



EXPERIENCE
Carole Powell-Henry applies Buddhism in her family life.

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Periodical Postage Paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401 and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: SGI-USA Subscribers, 606 Wilshire Blvd., PO Box 1427 Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

No. 3376

\$2.00

DECEMBER 14, 2001

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE 2ND CEC

The Joy of Faith

'The essence of Buddhism lies in the joy of faith,' SGI President Ikeda says. 'In other words, being able to truly enjoy ourselves reflects the essence of Buddhism.'

Many congratulations on the holding of your Central Executive Conference, bursting with the breeze of advancement and expansion. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all your efforts this year.

None of the efforts you have made for kosen-rufu are in vain. Only by overcoming obstacles does the true worth of a practitioner shine. To the degree that you challenge yourself to climb the mountain of kosen-rufu, overcoming obstacle after obstacle, you will accumulate more "treasures of the heart." As leaders of America, please lead lives of composure, based upon the great conviction that faith is the

source of infinite hope.

In his writings, Nichiren Daishonin states, "I praise myself, for I cannot hold back the upsurge of joy in my life" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 334). The essence of Buddhism lies in the joy of faith. In other words, being able to truly enjoy ourselves reflects the essence of Buddhism. Fully enjoying your devotion to the Mystic Law, brimming with confidence, please always be cheerful in spreading the seeds of happiness across your country and constructing a truly peaceful paradise in this land of freedom and justice, this land of America.

When America advances, the world, too, advances. When



(L-r) Kazue Zaitus, Sheilah Edwards and Doris Edwards enjoy a dinner meeting at the 2nd Central Executive Conference. Representative leaders from each zone were present, as well as the members of the SGI-USA Council.

America is healthy, so is the world. I hope you will advance steadily together with me for the next 10 years toward a

courageous victory.

I am praying for your good health, long life, happiness and great victory in your endeavors

for the sake of the Law. Please convey my most sincere regards to your comrades in your respective locales. **WT**

2ND SGI-USA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE

CEC PREPARES FOR YEAR OF EXPANDING DIALOGUE

By **JAMIE LIPTAN**
STAFF WRITER

The 2nd SGI-USA Central Executive Conference was held Nov. 30–Dec. 2 at the SGI Plaza in Santa Monica, Calif. Representative leaders from each zone were present, as well as the members of the SGI-USA Council.

Many important organizational issues were thoroughly discussed, including the focus of activities in the coming year, propagation efforts, publications promoting the Soka Spirit movement, the Florida Nature and Culture Center and the or-

ganization's continuing commitment to support Soka University of America. In addition, the Council unanimously nominated a new three-year term for SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, which the SGI approved.

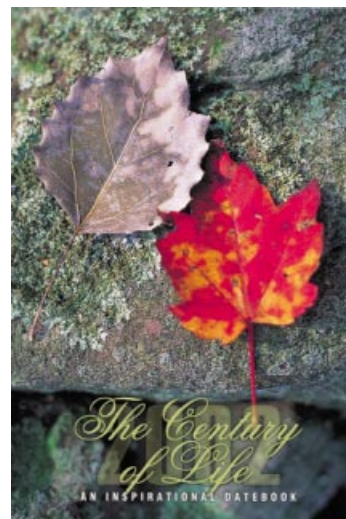
Reflecting on the weekend, Mr. Nagashima said: "There is certainly a lot to accomplish in 2002, but everyone at the CEC felt that with the joy of faith, we can definitely do it. Most important is not to put unnecessary pressure on our members — which we have done in the past — to meet our new goals. We want to make every

effort next year to be joyous. Then, we will win."

The Central Executive Committee meets regularly to discuss organizational policy and direction, as well as report on the activities of local organizations. Decisions of the CEC are officially reported through SGI-USA memos to local organizations. CEC members are nominated by the general director and approved by the SGI-USA Council. The Council members are nominated by the general director and approved by the SGI.

Please see pages 2–3 for more details from the CEC. **WT**

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The Century of Life 2002 datebook, with beautiful photography and inspiring words from SGI President Ikeda, can be purchased at SGI-USA bookstores or by phone, (800) 626-1313. Perfect for holiday gifts.

FROM SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR NAGASHIMA'S SPEECH

Reawakening Our Joy and Conviction

'The key for next year is simple,' says SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. 'It is joy—your joy, my joy and the joy of every single member. When people feel the joy of faith, it is contagious.'



Thank you for everything this year. I am full of appreciation for everything you have accomplished and I believe that next year, the Year of Expanding Dialogue, will be even better.

We all felt at this CEC that now is the time for us to cheerfully spread the seeds of happiness across America. In other words, now is the time to do *shakubuku*, to share Nichiren Daishonin's teachings with our friends. But our campaign has to start with ourselves first. That means reawakening our conviction in the Daishonin's teachings, our joy of faith. The Year of Expanding Dialogue indeed

begins inside each of us.

After everything that has happened since Sept. 11, our fellow citizens are suffering. They are looking for the answers to life, the solutions to problems big and small. And we have the solution. We must realize the urgency to propagate the Law for the sake of all humankind.

Why do people get up each day, work and raise families? They are looking for happy, fulfilling lives. But in the Latter Day of the Law, their own inner negativity keeps them from finding it. They are seeking the Gohonzon, no doubt about it. This is our con-

viction, this is our mission—and this is our joy.

One topic that came up in relation to having enjoyable activities next year was our practice of gongyo at our monthly discussion meetings. Because we have so many guests and new members attending our meetings nowadays, it was our feeling that it might be best to shorten gongyo at discussion meetings. This could make our friends feel much more comfortable. The weekend before Thanksgiving, I attended four district meetings and

noticed that sometimes guests were uncomfortable sitting through a full gongyo. They had not even met anyone yet, and they did not necessarily know what was going on. To be honest, I felt sorry for them. From now on, we want to suggest just doing parts A and C of gongyo at our district meetings to make them even more inviting. We want everyone to feel like they have just come home.

The key for next year is simple. It is joy—your joy, my joy and the joy of every single member. When people

feel the joy of faith, it is contagious. They can overcome any problem, and their joy spreads quickly to others. This is the way we can reach all of our goals and expand our organization. This is the way we can change our country and the world. I want each one of you to become completely happy.

How exciting it will be to experience the next 10 years of the kosen-rufu movement in the United States. We will see many, many people join our movement. We will accumulate the "treasures of the heart" from working together as the SGI-USA family. We will witness America become a better place and the world move closer toward peace. With these dreams, let's do our best in 2002! **WT**

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima Named to Second Term

Danny Nagashima was unanimously nominated for a second term as SGI-USA general director by the SGI-USA Council, Dec. 1. Mr. Nagashima's new term, which was approved by the SGI, will end in November 2004. Mr. Nagashima is the third general director of the

SGI-USA, a position he assumed on Dec. 3, 1999, completing the remaining two years of General Director Emeritus Fred Zaitzu's third term.

A naturalized U.S. citizen, Mr. Nagashima was born in Kawasaki City, Japan, in 1949, and moved to the United States in 1973. He is a gradu-

ate of Gakushuin University in Japan and received a master's of business administration from California State University, Dominguez Hills. He has held various national responsibilities in the SGI-USA and has lived in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, his current home. **WT**

FROM SGI-USA WOMEN'S LEADER MATILDA BUCK'S SPEECH

Empowering Others With Hope

'Genuine dialogue is founded on listening—not trying to convince someone by a barrage of words. As we listen, we empower others toward hope and revitalization.'



