



**SPEECH**  
SGI President Ikeda on the joy of being alive.

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## Muslims and Buddhists Hold Dialogue in Virginia

By SAMANTHA MCCULLOUGH  
ARLINGTON, VA., CORRESPONDENT

On Nov. 3 at the Northern Virginia Community Center, 39 SGI-USA members held an interfaith dialogue with four Muslims from the All Dulles Area Muslim Society. The goal of the meeting was to educate Buddhists and Muslims about one another's religious practice, develop bonds of friendship and trust, and create a sense of harmony among people of both faiths.

The meeting opened with the Muslims witnessing the Buddhist prayer. Later the Buddhists witnessed the Muslim prayer as well. Syaiful Idris, a Muslim and the event's emcee, introduced SGI-USA member Jennifer Zarbock, who spoke about the founder of Islam, quoting SGI President Ikeda: "Muhammad was a man of great patience, acuity and far-sightedness. Muhammad united the Arab tribes through his ability to inspire trust in and make allies of the people who



Participants enjoy a conversation at a gathering of Muslims and SGI-USA members in northern Virginia, Nov. 3.

were brought under Muslim rule. Muhammad combined painstaking attention to detail with passionate enthusiasm. He was generous, honest and

principled" (May 23, 1997, *World Tribune*, p. 7).

Muslim Ahmed Hussain noted that the tradition of dialogue between Buddhists and

Muslims goes back 300 years. In 1704, Liu Chi, a Chinese Buddhist, wrote *The Philosophy of Islam*, a comparison of Islam and Buddhism that em-

phasizes their similarities.

After a lively dialogue between the two groups, SGI-USA member Colleen Parks pointed out that dialogue is necessary to create peace, because it removes suffering and replaces it with joy.

When Syaiful said, "Now we will end the meeting with *sansho*," the SGI-USA members laughed, pleased that a Muslim respected the SGI tradition of ending Buddhist discussion meetings by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo three times.

"This is the beginning of something great and wonderful," said Ahmed Hussain afterward. "This is the way to develop understanding between two of the great world religions." Paul Schienle added, "It was the most beautiful expression of world peace I have seen in this [community center]." In the words of Peggy Goldman: "This is the way to create peace. Interfaith dialogue is theoretical until one actually does it. It was a powerful experience." **WT**

## Santa Barbara Interfaith Event Celebrates Peace

By PEGGY CHEN  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF., CORRESPONDENT

Ali S. Malaikah, an engineer originally from the Middle East, has been a Santa Barbara, Calif., resident for 24 years. "The Sept. 11 incident makes it more important than ever for people in our community to come together and to realize the importance of peace," said Mr. Malaikah. "Many people have misconceptions about Islam, like it is a violent religion. Well, it is not!"

Mr. Malaikah was one of the participants of "Celebrating Peace—Nonviolent Responses to Terrorism," a meeting sponsored by the University of California at

Santa Barbara Interfaith Council on Oct. 22. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together likeminded people by creating a forum for dialogue, and talk about how they can work together.

Pete Peterson, member of the Interfaith Council and the SGI-USA's Victory Over Violence representative in Santa Barbara, facilitated the kick-off event. The meeting started with two exercises relating to what happens when violent thoughts become rooted in human beings, followed by a dialogue among all participants. Approximately 25 people participated. The dialogue focused on the importance of talking about nonviolence and how people in Santa Barbara



The University of California, Santa Barbara Interfaith Council gathers on Oct. 22.

can work together to build a peaceful community.

Participants also viewed the

Gandhi, King, Ikeda exhibition and the Victory Over Violence video documentary. A tree

made of recycled newspaper by SGI-USA member Sophie Hou and Alan Phipps, a member of the local St. Mark's Church, both UCSB students, was presented at the University Religious Center, where the meeting was held. The tree will be on display at the center as a long-term exhibition. Visitors may hang leaf-shaped cards with pledges and comments.

Ann Elise Rudrud, a student at UCSB, found the meeting useful in her search for answers. The exercises helped her to understand more about the causes of peace and violence, and the meeting encouraged her to express her opinion about violence in her community. "It was definitely a positive experience," she said. **WT**

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA

# BUDDHIST STUDY GIVES US COURAGE

**‘The joy of studying Buddhism deepens our conviction in faith,’ SGI President Ikeda says, ‘and that conviction fills us with the courage to discuss Buddhism with others.’**

The progress of our soul is like a perfect poem. It has an infinite idea which once realized makes all movements full of meaning and joy.” These are the words of the renowned Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore.

