



**SGI President Ikeda speaks about how 'suffering leads to victory!'**

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**SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S OCT. 11 SPEECH—PART 2**

## Buddhist Study Illuminates Our Lives

**'Our study of Buddhism is something that is deepened and strengthened with the passing of time as we grow in faith and life experience,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'The efforts you are making to study the teachings of Buddhism now are certain to illuminate your lives, not only in this existence but for all eternity.'**

*The conclusion 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.*

On Oct. 28, the youth division Advanced-level Study Exam will be held, while the Study Department Entrance Exam is scheduled for Nov. 25. Is anyone here taking these exams? [Members in the audience responded in the affirmative.]

Those of you who are studying so hard in the midst of your busy schedules are truly admirable. Likewise, your seniors in faith who are supporting you

with all their might—lecturing, encouraging and teaching you the wonderful principles of Buddhism—are respectable indeed. I want to sincerely praise and encourage those of you in both groups.

I am sure that none of our members are heartless enough to think, "I have passed those exams, so who cares about anyone else?" [Laughter.] I ask

PLEASE SEE SPEECH, 2



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda and youth at the 10th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.

## Fostering Resiliency in New York Youth

Photo by JOSEA JOHNSON



New York youth enjoy Youth Day 2001 at the SGI-USA's New York Culture Center.

**By SARA ALGASE AND DELANO DAVIDSON**  
NEW YORK CORRESPONDENTS

On Oct. 30, social workers and youth counselors from throughout the New York City area gathered at the SGI-USA New York Culture Center to discuss topics ranging from fostering resiliency in youth to cultivating personal assets in young people.

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies sponsored the all-day conference. Sean Grover, a program administrator with Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers and SGI-USA member who helped facilitate the day, noted that the

conference was almost canceled due to the devastating events of Sept. 11. "Staying true to the theme of resiliency, we decided to let nothing stand in our way," Sean commented.

"Too often adults do all the talking and young people are supposed to listen," added Brian Moriarty, coordinator of the conference and the federation's Youth Services Network. "This is a day when young people do the talking and adults do the listening. I'm very proud that 80 percent of the presenters are young people."

The day started out with an introduction of the SGI-USA, a celebration of African dance and poetry by SGI-USA mem-

bers Afua McKinney and Dru Barnes, and a powerful performance about youth challenges by four teenagers from United Community Centers.

"The compassion of one person can make a tremendous difference in a young person's life"—this theme appeared again and again throughout the day. "Youth can excel when given the skills," said Gessy Nixon of Youth Communications, an organization for children in foster care.

A highlight of the day was a panel of young people who shared incredible stories of overcoming adversity. Julian

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## FROM SPEECH, I

everyone to warmly support those taking the exams. I hope that there will be strong, healthy competition in every prefecture around the country that will contribute to fostering a steady stream of talented people dedicated to kosen-rufu.

Our study of Buddhism is something that is deepened and strengthened with the passing of time as we grow in faith and life experience. The efforts you are making to study the teachings of Buddhism now are certain to illuminate your lives, not only in this existence but also for all eternity.

In my youth division days, I regularly traveled to Saitama Prefecture [north of Tokyo] to give lectures on Nichiren Daishonin's writings. I burned with a sense of mission and responsibility that I was acting as second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's representative, and my wholehearted efforts at that time have now come into full bloom. [For roughly three years, beginning in September 1951, President Ikeda was in charge of the district-level lectures in Kawagoe, Saitama Prefecture. He was a 23-year-old young men's group leader when he took on this responsibility, and held the Study Department qualification of assistant teacher.]

Among his injunctions to followers of future generations, Nikko Shonin, the Daishonin's direct successor, calls on us to engrave the Daishonin's teachings in our lives (see *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1618). The Nichiren Shoshu priests, however, scorn the Daishonin's writings and trample on the spirit of faith to work for kosen-rufu.

In contrast, we of the Soka Gakkai have engraved the Daishonin's teachings in our lives and advanced with faith that is earnestly committed to achieving kosen-rufu. That is why we have triumphed in every endeavor.

The French author Victor Hugo wrote: "We who believe, what can we fear? There is no backward flow of ideas any more than of rivers." Correct ideas empower people, contribute to their happiness and illuminate the future. This was Hugo's conviction. I hope our youth will deepen their understanding of the Buddhist teachings and forge themselves into outstanding thinkers and peerless philosophers.

In "How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood through the Lotus Sutra," the Daishonin writes:



A new bridge in the Brazilian city of Itapevi, near São Paulo, has been named Josei Toda Viaduct by the São Paulo state legislature.

"In such an age of conflict, when the pure Law of the other sutras ceases to be effective, the wonderfully efficacious medicine of the Lotus Sutra will provide the cure for all these grave disasters.

"If one uses the Lotus Sutra to pray for the welfare of the land, it will prove to be a great pure Law that will secure and protect the nation, insuring joy and prosperity to everyone from the ruler on down to the common people" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 879).

I hope you will thoroughly study the principles of humanism and peace expounded in Buddhism, the "wonderfully efficacious medicine" for life and society.

Once again, I wish all the examinees the best luck in their upcoming study exams.

**As long as you never forget the path of mentor and disciple, the SGI will flourish forever.**

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose work first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi read with keen interest while in prison, declared that "slandering a Socrates, so as to prevent anyone from believing in virtue, is an act of high treason committed against humanity." The persecution of President Makiguchi by nationalist Japan was just such an "act of high treason against humanity," as is

the persecution of the Soka Gakkai by Nichiren Shoshu.

The Greek philosopher Socrates, one of the great teachers of humankind, was condemned to drink poison and die as a result of the machinations of jealous rivals. After his death, his disciple Plato rose to action.

After President Makiguchi died in prison for his beliefs, his disciple, President Toda, similarly rose to action. And after the death of President Toda, who had struggled valiantly against countless obstacles, I rose to action as his disciple.

The spirit and vision of great mentors is always carried on by disciples whose hearts are one with theirs. This is an unchanging formula of Buddhism. This is the true path of mentor and disciple.

What is the significance of today's date, Oct. 11? It was on this day 58 years ago, in 1943, during World War II, that President Toda — who had been unjustly arrested for violating the reprehensible Peace Preservation Act and for committing *lese majesty* — was transferred from the Tokyo Police Department to the Tokyo Detention House in Sugamo. About two weeks earlier, on Sept. 25, President Makiguchi had been moved to the same facility.

President Toda, a genuine disciple, courageously followed his mentor. "Always together with my mentor!" "Al-

ways for my mentor!" This is the spirit of a disciple. I served President Toda with the same determination.

I hope you will always remember this path of mentor and disciple walked by the first three presidents of the Soka Gakkai. As long as you never forget or stray from this supreme human path, the SGI will flourish forever. And you will become eternal victors and champions of humanity without the slightest doubt.

The Daishonin writes: "It is said that, if a teacher has a good disciple, both will gain the fruit of Buddhahood, but if a teacher fosters a bad disciple, both will fall into hell.