First of all, I want to praise and thank everyone for their tremendous accomplishments this year. It is only because of your daily efforts that your CEC representatives could report such growth in every area, especially the districts that are taking such good care of their new members.

If I could condense all our

shared experiences, questions, requests and conclusions this weekend, it would come down to sharing our faith with others. What can we do in this time of great peril and of great opportunity? I say opportunity because right now, many people are re-examining their lives

and their values.

We can do what we were put on this earth to do. What we do best. What no one else can do. *Shakubuku*. No other peace movement offers the fundamental key of self-transformation or human revolution.

"Unless we can achieve a fundamental transformation within our own lives," says SGI President Ikeda, "so that we are able to perceive our intimate connection with our fellow human beings and feel their suffering as our own, we will never be free of conflict and war. I believe that dialogue holds the key to any lasting solution. Words spoken from the heart have the power to change a person's life. They can even melt the icy wall of mistrust that separate people and nations" (Oct. 19 *World Tribune*, p. 1).

Genuine dialogue is founded on listening—not trying to convince someone by a barrage of words. Doctors are finding that listening has a healing power. As we truly listen with openness and respect for another, we cleanse and heal our own lives of pettiness and egotism. As we listen to another, we help to heal the pain of separation that many of us carry. As we listen, we empower others toward hope and revitalization.

At our concluding meeting this weekend, we promised one another when we meet again in April that we will have introduced one person to the Gohonzon. This is also the women's focus this year—to expand the force for peace by helping one person change their life with this great practice. As leaders, let us be the first to

share our practice with others and to inspire our members to feel the joy of this action of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

Happy New Year of Expanding Dialogue! Please enjoy the holiday time. Take time to listen to your own heart and to others. **WT**

World TRIBUNE The SGI-USA's Weekly Newspaper

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

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

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

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2ND CENTRAL EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE

FROM SGI-USA YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADER WENDY DESOUZA'S SPEECH

Bringing the 'World Tribune' to the Forefront

This weekend, the young women's leaders resolved to share and promote the *World Tribune* in 2002. Toward this task, I have volunteered myself as SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck's apprentice. I would like to ask all the young women to unite in accomplishing an unprecedented victory in inspiring thousands more of our members to subscribe to the *World Tribune*. We can only do this by tapping into the treasure trove of wisdom found in the women's division members.

I've heard our general di-



rector use the expression "betting your life" many times. I personally decided to

focus on the SGI-USA publications because I feel we young women need to take ownership of this vital part of our kosen-rufu movement. We need something to fight for, and by doing so, we will earn a true sense of pride and accomplishment that we can measure.

The reality we now face is that many of our members do not subscribe to the *World Tribune*. My conviction is that the young women of the SGI-USA will make a great impact and bring the *World Tribune* back to the forefront of our activities. **WT**

FROM SGI-USA YOUNG MEN'S LEADER STEVE MORTAN'S SPEECH

FOCUSING ON JOYFUL PROPAGATION

Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's inaugural propagation campaign in Kamata Chapter, where the chapter accomplished 201 new Soka Gakkai households in a single month. This changed the organizational momentum for all of Japan. This year, in that same spirit, the young men of SGI-USA will focus on creating a great momentum of propagation in the United States.

Starting with the February Women's meetings, let's support them by bringing guests to their joyful gatherings. In March, the youth will sponsor introductory meetings in the districts to commemorate March 16, Kosen-rufu Day.



Our goal is to gather 25,000 youth and guests. These will be four-divisional meetings led by the youth, and we humbly ask the members of the men's and women's divisions to create these meetings together with

us, as we are determined to make them enjoyable and meaningful for all ages.

It is my determination and prayer that the SGI-USA youth will experience personal joy and confidently share this Buddhism. When President Ikeda was in his 20's, he completely dedicated himself to propagation, determined to help those who were suffering the most. Through this intense training in spreading the Law, he was able to develop his life.

Inspired by President Ikeda's life, let's create our own stories of an American *shakubuku* spirit which we can share with our future generations. With our personal victory, let's us bring President and Mrs. Ikeda back home to America. **WT**

CEC Highlights

Theme for 2002

The SGI-USA officially adopted the SGI theme for 2002, the Year of Expanding Dialogue.

Goals and Activity Focus for 2002

• Measurable Growth in the District

1) Propagation

The goal is for each district to accomplish two Gohonzon conferrals in 2002. Let's live up to our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth to propagate Buddhism for the happiness of all humanity.

2) May Commemorative Contribution

The goal is for each member to participate in the May Commemorative Contribution activity. This is an opportunity for every person to directly support the kosen-rufu movement through their financial contributions.

3) Publications Promotion

The goal is to increase the number of *World Tribune* subscribers to 30,000 (approximate increase of two per district). This contributes to expanding the SGI-USA members' understanding of Buddhism and empowers them to win in their daily lives.

4) Increase Number of Districts

The goal is to achieve a 20 percent increase in the number of districts, enhancing the SGI-USA's ability to care for its members.

• Soka Spirit

The SGI-USA will continue its Soka Spirit movement, educating ourselves and our friends about the humanistic essence of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

• District Leaders Training (every other month)

The increase of 20 percent in the number of districts nationwide will increase the need to have capable district leaders and leadership training will be important toward that end.

• Zone Leaders Teleconferences (every other month)

These teleconferences will facilitate the flow of communication between the zone and national levels. They will also provide an opportunity to discuss current issues and enable the general director to convey recent guidance from President Ikeda.

SGI-USA Appointments

• General Director

Danny Nagashima was appointed to a second three-year term as SGI-USA general director (see box on p. 2).

• SGI-USA Board of Directors

A new, eight-member Board of Directors was elected to a three-year term.

• SGI-USA Council

The 90-member Council was elected to a three-year term.

• SGI-USA Central Executive Conference

The CEC, which consists of zone and national leadership, was elected to a one-year term.

Gongyo at Discussion Meetings

The SGI-USA adopted a standard format of performing only parts A and C of gongyo at monthly discussion meetings. The hope is to make these meetings as inviting as possible to guests. (Please see general director's speech on p. 2).

Florida Nature and Culture Center

Three changes were adopted in the 2002 schedule of conferences at the FNCC (see box at left).

2002 FNCC Changes

The following changes have been made in the 2002 schedule of conferences at the Florida Nature and Culture Center:

- The Courageous Hearts Group (Soka Spirit) Conference, originally scheduled from Feb. 14-17, has been rescheduled for April 4-7.

- There will be no conference held from Feb. 14-17.

- A new theme conference, Practicing Buddhism as People of African Descent, will replace the Diversity Conference and be held May 30-June 2.

Psychologists Examine Buddhism in Psychotherapy

By **KATHLEEN H. DOCKETT**

WASHINGTON, D.C., REGION
ACADEMIC DIVISION LEADER

For the fourth consecutive year, "Buddhism and Psychotherapy," an extremely popular topic among psychotherapists, drew a standing room-only gathering at the 109th annual convention of the American Psychological Association held in San Francisco, Aug. 28.

Chaired by SGI-USA Culture Department member and licensed clinical psychologist Dr. G. Rita Dudley-Grant, this two-hour symposium titled, "Healing the Person, Family, and Planet: Buddhism and Psychotherapy" informed therapists and others about methods of incorporating Buddhist philosophy and practices in traditional and nontraditional therapy sessions.

