they finally introduced it at the August Young Men's Division Leaders Meeting, held on July 31.

*Heroes of the Gakkai
Our voices resound across
the seven seas
Young Bodhisattvas of the
Earth soar skyward
Celebrating together the
creation of peace
Ah! The bell of worldwide
kosen-rufu rings.*

As pioneers of the essential phase of the Soka Gakkai's development, the young men pledged to achieve global kosen-rufu and began their journey afresh with this song on their lips.

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



THE WAY WE SEE OURSELVES

Buddhism in a New Light

Soka Spirit Dialogue for the District

By SHIN YATOMI

SGI-USA VICE STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER



An important aspect of what we call “enlightenment” or “human revolution” is to change the way we see ourselves — to see the unconditional value of life within us, which neither requires comparison with others nor depends upon our transient appearance. It is a simple idea yet requires a difficult change of perspective since we have been trained for most of our lives to judge ourselves by how well we fulfill our socially prescribed roles in comparison with others. Those roles are often related to status or gender but rarely to our individual uniqueness.

As early as our social life begins, we start learning to judge ourselves in terms of others: “I’m not as smart as other kids” or “I’m not as slim as other girls.” Later in life, we still judge our worth in the same way: “I’m a loser because I don’t make as much money as most successful men do” or “I’m miserable because I’m not married as all happy women should be.” With subtle yet repeated reinforcement and censure from society and media, we learn to live our lives through the eyes of others, to

think of our happiness in terms of the ideas borrowed from or imposed upon us by others. In America, people are free to express their thoughts, but not many seem to have thoughts or even feelings of their own.

Nichiren Daishonin explains our innate Buddhahood as an absolute value of goodness, often describing it with expressions such as “unmade” (Jpn *musa*), “originally endowed” (Jpn *hon’nu*) or “eternally dwelling” (Jpn *joju*). Buddhahood, in other words, is

good in and of itself, not because of external conditions or circumstances. To awaken to this treasure within us is happiness while our ignorance of it spells suffering. As the Daishonin states, “When deluded, one is called an ordinary being, but when enlightened, one is called a Buddha” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 4).

The sad irony of modern men and women who have lost touch with their own lives is echoed in the Daishonin’s following words: “If you seek enlightenment outside yourself, then your performing...even ten thousand good deeds will be in vain. It is like the case of a poor man who spends night and day counting his neighbor’s wealth but gains not even half a coin” (WND, 3). All the hard work we do for our “success” and “happiness” would be wasted if those ideas were simply imposed on us from the outside and naively accepted without critical thinking and reflection.

Deriving self-worth by comparing ourselves with others is

one of our most destructive habits. It may be even described as a form of self-inflicted violence since it weakens us by *de-centering* our existence — in the sense that it shifts the center of power to decide the meaning of our lives to the outside. We let others decide what our happiness is, instead of deciding for ourselves. With the power of self-determination lost to external authority, we are no longer free nor independent. Since we live in a competitive society where this sort of comparison is encouraged and often unavoidable, it is a difficult habit to break, but to do so is crucial to our genuine happiness and freedom.

It is ironic that the original meaning of the word *compete* derives from the Latin *com-* “together” and *petere* “to seek” or “to strive.” Competition did not originally connote comparison; it meant “to strive together after shared goals.” Just as the Daishonin characterizes the state of Anger with “contention and strife” (WND, 100), competition in society often gives rise to anger, overt or suppressed.

To judge self-worth by comparing oneself with others is essentially an authoritarian way of life in which one seeks comfort and security in the approval of an external power. To unlearn such an authoritarian orientation and build a society in which people may live true to their unique identities is certainly an aspiration of

our multifaceted Soka Spirit movement, which aims for the liberation of individuals from all forms of authoritarianism, both within and without.

