



SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 11 SPEECH—PART 1

Genuine Trust Begins With Dialogue

'Neither military force nor political coercion is the answer,' says SGI President Ikeda. 'It is through one-on-one dialogue that individuals form bonds of genuine trust.'

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda's speech at the 10th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 11.

Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant." These are the celebrated words of the American philosopher and writer Henry David Thoreau.

The sweet music of justice. Each month, inspired afresh by the magnificent performances of the Brass Band at these Headquarters Leaders Meetings, we have advanced, achieving tremendous progress. [The Soka Gloria Brass Band regularly performs at the Headquarters Leaders Meeting.]

Let us offer a round of applause to express our appreciation to the members of the Soka Gloria Brass Band for their fine performances. Thank you!

The SGI has overcome every obstacle by winning victory after victory.

On Nov. 18, we will celebrate our first Soka Gakkai Foundation Day of the 21st century. The Soka Gakkai is an organization dedicated to kosen-rufu, a goal that is the very essence and will of Nichiren Daishonin.

When people lose this fundamental spirit of faith—of being fully committed to achieving kosen-rufu—they become self-centered. Though



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the 10th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Oct. 11.

they may give the appearance of being Buddhists, they are really "robbers of the Law."

Because we are an organization working to accomplish kosen-rufu, the Soka Gakkai has been able to overcome every obstacle and realize phenomenal development by continually growing and advancing, winning victory after victory. This is all due to your efforts. I most sincerely thank you.

Faith manifests itself in health. I hope all of you will become people who enjoy abundant good health, possess wisdom and compassion, and embody profound philosophy.

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 4



Youth of the SGI-USA's Killeen, Texas, Chapter celebrate after their Family Youth Festival, held Sept. 23 in Austin.

SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

AUSTIN MEMBERS HOLD TIMELY FESTIVAL

By BARBARA FELLMAN AND MARK BLOCKUS
AUSTIN, TEXAS, CORRESPONDENTS

The Victory Over Violence campaign took on special significance in Austin, Texas, on Sept. 23, when the members of the SGI-USA's Austin and Killeen chapters held their Family Youth Festival, the first such event following the tragic events of Sept. 11.

Members united and determined to use the tragedy as a springboard to show the power of the SGI movement for peace and to bring this message to the community. Approximately 500 members and guests gathered at Reagan High School in Austin under beautiful sunny Texas skies.

Austin Mayor Pro-Tem Jackie Goodman was on hand for the opening ceremonies. After a moment of silence in

honor of the Sept. 11 victims, she addressed the attendees: "This is an enormously significant event. The decisions we make as individuals will also influence the decisions we make as a country. Thank you for making this world a better place."

Ms. Goodman presented a proclamation declaring Sept. 23 "SGI-USA Victory Over Violence Day" in Austin and a Certificate of Honorary Citizenship to SGI President Ikeda.

The "Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace" exhibition provided great background information for the community to understand the SGI's commitment toward a nonviolent approach to global problems. Ms. Goodman toured the exhibition, which was held in an adjacent building on the high school campus, commenting on how impressed she was with the SGI's efforts for peace.

Lisa McMillan, a 16-year-old high school student and SGI-USA member, delivered a heartfelt keynote speech, which she stated had changed from when she began writing it before Sept. 11. "Victory Over Violence is changing our environment and ourselves so that everyone can enjoy peace and security in their land," she explained. "We must overcome domestic violence, international violence and all other forms of negativity within our lives. We, the youth of today, must become happy in our own lives so that present and future generations can live a life of happiness and peace."

Explaining the theme "The Youthful Colors of Victory!" she said: "As youth in the SGI, we come from a diverse background of races, colors and beliefs; thus the youthful

PLEASE SEE AUSTIN, 12

A TIME FOR HUMANISM

PERSPECTIVE

By MARI GORMAN
NEW YORK

Through the tragedy of Sept. 11, Mari Gorman realizes that 'since the one thing we all share is our humanity, it would seem that the time for humanism has arrived.'



On Sept. 11, I was on my way to the subway in Astoria, Queens, across the East River from Manhattan, to report for jury duty. Two people came out of a drugstore and called to another passerby and me, "A plane just crashed into the World Trade Center!" At first, I thought it must have been a terrible ac-

cident, but as I looked in the direction of the World Trade Center and saw the huge plume of black smoke in the sky, the thought crossed my mind that it was terrorism. I took the subway out to the Queens courthouse and was there for a very short time when, after both towers had collapsed, they told us to go home.

Because the trains had stopped running, it was a long and difficult trip. On the

crowded bus that eventually dropped me off an hour's walk from my home, emotions were running high. While people were not panicking, there was an atmosphere of worry and anticipation. A heated argument broke out between two people, one of whom thought we should immediately get out the war planes and another who said we have to work to stop the violence. The argument was ended by others on the bus shouting at them not to argue, that they weren't helping matters.

I remember that during the Gulf War, it seemed to become dangerous to speak out against war; if one did so, they were often branded unpatriotic, perhaps even subversive. As the days pass since the terrible events of Sept. 11, I feel the same atmosphere returning. Yes, arguing doesn't help matters, and using common sense as to the time and place for dialogue is important, but I believe that it is crucial to find ways to speak out against war,

which was what the young person on the bus was doing.

At an SGI-USA district meeting that night, our chapter leader pointed out that it was Sept. 12 in Japan, the anniversary of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution. Nichiren Daishonin revealed his true identity as the original Buddha as result of that event. Perhaps what happened here marks the time for people to reveal their true identity as human beings. Despite the wonderful display of unity as people rally around the flag, nationalism isn't the answer. Humanism is.

I think those who have committed the atrocious acts of terror and those who harbor and support them are all heinous criminals and must be found and dealt with as such as soon as possible. Yet we definitely must find a way to deal with this problem without destroying and causing misery in the lives of countless innocent people in the process. We certainly mustn't turn around and do to other people what has just been done to us. When I see all the American flags, I worry that the great spirit of America is being twisted into

an excuse to commit heinous acts ourselves.

I am definitely a patriotic American, and a committed Buddhist as well. In the SGI, we have always deeply honored the spirit and principles of this country and those who founded it. SGI President Ikeda has talked at great length about the forefathers of our country as great leaders who spoke up and worked for the happiness of others. He himself has the courage to speak up for and work on behalf of people's happiness all over the world, and has been outspoken about the evils of war. Indeed, this is our legacy. Our organization's great founder, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, died because of his stand against war and the tyrannies of nationalism.

We have a global economy but no global government. Since the one thing we all share is our humanity, it would seem that the time for humanism has arrived. If we, as SGI members, don't speak up for it, who will?

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

'Dialogue With Nature' in San Diego

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



The University of California, San Diego recently welcomed SGI President Ikeda's 'Dialogue With Nature' photo exhibition to its Giesel Library. At a reception on Oct. 30, Tammy Dearie, head of the Social Sciences and Humanities Library, shared that the exhibition had received a tremendously positive response from students and faculty. California Governor Gray Davis sent a commendation to the exhibition, praising President Ikeda for making a 'lasting impact on our state's cultural life' through his photography and poetry. Next year, the exhibition will continue to travel throughout the United States.

SGI-USA On The Web!

For information about SGI-USA, please visit our official Web site at www.sgi-usa.org. The site includes information on the organization's activities, history and publications, as well as an introduction to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

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VIRGINIA STRAUS LECTURES AT NEW YORK CULTURE CENTER

A New Kind of Peace Movement for a New Kind of War

By HELEN YOUNG
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT



Photo by CAROL BARNSTEAD

Virginia Straus, executive director of the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, lectures on SGI President Ikeda's book 'For the Sake of Peace' at the New York Culture Center, Oct. 20.