"Releasing the Demons: Teaching Men to Meditate" was the first presentation, by Dr. C. Peter Bankart, a licensed psychologist, professor, director of the Student Counseling Service at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind., and expert in Buddhist psychotherapy East and West. Prefacing his talk, Dr. Bankart issued a serious challenge to Western psychology by asserting that the deep ecological truths of Buddhism (e.g., dependent origination) are more powerful than virtually everything encountered in Western psychology and almost cannot co-exist with Western individualistic paradigms. Dr. Bankart suggested "that the pursuit of self-awareness and self-control that are at the heart of the wisdom traditions requires a strength of character and an intensity of personal commitment that relatively few individualistically oriented young European American men have acquired."

Taming these demons was the focus of the next presentation, "The Buddha's Influence in the Therapy Room," by Dr. Belinda Siew Luan Khong, licensed clinical psychologist and professor of psychology at Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW, Australia. Dr. Khong discussed the psychological use of Buddhist mindfulness practice and meditation and its impact on both therapist and client. "Through the use of con-



Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

centration and mindfulness, clients can learn to acknowledge, accept and make space for their emotions and psychological concerns." She discussed the Buddhist concept of "letting go" (relinquishing attachments), including the ability to listen quietly and remain open, and the ability to give even attention and bracket one's biases.

The use of Buddhist principles to better understand family dynamics and change was presented by SGI-USA member Dr. Maria Guajardo Lucero, licensed clinical psychologist and director of Assets for Colorado Youth, in "Healing the Heart and the Family." Addressing the parent's role in healing, Dr. Lucero stated: "Parents might view their family role as a navigator, navigating the waters of human potential. The core of family life is respect for human dignity. Realizing this is at the core of creating peace in the family." She called for the use of open dialogue to resolve conflict among family members and a deep appreciation that "children and parents chose each other in a previous life to spend this lifetime together in a parent-child relationship. This Buddhist belief speaks to the interdependence and interconnectedness that exists in the parent-child relationship, as both provide the other with opportunities to polish their lives, overcome obstacles and practice engaged com-

passion with each other."

In "Substance Abuse in the Caribbean: A Buddhist Approach to Recovery," Dr. Dudley-Grant of the Virgin Islands Behavioral Services in Christsted, Saint Croix, considered the larger picture of Buddhism and psychology on a community scale. Using the Caribbean as an exemplar, Dr. Grant addressed how Buddhist psychology can be used in the treatment of substance abuse and as a force to promote the development of positive community values. "Buddhist doctrine addresses cravings and attachments, indicating that an appreciation for the impermanence of all things can inform our understanding of the causation and mechanics of addictions." Analyzing the breakdown in the fabric of Caribbean society, Dr. Grant pointed to a "particularly pernicious value found in Western culture, that of rugged individualism. This individualistic approach to living is antithetical to the communal family structure and Afrocentric social fabric that stemmed from our African heritage." Based on the Buddhist principle of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things, Dr. Grant called for the widespread acceptance of social responsibility for both the problem and solution. "This will help to overcome the self-centeredness of Western individualism and to effect major change in our island nations in-

dividually and collectively."

Two overarching lessons were drawn from the presentations by symposium discussant Dr. Kathleen H. Dockett, licensed psychologist and acting chairperson of the Department of Psychology and Counseling at the University of the District of Columbia: 1) The Buddhist ecological principle of dependent origination is central to understanding and intervening in the behavior of individuals, families and communities; and 2) It is imperative that humanity develop compassionate acceptance of responsibility for the plight of others at the individual, micro- and macro-systems levels of intervention if society is to survive. "Both compassion and responsibility arise from understanding that we are all interconnected and interdependent," Dr. Dockett noted.

The profundity of the principle of dependent origination is reflected in the following statement by SGI President Ikeda: "Buddhism teaches that the mind and body of each human being, human society and the natural ecology are all interdependent. On their respective planes, they exist in a mutually supportive relationship; each is grounded in universal life and participates in the process of creative evolution in a profound harmony with the entirety of being..."

"In modern society, the unity and harmony of mind and body has been broken. This has caused both spiritual problems — including various types

of mental breakdowns, loss of ethical values and increasing violence — as well as physical problems — such as stress related illnesses, psychosomatic disorders, alcohol and substance abuse, etc...

"Buddhism takes as its essential starting point the need to deploy the inherent human capacities for compassion, trust and wisdom in order to heal the severances stemming from the inner disruptions of human life. The positive impact of this inner transformation to healing and harmony can transform the dynamics of families, of societies, and even of humanity itself" (Sept. 29, 2000, *World Tribune*, p. 10).

Thus, the deeply ecological concept of dependent origination serves as a foundation for healing at multiple levels of society. Strictly speaking, dependent origination teaches us that because everything in the universe is mutually related, one cannot separate collective karma from individual karma. We are all responsible collectively for our collective karma. Therefore, in order to change a suffering society, such as that reflected in the tragic terrorism of September 11, both an inner transformation and a widespread compassionate social responsibility will be essential.

Kathleen H. Dockett is acting chairperson and professor of community psychology in the Department of Psychology and Counseling at the University of the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C.

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EXPERIENCE—MARY WILLIAMS, BRONX, N.Y.

A Life of Victory Amid Harsh Realities

Mary Williams learns how to live the meaning of the phrase ‘the wise will rejoice while the foolish will retreat’ while overcoming obstacles both professional and personal.

I come from a dysfunctional family. My father, while a successful businessman, was for many years unable to achieve personal happiness. Although my mother is a gifted artist and writer, she never attended college and did not fulfill her own intellectual and artistic dreams. My parents were divorced after 32 years of marriage.

Perhaps because of their own disappointments, both my parents valued education and hoped their four children would excel. I graduated from a prestigious college and served in the Peace Corps, when I chose teaching as my vocation. I wanted a career that offered intellectual as well as emotional satisfaction.

Before I received the Gohonzon, I had completed a master's degree in teaching English and was enrolled in a doctoral program. I was happily teaching at Hostos Community College when my world fell apart. In rapid succession I lost my job and got divorced, a few months after giving birth to my second child.

Like my parents, I had struggled mightily to sustain a bad marriage. My husband, while loving in many ways, was emotionally and physically abusive. After repeated attempts to get marital counseling, which he refused, I asked for a separation and he threatened to kill me. We were divorced in six weeks. Our son was barely 3, our daughter just under a year old.

Resourceful, I was able to get another job as English Department chair at a good suburban high school. However, my dream of getting a doctorate receded. Fortunately, a close colleague, who had lost her job,



Photo by TEE LEK YING

Mary Williams, New York East Region academic division leader, with her younger son, Jay.

encouraged me to appeal my non-reappointment at the previous job. My appeal was granted unanimously by an arbitration panel nearly two years later. Although afraid, I returned to the college.

A few years later, my daughter's nursery school dance teacher, Margie Joffe, introduced me to Buddhism. When asked what my dreams were, I immediately replied that one major goal was getting a doctorate.

Just as I got started again, I became pregnant with my third child at the age of 42, a son born out of wedlock in December 1985. I had deeply desired a third child, so his birth, despite my not being married to his father, who suffered from clinical depression, was tremendous actual proof of my practice. My two older children, then 9 and 7, cherished and supported the family's "fortune baby."