As human beings, it is essential for us to earnestly inquire into the validity of various philosophies and, carefully weighing their correctness, superiority and depth, engrave the best, highest philosophy into our lives.

In the “Twenty-six Admonitions of Nikko,” we are advised. “Followers of this school should engrave the teachings of the Goshō in their lives” (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 1618).

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This autumn in Japan, amid a growing tide of expanding dialogue, the waves of Buddhist study are also rising high, as many youth infuse their lives with the great philosophy of Buddhism.

In October and November, respectively, the Study Department’s Advanced Exam for youth and traditional Entrance Exam open to all divisions will be held. I hope that both the candidates for these two exams as well as those helping them study will make the most of this opportunity to deepen their understanding of the boundless philosophy of the Buddhism of the sun.

One of the writings on the study curriculum for the youth exam is the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.” This is an important text that consists of a transcript of Nichiren Daishonin’s lectures by his disciple and successor, Nikko Shonin.

This oral teaching—compiled through the unity of mentor and disciple—is a profoundly memorable one both for my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, and for me. When I first began studying Buddhism with him, we started with the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.”

President Toda was a strict teacher. He would grill me about the meaning of Buddhist terms we encountered and ask me to explain various passages. I never knew what kind of question he would spring on me next. These study sessions would make me break out in a cold sweat, but today I am eternally grateful for President Toda’s instruction, which was like the rigorous training of a master swordsman.

The actions of a Buddha are dedicated to people’s welfare, to peace and to bringing happiness and salvation to all humanity. Faith is the starting point for our efforts to conduct ourselves as Buddhas, and study is the driving force for faith. Accordingly, there is no true faith without study; the eternal wellspring of faith is study.

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When I was young, I acquired the habit of recording in my diary passages from the Daishonin’s writings that left a deep impression on me. Only by studying with a burning desire to introduce Buddhism to others can we come in contact with the spirit of the Daishonin. Just memorizing Buddhist teachings and principles in a pedantic, abstract manner is not the way of study within the Daishonin’s Buddhism. That is the behavior of arrogantly conceited hypocrites and pseudo-intellectuals.

I recorded the following determination in my diary one chilly autumn night in 1950: “The battle intensifies daily. No other choice but to forge ahead, cherishing the desire to win.

“Work is important, but we



Photo by JAMIE LIPTAN

SGI-USA Study Department leaders prepare for the Advanced-level Examination to be held nationwide on Jan. 13, 2002.

must not neglect regular study of the Goshō” (*A Youthful Diary*, pp. 54–55).

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Without a sound grasp of Buddhist teachings, we cannot be called true practitioners of Buddhism.

With faith as our inspiration and study as our wings, we can win the hearts of millions as we strive to illuminate their minds and gain their understanding.

The membership’s frightened reaction to the harsh persecution suffered by the Soka Gakkai during World War II keenly drove home to President Toda the need to deepen the members’ grasp of the Daishonin’s teachings. He knew that these teachings clearly described the way to view various difficulties and phenomena encountered in the course of our Buddhist practice and the appropriate action to take depending on the circumstances.

And he recognized, with hindsight, that there had been no time to fully impart this understanding to his fellow followers in the Soka Gakkai’s formative period. In short, the pre-war organization was de-

feated because the membership lacked a firm mastery of Buddhist study.

Allow me to state again, though, that Buddhist study devoid of faith is the mark of hypocrites and pseudo-intel-

lectuals. The pitiful figure of the former Soka Gakkai Study Department leader who abandoned his faith bears eloquent testimony to this.

There was another sad individual who, though holding credentials from a famous university, similarly forsook his faith and embarked on a vicious course of spreading poisonous lies in an attempt to destroy Buddhism and the unity of believers. This is another stark example of Buddhist study without faith—an empty outward show of understanding the Daishonin’s Buddhism.

**With faith as our inspiration  
and study as our wings, we can  
win the hearts of millions as we  
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and gain their understanding. It  
is important that we each become  
such champions of kosen-rufu.**

It is important that we each become such champions of kosen-rufu.