One way to overcome our tendency to compare ourselves with others is through learning how to praise ourselves for our unique, intrinsic value. A common concern about self-praise is that it may cause arrogance, probably due to our Judeo-Christian tradition in which self-humiliation is often regarded as a necessary virtue to praise God, while self-praise is deemed as a sign of pride, which is one of the seven deadly sins. It should be noted, however, that arrogance is a defensive posture caused by a tendency to assume a sense of superiority or inferiority by comparing oneself with others. Therefore, so long as we praise ourselves solely for who we are and for our innate Buddhahood, we will never become arrogant, though we may at times *seem* arrogant to arrogant people. Indeed, the greatest way to praise ourselves is prayer that sincerely affirms our supreme potential as the Daishonin states, “When you chant *myoho* and recite *renge*, you must summon up deep faith that *Myohorenge-kyo* is your life itself” (WND, 3). As we praise ourselves in this way, we will grow confident yet humble because we start to recognize the same quality of Buddhahood in others as well. Appreciation for oneself leads to appreciation for others, which further strengthens self-esteem. The way we see ourselves is not only the way we live our lives, but also the way we relate to others. **WT**

Food for Thought:

- Some may feel that self-praise undermines self-discipline. Strictness, however, may stem from either compassion or hostility. What is the benefit of being strict to ourselves out of confidence, rather than self-loathing?
- Competition drives society. But why are some competitive people successful yet insecure? What is the weakness of a life built upon a sense of superiority? How can the faith in one’s own potential be a driving force for living as well as for society?

TIPS FOR ACTIVITIES

10 Great Reasons To Study SGI-USA Publications

By DAVE BALDSCHUN

LIVING BUDDHISM MANAGING EDITOR

When instructing new practitioners on the benefits of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the importance of attending SGI activities, we sometimes neglect to stress that studying Buddhism in our publications is a source of great benefit. We are conscientious about reciting morning and evening prayers and chanting abundant daimoku. But do we think to ourselves, “Gee, I haven’t studied in a couple of days (or weeks!)?”



Here are my 10 reasons for reading — studying — our publications (in no par-

ticular order):

1) The Buddhist Community

Reading our publications keeps us connected to the greater Buddhist order, our *sangha*. Nichiren Daishonin says that “This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 217). We are strengthened by the sense of unity and belonging we gain from reading about fellow believers around the world.

2) Confidence

There is power in the words of the Daishonin, SGI Presi-

dent Ikeda’s guidance and the encouragement of fellow members. Reading the publications translates into greater confidence and conviction in our own prayers to the Gohonzon.

3) Kosen-rufu

Kosen-rufu is a world peace movement. By reading about the activities and experiences of people in other cities and countries, we get a sense of *movement*, of progress beyond our own locale. We gain greater conviction by reading about the efforts of people around the world who are working for the same goal.

4) Commitment

It is a reflection of our commitment to the organization dedicated to *kosen-rufu*. It is translating our inner belief into an action that says: “I am an SGI member striving for *kosen-rufu*. I support what the SGI is doing.”

5) Seeking Mind

Reading the publications is an expression of a seeking mind, of our desire to learn more and deepen our faith. If we are not progressing, we are regressing.

6) Practice and Study

Reading the publications

PLEASE SEE TIPS, 11

Grammy Winner Stands Up for Peace

Photo by FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

PERSPECTIVE

By NESTOR TORRES

MIAMI

Nestor Torres finds his own path to peace and discovers that 'every day is a manifestation, a proof of the correctness, validity and tremendous power, of this practice.'

You must write a song for the little island," SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima said to me. It took me a second to figure out what he meant—"the little island." I realized he was talking about the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

At the beginning of last year, Mr. Nagashima asked Orlando Cepeda and myself to help bring the Victory Over Violence campaign to Puerto Rico. This was a dream come true for me because I had always wanted to be involved with SGI activities on the island. Being Puerto Rican myself, it was a way to repay my debt of gratitude to my native land.

"If you want to address the violence issue in Puerto Rico, you must be prepared to deal with and take a stand on the Vieques issue..."



Nestor Torres poses for photographers with his Latin Grammy Award for Best Pop Instrumental Album at the awards ceremony, Oct. 30 in Los Angeles.

Everywhere we went on our VOV campaign, the Vieques issue would show up. From meetings with university presidents and city mayors to comments by common citizens to the media—Vieques would not go away.