"If teacher and disciple are of different minds, they will never accomplish anything" (WND, 909).

Single-mindedly advancing on this great path of mentor and disciple, I have made the names of presidents Makiguchi and Toda known throughout the world. Few even in Japan — much less the world — knew of them. In China and South Korea, and in every other nation I have visited in my travels, I have always spoken of the achievements of my mentors. They are now praised the world over. This accomplishment is a source of tremendous pride.

**We can turn everyone and everything where we live into our allies.**

I have recently received

some happy news from our members in Brazil. A new bridge just completed in the city of Itapevi, near São Paulo, has been named Josei Toda Viaduct by the unanimous decision of the São Paulo state legislature. The governor signed the decree on Oct. 3. It is a large overhead bridge, 100 meters in length and 11 meters wide, spanning a highway.

SGI-Brazil General Director Eduardo Taguchi was also delighted by this development. I want to share his comments with you: "From the BSGI Nature Culture Center [located in the suburbs of Itapevi], one can now proceed down Tsunesaburo Makiguchi

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Street, cross the Josei Toda Viaduct and arrive in the city center of Itapevi, where President and Mrs. Ikeda are honorary citizens. It is a wonderful route that links together the first three presidents of the Soka Gakkai."

We have also received glad tidings from Denmark. In the village of Askov, a renowned educational center, there is a beautiful pond that is one of the area's noted sights. Recently, we have received official notification that the Askov Village Council has decided to name the pond, filled with blooming lotuses, Ikeda Pond. I humbly report this to you as an honor I have received as your representative.

The pond has a long history and is said to have existed since the last ice age. In the 19th century, the famous Askov Folk High School [founded on the ideals and principles of the noted Danish educators N.F.S. Grundtvig and Christen Kold] opened on its shores.

Indeed, it is very likely that President Makiguchi, who was interested in the educational methods of this school, may have seen a photograph of the pond [which appeared in a book published in Japan at that time]. Educational exchanges between the school on the shores of that mystic pond and the Soka schools



The village of Askov, Denmark, has named this lotus-filled pond Ikeda Pond.

and Soka University in Japan are now underway.

New friendships growing on the pond's banks, the invigorating discussions of youth—what a beautiful, poetry-inspiring scene. I hope that all of you will compose poems of friendship in your own cherished communities.

No doubt the situation of each community is unique, but as long as you have courage, wisdom and sincerity, you can turn everyone and everything into allies through the art of humanity. I hope you will all become this sort of great artist, overflowing with the spirited determination to build bridges of trust and

peace in your communities.

#### All sorts of things happen on the road to achieving kosen-rufu.

Finally, I want to address the youth in particular. On Oct. 1, I met with South African President Thabo Mbeki (see the Nov. 9 *World Tribune*, p. 7). It was our second meeting. [President Ikeda first met with Mr. Mbeki in 1998, when the latter was visiting Tokyo as South African deputy president.]

President Mbeki is a great champion of human rights and humanism. His father, Govan Mbeki, was also a renowned hero in the struggle against apartheid. Govan Mbeki survived 23 years in prison, along with former president Nelson Mandela.

When you think of spending 23 years in prison for your beliefs, you cannot help but feel how unbecoming it is for a youth to complain about petty things—such as being too busy, or not getting along with someone else in the group or how difficult it is to propagate Buddhism.

It is well known that President Mandela turned the prison where he was incarcerated into a "university" and studied together with fellow prisoners, many of who were much younger than he in years.

Govan Mbeki was willing to undergo an unending series of trials in order to raise the curtain on a new age of democracy in his homeland. He had engraved these words in his heart: "When you go into war, if your comrade in front of you falls off his horse, you must not stop and weep. You jump over him into battle. You learn not to weep."

All sorts of things happen on the road to achieving kosen-rufu. Fellow members may pass away, having fulfilled their mission in this lifetime. It is only natural for us, as human beings,

to be saddened by this.

However, we must not allow ourselves to be so overwhelmed by our emotions that we become weak. The important thing is to continue moving forward with the determination: "Whatever happens, I will keep going! I will challenge myself! And I will win!" This is the mark of a true champion, of a person of compassion, and it is the best way to reply to the wishes of those who have passed away.

Buddhism is about winning. Therefore, the correct course is striving to emerge victorious without fail. Let us win in all our struggles and live lives of great satisfaction, so that we can declare with real feeling, "Ah, that was fun!"

#### A life that embodies the teachings of Buddhism is a life of ultimate value.

From the Buddhist perspective, we are all family forever, throughout the three existences. The Daishonin writes, "You should always talk with each other to free yourselves from the sufferings of birth and death and attain the pure land of Eagle Peak, where you will nod to each other and speak in one mind" (WND, 909).

Let us work and talk together in this lifetime, the Daishonin says, and after death, too, let us talk together on Eagle Peak.

Throughout eternity, we will converse with one another, encourage one another and advance together toward happiness. This is the way of fellow members who share in the struggle for kosen-rufu. We must not allow the ill-intentioned who seek to exploit our organization, or the malicious who wish to torment the Buddha's children, or the treacherous who have no sense of gratitude or appreciation, to enter

this beautiful world of the SGI.

The SGI's advance is defined by our unity as members who are striving earnestly to introduce others to the Daishonin's Buddhism, to promote the activities of our organization, which has inherited the Buddha's intent and decree, and to realize a world without war.

The teachings of Buddhism enable us to view things based on the three existences of life—past, present and future—and to advance cheerfully along the valuable, noble path of peace, happiness and triumph.

Let us not complain about petty things. We cannot let ourselves be discouraged by a little hardship.

And we must never abandon our faith. To do so would be an act of cowardice and betrayal.

Let us lead lives of eternal victory, indestructible lives of unshakable conviction. This is the most meaningful life a human being can live.

There is no greater teaching than Buddhism. A life that embodies the teachings of Buddhism is a life of ultimate value.

I close my speech today with the prayer that you will all live such noble lives, bravely challenging and overcoming the raging storms and crashing waves, the rocky roads and the hardships of daily life, so that you can declare: "I have won!" "This is proof of the validity of the teachings the SGI upholds!"

Thank you for your long attention. Listening to a discourse on the Mystic Law and the philosophy of kosen-rufu is even more meaningful than studying the most advanced fields of learning at the finest universities in the world. Please know that in doing so, you are pursuing the field of eternal, indestructible happiness.

Thank you! Please stay well! **WT**

#### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

## To Emerge Victorious Without Fail

From This Speech:

**Buddhism is about winning. Therefore, the correct course is striving to emerge victorious without fail. Let us win in all our struggles and live lives of great satisfaction, so that we can declare with real feeling, "Ah, that was fun!" From the Buddhist perspective, we are all family forever, throughout the three existences. Nichiren Daishonin writes, "You should always talk with each other to free yourselves from the sufferings of birth and death and attain the pure land of Eagle Peak, where you will nod to each other and speak in one mind" (The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 909).**

1) SGI President Ikeda continually explains that "Buddhism is about winning." What exactly does this mean? What does the Daishonin say about the importance of winning? What do you think is necessary in your practice of faith to assure that you emerge victorious?