Although my younger son's father was well educated, with a doctorate in physics and a good job as a research scientist, I suffered from a similar, albeit more passive, abuse in my relationship with him. Because of my practice to the Gohonzon, I was able to summon enough wisdom to terminate this relationship before, rather than

after, marriage.

Despite, or perhaps because of my assiduous practice, obstacles continued to appear. Over the next three years my ex-husband and others filed nine reports of child abuse. Eventually I was able to "turn poison into medicine." I found a wonderful caseworker who became my protector and advocate. My pediatrician also supported me by saying, "You need not fear the truth." After countless hours of chanting to the Gohonzon and receiving guidance from my SGI leaders, all of the reports were eventually deemed "unfounded."

Although beset with heavy personal and financial challenges, I still dreamed of getting a Ph.D. Armed with strong prayers to the Gohonzon, I was able to take advantage of a doctoral completion seminar, and in six months I finished writing my dissertation. I graduated in May 1992, with my three children attending the graduation ceremonies.

Encouraged by members and colleagues to continue excelling, I applied for appointment to assistant professor. I was awarded tenure in 1996. The next spring I was elected chair of the English Department and immediately ran into severe obstacles. Since many

students failed the Writing Assessment Test, mandated for graduation by the Board of Trustees due to insufficient preparation before college, the college president resigned. The new president promptly asked me to resign. The president of the Student Government and the chair of the Student Senate also asked publicly for my resignation, amidst accusations of my own and the department's incompetence.

Nichiren Daishonin writes in "The Eight Winds": "Worthy persons deserve to be called so because they are not carried away by the eight winds: prosperity, decline, disgrace, honor, praise, censure, suffering, and pleasure. They are neither elated by prosperity nor grieved by decline" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 794). After chanting about the president's request, I told her I could not resign because my department had elected me.

While attacks on the department did not diminish immediately, three years later, at the end of my term as chair, the president warmly thanked me for my service to the department and the college. The student government leaders began smiling at me and saying: "You've changed. All the students like you now." Many of

the students had great success passing the new writing test after attending my writing workshop. The department, under review after our recently completed self-study, received a glowing affirmation.

My dreams today include getting another degree, a master's of fine arts in creative writing. I am looking at ways to apply for appointment to associate professor. My personal life has also changed dramatically. I have been seeing a man for over two years. He is emotionally stable and financially secure, with much insight and a good sense of humor. He respects me, my children and my Buddhist practice.

As for my children, my older son, now 25, is in his second year of teaching oral English in China and is thinking of becoming a teacher when he returns to the United States. My daughter, almost 23, has become a serious student, majoring in philosophy in Los Angeles, after spending a year in Shanghai, China, and another in Paris after her high school graduation. My younger son, the "fortune baby," now almost 16, is a typical teenager, more interested in the ladies than in school. However, this past summer he took to the stage in the SGI-USA Family Youth Festival at Madison Square Garden.

Throughout my 17 years of practice to the Gohonzon, I have received countless benefits. I have used my challenges to encourage others. Today I am able to rejoice when obstacles appear, because I know that my daily practice, coupled with encouragement from SGI President Ikeda and my SGI family, will help me to overcome and use each struggle as a springboard to my happiness. I am determined to practice for the rest of my life and to help others do the same. **W**

Comments on 'Culture Department in Action'? Ideas? Submissions? Please send to: Arlaana Black, P.O. Box 576, Edisto Island, SC 29438 or arlaana@earthlink.net. Thank you.

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S NOV. 12 SPEECH — PART 1

WE ARE DEVELOPING OUR HUMANITY

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

‘Training that develops our humanity is very important,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘A person who is never challenged or tested is weak when a crucial moment comes.’

Part 1 of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at the 11th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, held at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo, Nov. 12.

Thank you all for coming from so far away! And many thanks to those champions of kosen-rufu music, the Music Corps of our young men’s division! Founded in May 1954, the Music Corps has consistently inspired and encouraged people with its rousing tunes for almost five decades.

I dedicate the following poem in its praise:

*Even amid storms —
Ah, our Music Corps
Playing the melodies
Of the Buddhas and heavenly
deities.*

In her eloquent speech earlier, Kansai Women’s Leader Emiko Nakao referred to the Osaka Rally, which was held on July 17, 1957 [to protest President Ikeda’s unjust detention by the Osaka District Prosecutor’s Office]. Music Corps members gathered from early that morning on the riverbank in Osaka’s Nakanoshima and played Soka Gakkai songs

with all their might, hoping that their music would reach me where I was being held. And indeed, I could clearly hear them. I will never forget that courageous sound.

My thanks, too, to those heavenly emissaries of peace, the Fife and Drum Corps of the young women’s division! Let me praise them with the following poem:

*Shining brightly
In a tumultuous world —
The Fife and Drum Corps.*

One has but to mention the Fife and Drum Corps and everyone wants to hear them play. Its members have accumulated immense benefits as a result of steadfastly spreading the light of peace.

Thinking back, it was 45 years ago, in 1956, in our small, humble home in Kobayashicho in Tokyo’s Ota Ward, that my wife and I, along with several representatives of the young women’s division, discussed ideas for forming such



SGI President Ikeda speaks at the 11th Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting, Nov. 12, at the Tokyo Toda Memorial Auditorium in Sugamo.

a group for young women. That was the beginning of today’s Fife and Drum Corps.

Kosen-rufu is a great cultural movement placing supreme importance on music and the arts.

Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound, who appears in the Lotus Sutra, is said to be accompanied wherever he goes

by the music of hundreds and thousands of heavenly musicians. [“The Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound” chapter of the Lotus Sutra says, “The lands that he [Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound] passed through on his way quaked and trembled in six different ways, and in all of them seven-jeweled lotus flowers rained down and the instruments of hundreds and thousands of heavenly musicians sounded of themselves without having been struck” (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 293).

Nichiren Daishonin writes, “We can know a country’s prosperity by whether its tones are happy or sad” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 88). In other words, we can know a country’s future by its “sounds” — the sounds of the times and the age. The future of a country, whether it is destined to flourish or decline, is revealed in sound. This sound is the sound of human voices and, by extension, of the arts and culture, including, of course, music.

Kosen-rufu is a great cultural movement that places supreme importance on music and the arts. The Music Corps and the Fife and Drum Corps were founded based on this basic principle of Buddhism.

When I asked second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda to permit me to establish these

groups, he said simply, “If you’ll take full responsibility, Daisaku, go right ahead!” I purchased a few instruments out of my own pocket and donated them to the original members — 16 in the Music Corps and 33 in the Fife and Drum Corps.

Today, these groups in Japan boast some 20,000 members each. And, as you all know, many of their constituent groups have won top prizes in national competitions.

The SGI’s network of youth music groups has spread to 30 countries and territories.

On Jan. 20, 2002, the Japan Marching Band Championships will be held at the Budokan in Tokyo, and four Soka Gakkai bands have had the honor to be selected to participate: the Tokyo Soka Renaissance Vanguard Drum and Brass Corps, the Kansai Drum and Bugle Corps, the Chubu Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Kagoshima Marching Band. Congratulations!

In addition, our Kansai Young Men’s Chorus will participate in a national competition on Nov. 24.

Also, our Kansai Wind Orchestra won the gold medal at the All-Japan Wind Ensemble Competition on Oct. 21, while



Photo by DIXON HAMBY

‘Many SGI Music Corps and Fife and Drum Corps groups around the world have played at important national events in their countries and won high acclaim, creating a superlative record of achievement,’ says SGI President Ikeda. SGI-USA youth participated in Seattle’s annual Seafair Torchlight Parade on July 28.

the Soka University Pioneer Wind Orchestra won the gold medal in the university division of the same competition on Oct. 20.