This is how the Mystic Law spreads. Those who have a solid basis in faith and study are genuine leaders of the SGI.

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We must not be deceived. The substance of a person's faith can only be determined by whether they are acting in accord with the Daishonin's teachings. It is arrogant and gravely misguided to pride oneself on one's mastery of the Buddhist teachings if one only focuses on study while neglecting the other vital aspects of faith and practice. Such people are headed for certain ruin.



The American Renaissance thinker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote: "The more profound the thought, the more burdensome. Always in proportion to the depth of its sense does it knock importunately at the gates of the soul, to be spoken, to be done."

The Daishonin's Buddhism extols the sanctity of life, declaring that "we ourselves are the treasure tower, we ourselves are the Buddha" (see *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 299). It represents a sure guiding philosophy of peace that offers solutions for our ailing contemporary society.

In the SGI, we always return to the Daishonin's writings — the sutra of the Latter Day of the Law — and from there advance, bathed in the light of infinite courage, wisdom and compassion. These writings blaze with the brilliant life of the Daishonin, who endured all manner of persecution while opening the way for kosen-rufu in the 10,000 years and more of the Latter Day.

Through studying the Daishonin's writings, we can acquire the sharp insight that enables us to perceive the es-

sentia nature of things and events, such as the unchanging pattern by which those who uphold truth and justice meet with slander and persecution. The fundamental purpose of our Buddhist study is so that we may stand up to the three powerful enemies, who inevitably appear to hinder the advance of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, and realize kosen-rufu without fail. When we internalize the teachings of Buddhism and read them with our lives, we become the Buddha of the true aspect of all phenomena, embodying the principle that ordinary people can manifest the supremely noble state of Buddhahood, just as they are.

The joy of studying Buddhism deepens our conviction in faith, and that conviction fills us with the courage to discuss Buddhism with others.



Buddhism essentially began by Shakyamuni talking to his friends and convincing them of the truth of the Law to which he had awakened. From its inception, Buddhism has been a religion of dialogue.

The Daishonin's writings might also be described as the crystallization of a passionate spirit of dialogue. Several of his treatises — including "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land," a conversation between a host and guest, and "The Selection of the Time" — adopt a dialogue format, in which questions and answers are exchanged. In many of the Daishonin's letters, too, he happily responds to queries from followers and praises them for

asking questions.

This tenacious spirit of dialogue, thoroughly grounded in the two ways of practice and study, is the enduring tradition of the SGI. We study, talk to others and study again. The true path of Buddhist practice lies in this vibrant rhythm of study and dialogue fueled by a seeking mind.

President Toda declared: "Begin your study from the most elevated philosophy. If you read and grasp the meaning of the Daishonin's writings, you will understand everything else."

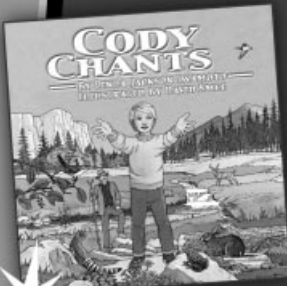
Young seekers, noble comrades in faith, now is the time to study hard and speak out with confidence! Armed with the Daishonin's writings, the teachings for all humanity, dance out onto the new stage of history! For the sake of a hope-filled future for humanity! And to bring the brilliant light of humanism to shine over our planet!

This essay was published in the "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" series in the Oct. 19 *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai's daily newspaper.

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SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S AUG. 21 SPEECH—PART 2

# SHARING THE JOY OF BEING ALIVE

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS

**‘Let us continue sharing with others the joy of being alive,’ SGI President Ikeda says. ‘Let us continue proclaiming the truth of life. Even if we are alone, our cry will open the eyes of many and become a force that moves the times.’**

*The conclusion of SGI President Ikeda’s speech at a joint training session for leaders of the Hokuriku and Shinetsu regions, held at the Nagano Training Center in Karuizawa, Japan, Aug. 21.*

**H**enry David Thoreau, the well-known American Renaissance thinker and author of *Civil Disobedience*, is acclaimed as a philosopher who changed history. Thoreau’s thought had a major influence on Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I regard it as a tremendous honor to have been named an honorary life member of the Thoreau Society, an organization dedicated to carrying on the spirit of this giant figure of the past (see June 8 *World Tribune*, pp. 6–8). I am currently participating in a dialogue with Thoreau Society President Ronald A. Bosco and Secretary Joel Myerson, who are renowned Thoreau scholars. Both men visited the Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo campus and expressed their deep empathy with the school and its ideals.