2) Based on the above passage from the Daishonin, can you think of actions that you can take in your district or in daily life that are one with its spirit? Do you think the Daishonin's words here express the oneness of mentor and disciple? If so, in what ways?

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S SEPT. 8 SPEECH

# SUFFERING LEADS TO VICTORY

**'Greatness comes from weathering suffering,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'Those who have undergone intense trials cannot be defeated. In the end, they prosper. Youth, and life as a whole, follow this formula.'**

*SGI President Ikeda's speech on receiving the title of Knight of the Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of Saint Agatha from the Republic of San Marino, at the Soka International Friendship Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo, Sept. 8. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the future division and doctors division general meetings. Also attending the event were 450 members from 50 countries and territories participating in an SGI youth training course.*



SGI President Ikeda speaks upon receiving an honor from the Republic of San Marino, Sept. 8.

**C**ongratulations on the first future division general meeting of the 21st century! [The future division in Japan includes the Boys and Girls Group and the junior and senior high school divisions.] I am very happy to see that you are all in high spirits.

I fondly recall that when I was the same age as the current members of the Boys and Girls Group, I read a poem filled with romance and adventure. It opened with the words "On the summit of a glass mountain, there was a golden castle."

I remember the story went something like this: There was an intense struggle over the control of a golden castle. At first, the honest, hardworking people living under its protection were harassed and tormented by villains who wanted to usurp the castle. But the people refused to be defeated and bravely fought on. In the end, they triumphed and held a grand celebration within the castle walls.

An invincible land like the one in this tale does exist on this green planet of ours. It is a land of proud people who have built a beautiful castle on a high mountain peak and from there have resolutely defended

peace, freedom, justice and humanity. That land is the venerable Republic of San Marino, the world's oldest republic. [San Marino, an enclave in central Italy, was founded in 301 C.E.]

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, strongly espoused and upheld his nation's ideal of a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Incidentally, both Soka University of America and Soka University in Japan possess among their treasures correspondence written by President Lincoln.

Of which country did President Lincoln say the following? "Although your dominion is small, your state is nevertheless one of the most honored, in all history. It has by its experience demonstrated the truth, so full of encouragement to the friends of humanity, that government founded on republican principles is capable of being so administered as to be secure and enduring."

It was the Republic of San Marino. This nation stands as a peerless model and a golden ideal for humanity, the world and the future.

On Sept. 3, San Marino celebrated the auspicious occasion

of the 1,700th anniversary of its founding. Allow me to extend my warmest congratulations.

**President Makiguchi always asserted that to be despised by fools is the greatest honor.**

Most esteemed Captain Regent Luigi Lonfernini and Captain Regent Fabio Berardi of San Marino, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: I humbly accept this most significant of honors from the Republic of San Marino. Thank you very much.

From the time I was a young man, I have felt a profound respect and affection for San Marino. Almost a century ago, first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi made mention of the republic in his book *The Geography of Human Life*. He noted that though San Marino was surrounded by great powers, it stood on towering mountain peaks and resolutely preserved its independence as a republic for more than a thousand years.

President Makiguchi also wrote that people who live in mountain regions such as San Marino have many admirable characteristics. He described them as high-minded, heroic

people possessing an independent will and steadfast integrity. He discerned a strong republican spirit in their amicable, cooperative way of living, equitable sharing of land and wealth, and general spirit of equality.

At a time when Japan was rallying the country for a war against Russia, President Makiguchi studied the circumstances of other nations. He was a person with a broad, international perspective, who always looked at the world as a whole. Envisaging a distant age of peace and humanity, he created value by striving for a world of human harmony, a "republic of humanity."

Because of the towering scope of President Makiguchi's vision, people in Japan, with their narrow island-country mentality, envied and resented him, showering him with groundless slander and abuse. Later, as a consequence of his speaking out for truth during World War II, he was persecuted by the insane forces of nationalism, and ultimately died in prison for his beliefs.

President Makiguchi always asserted that to be despised by fools is the greatest honor, and

he persevered in his struggle to the very end like a lion king. I have every confidence that this selfless champion's commitment to human harmony lives on in the youthful members of the SGI, who are now active in 177 countries and territories around the world.

Outstanding youth leaders from five continents and a total of 50 countries and territories, including San Marino, are with us here today. How happy this makes me! Thank you so much!

In addition, some 500,000 representatives of the future division, at close to 1,000 Soka Gakkai culture centers across Japan, are scheduled to watch today's ceremony by satellite transmission. Thanks to all the future division members for their efforts. Let me also express my sincerest appreciation to the members of the 21st Century Mission Group, the leaders of the future division, who are always working so hard to foster and support our younger members.

For the young people who will shoulder the new century, there is much to be learned from the history of San Marino. When a certain citizen of San Marino was asked 700 years ago, "What is freedom?" he replied, "Freedom is not fearing anyone."

These words that express the very pith and marrow of freedom have been handed down to the present. The united, valorous citizens of San Marino have staunchly fought for the freedom of the human spirit, repulsing such threats as religious persecution and political oppression, and have won.

Napoleon Bonaparte is said to have admired San Marino and offered to expand the boundaries of the mountain republic. The citizens of San Marino, however, rejected this offer. They chose to act in a resolute, dignified manner, based on a firm refusal to build their own happiness and prosperity on the suffering of others.

Furthermore, San Marino, a community of generous, strong people, has throughout history always opened its doors to refugees of natural disasters and political persecution, never turning anyone away, always warmly welcoming and protecting all.

It is a well-known historical fact that during World War II, San Marino, with a tiny population of 15,000, accepted more than 100,000 refugees and sheltered and fed them from its own scarce food supplies. This has moved even scholars studying San Marino's history to tears.

During the war, San Marino's physicians also distinguished themselves by their contributions. Today, members of the Soka Gakkai doctors division are with us. My thanks for their steadfast efforts.

**We need the courage and compassion to reach out to those who are suffering or in trouble.**

Recently in Japan, there has been an upsurge in incidents of cowardly bullying and atrocious violence. The country is deteriorating.

But you, the future division members, must never allow yourselves to be contaminated by these negative influences. You must not be defeated. No matter what might happen in your relations with others or in society, please continue to live your lives with strength, wisdom and optimism, and stand by those who are suffering. This is the way of a magnificent individual who has the heart of a lion.

Learning from the example of San Marino, it is important that we have the courage and compassion to reach out to those who are suffering or in trouble. This is the noblest thing that a human being can do. It is also the spirit of your mothers and fathers, who have pioneered this gathering of courageous individuals that is the Soka Gakkai.

Why has San Marino prospered for 1,700 years, always free and independent? Historians who have studied and analyzed this important question conclude that one of the reasons is that the San Marino citizens have together shared and endured various trials and hardships.

In other words, greatness comes from weathering suffering. Those who have undergone intense trials cannot be defeated. In the end, they prosper. Youth, and life as a whole, follow this formula.