As for our Fife and Drum Corps, the Tokyo Metropolitan Marching Band and the Tokyo Metropolitan Baton Twirling Team will also compete in national championships on Nov. 24 and on Jan. 13 next year, respectively.

These achievements are remarkable. The activities of the members of these groups are in themselves a great artistic movement, a great cultural movement.

The SGI's network of wonderful sound has today spread to 30 countries and territories. Many SGI Music Corps and Fife and Drum Corps groups around the world have played at important national events in their countries and won high acclaim, creating a superlative record of achievement. I wholeheartedly applaud them on becoming the best Music Corps and Fife and Drum Corps in the world.

No matter how smart we are, we cannot take decisive leadership if we are weak.

Training that develops our humanity is very important. A person who is never challenged or tested is weak when a crucial moment comes.

No matter how smart we are, we cannot take decisive leadership for kosen-rufu if we are weak as human beings. Those who have undergone thorough training in faith in their youth, as members of the Music Corps and the Fife and Drum Corps have, are strong.

A quick look at our women's

leaders shows that graduates of the Fife and Drum Corps are making outstanding contributions. [President Ikeda introduced a number of top regional women's leaders who are Fife and Drum Corps graduates.] SGI-Micronesia Chapter Leader Noriko Lopez, who is with us today, is also a graduate of this group.

In our SGI organizations in other parts of the world as well, members who have undergone training in the Fife and Drum Corps in their youth have grown splendidly and are wonderfully active today in our movement for kosen-rufu. From a young age, they worked hard and challenged themselves with noble dedication. They strove with their entire beings to inspire and impart hope to many. That is why they so brilliantly shine.

The Mystic Law is the fundamental Law that encompasses and moves the entire universe. Consequently, the actions we take for kosen-rufu adorn our lives with immense benefit. The strenuous efforts of our Music Corps graduates are also most heartening. Some 15 graduates have gone on to become Soka Gakkai vice presidents. [President Ikeda introduced the 15.]

In fact, all the graduates of our youth music groups have achieved truly admirable growth. The same goes for other members who in their youth received training in the garden of kosen-rufu and worked hard behind the scenes. They shine and are winning in their lives.

Today, representatives of our famed arts division have also joined us to celebrate the anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's

founding, Nov. 18. Thank you very much!

Let us all continue to show our support for the worthy artists of the Soka Gakkai who are striving so earnestly for kosen-rufu!

In this year of great victory, let me say again to all our members, thank you so very much! The phenomenal development of the Soka Gakkai today has been achieved solely through your prayers, unity, perseverance and energetic efforts.

The Soka Gakkai is filled with cheerful music and art. High Priest Nikken Abe and Nichiren Shoshu were jealous and resentful of this enjoyable, beautiful realm of the Soka Gakkai and tried to destroy it. It was the priesthood that called Beethoven's Ninth Symphony "slander of the Law." Where else in the world could one find clerics who reject this magnificent cultural treasure of all humanity?

Shakespeare wrote in *The Merchant of Venice*:

*The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus;
Let no such man be trusted....*

This is a penetrating observation of human nature made by one of the world's greatest writers.

To be continued in an upcoming issue.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

The Happy Sounds of Kosen-rufu

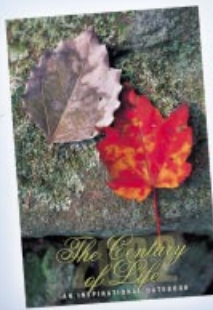
From This Speech:

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "We can know a country's prosperity by whether its tones are happy or sad" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 88). In other words, we can know a country's future by its "sounds" — the sounds of the times and the age. The future of a country, whether it is destined to flourish or decline, is revealed in sound. This sound is the sound of human voices and, by extension, of the arts and culture, including, of course, music. Kosen-rufu is a great cultural movement that places supreme importance on music and the arts. The Music Corps and the Fife and Drum Corps were founded based on this basic principle of Buddhism.

1) SGI President Ikeda explains that in the above passage the Daishonin says that "we can know a country's future by its 'sounds' — the sounds of the times and the age." Based on your practice of faith, do you ever consciously think about the "sounds" you are creating with your voice in your daily activities? If so, in what ways? What type of "happy tones" do you think will contribute to creating a prosperous destiny for you and America? What do think are some of the "sounds" today that left unchecked, will bring about the decline of this country?

2) President Ikeda continues: "This sound is the sound of human voices and, by extension, of the arts and culture, including, of course, music. Kosen-rufu is a great cultural movement that places supreme importance on music and the arts." Can you find other passages in *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* that explain the importance of sounds? Can you think of examples where music and art have been used to serve the authority of power rather than the happiness of the people? Do you think it is important to counteract this kind of negative influence? If so, in what ways?

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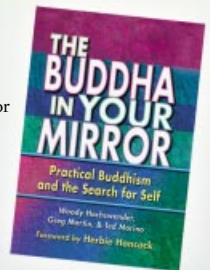
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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

SGI President Ikeda's novelized history of the Soka Gakkai

'PURE STREAM'

VOLUME 8, CHAPTER 3, PARTS 29-32

'It has always been a rule that Soka Gakkai members do not lend or borrow money among one another. It is especially wrong for a leader to borrow money from the members.'

Around this time, a serious problem arose in a certain region of Japan involving a regional leader and money.

The situation came to light through the courageous actions of a young women's leader. Her name was Yukiko Kishizaka. She had a good head on her shoulders and a strong sense of right and wrong. When she went to visit and encourage the young women in her area, she also got along well with their mothers. She was trusted by the women's division, too.

The incident took place in the spring of 1963. Kishizaka was at her job as a bank teller when a women's division member she was acquainted with came to her window. The woman, who ran her own business, addressed Kishizaka in a low voice: "I'd like to talk to you about my financial situation. Would you mind coming by my house when

you get off work today?"

Kishizaka supposed that the woman wanted to talk about her fixed deposit account or some similar matter, and so that evening she headed toward the woman's house light-heartedly. When she got there, however, she was told a rather upsetting story.

"The truth is, I lent Koji Numayama ¥100,000, but it's been quite a long time, and he hasn't repaid me. I don't know what to do," explained the woman.

Koji Numayama was a central leader in the region. Kishizaka was speechless. From the time of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, borrowing and lending money among Soka Gakkai members was strictly forbidden. There was no way Numayama could not have known this.

"Have you asked him to repay you?" asked Kishizaka.

"No," replied the woman.



Illustrations by KENICHIRO UCHIDA

"It has always been a rule that Soka Gakkai members don't lend or borrow money among one another," said Kishizaka. "It is especially wrong for a leader to borrow money from the members. It may be hard for you to speak up to him because he is a leader, but I think you should be brave, and come right out and ask him to repay the loan.

"I'll also discuss this with the appropriate people," she promised.

Kishizaka almost could not believe what she had heard, but subsequently two other women came to her with the same story: Numayama had borrowed money from them and had not repaid it. They, too, asked for her advice. They were at their wit's end, but at the same time did not want to cause any trouble.

This was a very serious problem, and Kishizaka was at a loss for what to do. She realized that she should report the incidents immediately to the top men's and women's leaders in the region, but she did not want to seem like she was being a snitch.