Since Sept. 11, a drumbeat has been apparent in the media: America is fighting a new kind of war. "So when you are talking about a new kind of war, what do you need?" asked Virginia Straus, the executive director of the SGI-affiliated Boston Research Center for the 21st Century. "You need a new kind of peace movement and the SGI can be in the vanguard of it," she told a room full of members who had gathered at the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center on Oct. 20.

As head of the BRC, whose mission is the study of peace and the promotion of Buddhist humanism in society, Ms. Straus said that in the wake of Sept. 11 it was important for each of them to become a leader in what she called a new "grass-roots peace movement." She said that in addition to being "experts in touching people's hearts," it was also important for members to be-

come eloquent in explaining how Buddhist principles apply to the world around us, especially at this critical time. To this end, she encouraged mem-

bers to read a number of books, including SGI President Ikeda's *For the Sake of Peace* and *Is There No Other Way?* by Michael Nagler, chairman

of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of California at Berkeley.

Ms. Straus said experts in the field of conflict resolution

are coming very close to the essence of Buddhist principles as they discover, through trial and error, how to resolve conflict. Both President Ikeda and Professor Nagler have pointed out that violence, so pervasive in our society, is rooted in hatred. Hatred in turn springs from ignorance of what Mahatma Gandhi called the "heart unity" among people, namely the oneness of all humanity. Ms. Straus said a terrorist would not lash out at someone he was able to identify with. "It is that ignorance that needs to be confronted in everyone," she said.

She urged members to engage in interfaith dialogues with Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths. She said it would be a major step forward for SGI-USA members to understand Islam better, adding that if we want a "spiritually based peace movement," there are people in other religions who can be great allies.

With more than 90 percent of the American public in favor of the bombing in Afghanistan, Ms. Straus said peace scholars are feeling under siege. She encouraged SGI-USA members to contact local universities and invite peace scholars to SGI-USA discussion meetings. She also suggested members visit the BRC Web site (www.brc21.org) to access information on non-violent perspectives on the present crisis. **WT**

SGI-USA Establishes Sept. 11 Scholarship

SGI-USA established the SGI-USA Scholarship Fund with Soka University of America two years ago to benefit SUA students who are eligible for financial aid. Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund has the opportunity to do so every November, the month of SGI-USA's Nov. 18 Commemorative Discussion Meetings.

This year, an additional scholarship fund to benefit Soka University of America students was established in memory of SGI-USA members David Aoyama, Vincent Kane, Robert Miller and other victims of the tragic events of Sept. 11. Due to the addition of the

September 11, 2001 Scholarship Fund, a new lime-green contribution envelope has been printed.

Available through each zone office are contribution envelopes, which list two contribution options: 1) SGI-USA General Scholarship Fund; and 2) September 11, 2001 Scholarship Fund.

Those making a contribution must indicate the fund to which they are contributing. Individuals wishing to contribute to both funds are asked to make a separate check and envelope for each.

Contributions using these lime-green envelopes will be accepted through Jan. 31, 2002.

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FROM SPEECH, I

Those who applaud the champions of kosen-rufu will accumulate great fortune.

The Daishonin quotes the following words of the Great Teacher Dengyo from *A Clarification of the Schools Based on T'ien-t'ai's Doctrine*: "Those who praise him [a person who upholds the Lotus Sutra] will amass good fortune rising as high as Mount Calm and Bright [Mount Sumeru], while those who slander him will be committing an offense that will lead them to the hell of incessant suffering" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1039).

Mount Sumeru is a towering peak like Mount Everest, situated at the center of the world in Indian mythology. As this passage indicates, the benefit that accrues to individuals who praise the practitioners of the Lotus Sutra is incalculable. It is an unchanging rule of Buddhism that those who applaud the champions of kosen-rufu will accumulate great good fortune, while those who slander them will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

Some people spend their days pursuing idle amusements. Some live aimlessly, succumbing to indolence and apathy.

Neither of these ways of life will ever lead to true fulfillment or happiness, however. Not realizing this is one of the great follies of humankind.

In contrast, you are taking action for kosen-rufu. You are advancing for peace, happiness, security and harmony. You are propagating the Buddhist teachings, which provide the foundation for all of these things.

There is no nobler life than this. All of you have my unstinting praise.

If we stop moving forward, we immediately set ourselves up for defeat.

What is happiness? This has been a central focus of philosophy for millennia—from the ancient Greeks to the French philosopher Alain, best known for his treatise *On Happiness*.

The French thinker Romain Rolland said that happiness is finding one's own path—it is "never stagnating, life moving forward, advancing!" The spirit of Buddhism is that of ceaseless advance as characterized by the famous passage from the Lotus Sutra "To exert oneself bravely and vigorously" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 23).



SGI members from 15 countries attend the 10th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, Oct. 11, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.

If we stop moving forward, we immediately set ourselves up for defeat. Not to advance is to regress.

Who qualifies as youth? It is not simply a question of age. A youth is someone who keeps progressing day after day. This was first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's conviction.

A person who advances is a youth in the truest sense. If we lack the spirit to advance, we are old at heart, no matter how young we may be in years.

Moreover, the Mystic Law is the fountain of perennial youth and eternal life. It allows us to make our way through the three existences of past, present and future with boundless life force.

The Soka Gakkai is overflowing with the dynamic spirit of continual advance in every corner of Japan. We are always cheerful and high-spirited, standing proud and tall as invincible champions of truth, no matter what happens.

Today's meeting is a gathering of ever-advancing youth. Congratulations on this 10th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, which is also the general meeting of our great Kanto Region, which has achieved total victory on all fronts. Since we always describe the Kansai Region as "ever victorious," I propose that from now on we make "total victory" the

catch phrase for Kanto.

Only by triumphing over injustice can true justice be proven.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose thought President Makiguchi continued to study up to his death in prison, writes: "A cheerful heart alone is able to find happiness in the good. A religion that makes people gloomy is false..."

The Soka Gakkai is limitlessly cheerful because it stands for truth and justice. It possesses the strength of the people, their ability to brightly smile in the face of adversity and keep moving forward.

"Come, let us take action!" "Let us work for kosen-rufu!" "Let us expand our SGI network!" Joy resides in such a bright, positive spirit. Those who gladly strive for kosen-rufu and for the welfare of their friends savor true happiness.

In contrast, those who criticize others and try to bring about their downfall are like vipers—they can never know genuine happiness. Similarly, a religion that does not make people happy but instead makes them feel gloomy and depressed is in error. This is a perfect description of High Priest Nikken Abe and his followers.

The 10th anniversary of that ridiculous "excommunication"

of the Soka Gakkai by the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood is fast approaching. [In a notification dated Nov. 28, 1991, the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood arbitrarily excommunicated the Soka Gakkai.] Who in the realm of Buddhism excommunicates anyone in this day and age? We are not living in feudal times—such anachronistic behavior shows just how far out of touch the priesthood is with the modern world.

Up to that time, the Soka Gakkai had served the priesthood with unimaginable dedication, yet they cut us off just like that. They hoped this would mean the end of the Soka Gakkai, but the scheming priests completely miscalculated. Instead, the Soka Gakkai today has achieved tremendous development as a global religious organization.

Only by triumphing over injustice can true justice be proven. And it is precisely because we have encountered those who sought to obstruct the flow of kosen-rufu that the correctness and validity of our movement shine so brightly.

Those who act against the Buddhist Law will incur strict retribution.