When the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum presented an exhibit on Napoleon in 1993, San Marino lent a precious golden cavalry helmet and armor, which gleamed with an astonishing brilliance that I vividly remember even now. Buddhism teaches us to "don the armor of endurance" (WND, 392).

I hope that all of you, as youth who possess a lofty mission, will walk the royal road of truth, sincerity and integrity with unflinching perseverance and patience. I also hope you will study assiduously and work painstakingly to forge yourselves into invincible citadels



Representing 50 countries and territories, 450 SGI youth training course participants attend the Sept. 8 ceremony.

of truth, magnificent citadels of philosophy and towering citadels of victory.

This is my most ardent wish for you. Let's make a vow today to achieve this! Those who agree, please stand up! [The members of the future division answered enthusiastically and rose from their seats. President Ikeda went on to ask them in a humorous manner such questions as "Did you help your mother this morning?" "During exam time, did you study without watching TV?"]

To the future division members, I wish to declare that the future top leaders of the Soka Gakkai will emerge without fail from your ranks, and that your division will produce an uninterrupted stream of outstanding leaders in every field of society.

**Sept. 8 is a very important day in SGI history.**

It was on today's date, Sept. 8, 44 years ago, in 1957, that second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, holding aloft the ideal of global citizenship, made his Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons at the Mitsuzawa Track and Field Stadium in Yokohama.

It was also on this date, 33 years ago, in 1968, that I, as his disciple, amid countless obstacles and criticism, called for the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, based on my desire for world peace and global security.

Once again on this date, six years later, in 1974, a few

months after visiting China, I made my first visit to Moscow in the former Soviet Union. Although faced with strong opposition, I declared that I would go, because fellow human beings were there.

Sept. 8 is a very important day in SGI history.

Today, by welcoming our honored guests from the Republic of San Marino, we are adding yet further significance

to this meaningful date.

I assert that the seeds of humanistic exchange that I have carefully planted one after another over the years in this way are now bearing abundant fruit in the spheres of peace, culture and education. It is important to plant seeds. It is important to take action.

Yesterday, Sept. 7, Captain Regents Luigi Lonfermini and Fabio Berardi honored Soka

University with a visit. Captain Regent Lonfermini gave a wonderful speech in which he called for the solidarity and harmonious coexistence of the global village. I am in profound agreement with him and deeply appreciate his message.

I suggest that we all pledge here and now to work together cheerfully and courageously with these great leaders of the world's model republic, San Marino, to build a new global society of human harmony.

I also hope that when you, the future division members, grow up, you will take your parents—or, if you are without parents, someone who has taken care of you like a parent—to visit San Marino, foremost nation of peace. Let's make these promises together!

Finally, allow me to share the words of the Italian poet and Nobel laureate Giosuè Carducci, who said of San Marino: "Glory unto thee! O ancient republic—Virtuous, generous, and loyal!" Like the poet, I dearly pray for the eternal and indestructible glory of San Marino.

I close my speech with the sincere, fervent prayer that the sun of victory of San Marino, as well as of the youth of the world, will brilliantly illuminate the way toward eternal freedom and peace for humanity in the 21st century.

*Grazie, Grazie!* ("Thank you" in Italian.) **WT**

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## SGI-USA Establishes Sept. 11 Scholarship

**S**GI-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.



Q & A  
WITH  
SUA

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

### Question:

Does SUA have a full-service Student Center?

### Answer:

It certainly does. The Student Center has three full floors with many different amenities. The Dining Hall holds just under 300 occupants at one time, with hardwood floors and tables that seat 10 apiece. At one end of the Dining Hall, you will find a large video wall composed of six large-screen videos that can display six individual shows or one large one. The students use this video wall for Saturday night movies and many other uses. Super Bowl, anyone? At the other end of the Dining Hall are clusters of stuffed chairs used for lounging during all hours of the day.

On the 2nd level, the Student Center Plaza, you will find outdoor seating with trees in a plaza. On one side are the mailroom, student mailboxes and the ATM machine. On the other side, students can access the

bookstore, the game room and the new coffee house that serves specialty teas, coffees (espresso and lattes) and after hours snacks until midnight.

On the 3rd level is the Conference Center with a reception area and four conference rooms, which include video-teleconferencing capability. The 3rd level also includes the Student Health Center staffed by a nurse practitioner. The Health Center also provides flu shots.

### Question:

Is SUA safe? What about the city of Aliso Viejo?

### Answer:

The Orange County Sheriff said on July 1, when Aliso Viejo was incorporated, that it is now the safest city in California. Eighty percent of SUA is bordered by wilderness park, and at the single main entrance, security personnel always stop to greet all visitors, 24 hours a day. The campus is closed to uninvited visitors from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Security staff cover all areas of the campus 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

SUA also operates 64 video cameras strategically placed around the campus to monitor building entrances and major thoroughfares. Most of the cameras are found in parking lots and merchandise areas, and all of them feed back to video monitors in the security offices, where they are always monitored.

The parking lots also contain 40 code-blue emergency stations that instantly alert security in case of trouble. The stations are also monitored by video cameras.

All buildings and rooms have electronic access for students provided through their computers — serving as student identification, room key and charge card for their student account.

### Question:

It is difficult to assess SUA's quality, since it is brand new. What are some of your indicators of quality? How do you measure your chances of success as a university?

### Answer:

There are both tangible and intangible measures. Among the tangible measures are endowment, quality of faculty and quality of student body.

SUA started with an endowment of \$250 million, which guarantees it financial stability and allows SUA to provide the educational opportunities that students want and need.

Second, the quality of SUA's faculty rivals any other small, liberal arts college among the list of outstanding liberal arts

colleges in the United States. Take a look at SUA's catalogue ([www.soka.edu/catalog](http://www.soka.edu/catalog)), examine the schools that the faculty attended and compare that list against any other small, private liberal arts college. You will not find SUA wanting.

Third, the "stats" on our entering class are outstanding. Recently, the president of Claremont McKenna College, Pamela Gann, said that SUA's entering class was outstanding and far and away better than any other entering class of a start-up institution she had ever seen.

As to the intangible measures, SUA has already built its alumni center, and we have not even graduated our first student. This shows that we believe in ourselves and in our mission, educating students for the role of a global citizen in our ever-changing world. This confidence is manifested throughout the faculty and the student body. We are all joined together by a common mission — namely, to respond to the vision of SUA's founder, who eloquently argues that it is through education that we discover our true selves, the human family and our place in the global community.

The faculty is strongly motivated to give students an education that reflects this outlook and have worked tirelessly to produce a curriculum that meets traditional goals of education while also looking beyond to explore the depths of the human experience. The strength of our university community is our firm commitment to serve the

student as heart and core of the university.

Of course, in the end a university is only as good as the student's willingness to apply him or herself to the learning environment. In this respect, whether a university succeeds or fails really depends on the effort and commitment of each student.