Thoreau said, “My life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel.” And, “I go to see many a good man or good woman, so called, and utter freely that thought which alone it was given to me to utter.” He also said: “Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I.”

Let us continue sharing with others the joy of being alive. Let us continue proclaiming the truth of life. Even if we are alone, our cry will open the eyes of many and become a



SGI President Ikeda is participating in an ongoing dialogue with Thoreau Society President Ronald A. Bosco, who visited him in Japan in May.

force that moves the times. This is the movement of Soka.

**The slightest error may cause everything to come crashing down in an instant.**

In a letter to his disciple Sennichi-ama, the wife of Abutsu-bo and a resident of the Shinetsu region, Nichiren Daishonin uses the following metaphor to strictly warn against slandering the Law: “Suppose there is a ship that sails on the open sea. Though the ship is stoutly built, if it is flooded by a leak, those on the ship are sure to drown together. Though the embankment between rice fields is firm, if there is an ant hole in it, then surely, in the long run, it will not remain full of water” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 626).

These are reasonable words that must be taken to heart. Whether in an organization, one’s own life or some under-

taking, regardless of how solid and strong things may appear, the slightest error may cause everything to come crashing down in an instant. Ruin begins with complacency and the arrogance that accepts even minor blunders.

It is a leader’s responsibility to deal with such problems quickly and appropriately, without overlooking the smallest detail. Each of these instances represents an important crossroads on which future development hinges. We must never forget this.

**We need to unite and pray in the spirit of ‘many in body but one in mind.’**

The struggle for kosen-rufu begins with prayer. “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” which the Daishonin wrote while in exile on Sado Island, states: “All disciples and lay supporters of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the spirit of

many in body but one in mind, transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim. This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death. Herein lies the true goal of Nichiren’s propagation. When you are so united, even the great desire for widespread propagation can be fulfilled. But if any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within” (WND, 217).

In short, we need to unite and pray in the spirit of “many in body but one in mind.” When everyone prays together for victory in the endeavor to “refute the erroneous and reveal the true,” their daimoku becomes that of the lion king.

When everyone prays with one mind, kosen-rufu advances with increasing mo-

mentum. Prayer itself is the greatest power with which to forge ahead.

The Daishonin says: “Just as all the different kinds of plants and trees come forth from the earth, so all the various teachings of the Buddha are spread by persons. As T’ien-t’ai said: ‘Even during the Buddha’s lifetime, the Law was revealed by people. How then, in the latter age, can one say that the Law is worthy of respect, but that the person who upholds it is to be despised?’

“Hence, if the Law that one embraces is supreme, then the person who embraces it must accordingly be foremost among all others” (WND, 61).

What kind of person demonstrates true human greatness and nobility? It is someone who, no matter what happens, single-mindedly works for kosen-rufu without wavering in the least, without moaning or complaining. This is what the Daishonin teaches. It is also the

way of life expounded in the Lotus Sutra.

Living this way requires enormous effort, but those who exert themselves for kosen-rufu steadily accumulate benefit without even realizing it. They rapidly accomplish their human revolution.

**Because life is eternal, the present is extremely important.**

The benefit of the Mystic Law is inconspicuous. Even if we cannot see the results of our efforts right away, everything is constantly moving in the best direction for our lives. That itself is the most profound benefit.

There is no more worthy cause than taking action for kosen-rufu. No one can surpass a person tenaciously carrying out activities for kosen-rufu. Absolutely nothing can defeat a noble champion of the spirit. Please be confident of this.

The Daishonin explains that at the moment of death those who have practiced in such a fashion will be welcomed by many Buddhas and escorted to Eagle Peak. In "The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life," he says: "How can we possibly hold back our tears at the inexpressible joy of knowing that not just one or two, not just one hundred or two hundred, but as many as a thousand Buddhas will come to greet us with open arms!" (WND, 216-17).