Today we have with us members from 15 countries and territories, including South Korea, Indonesia and Italy. A warm

welcome to all of you!

Ten years ago, SGI members were active in 115 countries and territories. Today, freed from the priesthood's shackles, we have achieved unprecedented growth, expanding to include 177 countries and territories.

In addition, as your representative, I have received honorary doctorates and professorships from many educational institutions around the world. This autumn, the number of academic honors bestowed on me from the end of 1991 onward—that is, in the 10-year period since our split from the priesthood—will come to exactly 100. [In 1991, the number of academic honors received by SGI President Ikeda stood at 12, the first being an honorary doctorate received from Moscow State University in 1975. That number has now grown to 109, with three more universities scheduled to bestow academic honors on him this autumn, bringing the total number to 112.]

Both President Makiguchi and second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda were educators. They knew that religion without education tends to lapse into self-righteousness. I believe that the various educational honors I have received bear testimony to the fact that we of the SGI are walking the

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Transcending Differences Through Dialogue

From This Speech:

Humanity's future is still in peril. The only real way to break out of this chaos is for human beings themselves to change. With our grand vision for the 21st century, let us ring the bells of eternal peace, of kosen-rufu, steadily and resolutely, one after another! The world at peace and all humanity living together in harmony is the dream and hope of the 21st century. The surest first step toward realizing this goal is for human beings to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences. A crucial passage in Nichiren Daishonin's treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" says, "Let us discuss the question at length" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 7). The host here invites his guest to engage in a discussion with him. The Daishonin highly valued one-on-one dialogue.

1) SGI President Ikeda says that "the surest first step toward realizing [world peace] is for human beings to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences." Do you think courage is important in this endeavor to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences? If so, in what ways? Can you think of ways to create opportunities for genuine dialogue with others in your daily life?

2) Shakyamuni, Nichiren Daishonin and President Ikeda are all masters of dialogue. Based on their examples, what do you think are some important elements that make genuine dialogue possible? Can you think of things that impede the free exchange of ideas?

3) Why do you think thorough discussion with other people — even those we may disagree with — is so important for the future of humanity? Do you think raising our voices in this way can change the course of humankind? If so, how?

ideal path as a religious organization. I wish to share all of these honors with you, my friends. Together we have weathered countless obstacles and triumphed over all.

I earnestly pray each day that you will live the happiest lives, that you may enjoy good fortune, safety, longevity and good health.

In his well-known letter "Many in Body, One in Mind," the Daishonin writes: "Although Nichiren and his followers are few, because they are different in body, but united in mind, they will definitely accomplish their great mission of widely propagating the Lotus Sutra. Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 618).

I wish to declare that, just as this passage states, through your united efforts, we have completely triumphed in every respect over both the corrupt priesthood who betrayed the Daishonin as well as other unscrupulous individuals who have plotted against us.

In one of the essays of the famous French thinker Montaigne, we find the passage "Evil swallows most of its own venom and poisons itself." Those who slander the law writhe in agony from the venom they themselves have produced: This is a perfect description of the sad fate that awaits High Priest Nikken and his cohorts.

Since the Buddhist Law is the ultimate truth, those who act against it will incur strict retribution in accord with the un-

compromising workings of cause and effect.

In these turbulent times, women are forging a vast network of peace and respect for life.

President Makiguchi was also a pioneer in the education of women. He firmly believed that women, who create the values that foster peace, are the builders of the ideal society of the future. Mothers are educators who protect and nurture the infinitely precious treasure of life. [More than 90 years ago, out of the desire to provide educational opportunities to all women, President Makiguchi organized free classes for women who lacked financial means. He also established correspondence courses for women. He assembled a top-notch group of teachers and excellent teaching materials for this purpose and held audio-visual presentations in the form of short films, aimed at gaining popular support for this movement.]

The Japanese writer and educator Nitobe Inazo, who went on to become under-secretary-general of the League of Nations and was well known for his activities in the international arena, was a close acquaintance of President Makiguchi. In contrast, the Soka Gakkai's founder, who was imprisoned for his opposition to the military authorities during World War II, did not enjoy wide renown in society during his lifetime.

Nevertheless, today his far-reaching vision shines with a brilliance that only increases as time goes by. He was truly a great man.

As a glance at the international situation will reveal, we are living in a turbulent age. In these times, all our women's and young women's division members — here in Kanto, in other parts of Japan and across the globe — are forging a vast, unprecedented network based on the ideals of peace and respect for life. The only way to establish genuine world peace is to further expand and consolidate this network. I wish to strongly impress this upon you.

The only real way to break out of today's chaos is for human beings themselves to change.

Let us recall some of our goals. We have vowed to secure the foundation for peace in Asia and throughout the world during the second Seven Bells, in the first half of the 21st century. Then, during the third

Seven Bells, in the second half of the 21st century, we will see the philosophy of the sanctity of life established as the spirit of the age and the world (see the Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

Humanity's future is still in peril. The only real way to break out of this chaos is for human beings themselves to change. With our grand vision for the 21st century, let us ring the bells of eternal peace, of kosen-rufu, steadily and resolutely, one after another!

The world at peace and all humanity living together in harmony is the dream and hope of the 21st century. The surest first step toward realizing this goal is for human beings to reach out and engage in dialogue that transcends all differences.

A crucial passage in the Daishonin's treatise "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" says, "Let us discuss the question at length" (WND, 7). The host here invites his guest to engage in a discussion with him. The Daishonin highly valued one-on-one dialogue. "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" is itself structured as a dialogue between the host and his guest.

This treatise is the starting point for peace. It is said that the Daishonin's Buddhism begins and ends with "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land." And dialogue is the backbone of this important work.

Neither military force nor political coercion is the answer. It is through one-on-one dialogue that individuals form bonds of genuine trust.

A world where all people can assemble together without discrimination, transcending all national and ethnic differences — the SGI is truly a

model of this dream. Just look at the international gathering we are holding today, with so many friends from different countries around the globe. All we need to do is expand this network of human harmony.

We are spreading dialogue for peace throughout the world. We are conducting dialogue with people of different cultures and traditions.

I have personally engaged in more than 1,500 dialogues with leading thinkers from all continents, starting with British historian Arnold Toynbee. Moreover, my dialogues with some 40 of these individuals have either been published or are in the process of being published, all with the aim of fostering international understanding.

The Soka Gakkai's movement for peace is striving through dialogue to establish the philosophy of the sanctity of life as the spirit of the 21st century. The dialogues you engage in every day are noble and important. I hope you will continue them with supreme confidence and pride.

After World War II, President Toda embarked on his own campaign to expand dialogue here in Kanto. [In September 1946, President Toda traveled with a small group of leaders to Tochigi and Gumma prefectures on the organization's first regional propagation drive after the war.] I am thus very happy that we are making a cheerful, energetic departure today with this Kanto Region General Meeting toward 2002, which has been designated the Year of Expanding Dialogue.

To expand dialogue is to expand well-being, peace, victory and the future.

To be continued in an upcoming issue.

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Survivors of Japanese Prisons Honor SGI President

Photos by GREGORY NAKASUJI

At a special Oct. 30 ceremony at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, the Association of Survivors of Japanese Prisons Incorporated of the Republic of the Philippines awarded SGI President Ikeda its Plaque and Medal of Peace. Sir Colonel Vicente O. Novales, president of the association, presented the awards to SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, who received them on behalf of the SGI president. The Association of Survivors chose to honor President Ikeda for his lifelong work to rid the world of war. Also on hand were officials of The Order of the Knights of Rizal, led by Sir Rogelio M. Quiambao. **WT**



SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima receives the Medal of Peace on SGI President Ikeda's behalf from Sir Colonel Vicente O. Novales, president of the Association of Survivors of Japanese Prisons Incorporated. SUA President Daniel Habuki (left) and Sir Rogelio M. Quiambao of The Order of the Knights of Rizal (right) also attended the ceremony at SUA, AV's Founders Hall, Oct 30.