Private colleges pride themselves on offering students something special. What is SUA's "something special" for its students? It is how we treat one another. Students, faculty and staff have come to SUA because their personal values and aspirations resonate with those of SUA. Faculty members focus on close interaction and dialogue as fundamental tools for each student's development. We have small classes, yes, but what happens within them and outside of them is our something special. We feel that peace and human rights begin with self-awareness, self-mastery and dialogue.

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

**Deadline: Jan. 15**

**Don't forget, applications for the entering class of 2002 at SUA are due Jan. 15, 2002!**

# Students Hail From Around the Globe

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

## Conny Kull Switzerland

In 1999, I attended a language school in Santa Barbara, Calif. While I was there, I participated in the SGI-USA's Grand Youth Culture Festival. After the festival, we went to a barbecue in Aliso Viejo and took a tour of the new SUA campus construction site. I was amazed. This vision was really starting to happen. I was a little jealous of the future students, thinking that they would have it really nice there.

Then I went back home to Switzerland. In the back of my mind, I was thinking it would be great to go there, but doubts kept coming up—it's too ex-



pensive and maybe I'm too old [24]. I was subscribing to the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, which had lots of information about applying to SUA, so I eventually decided to challenge it.

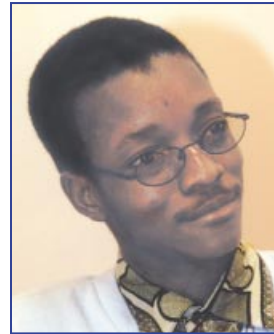
Although it's always hard applying to school in another country—translating your records, taking tests—the struggle against my own doubts was the most difficult. I had to believe I was capable enough to become part of the first class. The people around me didn't really understand what I was doing.

When I started really looking into SUA, I liked the wide range of courses. It is very different from other universities. Up until now, I have learned how to survive, to make money. But I want to know more about the world I live in and how I can contribute. I think SUA will help me lay that foundation.

In a way, it was a risk to come here, because it is a brand new school. But I really trust Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of this university. He is taking real action for peace, developing deep human bonds with so many great people. My admiration for him played a big part in coming here. And the staff here have been so helpful, really making me feel at home.

## Edinam Konu Ghana

The SGI office in my country has a relationship with the University of Ghana, where my father is the registrar. So through my father, I heard about SUA.



Photos by ROBERT EVANS

I decided to pursue attending SUA because I am very interested in the philosophy of the founder, Daisaku Ikeda. A viewbook for SUA was handed out at the University of Ghana during a ceremony where he had donated some items.

I applied to several universities around the world. It was important for me to have the opportunity to learn to live my life for world peace and to give back to my community. Since that is the foundation on which Dr. Ikeda founded this school, I thought it was the right choice.

When I meet him, I will thank him for the opportunity to attend this great school and commend him on the great work he has done all over the world.

My family was very happy about my coming here to SUA. My father was very supportive in my decision.

The classes here are small, so the attention given to each student is much greater here. Since we are a smaller group of students and faculty, I think the relationships we are developing will be deeper. I know the philosophy will make better people of us and the curriculum is geared toward international citizenship. I like that aspect a lot.

In Ghana, the standard of living is not very high. I want to use my education from SUA to help the economy of my country and improve people's lives.

I feel that the students of the first class have a lot at stake. We are the ones who have to create the school's history and tradition. But I think we are up to the task. I have been very impressed with my fellow students. **WT**

## Come See Soka!



**Private Liberal Arts College**  
**9:1 Student/Faculty Ratio**  
**Founded Upon Peace, Human Rights**  
**and the Sanctity of Life**

**Soka University, 1 University Drive,**  
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**"Creating a World of Value"**



## Dec. 15 Family Tour Day

- 9:00 a.m. Free Guided Tours Begin**  
(Every half hour until 11:00 a.m.)
- 10:30 a.m. Student and Parent Q-and-A Workshop**
- 11:30 a.m. Brunch Opens in Student Center**  
(By reservation only: \$7)
- 1:00 p.m. The Chengdu Acrobatic Troupe of China**  
(Free to students 18 and under, \$5 for adults, reservations required)

For reservations: Call (949) 480-4150  
or e-mail [admission@soka.edu](mailto:admission@soka.edu)

For directions: See [www.soka.edu/direct.html](http://www.soka.edu/direct.html)

# the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

## 'PURE STREAM'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 21-24

*'No leader of Japanese society at the time had ever charged young women with a lofty mission or encouraged them to change society and the nation. It was in this climate that Shin'ichi Yamamoto entrusted the Soka Gakkai young women with the responsibility of building a peaceful society based upon the humane ideals of Buddhism.'*

Many guests attended the reception that was held after the completion ceremony for the Soka Gakkai Headquarters building in Shinanomachi. Shin'ichi Yamamoto walked around the room greeting everyone and thanking them for coming. Some commented to him on the new Headquarters: "It combines grandeur and simplicity." "It exudes the strength of a great ship!"

Among the guests were people from the neighborhood. "Thank you for taking the time to join us today," Shin'ichi said to them. "I'm Soka Gakkai President Yamamoto. There will be a lot of traffic passing through this building, but we will do our best not to be too much of a nuisance. I sincerely hope we will enjoy your con-

tinued support.

"We want to do whatever we can for the community, so please let us know if there is anything you need from us," he said, bowing politely. The neighbors at the reception seemed surprised and grateful for Shin'ichi's remarks.

To gain understanding and support for Soka Gakkai activities and spread the teachings of Buddhism in the community, it is crucial to be considerate of those living near Soka Gakkai facilities. The organization will only develop as a movement firmly rooted in society if the communities where its centers are located thrive, and the people living there feel secure and undisturbed by their presence.

The reception ended amid high spirits.

The Soka Gakkai initiated a



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

fresh wave of activities with the new Headquarters as its focal point. The members advanced joyfully toward the essential phase that would commence on the 7th memorial (6th anniversary) of the death of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda on April 2 the following year. The essential phase referred to a time when every area of human endeavor, including education, art, government and finance, would be brought to full bloom upon the foundation

of kosen-rufu that had been laid up to that point. It was a move from theory to actuality; a time when the humane Buddhist philosophy and ideals of respect and compassion for life would be actively applied in society, and contribute substantially to social prosperity and peace.

It was also the age in which Shin'ichi, having fulfilled the vow he made to his mentor to

achieve a membership of three million households, would create his own vision of kosen-rufu as the disciple and spread his wings and take flight toward its realization.

Around this time, a wave of excitement was sweeping the young women's division. Shin'ichi had published guidelines for them in the editorial of the September issue of the *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai monthly study journal. This was the first time they had received concrete guidelines from Shin'ichi, and young women around the country were overjoyed.

The editorial began, "My mentor often said that the young women's division members should be as bright and beautiful as the sun." President Toda had continuously prayed for the happiness of the Soka Gakkai young women. After sharing his words, Shin'ichi discussed how in the course of history women had wept over their destiny while enduring the shackles of social oppression. He then explained the Lotus Sutra's teaching of the enlightenment of women, stating, "In other words, by firmly maintaining a correct view of life, of daily living and of society, you can create value toward realiz-

ing happiness in your families, your workplace, and society."