Regardless of how their life comes to an end, those who have struggled for kosen-rufu embark on a journey over the three existences of past, present and future that abounds with the greatest happiness and joy. They will be reborn where and when they choose with complete freedom. Such is the immense power of the Mystic Law permeating the three existences of life.

Life is eternal. For this reason, the present is extremely important. Buddhism teaches: "If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present" (WND, 279).

Our eternal victory depends entirely on our struggles in the present.

**'Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat.'**

To Shijo Kingo, who had a close connection with the

Shinetsu region, the Daishonin wrote, "Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat" (WND, 835). And: "Buddhism is reason. Reason will win over your lord" (WND, 839).

Also, to Ota Jomyo, who had a connection with the Hokuriku region, he wrote, "In the first place, within [both] the truth of the secular world and the ultimate truth revealed by the Buddha, it is victory or defeat that is essential" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1002).

I hope all of you will continue achieving victory upon victory and thereby expand and advance kosen-rufu in the Hokuriku and Shinetsu regions.

The Daishonin was overjoyed to learn that his followers Abutsu-bo and Sennichima had taught their son about faith and raised him to be a sincere practitioner. The Daishonin writes, "His [Abutsu-bo's] son, Tokuro Moritsuna, has followed in his footsteps and become a wholehearted votary of the Lotus Sutra" (WND, 1045). I hope Hokuriku and Shinetsu will be the best examples of transmitting faith to the next generation and raising fine successors.

I hope you will send capable people dedicated to the cause of good out into the world. Please foster many "Tsunesaburo Makiguchis" and "Josei Todas" of the 21st century.

Next year will mark the 730th anniversary of the Tsukahara Debate on Sado Island. Describing how he had refuted several hundred priests of other Buddhist schools on this occasion, the Daishonin says, "I overturned them as easily as a sharp sword cutting through a melon or a gale bending the grass" (WND, 771-72). I pray and have every expectation that the youth of Hokuriku and Shinetsu will expand their network of truth and justice with their sharp minds and gale-like strength.

I want to present you with these words of Helen Keller: "The real way to grow is by aspiring beyond our limitations, by wishing sublimely for great things and striving to achieve them." She also said: "When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another."

I particularly hope the members of the young women's and women's divisions will engrave in their hearts the conviction of this great individual who triumphed over so many difficulties.

**May you always enjoy excellent health and fulfilling lives!**

Walt Whitman, a favorite poet of mine, sings,

*Pioneers! O Pioneers!  
All the past we leave behind,  
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,  
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march.*

I pray that this summer training course will be a significant, historic event for all of you, the true pioneers of kosen-rufu. Please convey my best regards to all the members in your respective areas.

May you always enjoy excellent health and fulfilling lives! May you live long and accumulate good fortune each day. I am daily praying for your happiness.

To commemorate this training session, I want to present you with several poems. First, to the Hokuriku members:

*Noble network of Hokuriku  
That possesses  
The golden spirit  
Of kosen-rufu—  
Your future is assured.*

◆◆◆◆  
*Never forgetting*

*The dauntless  
Faith of Soka,  
Construct a splendid palace  
In great Hokuriku.*

◆◆◆◆

*With my whole heart  
I pray and pray  
For the excellent health,  
longevity,  
And the joy-filled journey  
Of all my friends in  
Hokuriku.*

And for the Shinetsu members:

*Year  
After year  
You traverse  
Countless mountains and  
rivers  
Creating a noble history.*

◆◆◆◆

*Forging your lives  
Through cold winds,  
You dauntlessly  
Exert yourselves  
As champions of benefit.*

◆◆◆◆

*Cheerfully  
And brightly,  
Adorn this life  
With great happiness  
As millionaires of victory.*

Thank you again for all your efforts in attending today's meeting. Together let us embark on a fresh journey toward a new world!

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## FROM HAWAII TO THE WORLD

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 Liptan and described their experiences in coming to SUA.

### Mitsuko Takahashi Hawaii

I was attending a four-year university in Hawaii, but when I heard of the values and ideology of Soka University of America — to create well-rounded, global individuals who could do well anywhere in the world — I had no doubt that I could achieve my goals there.