FROM SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE ON RECEIVING THE PLAQUE AND MEDAL OF PEACE

Entrusting Peace to Young People

The unspeakable barbarity and atrocities that Japan perpetrated against the Philippines during the World War II are acts that can never be absolved. So that the folly of the past shall never be repeated, the SGI has worked for many years to marshal the forces of peace, our cry against war and violence directed in particular to the youth of the world.

◆◆◆◆

Together with each of you here today, I pledge to continue my advance upon the paths of peace, culture and education, marching ever onward to transform the 21st century into a century free of war, so that all may shine with happiness. **WT**



Students of the first freshman class of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, enjoy the awards ceremony.

SIR COLONEL VICENTE O. NOVALES'S SPEECH ON CONFERRING THE PLAQUE AND MEDAL OF PEACE

NOBODY IS A WINNER IN WAR

'Because of all the experiences that I had, I realized that the inhumanity of man against his fellow being must be stopped,' Sir Colonel Vicente O. Novales says. 'There is only one conclusion: We must stop all wars, because nobody is a winner, and everybody is a loser.'



Sir Colonel Vicente O. Novales, president of the Association of Survivors of Japanese Prisons Incorporated, speaks to the SUA freshmen.

Bring you warm greetings from the Philippines and a warmer greeting from a senior World War II veteran. I thank you for having me here to share with you some of my life experiences.

About 60 years ago, like all the students of this magnificent institution of learning, I was full of life and busy with college activities. Basketball is the most popular sport in the Philippines. Once you become a member of the champion team of the National Intercol-

legiate Athletic Association, it makes you feel like a celebrity. And for a 19-year-old, it was a glamorous life.

As history will tell you, on Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Air Force bombed Pearl Harbor, which started the Pacific War. I volunteered in the Philippine Army but was turned down for enlistment because I was only 19 years old and did not have enough

military training.

But being 19 years old did not keep me and a lot of my friends on the sidelines. We organized a guerrilla outfit, which is known as the Hunters ROTC. I am very proud to say that this organization has established itself in the history of the Philippines as one of the successful guerrilla movements of our country. We were idealists and loved our country, and we were willing to die for what we believed in. A lot of my friends were killed.

As guerrillas, we were both the hunters and the hunted. We suffered deprivations living in the jungle. We had no food, we were vulnerable to the elements most of the time, and insects and leeches attacked us. I cannot explain to you how life was then, but believe me, it was very hard. To avoid starvation, we learned to eat anything that moved in the jungle. We were living off the land.

The worst thing that happened to me was being captured by the Japanese Imperial Army and imprisoned at Fort Santiago. The dreaded military Kempeitei subjected me and all of us who were incarcerated in this fort to almost daily torture. We were punched, kicked, beaten with pieces of wood and tortured. In addition to this, we were not given food and water. We were subjected to the cruelest and most inhumane torture and indignities, which I would like to forget.

Fortunately, in my case, I was transferred to the island of Mindanao in the province of Davao, where we were away from Manila in an outdoor type of environment. But the starvation and the torture continued.

I was able to escape from this concentration camp and joined a guerrilla unit operating in the area under an American officer named Wendell Fertig.

Can you imagine the hatred and the anger that built within me because of this experience? It transformed me into a machine of death against the enemy, every time I went on a

mission. I was very cruel.

But eventually, because of all the experiences that I had, I realized that the inhumanity of man against his fellow being must be stopped. This is from a man who has suffered and dealt sufferings. There is only one conclusion: We must stop all wars, because nobody is a winner, and everybody is a loser.

Peace, not war, must be the ultimate undertaking of all men.

As Dr. Daisaku Ikeda writes in his 1999 Peace Proposal: "To lay the foundations for a lasting peace, we must deinstitutionalize war. We must effect a transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. With the end of the Cold War, for the time being at any rate, the threat of an all-out nuclear conflict has been averted. Unfortunately, however, local and ethnic conflicts grow in number year by year all over the world" (May 1999 *Living Buddhism*, p. 29).

Dr. Ikeda is truly is a man of peace, and for this reason, our organization honors him with the Plaque and Medal of Peace.

For an aging veteran like myself, facing the final curtain of my life, I have to say that the honor you have given me today will be treasured not only by yours truly but also my family and the many veterans of World War II. **WT**

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NOV. 11 ENCOURAGEMENT

Youth Can Impart Great Hope

'Turbulent, challenging times present a wonderful opportunity for youth to take center stage,' says SGI President Ikeda. 'Since you are young, I hope that you will work much harder than others to impart hope to friends and vanquish the evil and injustice that inflicts suffering on people, and that you will strive to expand our alliance for peace throughout the entire world.'

On the evening of Nov. 11, SGI President Ikeda attended a conference with Soka Gakkai regional leaders and youth representatives at the Shinano Culture Center in Shinanomachi, Tokyo. Expressing his appreciation for the members' wonderful efforts to promote kosen-rufu, President Ikeda had the following to say:

- Today, filled with growing uncertainty about the future, people are seeking a solid philosophy they can base their lives on. Turbulent, challenging times present a wonderful opportunity for youth to take center stage. Since you are young, I hope that you will work much harder than others to impart hope to friends and vanquish the evil and injustice that inflicts suffering on people, and that you will strive to expand our alliance for peace through-

out the entire world.

- Everything depends on the leaders. This includes the leaders' ability to evaluate reports and respond appropriately, their courteous speech that wins people's hearts and their appealing, attractive personalities that draw people like a magnet. When leaders demonstrate these qualities and take action on the front lines of our movement, the momentum of our entire organization will multiply. Right up to the very end, leaders must never think of retreating.

- Life is long. There is no need to be impatient. Happiness lies in being strong. Faith lies in never being defeated. While forging a self that remains strong and unshaken in the face of any challenge, please advance with vigor and joy, and lead great lives dedicated to kosen-rufu. **WT**

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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'PURE STREAM'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 17-20

'Soka Gakkai activities are all aimed at helping members deepen their faith and at advancing the cause of kosen-rufu. If this basic purpose is forgotten in the process of trying to put on a good show, then such activities lose their meaning and purpose.'

Shin'ichi Yamamoto was concerned with how the members of Toyama Chapter would react to the death of their chapter leader, Toshiharu Takamatsu. But when he saw the faces of the members who filled the hall, he was relieved. They had overcome their sadness and appeared firmly resolved to carry on Takamatsu's spirit of dedication to kosen-rufu.

In his speech, Shin'ichi encouraged the members to uphold the Mystic Law throughout their lives and become true winners. He could

see that they fully grasped his message. Even in death, Takamatsu's strong determination continued to influence the members of his chapter and was beginning to have an impact on the entire region.

On Aug. 24, the 16th anniversary of his joining the Soka Gakkai, Shin'ichi visited Hokkaido, where his mentor, Josei Toda, spent his youth. He attended a leaders meeting at the Hokkaido Headquarters building that day, and on the 25th went to the 5th Soka Gakkai Hokkaido Sports Festival, held in Sapporo.

This "Festival of Youth" was the first of the year. Similar events would follow across the country, culminating in a national gathering on Sept. 22. In fostering youth, it is important to provide a stage on which they can exercise their talents. The sports festivals offered just such an arena as they presented these young people with an excellent opportunity to give full play to their strengths and abilities.