She spent several days mulling over the situation.

Kishizaka knew Numayama as they had participated in Soka Gakkai activities together. After pondering the matter for several days, she decided to go directly to him and ask him about the stories she had heard. Then, if need be, she would issue him a warning.

Kishizaka paid a visit to Numayama's home in late September. Her heart was heavy. When Numayama appeared in the entranceway, she got right to the point: "I have something I want to talk to you about. You know, Mr. Numayama, that lending and borrowing money among Soka Gakkai members is strictly prohibited, don't you?"

He nodded without expression.

Kishizaka related each of the incidents that she had heard about to Numayama, who stood there in silence growing clearly annoyed.

"Are these stories true?" Kishizaka asked. "If they are, I hope that you will find a way to return the money. Please. I think it is outrageous for a Soka Gakkai leader to behave in this fashion."

At this, Numayama became incensed, and his manner suddenly transformed. "What right is it of yours to tell me what to do?!" he yelled.

He looked ready to strike Kishizaka. Just then, his wife Mieko, who was a women's leader, rushed to where they were. She must have been listening to their conversation.

"Ms. Kishizaka," she said, "It's not his fault. I made him do it. I'm the one to blame, so please forgive my husband!"

She pleaded with Kishizaka, tears in her eyes. Returning to his senses, Numayama began muttering excuses. The company he was co-managing was facing difficulties, and he was desperately trying to raise funds but to no avail. An earlier business of his had also failed, and he had borrowed money to pay back those debts, too.

"In any case," Kishizaka said sharply, "you know that it is wrong to borrow money



from Soka Gakkai members, don't you?"

"You're absolutely right," replied Mieko. "I know what we've done is inexcusable. But don't worry, we will pay everyone back right away."

Believing the problem now solved, Kishizaka felt as if a great weight had been lifted from her shoulders. But when she saw one of the women who had lent money to Numayama again some time later, she learned that he still had not repaid the loan.

Kishizaka began to suspect that the problem of Numayama borrowing money from members ran much deeper than she had originally thought. Several days later, she met with a men's region leader and reported what she had heard. The leader could not hide his astonishment: "Is that what he's been doing? How many members has he borrowed from?"

"I don't know the full extent of it, but I have heard of several incidents," Kishizaka replied.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, the leader immediately contacted Soka Gakkai Headquarters for instructions. Without delay, a vice general director and other senior leaders in charge of the region began an investigation into the matter. Their inquiry revealed that Numayama had borrowed money from more members than anyone had imagined, and that he had accumulated an enormous debt.

Furthermore, in each case, he had done it by cleverly exploiting the members' faith. One of his victims, a men's district leader named Shotaro Okajima, had been tricked into loaning Numayama some ¥1.8 million. Okajima ran his own company, and business was going smoothly. Numayama would frequently visit his home and ask about the business. Okajima was grateful for Numayama's interest, feeling it was a sign that he was a leader who really cared about the members.

One day, Numayama said to Okajima with a serious look, "To tell you the truth, I'm in a bit of a bind...." He went on to explain that the payments from a certain area for the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's newspaper, had not yet arrived. The area was rather remote and lacked good transportation, which meant that it often took three or four days for money and goods sent from there to be delivered. At that time, the system for selling and distributing newspa-

pers presently in use was in the process of being established across Japan, and there were still some regions that collected *Seikyo Shimbun* payments through the local Soka Gakkai organization. [Today, with a daily circulation of 5.5 million nationwide, the *Seikyo Shimbun* is operated through a system independent of the Soka Gakkai organization.]

"Remittance of the payment can't be late," Numayama said, "so I was wondering if you could cover the outstanding amount temporarily. I'll return it to you as soon as the money arrives."

This sounded like an emergency to Okajima. It just so happened that it was payday for his 15 employees, and he had ¥500,000 on hand, which he lent then and there to Numayama. Okajima trusted Numayama as a Soka Gakkai leader, so he did not even ask for an IOU.

But Numayama's story was a complete fabrication. Okajima, however, believed wholeheartedly that the newspaper payment would arrive soon and that Numayama would then repay him.

One month passed, then another. Numayama didn't repay the loan or say another word about it. Then, three months later, Numayama appeared at Okajima's home unannounced. Okajima naturally thought he had come to

repay him, but instead Numayama had a surprising announcement: "We're in another jam. The members' payments for the visit to the head temple have not arrived."

Okajima cut him off before he could say anything further: "Mr. Numayama, you haven't returned the money you borrowed for the newspaper payment yet."

"I know," Numayama replied. "We still haven't received it, and now the money for the pilgrimage hasn't arrived either, which only makes matters worse. It comes to about one million yen, and if it isn't paid, the members won't be able to go."

Seeing Numayama's troubled expression, the good-hearted Okajima thought: "A million yen is a lot of money, but it will be terrible if the members can't visit the head temple. I'll take care of it somehow. It's for the sake of my fellow members, after all." He went to the bank, withdrew the money and gave it to Numayama.

Some time later, Numayama showed up at Okajima's home again. Without the slightest hesitation, he asked for another loan: "Leaders are coming from Tokyo and I have to take them to dinner and entertain them, but I don't have any cash on hand. Can you help me out, Mr. Okajima?" Once again, he entertained Okajima in earnest.

The entertainment of lead-

ers was prohibited by Soka Gakkai policy. Unaware of this, Okajima lent Numayama the money, thinking that if it was indeed necessary for him to entertain visiting leaders from the Headquarters, it was sure to be expensive.

By now Okajima had lent Numayama more than ¥1.8 million, but Numayama showed no sign of returning any of it. When Okajima asked him if the newspaper or pilgrimage payments had arrived yet, Numayama, clearly annoyed, replied, "Not yet."

Eventually, Okajima, too, came to suspect that something was not right. Numayama may have noticed that Okajima was starting to get suspicious, because one day, as if trying to curry favor, he visited Okajima carrying an incense container that he said he received from the high priest at the head temple. "This is very valuable," he said. "I'd like to give it to you."


"I don't want it," Okajima retorted. Then he asked for his money back.

"I don't have any money," Numayama said. He defiantly added, "It hasn't arrived yet. There's nothing I can do about it!"

Realizing he had been duped, Okajima trembled with anger.

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

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TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR DIALOGUE

By MAJID TEHRANIAN

TODA INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL PEACE
AND POLICY RESEARCH DIRECTOR

The newly established \$20 million Wosk Center for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University in downtown Vancouver promises to set a new architectural and philosophical challenge to City Convention Centers everywhere. Opened on Sept. 20, 2000, the Center breaks with the traditional design of meeting halls. In place of the big, linear, and impersonal halls including a high platform and podium, the Center's main meeting hall is built in a series of circles and is equipped with the latest interactive conference technologies. Each seat is enabled with computer projection and polling buttons indicating yes, no, abstain, and two other open choices. The hall is clearly intended to be egalitarian and conducive to dialogue. It represents what the world desperately needs now for dialogue and conflict resolution.

At a Center conference that took place on Dialogue and Negotiation (Feb. 2-3), bringing practitioners and academicians together, the result was a rich, participatory, intimate and enlightening conversation. Admittedly, the participants were generally predisposed to dialogue. They consisted of lawyers, mediators, arbitrators, family therapists, civic leaders, and professors of communication, peace studies, and international affairs. As the conference took up three different case studies of a dialogic approach to conflict resolution, it became clear that the method is sorely needed for most human conflicts that plague the world today.