He encouraged them not to allow circumstance to control or sway them and thereby succumb to misery as had happened so often in the past. Emphasizing the importance of carrying out their mission in this life, he further urged them to act boldly in all fields of endeavor.

Shin'ichi asked that they not be subservient or ingratiating, but that they hold their heads high as truly modern women of wit, culture and passion taking the lead in building a new age. Their mission, he said, was to work for social prosperity and world peace while striving to become happy themselves. He suggested four practical guidelines for them to apply in their daily lives toward that end:

- 1) Devote yourself wholeheartedly to faith and practice, and study the teachings of Buddhism in earnest.
- 2) Ensure that Soka Gakkai meetings attended by young women's division members are always warm and brimming with joy and compassion.
- 3) Enjoy each day by establishing a positive rhythm in daily activities at work and at home.
- 4) When choosing a marriage partner, seek the advice and counsel not only of your parents, but also of fellow mem-



bers and seniors, and look to the graduates of the young women's division as models for how to build a happy life.

Shin'ichi then cited a few passages from Nichiren Daishonin's writings, including "There should be no discrimination among those who propagate the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo in the Latter Day of the Law, be they men or women" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 385).

"As young women who uphold and protect the Mystic Law," he declared, "you are all children and emissaries of the Great King of the Law." He ended his article, saying: "At this time of the creation of a 'third civilization,' it is my great hope that the members of the young women's division will surpass even Joan of Arc, who saved her homeland of France."

No leader of Japanese society at the time had ever charged young women with a lofty mission or encouraged them to change society and the nation. It was in this climate that Shin'ichi entrusted the Soka Gakkai young women with the responsibility of building a peaceful society based upon the humane ideals of Buddhism.

Japan had entered a period of rapid economic growth and was becoming wealthier by the year. People had begun to spend more money and leisure activities were on the rise. At the same time, young women were becoming more self-centered; interested only in superficial glamour, and were starting to lose touch with their spiritual core. This concerned Shin'ichi. No real joy is

to be found in a life that seeks only personal happiness, a life of self-interest. Furthermore, preoccupation with glamour or image and spiritual emptiness are two sides of the same coin.

The key to living a truly wonderful life is to build a strong spiritual center during one's youth. To do so, we need a sound philosophy. Shin'ichi dedicated his editorial in the *Daibyakureng* to young women because he wanted them to exercise their full potential in benefiting others and society as a whole, to create real value and genuine happiness in their lives.

Shin'ichi's article gave these young women a clear direction in which to proceed. They were overjoyed and rose excitedly to the challenge of changing the course of history of women. With their motto "Be a Joan of Arc of the Mystic Law," they brightened their discussion meetings and places of work with fresh smiles that sparkled like a pure stream.

Shin'ichi spent the month of September devoting himself to the growth and development of young people. He attended a series of Soka Gakkai youth division sports events, including the Tohoku Sports Festival (Sept. 8), the East-West Swimming Competition in Osaka (Sept. 14), the Kansai Sports Festival (Sept. 15), the Tokyo Sports Festival (Sept. 21), the All-Japan Sports Festival (Sept. 22), and the All-Japan Judo and Kendo Meet (Sept. 30).

He also attended the first meeting of the editorial committee of the student division journal, where he and committee members considered names for the new publication. They



finally decided on *Gakusei Journal* (Student Journal). This later became *Gakuen Journal* (School Journal), and then *Daigaku Shimpo* (University News). Years later the student division journal was dissolved to make way for the present journal of the youth division, *Soka Shimpo* (Soka News).

Helping youth develop means meeting them face-to-face, talking and working with them, and giving them inspiration. Shin'ichi gave himself wholeheartedly each day to raising the next generation, while at the same time leading the kosen-rufu movement.

In October, district leaders meetings for each local Headquarters in the Tokyo and Kanto regions were held in

succession at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi. The new building was for use by all members. Shin'ichi was eager to make a fresh start from the Headquarters with these men's and women's division district leaders, who were the main support and center of chapter activities.

He attended all of the district leaders meetings, conducting question-and-answer sessions and pouring his life into encouraging the participants. Until now, he had met with men's and women's division chapter leaders on numerous occasions to offer guidance and encouragement, but he hadn't had many opportunities to meet with district-level leaders. Shin'ichi felt the time had come to spark a new surge of progress by focusing on district leaders.

During this time, while traveling to Kushiro and Muroran in Hokkaido, as well as the Tohoku and Chugoku regions and other parts of Japan to encourage the members and offer guidance, Shin'ichi was also steadily building a base for the Soka Gakkai's cultural movement.

On Sept. 15, the opening ceremony for the Asian Culture Research Center in Kansai was held, and on Oct. 18, a concert to celebrate the establishment of the Min-On Concert Association took place at Bunkyo Civic Hall in Tokyo.

Shin'ichi conceived the idea of the Min-On Concert Association during his first visit to India and Southeast Asia, in February 1961, as he was traveling back from India through Burma (now Myanmar) toward Thailand and Cambodia.

Shin'ichi's elder brother died in Burma during World War II. Throughout that trip, Shin'ichi thought about what was needed for humanity to break away from the tragedy of war and build lasting peace. He realized that some means of promoting mutual understanding among the peoples of the world was indispensable to this end, and that cultural exchange through music and the other arts was essential. Shin'ichi decided to found an organization with the Soka Gakkai as the parent body for the purpose of promoting exchange in music and the arts.

The Soka Gakkai leadership carefully considered the matter, and at the second national convention of the Education Department on Aug. 1 that year, Shin'ichi announced plans for forming a cultural association. A preparatory committee was set up and final steps taken toward the association's establishment. This included selecting its name, defining its guiding principles and goals, choosing its president and directors, and proposing a concrete program of events.

Now, on Oct. 18, a concert celebrating the association's establishment was being held. It began at 6:30 p.m. with a rousing performance of the march "Anchors Aweigh" by selected members of the Soka Gakkai Brass Band. The logo of the Min-On Concert Association, a stylized design of musical notes, hung at the back of the stage.

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



### SGI President Contributes to University of Buenos Aires Book

In commemoration of its 180th anniversary, the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, recently published *The Doctors and Their Convictions — Treasures of the University*, a collection of essays contributed by 47 honorary doctors of the university. SGI President Ikeda, an honorary doctor since 1990, contributed an essay titled “Future Role of Education in the International Community,” which focuses on the role of education in the 21st century. In it, he promulgates “humanistic education,” which focuses on the development of each individual’s potential and the transformation of the ensuing “energy” toward the creation of value for constructing a new era.

The SGI leader further suggests that a new philosophy is required toward that end. In contrast to the three pillars of the French Revolution — “liberty,” “equality,” and “philanthropy,” he proposes three principles — “value-creation,” “symbiosis” and “service” — as being basic indicators for the 21st century. We must not merely be content with winning liberty, he points out, but rather, make it the basis for progress in creating further value. He emphasizes that the mission of education in the 21st century is to inspire people to take action for others’ happiness, transcending egoism.