Shin'ichi carefully observed how the youth in each area were preparing for these events, watching what they were planning and how they were growing as a result. He wanted to see if they would concentrate simply on putting on a show, or if they would give the occasion a special meaning and come up with something original and unique that would launch them toward further progress. Depending on their effort and attitude, the sports festivals would have very different meaning and value.

Soka Gakkai activities are all aimed at helping members deepen their faith and at advancing the cause of kosen-

rufu. If this basic purpose is forgotten in the process of trying to put on a good show, then such activities lose their meaning and purpose.

The Hokkaido sports festival overflowed with youthful energy and passion. Individual events were unique and well thought out. When the word *trailblazing* was spelled out with hand-held cards on the field, a thunderous cheer rose from the audience. In preparation for this day, the members had worked very hard to introduce their friends to the practice. They wanted to celebrate this occasion with proof of their efforts to blaze a great trail of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism throughout Hokkaido.

Shin'ichi was overjoyed to see the growth of the youth in Hokkaido, where just six years earlier, during the Yubari Coal Miners Union incident of 1957 [a case of blatant religious discrimination, in which miners were threatened with losing their jobs on account of belonging to the Soka Gakkai], he had fought with all his strength to protect the many

ordinary citizens who had joined the Soka Gakkai there.

On Sept. 1, a day of bright sun and beautiful blue skies, a grand chorus of joyful voices rang through the Nihon University Auditorium in Ryogoku, Tokyo. The 26th Headquarters Leaders Meeting was being held to commemorate the completion that day of the long-awaited new Soka Gakkai Headquarters building in Shinanomachi. This facility was to be an energy source from which an important new movement in the essential phase of kosen-rufu would be launched.

The meeting started just past 9:30 a.m. Beneath the clear autumn sky, members who had gathered from all over Japan rejoiced at the building's completion and cheerfully exchanged vows to make a new start in their activities.

In his speech at the meeting, Shin'ichi related that High Priest Nittatsu had happily told him: "President Yamamoto, kosen-rufu is here! The time has arrived at last!" Shin'ichi also announced that the Soka Gakkai had realized President Toda's goals of 3 million member households and of opening the way for the spread of the Daishonin's teachings throughout Asia.

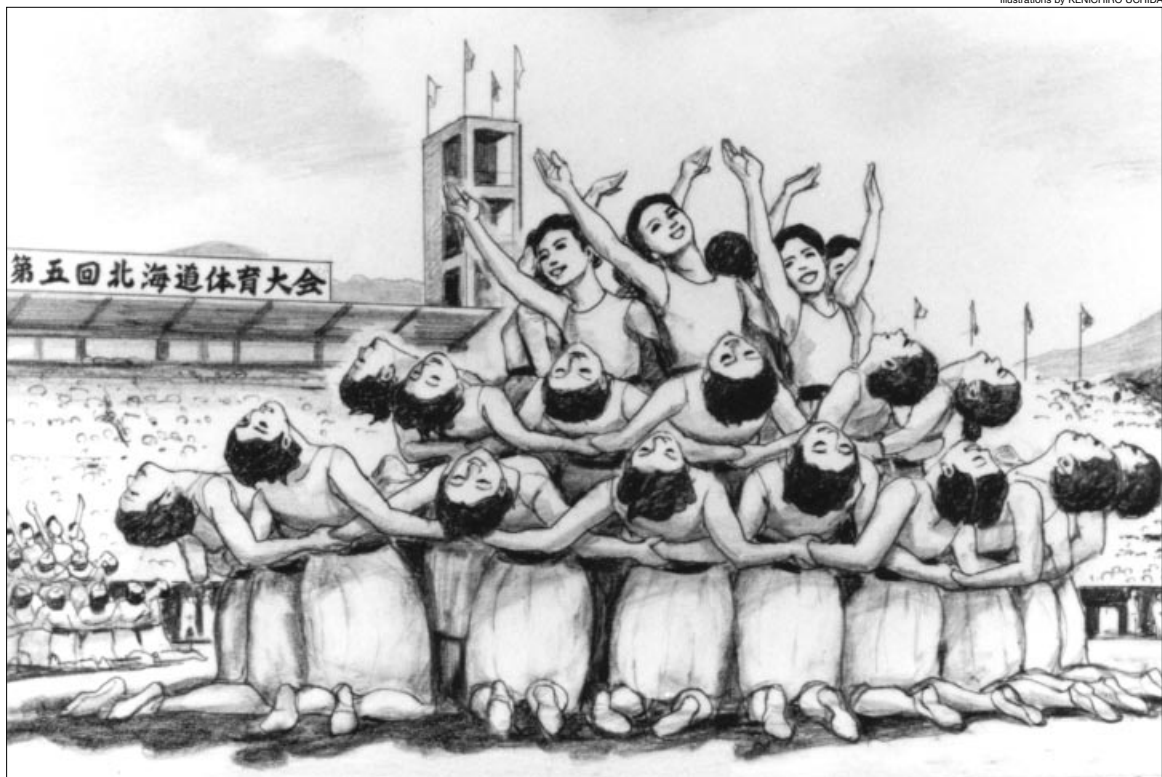
In fact, the Soka Gakkai now had more than 3.6 million member households, and seven chapters had already been established in other parts of Asia, where President Toda had so desired to shine the light of happiness. The foundation for worldwide kosen-rufu was steadily being built.

Shin'ichi declared that, based on the Daishonin's Buddhism, the Soka Gakkai would without a doubt lead all the people of Japan to happiness. He closed by saying: "My sincerest wish is that all of you will put faith first and enjoy wonderful benefit in your lives. I hope our leaders will do their utmost to serve the members toward that end. We must never grow arrogant or negligent because of the Soka Gakkai's tremendous growth.

"Let us be humble about our victories and continue to advance in high spirits one step at a time as allies of the people."

After this joyous leaders meeting, the completion ceremony for the new Headquarters building was held in Shinanomachi at 1:30 p.m. The pristine white structure sparkled against the cloudless sky. The site measured 14,639 square feet, and the building itself covered 10,226 square feet of that. With four stories and a

Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA



basement, it boasted a total floor space of 41,355 square feet. Its surface was plain concrete inlaid with pieces of marble. The solid diagonal pillars gave the building a feeling of simple fortitude and grandeur.

The members' eyes glistened and their faces beamed as they took in the splendid edifice. They were excited to think of the fresh surge of progress that would arise from this place.

Nothing could have made Shin'ichi happier than to witness his fellow members' joy at the completion of the new Soka Gakkai Headquarters building in Shinanomachi. Thinking back, he recalled that for the first eight years after President Toda had been released from prison on July 3, 1945, the Soka Gakkai had no place of its own. During that time, President Toda was busy rebuilding the organization, and the second floor of his business offices in Nishi Kanda, Tokyo, served as the Soka Gakkai Headquarters. It was here that he held his lectures on the Lotus Sutra and established the young men's and young women's divisions.

This was also where the Soka Gakkai's Joju Gohonzon bearing the inscription "For the Fulfillment of the Great Desire for Kosen-rufu Through the Compassionate Propagation of the Great Law" was enshrined. From here, the organization had launched its colossal effort to introduce 750,000 households to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

During those eight years, whenever a senior leader would propose constructing a Headquarters, President Toda would

flatly reply: "We don't need a building. That's just an outward form. Wherever I am is the Headquarters!"