Iona Campagnolo's presentation of cooperative decision making in the Fraser Basin in British Columbia showed how a complex regional development project can, in fact, engage all stakeholders instead of just the government and developers. By leaving their egos at the door, the stakeholders in a contentious development project have discussed and resolved many of their conflicts amicably.

Great Fraser River in British Columbia supplies 80 percent of the water in the province. The Fraser Basin Council, consisting of the major stakeholders in five geographic regions,



Dr. Majid Tehranian, director of the SGI-affiliated Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, talks with SGI President Ikeda in Okinawa, Japan, last year.

has focused on sustainable development, environment and equity. The case study of the residential schools, in which the children of the Canadian indigenous population had been subjected to prolonged sexual and other abuses, demonstrated how a potentially explosive and costly litigation could be circumvented by pacific settlement out of court.

Presented by Robert Joseph, a tribal chief, and Glenn Sigurdson, a lawyer-mediator, the case also has successfully grappled with reconciliation among the indigenous peoples and the churches. The abused people carried the scars of their childhood memories while the churches were faced with financial and moral responsibility for the misdeeds of their forefathers.

The power of dialogue was shown again in a case study of the Toda Institute's project to achieve security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf region. This is an explosive region of the world that has already known two wars and a creeping third. In the last two decades, more than 1 million people have been killed, another million maimed and billions of dollars of property destroyed, while the population of Iran and Iraq are suffering under U.S. sanctions. In collaboration with other peace and policy centers, the Toda Institute has established an International Commission for Security and Cooperation in West Asia con-

sisting of senior diplomats and scholars from the littoral states of the Persian Gulf, the five permanent member-states of the U.N. Security Council, and the United Nations. The Commission has so far met three times in Istanbul, Turkey (1999), Limassol, Cyprus (2000), and Doha, Qatar (2001) to explore the possibilities for arms control and dispute resolution among the littoral states.

Dialogue (among two) and multilogue (among many) can be best understood in contrast to other conflict and communication strategies. Violence, silence, adversarial, didactic, command, persuasive, bureaucratic and disciplinary communication strategies are employed in a diversity of conflict situations.

Violence is the language of raw force. It is often used when all else has failed or when one or several parties see a gambling chance in getting their way through violence. Silence is typically the communication strategy in situations of repression, in which the oppressed choose to keep their peace while undermining the oppressor in subtle ways. Adversarial strategies characterize litigation, trial courts, political campaigns, and sometimes labor-management disputes. Command communication is typical of the military and hierarchical structures. Advertisers, politicians, parents, friends, and sometimes enemies employ persuasive communication. Bureaucratic communica-

tion often takes place within the framework of rules and regulations of organizations. That is why bureaucratise often baffles the clients! Disciplinary communication is a lingo that has been developed by academic disciplines (economics, sociology, medicine, etc.) and working professions often to achieve economy and monopoly. It mystifies the uninitiated and keeps them out of the conversation of "the experts."

What is the magic of dialogue? In contrast to all of the above, dialogue begins with the assumption that "truth" or "meaning" is not the monopoly of any single person or group. Truth (with a small "t") must be therefore negotiated among contending parties. To do so, it is necessary for the parties to any dispute to enter an open-minded conversation on their conflicting perceptions of the situation at issue. Dialogue is thus a contemplative process in which parties to a dispute listen more than talk.

The listening process leads each side to question its own truth claims in the light of what is heard or examined. Dialogue is thus a kind of foreplay before serious negotiations start. Its aim is to build trust and mutual understanding before a common ground can be found for the compromises that are often needed to reach a settlement.

From an economic perspective, dialogue may be considered as social capital formation.

Like all capital investment, it takes time to reap its fruits. In other words, it has a gestation period, after which, through cooperative learning and decision making, the stakeholders can collaborate in a project with higher productivity than otherwise possible.

In its peace-building projects, the Toda Institute has employed a tablet of Ten Commandments for Dialogue that has proved useful in complex situations of conflict. The tablet received considerable attention at the Vancouver conference. Here it is, dear reader, for your consideration. You may modify it in any way you wish. Unlike the other Ten Commandments, this one is subject to negotiation.

- 1) Honor others and listen to them deeply with all your heart and mind.
- 2) Focus on the agenda while seeking the common ground for consensus, but avoid group-think by acknowledging and honoring the diversity of views.
- 3) Refrain from irrelevant or intemperate interventions.
- 4) Acknowledge others' contributions to the discussion before relating your own remarks to theirs.
- 5) Remember that silence also speaks; speak only when you have a contribution to make by posing a relevant question, presenting a fact, making or clarifying a point, or advancing the discussion to greater specificity or consensus.
- 6) Identify the critical points of difference for further deliberation.
- 7) Never distort other views in order to advance your own, try to restate others' positions to their own satisfaction before presenting your own different views.
- 8) Formulate the agreements on any agenda item before moving on to the next.
- 9) Draw out the implications of an agreement for group policy and action.
- 10) Thank your colleagues for their contribution.

Majid Tehranian, a graduate of Dartmouth and Harvard, is currently professor of international communication at the University of Hawaii and director of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research.

EXPERIENCE — CAROLE POWELL-HENRY, SILVER SPRING, MD.

A Last Lesson in Compassion

This is a story about my mother, Lillie E. Smith, and her only child — me.

Although we never had a bad relationship, there seemed to be little interaction between my mother and me. I had been very close to my father for all my years growing up. Meanwhile, my mother always had her sisters and nieces around her, and everyone was happy with that. But later, after years of Buddhist practice — and after I had my own daughter, Tiffany — I understood that I needed a closer relationship with my mother.

I started to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in New York in 1973. In 1976, I chose to live on the small island of Antigua in the West Indies, where I stayed for 25 years. I had the wonderful fortune to start a British Model Primary School there with an Englishwoman who became a great mentor to me. The school was a joy to attend every day for 10 years.

Before 1995, when Hurricane Louis ripped through Antigua and destroyed many homes, including my own, I made a point of visiting my mother twice a year in Maryland. After that, because I was busy rebuilding, I sent Tiffany to live with her for a time. Tiffany repeatedly told me, "Mommy, you'd better go and see Granny, because she is not acting like herself." But each week when I phoned my mother, my aunt, who lived with her, said that everything was fine. Then, in June 1999, my cousin wrote me a disturbing letter about her mental health.

I decided to find out for myself how my mother was doing, so Tiffany and I packed our bags. It was also time to enter Tiffany in a U.S. high school. She had already completed secondary school under the British system in Antigua, but would need to graduate



Carole Powell-Henry (left) with her mother, Lillie E. Smith, holding cousin Angelica, and her daughter, Tiffany.

from a U.S. high school in order to attend college in the States. When we arrived in New York in August, we first got Tiffany into a drama magnet high school. Tiffany and I were feeling really excited and happy. I absolutely trusted my practice to the Gohonzon, and was praying deeply for Tiffany's protection in such a big place like New York.

I traveled on to Maryland, where I had grown up, to see my mother. It was immediately clear to me that she was not her usual, confident self, busy and ordering everyone around. She kept telling me that she was "not crazy," which made me aware that she was concerned about her condition but unsure what to do.

I chanted to the Gohonzon I had brought with me, sometimes as much as five hours a day. I postponed my return to Antigua and my school's opening. I stayed in Maryland through October, taking my mother for many tests and medical appointments. At the end of October, my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Doctors gave her only one year to live.