I grew up in Hawaii where multiculturalism and diversity are valued. It is hard to find schools in other places that respect the same things. But SUA values and promotes multiculturalism, and the students do as well. Also, the administration and faculty here truly care about the students, and the students really value higher education, which is rare.

I find it easier to remain focused here because there are so many people supporting



you; not just your advisors, but your peers as well. I feel at home with the students on the campus. They have goals and a sense of mission, they're focused on why they're here. My goal is that after my four years at SUA that we continue to stay as a family.

I respect that Dr. Ikeda has followed through completely on his and his mentor's dream. Knowing that he is the founder really comforted me in leaving home. My father told me that Dr. Ikeda limited the amount of students so that he could individually take care of us. When I heard that, my fear of crossing the Pacific Ocean to come to this university disappeared.

I want to study law, and become a person who can defend

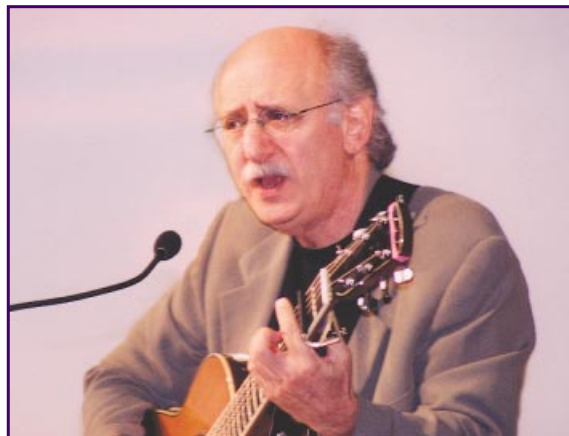
people anywhere in the world. Initially, I wanted to go into constitutional law, but now the more personal issues in individual people's lives inspire me more. Every time I forget why I am here, I look around and remember that there are so many people in the world that are discriminated against, that are denied their rights, and that re-ignites my fire for law.

I expect to gain a lot of confidence here at SUA, to overcome my fear of the rest of the world, and become a leader who can inspire others in the different areas of my life.

The World Tribune has printed four other student interviews: Gonzalo Obeillero of Argentina and Priyanka Sabarwal of India in the Oct. 26 issue, and Conny Kull of Switzerland and Edinam Konu of Ghana in the Nov. 30 issue. These five students represent the five continents that are home to the first 120 students at SUA.

### Deadline: Jan. 15

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



Peter Yarrow shares a song with educators and community leaders at 'Operation Respect,' held at SUA, Nov. 30.

## SUA Hosts 'Operation Respect'

By MARILYN GOVE  
SUA MANAGER OF RECRUITMENT

On Nov. 30, the recreation center at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo rang with the songs of Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary) as the Orange County Department of Education and McGraw Hill Education presented "Operation Respect" to educators and community leaders in Orange County.

The daylong symposium and concert were the kickoff for

"Don't Laugh At Me" training sessions on character education, conflict resolution and diversity education. The program is designed to promote constructive conflict resolution and to stop bullying and violence in our schools.

SUA was proud to be the host site for this important symposium. Dr. Gail Thomas, vice president for institutional research and assessment, and professor of sociology at SUA, and Pilipino Navarro, student body president, participated in the Civility Panel. **WT**



Q & A  
WITH  
SUA  
Aliso Viejo

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

#### Question:

Does SUA have a Student Government Association?

#### Answer:

Yes. Elected representatives oversee many student issues, leadership of clubs and a variety of student activities. SUA

has a strong philosophy of involvement of faculty, students and staff in all areas of campus governance, and the Student Government plays an important role in assisting students to fill positions on all university committees. (See "Student Government Association," P. 7)

#### Question:

Since the residence halls

become the students' homes during the year, what amenities do they offer to make life interesting?

#### Answer:

Every hall has a living room with comfortable furniture and a computer room at the end of the hall. The larger halls have their own exercise rooms with machines, mirrored walls and a ceiling-mounted television. Each hall likewise has a lower-level multipurpose room used primarily for recreation, which includes a large-screen television with comfortable furniture, pool tables, foosball, a piano, a sound system and a variety of other entertainment. Of course, each hall has a laundry facility also serving as a social gathering place. Each hall also has

rooms on the ground floor for locked bicycle storage. The larger halls each have a multi-faith room, so students of a similar faith can join to practice their religion together.