In fact, however, no one felt the need for an independent Headquarters building more than President Toda. At his offices in Nishi Kanda, only two rooms were available for Soka Gakkai use, and both were quite small. People coming for meetings or to receive guidance would often overflow the building out into the street. President Toda felt terrible about those members who could not enter, and it pained him to no end to see them standing in the cold and rain.

Since he could not afford to build a Headquarters on his own, doing so would require asking the members for donations. At that time, however, most Soka Gakkai members were so poor that they could barely make ends meet. Not wanting to increase their burden, President Toda decided to hold off on the construction of a Headquarters building until a later date.

When he was alone with Shin'ichi, President Toda often shared his true feelings. "Shin'ichi," he would say, "let's build a magnificent Headquarters building someday. I'd like the Soka Gakkai to have other great structures, too."

Plans for a Headquarters building finally took shape in the summer of 1952. Things were going smoothly when the Soka Gakkai purchased a lot measuring 15,096 square feet at 25 Shinanomachi, Shinjuku Ward, near the Nishi Kanda Headquarters, but soon they hit a snag. The five-story



pagoda at the head temple had sustained weather damage, and repairs were urgently needed. President Toda gave first priority to maintenance of the head temple and set about repairing the pagoda.

Repairing the five-story pagoda depleted the Soka Gakkai's funds for building a Headquarters. As a result, in 1953, they sold the land they had bought a year earlier and purchased instead an old Western-style building with an area of 7,353 square feet at 32 Shinanomachi and refurbished it. In November that year, the Soka Gakkai Head-

quarters moved to this building in Shinanomachi.

For the next nine years, this was the base camp for kosen-rufu activities. Many members received guidance and encouragement from President Toda here. It was a training center for the nurturing of new talent. The ceremony officially recommending Shin'ichi as the third president of the Soka Gakkai after President Toda's death also took place in this building.

Plans for tearing down the old building and putting up a new one on the same site had been under consideration even while President Toda was alive. After Shin'ichi became president, however, the Soka Gakkai's movement experienced such great progress as well as a dramatic increase in membership that the need for a new Headquarters building became urgent. The project was therefore undertaken at last.

Stones from 42 nations around the world, from locations such as Egypt and the Ganges River in India, were encased in the concrete base of the altar where the Joju Gohonzon was to be enshrined. Shin'ichi had collected these stones on his overseas travels, and he had them placed there to symbolize the prayer for world peace.

The basement of the new Headquarters contained the control room and electric facilities, a cafeteria and storage space. The first floor had a lobby, offices and reception rooms. On the second floor were more offices, meeting rooms, reception rooms and

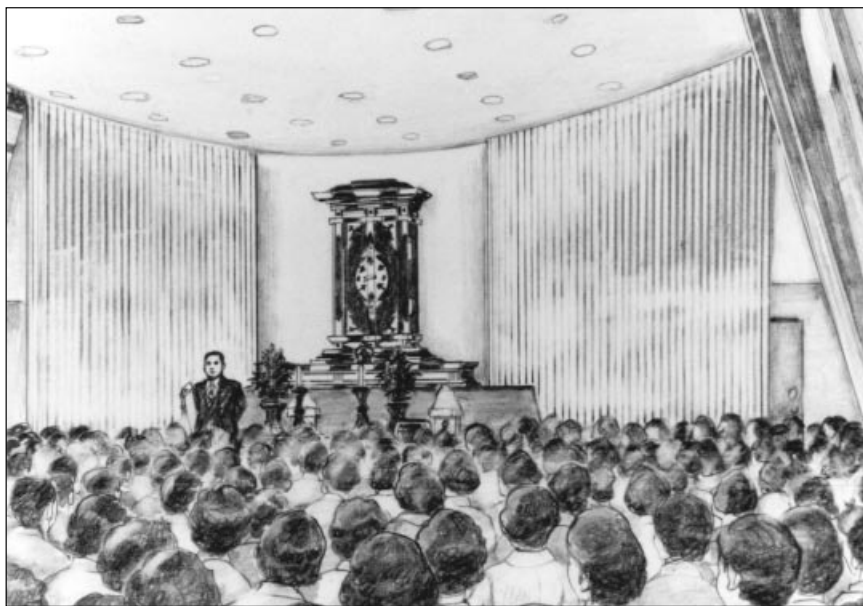
rooms for each Soka Gakkai division. On the third floor were a large main Gohonzon room and the president's office, and on the fourth was a large conference hall.

The completion ceremony took place in the Gohonzon room on the third floor. Amid the joyous voices of members reciting the sutra and chanting daimoku, Shin'ichi vowed that from this new Headquarters he would continue giving his all to leading worldwide kosen-rufu.

Addressing the participants, Shin'ichi said: "For the first time in the 35 years since President Makiguchi took faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism and began to spread its teachings far and wide, the Soka Gakkai has built a real Headquarters. This Headquarters is a castle of the Law dedicated to kosen-rufu. It is a castle of champions who work for the people's happiness. Though there is a room for each Soka Gakkai division here, I hope you will make the most of all the facilities in your respective activities.

"I hope all of you will take full responsibility for our movement, becoming allies to those who are suffering and courageously taking the lead in spreading this Buddhism throughout Japan and the world." The sunlight streaming in through the large windows of the new building illuminated the faces of all present.

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



VICTORY OR DEFEAT

WORDS To WIN By

By AL ALBERGATE

SGI-USA VICE GENERAL DIRECTOR

From "The Hero of the World,"
The Writings of Nichiren Dai-
shonin, pp. 835–39.

Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat, while secular authority is based on the principle of reward and punishment. For this reason, a Buddha is looked up to as the Hero of the World, while a king is called the one who rules at his will. (WND, 835)

Reward and punishment are the means that a government sometimes employs to enforce its policy. Those who support its aims are



rewarded and those who go against them are punished. Judgment rests with the ruler or other governing body empowered to administer reward and punishment. Since both are meted out by human beings, justice is bound to be less than perfect—some people will contrive to be rewarded without merit, while others will be punished without fault.

The world of Buddhism, however, cannot be manipulated in this way. Its basis is

not reward and punishment, for Buddhism acknowledges no external power that could reward or punish us. Rather, it concerns itself with victory or defeat, that is, with fundamental happiness or unhappiness in each individual's life. Its authority rests nowhere outside us but with the ultimate truth or Mystic Law inherent in life itself. If one believes in and seeks to realize this truth, he will win; if he remains ignorant or goes against it, he will lose. This is due to the workings of karmic causality, which are perfectly impartial.

The Buddha is called "the hero of the world," not because he bends others to his will, as a king or government does, but because he reveals the Law that is eternal and thus leads all people to enlightenment.

In this, we can also see a fundamental distinction between religions based on rules and those based on virtues. Rule-based religions create behavioral restrictions. Those who

violate these restrictions will be punished; those who abide by them will be rewarded. The practitioners of these faiths, which are typically based on an external deity, often believe this reward or punishment will manifest after death. Without the threat of punishment being meted out in the present, the incentive to restrict unethical behavior may prove inadequate. The increasing violence of our society is just one example of the loosening of these strictures of faith.

In a virtue-based ethic, like that of the Daishonin's Buddhism, ethical behavior based on the fundamental law of cause and effect leads to a lasting happiness and victory instead of defeat. It is its own reward, hard-wired, as it were, into each person's being. In these terms, we can see why the Buddha is the hero of this world. For a Buddha opens our eyes to the internal, eternal and objective law of causality that transcends the limitations of secular or religious authority that dispenses reward and punishment.

When we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the

Gohonzon, we are able to see for ourselves the workings of this Law in ourselves and our environments. Imbued with this wisdom we can live victoriously and happily.