Although I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, I only knew Vieques as a little island off the eastern coast. We knew that the United States Navy had been conducting bombing exercises there for

years which continue today, but not much attention was given to the harsh reality that the thousands of inhabitants of Vieques endure.

In June of last year, the initial activities of Vida Sin Violencia (Life Without Violence), as the Victory Over Violence campaign is called in Puerto Rico, included an all-star concert of which I was in charge. On the first day of rehearsals, some friends who were supporting the event

asked if I would like to participate in a documentary about Vieques. I agreed.

As I began to read the script off the teleprompter, I could not believe what I was saying. Appalled, angry, ashamed, indignant—none of these words can describe the anguish I felt as I recited the facts, numbers and statistics before me. I finally understood what it was about Vieques. I determined right then and there that I would write and include a song about Vieques in my upcoming CD. But what kind of song would it be? I certainly did not want to make a political statement, for I strongly felt, as I still do, that the Vieques matter is a human rights issue, not a political one.

The Vida Sin Violencia events were a success and I went on with a very busy summer schedule leading up to the production of my new CD. This is when I saw Mr. Nagashima, who reminded me of the pledge I had made three months before.

"Everything changes/nothing is constant/life is eternal/ is what you make of it..."

In "The Fourteen Slanders," Nichiren Daishonin tells the story of a boy who learns Buddhist teachings from the god Shakra, who is disguised as a demon (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 757). These lines are a variation on a teaching the boy heard, and for some time I had wanted to use them in a song. With the help of many people and in spite of great reservations from the

label, I included two versions of "Paz Pa' Vieques" (Peace for Vieques) on my new CD, "This Side of Paradise," for which I was honored to receive a Latin Grammy award.

From a Buddhist perspective, and a personal one, the situation in Vieques is bound to change; once people's lives awoken to their mission, they will make change happen. Nothing is constant, not even that which seems to be hopeless. No matter how bad or difficult things might be, there is always hope for change, and even further, there is always the possibility that we can turn poison to medicine.

What I have learned and continue to discover—particularly in light of the atrocities of Sept. 11—is how fortunate I am to be practicing Buddhism at this particular time. Every day is a manifestation, a proof of the correctness, validity and tremendous power, of this practice. That, and SGI President Ikeda's guidance and example that Buddhism is daily life, has allowed me to stand up for the sake of justice in the way that is best suited for me. As a musician, my most effective weapons are my songs aimed at every human heart, including the Navy soldiers and even the terrorists. You see, they too are human, just like the Viequesians, and we must never forget that.

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

FROM TIPS, 10

is part of the practice of study designated by the Daishonin, who states: "Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism" (WND, 386). We gain a deeper understanding of the Daishonin's teachings from explanations in the publications.

7) Faith

The Daishonin also writes: "To have faith is the basis of Buddhism. The first volume of *On "Great Concentration and Insight"* says, "To "believe in the perfect teaching" means to awaken faith through doctrine and to make faith the basis of practice'" (WND, 833).

8) Appreciation

Studying Buddhism in our

publications maintains our sense of wonder about our practice. The Daishonin says that it is rare to be born as a human being and rarer still to encounter Buddhism. And rarest of all, to encounter the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo means we are "a person who has offered alms to a hundred thousand million Buddhas in his past existences!"

(WND, 993). As bad as things may get, we never want to take our fortune to have the Gohonzon for granted.

9) Crises

Studying Buddhism in our publications allows us to understand how our life works and why things happen. We will not falter in crises. We won't ask: "Why me? What do I do now?" We will know ex-

actly what to do—go to the Gohonzon.