Other contributors to the com-



memorative book include Frederico Mayor, former director-general of UNESCO; Kenneth J. Arrow, Nobel laureate in economics (1972); and Oscar Niemeyer, world-renowned Brazilian architect whose work includes the original buildings in Brasilia City and the United Nations building in New York.

### SGI’s ‘World Boys and Girls Art Exhibit’ Opens in Yugoslavia

On Nov. 5, the SGI’s “World Boys and Girls Art Exhibit — We Are All Friends on This Planet” opened at Progress Gallery, Belgrade, Serb Republic, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The opening ceremony, which began with a performance by a children’s chorus, was attended by some 400 guests, including Her Royal Highness Princess Jelisaveta Karadordevic of Yugoslavia, Serb Republic Culture Minister Branislav Lecic and UNICEF Belgrade director Jean-Michel Delmotte. Some 150 children’s drawings and paintings from 100 different countries with 75 of them by Yugoslavian children are displayed.

At the opening, SGI-Europe Chair Shoichi Hasegawa read a message from SGI President Ikeda, who calls children “Angels of Peace,” and said their drawings, imbued with their hopes and dreams, are the universe of their soul. Art can unite the hearts of the world’s children. He called on adults to respond to their “prayers for peace” and to keep aflame their “light of hope.” Culture Minister Lecic said the world drawn through the eyes of children with their purity and innocence overflows with humanity, and should be a signal for adults to actualize a peaceful society.

### SGI-Europe Youth Hold Commemorative Meetings

SGI youth members across Europe celebrated the 40th anniversary of the introduction of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism to Europe with a variety of activities. SGI-Spain youth held meetings in 13 cities in Spain to commemorate the occasion. In Madrid, the young people hosted a human rights forum on Oct. 20. Human rights activists, musicians and scien-

tists discussed the concept of Buddhist compassion and the spirit to serve others, and their beneficial application in society.

Members in France and Portugal held a study session on the Daishonin’s Buddhism and learned to better apply Buddhist principles for bringing about a positive change in their personal circumstances and society. At a meeting in Luxembourg, where a headquarters was just established in June, Headquarters Leader Chizuko Breden encouraged members to lead lives of value and happiness based on their Buddhist practice.

In addition, SGI general meetings were held in the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, the United Kingdom and Sweden.

### New SGI Center Opens in Malaysia

Sarawak Culture Center, the 11th center for SGI-Malaysia, opened in the state of Sarawak on Oct. 20. SGM General Director Koe Teng Hong and other representative leaders and members attended the opening ceremony.

In his congratulatory message, SGI President Ikeda related his belief that developing friendship and gaining trust in society as good citizens are sure ways to peace. A children’s art exhibition will take place Nov. 3–5 to commemorate the center’s opening.

*Courtesy of SOKANET  
(www.sokagakai.or.jp)*

# Carrying Through With Faith to the End

**WORDS To WIN By**

**By RONNIE SMITH**  
MID-ATLANTIC ZONE LEADER

From “*The Hero of the World*,”  
The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 835–39.



If there are any among my followers who are weak in faith and go against what I, Nichiren, say, they will meet the same fate as did the Soga family. I will tell you the reason.... Draw your own conclusions from what I said above. Those among my followers who fail to carry through their faith to the end will incur punishment even more severe. Even so, they should not harbor a grudge against me. Remember what fate Sho-bo, Noto-bo, and others met. (WND, 838)

In the above passage, Nichiren Daishonin explains that one’s posture toward the Mystic Law determines either victory or defeat in one’s life. Those who give up their faith halfway, he says, will incur even greater loss than that of the Soga family. According to official histories, in the face of initial hostility, the Soga clan championed Buddhism in Japan when it was first introduced there. As a result they thrived, eventually emerging as the most pow-

erful clan in the country. Unfortunately, under the spell of unrivalled power as the only influential clan in the country, they succumbed to arrogance. Departing totally from the spirit of the Buddhism that they outwardly embraced, they committed inhumane acts and were eventually ruined.

Shofu-bo and Noto-bo were disciples of the Daishonin who later abandoned their faith. Shofu-bo is said to have begun harboring doubts in the Daishonin around the time of the Izu exile in 1261, eventually turning against him. And, although Noto-bo fought to defend the Daishonin during the attack at Matsubagayatsu in 1260, and was even wounded, he is thought to have abandoned faith around 1271.

The Daishonin explains that, “Retribution varies according to the degree of slander against the correct teaching” (WND, 625). From this we understand that if a person who has embraced Buddhism for a while and knows something of its pro-

fundity should abandon faith, turning against the correct teaching, his error is greater than that of someone who out of ignorance opposes it from the outset. Or, from another perspective, if a person of venerable rank, who is supposed to be responsible for leading others to happiness, should then begin to oppose the Daishonin’s teaching, his slander is far greater than someone who with little understanding of Buddhism foolishly abandons faith.

The Daishonin makes it clear that deepening our faith is a life long effort. It is the law of causality that guarantees the transformation of our lives. If we continue in our efforts to deepen our faith not allowing ourselves to be distracted or veer off course when confronted with difficulties, we will be able to accumulate immeasurable good fortune.

Conversely, if we allow ourselves to succumb to negative influences, causing the Daishonin’s words of encouragement to go unheeded, thereby

turning our backs on the Mystic Law — our eternal Buddha nature — we will experience the resulting negative effects of those actions as well.

The main point is to maintain faith throughout life. The Daishonin, out of profound concern for his disciple, is admonishing Shijo Kingo here, that, in the face of the threats confronting him, he should never retreat in faith. Further, when he says that “they should not harbor a grudge against Nichiren,” the Daishonin is making it clear that the “punishment” or defeat that those who turn against the correct teaching experience is based entirely on the law of cause and effect. In spite of the greatness of the Daishonin’s teaching, it is the result of opposing the Mystic Law.

However, by exerting ourselves in faith, the good fortune and benefit we amass in this lifetime affects not only our families and friends, but our ancestors and descendants as well — leading all to enlightenment. **W**

HONORING OUR PIONEERS — JOSEPH O'RAYEH, SAIPAN

# Waves of Peace From the Southern Pacific

*This experience originally appeared in the July 6 Japanese edition of the World Tribune.*

**B**uddhism teaches the concept of deliberately creating appropriate karma, which means that we are born with karma that we voluntarily created so that we can practice Buddhism, change our karma and prove the greatness of the Mystic Law, thereby leading others to happiness. When I finally realized that this concept describes my own mission, I felt inexpressible courage and joy.

I formally converted to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism on Nov. 18, 1954, while in the U.S. Navy. I had been introduced to the practice a year earlier by a young Japanese woman named Yaeko, whom I married in 1954.

Early that year, I wrote to tell my parents that I intended to marry Yaeko and that I was practicing Buddhism. Their reaction was explosive. They immediately solicited the help of Congressman Addonizio of New Jersey to fight my marriage. Together with the Navy's chaplains' corps, they waged an intense two-year campaign. I, in turn, practiced with intensity.