This letter was written to Shijo Kingo, one of the Daishonin's strongest supporters and a retainer of the Ema family. At the time, Lord Ema was threatening to expel him from the clan. This would mean losing his estate and becoming essentially a homeless samurai, a life-threatening situation.

All of this persecution was the result of his Buddhist practice and staunch support of the Daishonin. If Kingo were to capitulate and give up his faith, he likely would have pleased Lord Ema and been allowed to remain in his position on his estate. However, by giving up faith, he would fail to achieve lasting happiness. By remaining firm in his faith, he was in danger of being punished, but guaranteed eternal victory in life. Through perseverance, he also won his lord's favor in the end. The Daishonin urges him to think about ultimate victory or defeat, rather than temporary reward or punishment. **WT**

EXTERNAL EVIL

Back to the Basics

By MARK KORAL

LOS ANGELES

Evil in Buddhism refers to the negative functions that work to destroy, obstruct and otherwise undermine the dignity of life. The manifestation of this fundamental darkness inherent in life is often personified as the workings of the devil king of the sixth heaven and may be equated with the element of egoism intrinsic to the self.

In this regard, Nichiren Daishonin says, "The fundamental nature of enlightenment manifests itself as Brahma and Shakra, whereas the fundamental darkness manifests itself as the devil king of the sixth heaven" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 997). The essential character of the devil king of the sixth heaven is to deprive living beings of life and life force, driving them into the pain and



suffering of Hell.

Sometimes referred to as the "heavenly devil," this devil king enjoys supreme delight by controlling living beings as a means to his own egocentric ends. He resides at the peak of what is called the world of Desire, which includes the first five of the Ten Worlds (Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger and Humanity) plus part of the world of Heaven.

The world of Desire is so-called because living beings in this realm of existence are controlled by desires and instincts. They are completely

at the mercy of their reactions to changes in their environment (see *Life: An Enigma, a Precious Jewel*, p. 109).

A society dominated by the mistaken belief that the transitory world of Heaven is the highest aim in life is indeed a place firmly at the mercy of the devil king's diabolic influence. People in this realm, controlled by their desire for material abundance, trade their spiritual growth for material gain.

That the Lotus Sutra refers to such a world as a "burning house" is with good reason. Living in this manner is to be at the mercy of the ever-shifting winds of one's environment. The promise of true security and happiness for the people dwelling there is merely an illusion. And when the veil of illusion is finally lifted by the reality of life's impermanence, it is often the agonies of Hell that lie in wait.

How can we extricate ourselves from the torments of this burning house? Buddhism provides a way out of this cultural malaise confronting contemporary civilization. It provides the means of liberating the self from its deluded attachment to transitory phenomena—the devil

king's domain.

In terms of the practice necessary to undertake to bring about this human revolution, SGI President Ikeda says: "To attain Buddhahood, we have to thoroughly conquer our own 'inner evil.' The concrete means for doing so is struggling against and defeating 'external evil.' Struggling to defeat evil enables us to polish and purify our lives, and attain Buddhahood. Because we strive against the ultimate evil, we attain the ultimate good" (June 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 32).

What is meant by external evil? The symbolic fashion in which the fundamental darkness in life is represented—the devil of the sixth heaven—should not prevent us from seeing the essence of the matter.

The pleasure we derive from exerting control over other people and nature is this diabolic quality of desire operating in our own lives. The urge to control and dominate others is the utmost manifestation of this devilish function.

One of Buddhism's distinguishing qualities is its emphasis on cause and effect. By immersing ourselves in this illusion-dominated culture we willingly take on the struggle

to promote the sanctity of life. By patiently overturning mistaken ideas and misleading philosophies that destroy the dignity of life, we are able to polish and strengthen the Buddhahood in our lives. The practice of altruism is the concrete means of defeating the darkness in our own lives.

Moreover, as the most profound teachings of the Lotus Sutra make clear, as magnificent ordinary people—Bodhisattvas of the Earth—we have been charged from the remote past with the essential mission of spreading the ideals and practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism throughout the world.

The principle of three thousand worlds in a single moment of life elucidates that our lives are fundamentally at one with the entire universe. Based upon the Mystic Law actualized by the Daishonin in the form of the Gohonzon, we can penetrate the universe with our determined faith.

By wholeheartedly directing our focus to working for the happiness of others, we subdue the evil workings lurking within and bring forth our fundamental enlightenment in a process that continuously strengthens our Buddhahood. **WT**

EXPERIENCE — MIKE CLARK, NEW YORK CITY

Realizing My Dreams By Embracing My Buddha Nature

For as long as I can remember, music has been the center of my life. Both my mother and father had a deep love for music and placed my crib right next to the phonograph. When I was 4, my father brought his drum set down from the attic and sat me down. They were stunned when I began playing. I seemed to have an inherent talent for putting together rhythm combinations, and a highly developed sense of coordination with my hands and feet.

The very next night my father brought me along to a nightclub to sit in with some of his musician friends. I played a long drum solo and the crowd went wild. After that, I came in twice a week as a featured guest artist.

When I was 7, my parents went through an extremely nasty divorce. I lived with my mother and as time went by watched her go through a tremendous struggle as a single mother. I renounced my faith in God, started hanging out with a bad crowd, and my grades went from straight A's to failing. I stayed in my room and played my drums all day, every day.

My father began to drink heavily. The police were called on more than one occasion, because he would become very violent. Lying on his behalf and trips to jail to bail him out were common occurrences. By the time I was 13, I was drinking with him.

As soon as I graduated from high school, I went on the road with a band and started playing music professionally full-time. I was in several African-American bands that traveled throughout the south playing jazz and the blues. I witnessed brutal acts of violence and incidents of discrimination against my band mates and other people of color. I began to question my right to play the music that I loved so much. This imprinted on me a legacy of shame for my country and my race.

My best friend, Paul Jackson,

with whom I was sharing an apartment, came home one day chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. He told me he had just been hired to play bass with Herbie Hancock. He said if I chant, I could have anything I want. So I immediately started to chant for a gig with Herbie or Miles Davis. After all I had experienced, though, I knew this was impossible. Herbie hired me three weeks later to play with his band The Headhunters.

Within a year, the record *Head Hunters* went gold. Over the next four years, we traveled around the world, chanted thousands of hours of daimoku, introduced hundreds of people to Buddhism, had discussion meetings in our dressing and hotel rooms and received personal guidance from SGI President Ikeda. I prayed to be immortalized in jazz history, and I was credited with a drumming innovation on a song Herbie wrote that subsequent books claim changed jazz drumming history. The name of the song was "Actual Proof."

It seemed like all my dreams were coming true. But in the midst of all this, I continued becoming involved in unhealthy relationships. By the time I was 27, I was in my third marriage. My first wife, my high school sweetheart, had been killed in an automobile accident. I walked out on my second marriage, and my third wife was murdered in a drug-related gang execution. Every time I met a woman who might have been good for my life, I ran in the other direction or broke up with her.

Meanwhile, during my tenure with the Headhunters, I consistently encountered racist attitudes that left me feeling incapable, stupid and unworthy. I doubted my humanity, my Buddha nature, my very right to be on earth. I felt totally powerless at this injustice, based on an external like the color of my skin. I could understand where others' anger came from, but it did not help my pain. I eventually



left the band, and with my new girlfriend, moved to New York to be a serious jazz player.

I played \$25 gigs in after-hours clubs that were violent dens of iniquity. We lived in a small room with a view of a wall with no sunlight. No kitchen, just a refrigerator and a hot plate.