10) Doubts

Studying Buddhism in our publications enables us to overcome doubt. Not just intellectual doubt, but devilish functions within life itself. Study is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is a spiritual endeavor that is life affirming. **WT**



The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

wt@sgi-usa.org

General Director Daniel Nagashima • Publisher Fred M. Zaitso • Assistant Publisher Greg Martin
Editor in Chief Ted Morino • Managing Editor Jeff Farr • Staff Writer Jamie Liptan
Staff Assistants Craig Green, Mark Koral, Linnea Peery • Staff Photographer Gregory Nakasui
Graphic Designers Stephanie Sydney, Linda Eberle • Staff Translators Jeff Kriger, Shin Yatomi

Bureau Chiefs — Central Zone: Dana Powe, wtcentral@sgi-usa.org • Mid-Atlantic Zone: David Jaroy, wtmidatlantic@sgi-usa.org • Northeastern Zone: Sean Grover, wtneortheast@sgi-usa.org
No. California Zone: Ron Baird, wtnocal@sgi-usa.org • Pacific Zone: Gary Nakamura, wtpacific@sgi-usa.org • Pacific Northwest Zone: Liza Javier, wtpnw@sgi-usa.org • Southern Zone: Francisco Palacio, wtsouthern@sgi-usa.org • So. California Zone: Jason Henninger, wtsocal@sgi-usa.org
Western Zone: Irene Owada, wtwestern@sgi-usa.org

Foreign Language Pages — Chinese: Ingrid Yeh • Korean: Charles Lee • Spanish/Portuguese: Martha Mauny, wtspanish@sgi-usa.org • Japanese: Katsunori Umezawa
Special Inserts — Friends for Peace: Palma Odano, ffp@sgi-usa.org • Seize the Day: Alexis Trass, seize@sgi-usa.org

Subscriptions (800) 835-4558, sgisubs@aol.com, www.sgisubs.com • Reader Comments / Submissions — World Tribune P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907, e-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org • Organizational Comments / Questions — Member Services P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907, e-mail: sgi-usa@sgi-usa.org • Publications Research Requests — SGI-USA Publications Library P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907, Phone: (310) 260-8980, Fax: (310) 260-8910

CHICAGO YOUTH JOIN FAMILY PARADE

Photos by RAJIV MISTRY



By FRANCES STOCKER
CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT

SGI-USA! SGI-USA!" was the spirited call and response from SGI-USA members gathered along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to cheer on the SGI-USA youth in Chicago's 72nd annual Bud Billiken Parade, Aug. 11. It was the first time that the SGI-USA participated, and the theme, "A Global Family — Celebrating Victory Over Violence," fit in perfectly.

The SGI-USA contingent included hundreds of performers, with the Music Corps playing a spirited rendition of "Survivor" to the determined waves of the Flag Corps and lively moves of the Era of Humanity dancers. All of this took place in vibrant SGI red, yellow and blue, except for the gleaming bunch of well-behaved SGI Kids dressed in costumes representing cultures from around the globe. Rounding out the performances were the energetic, precision steps of the Marcher/Steppers to a perked-up version of "Ode to Joy."

The Marcher/Steppers is a four-divisional group, and members of the men's and women's divisions have supported the activity from the very beginning. "This was an opportunity to help nurture the youth by encouraging them and participating right beside them," said Royce Knowles, a women's district leader who supports the Era of Humanity dancers.

The Bud Billiken Parade has developed considerably since its humble beginnings. This year, it consisted of more than

270 units and floats, many from out of state. Close to 1 million people lined the streets, sat on lawn chairs along the park median or on building stoops to watch the parade, creating the feel of a giant outdoor festival.

Amidst all the fun, SGI-USA members talked with several parade supporters about the SGI-USA entry's theme. "This is the theme of the parade as well," noted *Chicago Defender* Publisher Eugene Scott. "We are one world family. We can't really progress in the world unless everybody progresses. So it's all about family, young people and unity in the community."

Local SGI-USA leaders also spoke with Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, who responded to the SGI theme as well: "When we talk about family and violence, we all have to look at what's happening to society and what's happening to our children and families. So I think [Victory Over Violence] is an appropriate sponsorship that will help stop the violence, not only outside but within a family."

Summing up the spirit of the youth to challenge themselves through the parade activity, Chicago Region 3 Young Men's Leader Corey Powe noted during one of the practices that "SGI President Ikeda often talks about human revolution, about overcoming the lesser self. Personally, I have come to understand that the routines we're doing are not the extraordinary part of this activity. It's the process that we go through inside each of us to reach the end result — world peace." **WT**