Yaeko and I received guidance from second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda. He told us, "The Daishonin's Buddhism will spread to the world without fail, so I hope you will devote your lives to the kosen-rufu of America."

Yaeko and I were married in a Japanese ceremony in November 1954, but it was not recognized by the U.S. Navy. We never gave up. In July 1956, they finally granted us permission to marry.

My mother passed away in the summer of 1956. In the years that followed, my faith and practice nourished her "universal" life, and I know that she's been reborn into fortunate-filled circumstances. My father spent the last six years of his life



Joseph O'Rayeh and his wife, Yaeko, continue to enjoy their Buddhist practice.

practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism. He could always be counted on for a personal experience at discussion meetings.

With President Toda's guidance in our hearts, we left Japan for San Diego in 1957. I was assigned to a new ship, and while I sailed through the Aleutians, Yaeko, with no English-language skills, introduced Buddhism to any Japanese person she could find.

In 1959, I was discharged from the Navy, and we moved to Reno, Nev. On Oct. 4, 1960, we met SGI President Ikeda in San Francisco during his first visit. He appointed Yaeko and me leaders of Nevada District. We fought hard for kosen-rufu in Nevada for many years.

In the early 1980s, I was diagnosed with diabetes and told that I'd probably had it for several years. By 1991, it took a turn for the worse—my left foot turned purple because of poor circulation, and I was in

hellish pain. Doctors spoke of amputating my left leg, but it was precluded by the discovery of blocked coronary arteries. In March 1991, I had quintuple-bypass surgery. The cardiothoracic team was amazed that there was very little apparent damage to my heart.

The pain worsened, however, and doctors decided to amputate. I had no fear; I trusted the Gohonzon. Then, suddenly, just before the amputation, I felt an overwhelming need to keep my leg and began chanting passionate daimoku, inwardly shouting to the universe that I needed my leg for kosen-rufu. After I had chanted with intensity for a while, a vascular specialist told me that, rather than amputate, they had decided to perform a procedure to improve circulation to my leg. Amazing! That surgery was meant as a temporary measure, but I still have the use of my legs today.

In March 1998, I underwent

another type of bypass surgery. Many of my fellow SGI members chanted for me. To this day, I sincerely appreciate their daimoku. President Ikeda sent me these words: "By winning the last battle, you are a winner in life. Let's fight together. I am sending you daimoku."

I have undergone operations one after another. Each time, I have recovered and risen up stronger, like a phoenix.

Yaeko and I were enjoying our SGI activities in Ventura, Calif., when, in early 1999, I was asked to make a two-week consulting trip to the island of Saipan. I have been here ever since, and Yaeko joined me in October 2000.

Guam, southernmost of the Northern Mariana Islands, is a territory of the United States. The 14 other islands in the chain, including the three inhabited islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota, comprise the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Tens of thousands of lives were lost here during World War II, and Tinian, only three miles away, is the island from which the two atomic bombs were flown to the skies above Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

What more appropriate site could there be for a monument to peace? At President Ikeda's instructions, it was completed and dedicated in November 2000. In addition, we are in the process of installing three peace memorial gardens in the names of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and President Ikeda on that same historical island.

We realize that monuments and memorials are inanimate. Without our action for kosen-rufu, there can never be peace. Our activities now include Gosho study, world peace prayer meetings, group discussion meetings and new member/slow gongyo meetings. We have collectively decided that these beautiful islands, once the location of the hell of war, are the

ideal place from which to launch a powerful campaign for peace.

I have divided my practice into 10-year periods. The 1950s were a period of pure seeking mind. There were no English-language study materials available yet, but I sincerely sought Buddhism in every way I could. The 1960s were a period of study. Thanks to President Ikeda, English-language study materials gradually became available, and I studied voraciously.

In the early 1970s, I thought I knew everything there was to know about Buddhism. It was then, not coincidentally, that my life took some negative turns. The 1980s were a period of awakening—rude awakening, that is. I figured out, thanks to cause and effect, that I understood very little about Buddhism. In the 1990s, I began a new period of pure seeking spirit. I fought hard against my arrogance and began to manifest degrees of humility that I had never let surface before. I studied again with a strong desire to be able to teach others.

Finally, the 2000s are a period of joy. I feel a constant thrill that I can chant Nammyoho-rengo-kyo. My practice has allowed me to transcend the obstacles, the devils and the demons of life. There is no doubt in my mind why this is so: Throughout the past 47-plus years, no matter what the circumstances, I never failed in my daily practice, and I always stayed with our organization.

In December 2000, my doctor told me that I had advanced, inoperable prostate cancer. I was not panicked by the terminal prognosis. Rather, I rejoiced, grateful for another chance to challenge my karma. To this day, I feel extremely well and have an appetite that rivals a teenager's. I try to make positive contributions every day for the sake of kosen-rufu.

This is indeed the time of my life. What will the next 47 years be like? **WT**



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FROM NEW YORK, 1

Kurita, a SGI-USA member, told his story of being diagnosed with Schizoaffective Disorder. He attributed his complete recovery to his mother's faith, tireless compassion and endless search to find the right treatment for his illness. "My mother never gave up on me, even when I had given up on myself," he said. Julian, 25, is now a student at New York's School of Visual Arts and a junior high/high school division leader.



Alex Abrolleile spoke about growing up gay and the strain of living with a father "who found new things to hit me with every day." By the age of 17, Alex was homeless and a prostitute. He credited his remarkable turnaround to one caring social worker from the Green Chimneys organization, who "was the first person to ever tell me everything was going to be okay," Alex said. "That was the moment everything changed for me." Alex is now a student at Hunter College.



Jessica Kramer, who was a runaway at 13, had some advice for adults: "You need to tell young people that they can achieve their dreams. No matter how crazy their dreams may sound, encourage them to do it. Help them move forward."

Giselle John, abandoned by her mother at age 14, regaled the audience with stories of run-

ning away from police and child welfare workers. A teacher saw Giselle as a diamond in the rough and encouraged her to succeed at her goals. Giselle is now a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She stressed the importance of being a role model. "You never know what seeds you're planting," she said. "You never know who's looking up to you."

Brannon Woodfin, whose life was consumed with committing street crimes, recalled how he blossomed with the help of his counselor, Barbara Silverman, and her program called Let's Talk About It. Brannon stressed the need to keep a close watch on impressionable youth. "The worst thing you can do is let them stray," he said. "If they think you don't care, you'll lose them forever." The stories of these courageous young people inspired the participants to give them a standing ovation.

The afternoon consisted of lively and informative breakout discussion groups on everything from drama-therapy to youth trauma.

Brian Moriarty closed the day by thanking the "staff and members of the SGI-USA, for without your commitment and vision this day would not have been possible." As participants departed with new insights and tools for fostering resilience, Youth Case Manager Teresa Richardson noted: "It was a great day. It made me proud of what I do for a living; proud to be a part of positive change for young people. WT



Photos by JOSEA JOHNSON