Record companies told me outright that because I was a white drummer, there was no market for me unless I played a fusion hybrid form of the music. But my dream was to play acoustic jazz music.

I fought desperately to overcome these circumstances. I kept chanting abundant daimoku, taking part in SGI-USA activities and getting regular guidance from my seniors in faith. But my karma would not budge. It seemed truly immutable.

Much of what I was experiencing was the continuous residue of racial profiling, so to speak. I came to play jazz music, but I found the jazz music scene in New York to be overwhelmingly segregated along black and white divisions. The situation appeared hopeless.

I was plagued with a deep anger and mounting frustration that my career was entirely out of my control. I began looking

for trouble so I could release the rage inside.

I used to hang out in Central Park at night, armed and counting large sums of money, baiting someone to mug me. Another time, a gun was pointed at my head and the trigger pulled three times, but the gun did not go off. That I survived this period in my life and was not killed or imprisoned for killing someone else is testament to the power of my Buddhist practice.

Years passed. I got very sick with chronic fatigue syndrome and became completely incapacitated. I entered into yet another terribly unhappy and inappropriate marriage that ended in divorce.

I was later asked to participate in a Headhunters reunion recording and tour. Unfortunately, the same conflicts reappeared, and the tour was not a good experience. Afterward, I received guidance to try to understand all of my problems.

It was suggested that because I saw myself as a "white jazz musician" who could never penetrate the wall of racism in the jazz music industry, the universe was simply reflecting that perception. In other words, my feeling had become my prayer, and my prayer was reflected in my reality. I knew this was not just

about music; it was about me.

I returned to the Gohonzon with an attitude that I was a Buddha and worthy of respect from myself and for myself. I let this sink into my prayer and allowed it to be my attitude in faith even while not in front of the Gohonzon. I made a decision to be happy and accepted that I had the right to be. Acknowledging my Buddha nature, I was learning about self-love.

I soon saw results with this change in attitude. A record company invited me to do my own solo project, entitled *Actual Proof*, the name of the song that brought me fame many years earlier, and I got a manager and an agent. I am on the road with my own band, playing to sold-out houses. I recently finished a recording with some of my fellow Headhunters alumni. We have all realized tremendous growth in our individual and joint struggles. Now the music we play reflects the love, mutual respect and joy we experience with one another. The wounds have healed.

President Ikeda once wrote: "It is important that we always maintain a seeking spirit toward Buddhism. We must always have the desire to improve ourselves, never coming to a standstill and stagnating in our present situation" (Feb. 19, 1999, *World Tribune*, p. 1). After years of struggling with my own demons, I am now living a life for the sake of peace. If there is anger, it is at the tragic injustices I witness. If there is rage, it is channeled into fighting for kosen-rufu on a higher level. My life has finally begun to reflect the fortune of embracing the Mystic Law.

From this point on, I am determined to create value with my music, close the gaps filled with the delusions of differences and dedicate myself to fostering bonds of humanity and mutual respect between all people.

—As told to Linda Reynolds



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SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

El Paso Community Rallies Around VOV

By JUDY HYMAN
EL PASO, TEXAS, CORRESPONDENT

The SGI-USA's El Paso Community Center overflowed with SGI-USA members and friends as they celebrated the Family Youth Festival theme of Victory Over Violence, Oct. 14. A lively program, interspersed with presentations by local organizations and musical groups, provided an interesting combination of education and culture to an appreciative audience.

A resolution presented by the county of El Paso congratulated the youth of the SGI-USA for their efforts in addressing violence in our country. A representative from the city of El Paso officially proclaimed October 2001 Victory Over Violence Month and invited youth leaders to participate at the city's upcoming memorial service for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Among other highlights was a presentation by Yusef Shere of the Islamic Center of El Paso. Mr. Shere outlined traditions and beliefs prevalent in Islam, emphasizing that true



An SGI-USA youth chorus entertains the audience at the Family Youth Festival in El Paso, Texas, Oct. 14.

Islam seeks peace and does not condone violence. "The word *jihad*," Mr. Shere said, "means struggle." He went on to say that a Muslim's constant struggle is to subdue one's own negative impulses and elevate the higher qualities in one's

life — a concept Buddhists can readily appreciate.

The El Paso Border Chorders, a local men's singing group, entertained with a number of barbershop-style songs from the early 20th century and ended their presentation with a lovely

rendition of "America the Beautiful." Tears came to the eyes of many as the audience rose to its feet in silent respect for this musical tribute to America.

Other guest speakers included representatives from the El Paso Shelter for Battered

Women and the El Paso Child Crisis Center. Each spoke of the importance of teaching children to be nonviolent through good examples set by the adults around them.

Performances by the Eastwood High Nuevo Amanecer Folklorico Group, the El Paso Women's Division Chorus and the Youth Division Chorus rounded out the program.

In closing remarks, Michael Day, SGI-USA El Paso youth leader said: "We wanted to give each of you a token of our appreciation for your help in making the family youth festival a success. So, we handmade over 1,500 origami cranes. In Japan, the crane is a symbol of peace. It is said that if you make 1,000 origami cranes, your wish will come true. Let us never give up! Let us have the spirit of 10 million cranes! Let us joyfully create a culture of peace!"

After the program, tables piled high with food from many countries greeted guests and members. A small dance floor, accompanied by a DJ's selections, was soon filled with dancers reveling in the success of the festival. **WT**



The finale of the SGI-USA Family Youth Festival in Austin, Texas, brings community groups and SGI-USA members together under the theme 'The Youthful Colors of Victory,' Sept. 23.

FROM AUSTIN, 1

colors. Victory is because we as global citizens will overcome the prejudices and hatreds that still exist in this world today. Victory Over Violence is not an easy process but it begins with us, the Youthful Colors of Victory!"

The performance began with a beautiful rendition of "America the Beautiful" by Beverly Johnson, followed by "Jedi Training School," a *Star Wars*-based skit showing the power of faith.

The centerpiece of the festival was a seven-act play called *The Lion Has No Rage*. Written and staged by a friend of the SGI, David Kyle, the play provided a cohesive story line into which many different types of performances were interwoven. The goal was to allow each youth to participate, and to be flexible enough to include anyone's talent. Among the varied, interspersed performances were a rock duet of Oasis songs, a piano/violin concerto of Massenet and Brahms, an original hip-hop dance by

Killeen young women, an Indian dance and a karate demonstration by the Boys and Girls Group members.

A local Austin hip-hop artist, MC Overlord, known for promotion of nonviolence in his lyrics, had the members dancing in the aisles to four of his upbeat songs.

All audience members joined in singing "Ode To Joy," led by Beverly Johnson and accompanied on violin and piano by Dohee Kim and Yongsun Kwan.

Members of the community

rallied their support and a number of organizations participated, including the Austin Fire Department, which set up a display as a memorial to the firemen who lost their lives in New York. Phenix & Phenix Publishing, the locally based publishers for Middleway Press, displayed the books *The Buddha in Your Mirror*, *The Way of Youth* and *For the Sake of Peace*, as well as promotional brochures and bookmarks. The walls were covered with art exhibits from a local grade school and the Del Valle Correctional

Institutions, as well as a Victory Over Violence display created by the SGI-USA youth.

Two TV stations covered the event on the evening news. They interviewed SGI-USA youth to gain young peoples' perspectives on the Sept. 11 tragedy and to gather their thoughts on the first experience of war in their generation. Lisa McMillan responded confidently to the interviewer's questions, saying, "Our culture of violence can only change by giving hope and courage to future generations." **WT**