I didn't know what to do. I prayed for the best situation for both my mother and for me. After many hours of chanting and studying *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, and writing and calling members for encouragement and guidance, I decided to take my mother home to Antigua. Since I had spent so much time living far away from her, I determined now to devote myself to caring for my mother. It was then that I remembered what I had written on my list of determinations three years earlier: to have a better relationship with my mother in this lifetime.

Now it was early in November 1999. My family insisted that my mother would never move so far away to the Caribbean. I asked her doctors if it would be OK for her to make the trip, and they said that the climate would be the best thing possible for her — after all, there was nothing to be done medically. In Antigua, there is a very caring, reverent attitude toward the elderly, and I knew my mother would be treated well.

During the move, I existed solely on daimoku and my study of the Daishonin's writ-

ings. I wrote to SGI President Ikeda, who responded that I should take care of my mother, no matter what.

My mother, now in the late stages of Alzheimer's, was never even aware that she'd been on an airplane. When I told her that we were at my home in Antigua, she replied,

"Way over there, no." I arranged to keep my mother at home and hired three wonderful ladies to take care of her in shifts. She was comfortable, content and happy. After her second week there, she no longer needed any allergy medication, a problem she had suffered from her whole life. We also found Dr. Frazer, who was qualified in geriatric medicine and came to examine my mother twice a week. Dr. Frazer explained in detail the stages of my mother's illness. It prepared me for what was to come.

Taking care of a parent with Alzheimer's can be an extremely difficult and painful experience. I did not sleep more than a few hours a night for months because of Sundowners Syndrome, which causes a patient to talk and yell through the night. I would sit in front of my altar, often late into the night, not always able to chant. And I still had to go to school every day and teach. In her more lucid moments, however, my mother would say things like, "Girlie, I don't know what I'd do without you." And she'd hug me and say "I love you" almost daily. She had not said that

very often in my childhood.

Tiffany was wonderful. I brought her home five times during the school year, an expensive undertaking, but I needed her. She and I talked about the fact that we would not have Granny with us much longer, and Tiffany wanted as much time with her as possible, as they had been very close.

I continued to chant for my mother to enjoy her life to the end and for me to be able to bring her back to her own home before she died, so that she could have a big funeral at her church. This was important to her.

My mother chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo on several occasions during our time in Antigua. She would sit next to me and say it a few times and move on. I was the chapter women's leader, and when we had meetings at my house she would say, "Girlie, you had a lot of people tonight," or "Girlie, are they coming tonight?" (meaning members). She enjoyed sitting on the couch during meetings.

It was my deepest prayer to never be defeated by my mother's disease and to remain with her for what was left of her life. Tiffany and I brought her back to Maryland on Aug. 17, 2000. Three weeks later, she died in her own bed, without suffering, and with my aunt and me sitting on her bed. She was 82 years old.

This experience has been actual proof to me of the power of this Buddhist practice. Recently, I have been living in Maryland and practicing where I grew up near Washington, D.C. Sometimes as I took care of my mother, I wondered why I was going through such hardship. Recently, in D.C. and again during a visit to the Florida Nature and Culture Center last May, I met and talked with three women who were going through the same situation. I was so grateful to be able to share my experience and the guidance I received, with the hope of benefiting others going through similar difficulties. As I spoke, I experienced an even deeper appreciation for my mother's last lesson for me. **WT**



The SGI-USA's
Weekly Newspaper

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SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

Philadelphia Festival Spreads Message of Peace

Photos by JONATHAN WILSON

By FRED KAPLAN-MAYER
PHILADELPHIA CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 100 Philadelphia SGI-USA youth, along with a 23-member Boys and Girls Group chorus, presented "Peace, a Musical Production," for an enthusiastic audience of SGI members, family and friends, Oct. 27. The ambitious production, which featured song, dance and music performances, was woven together with dramatic narrative pieces to communicate a common theme: peaceful dialogue, not conflict, is the correct response to violence.

Even though the production, which spawned two performances that played to nearly 2,000 audience members, was planned and rehearsed over a five-month period, the events of Sept. 11 seemed to add a heightened sense of purpose to the gathering. This feeling was summed up by one of the performers, Connie Utada, who said: "[Since the attacks,] peo-



ple seem to be of one mind-set of confusion and revenge. We really wanted to encourage people and show them there is a voice for peace, that a culture of peace can be attained."

The opening of the production featured the reading of congratulatory messages from U.S. Congressman Bob Brady, City Councilman Howard Cohen and Mayor John Street, who proclaimed Oct. 27 SGI-USA Day in Philadelphia.

SGI-USA Philadelphia Region Women's Leader Doris Edwards said she was very encouraged by the production, especially because the youth spearheaded all aspects of the endeavor. "This was

entirely a youth-driven event and I believe they really propagated Buddhism to a lot of people through their efforts," she explained.

Crystal Wearick of Mullica Hill, N.J., a high-school student who attended as a guest, said she was impressed by the production's message. "The message of peace was especially [appropriate] considering what's going on right now," she said.

Her neighbor and friend, Julie Praetzel, added that the three-act play did an excellent job depicting the kinds of conflicts that can arise at school. "The kids in the performance," she said, "seemed really connected and communicated [through their songs and dances] an important message."

As for the vision of the SGI-USA youth in Philadelphia, Elekeu Roho Correll is perfectly clear: "Youth are the future and we want to hand down peace — this is just the beginning." **WT**



SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS

Houston Festival Celebrates 'Culture of Peace'

Photos by DORIS BRYANT and BEN DESOTO

By DORIS BRYANT
HOUSTON CORRESPONDENT



With cool breezes and a cloudless, sunny day to greet them, SGI-USA members of the Houston area were joined by family, friends and invited guests to celebrate the Victory Over Violence Family Youth Festival on Oct. 27 on the University of Houston campus.

"Joyfully Creating a Culture of Peace" was the selected theme of the festival, which featured 26 musical performances. Brightly colored costumes heralded a musical tribute to the multifaceted diversity of the Houston community. Spirited traditional dances of Africa, Japan, Latin America, Thailand and India were equaled only by performances and songs ranging from American hip-hop, rap and golden oldies of the 1960s and '70s, to an Italian aria and beloved songs of American patriotism. In support of the festivity, each



of Houston's 16 SGI-USA districts featured its own booth promoting peace, culture and education with interactive activities for curious guests.

Community support included the participation and co-sponsorship of more than 40 agencies and businesses, including UNICEF, the Center for Children at Risk and Texas Southern University. An entire group of guests from a local member-owned, children's development and educational center brought the crowd to its feet with their rendition of a Stomp routine.

Kaminari Taiko Drummers called the event to life with a resounding performance.

Opening ceremonies began with the presentation of a city of Houston proclamation from Mayor Lee Brown awarded by the mayor's representative, Councilman Joe Montemayor.

The highlight of the opening was the arrival of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee directly from Washington, D.C. As evidence of her support of the SGI's endeavors to promote cultural exchange and humanistic education, a Congressional Certificate of Recognition for the SGI-USA was presented to Houston Vice Women's Leader Marilyn Price. In the congresswoman's address, she applauded the movement of the SGI, stating, "It is not where someone stands in times of prosperity and joy; it is where you stand in times of adversity, and I cannot think of a better coming together to build increasing harmony and understanding in Houston through the promotion of peace than this festival." **WT**