In the individual student rooms, each student has a bed, a computer-friendly desk with hutch, a bookcase and a large wardrobe. All furniture is stackable and moveable, so that students can rearrange their rooms at their desire.

#### Question:

How are the residence halls run, and are they arranged by gender?

#### Answer:

Each of the residence halls has elected its own hall council made up of students who

work with the other residents to develop the culture and operating style for that hall. Although all halls are coed, students were polled during the summer to see their preference of living style. Some preferred a single-sex wing in a coed hall, and many others chose to live in coed wings. For this first year, 2001, SUA was able to accommodate each student's wish. Of course, we cannot always guarantee that result.

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.

# Introducing the SUA Student Government Association

Soka University of America students went to the polls Oct. 2 to elect their first student leaders to serve a one-year term in the Soka Student Government Association at the Aliso Viejo campus.

Pilipino Navarro was elected president and will lead the governing body, which is expected to set traditions and policies as well as establish by-laws and the organization's constitution.

"Every student at SUA is a member of the SSGA. I think part of my job as their president is to represent their interests and serve as a liaison between them and the university administration," says Navarro. "Also, I will try to make sure that students are able to get everything they deserve to assist with their studies and also support the student body so that they are able to help themselves—I believe in empowerment."

Navarro's duties also include serving on the important University Life Committee, which addresses issues affecting the university community as a whole, supervising operations of all committees of the SSGA,



Pilipino Navarro, president.

preparing the SSGA budget and establishing the agenda for all SSGA meetings.

Serving with Navarro is Tetsushi Ogata as SSGA Vice President, and his duties include assisting the student body president in his duties, serving on the university's Academic Program Committee and being a member of the University Judicial Board.

Susan Ikeda was elected as Treasurer and will be responsible to receive and disburse funds, formulate and adminis-



Tetsushi Ogata, vice president.

ter the SSGA budget and to oversee distribution and accounting of all SSGA funds as well as set financial procedures for the entire SSGA.

Malayna Butler will serve as the group's Secretary and her job will be to publish the SSGA meeting agenda as well as record and make available the minutes of each SSGA meeting and publish any action taken by the SSGA and its committees.

"My responsibility is to keep students informed and to document all of the happenings in



Susan Ikeda, treasurer.

the meeting. I feel very fortunate to have such a position," mentions Butler.

The Attorney General is Mitsuko Takahashi and she will serve as Elections Chair for all SUA student elections, setting dates, rules and procedures for all upcoming elections. She will also be versed in all university policies and serve as a resource in areas of student rights and in resolving constitutional issues for both the student government association and student clubs. **WT**

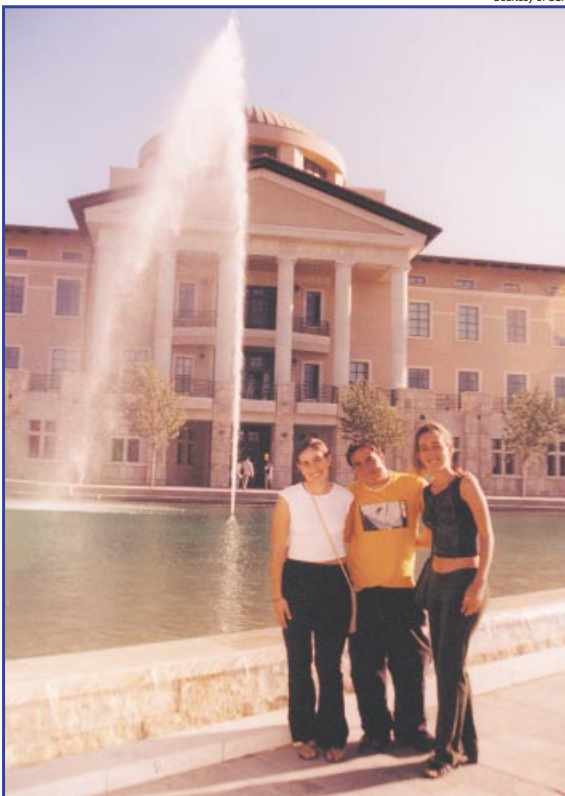


Malayna Butler, secretary.



Mitsuko Takahashi, attorney general.

Courtesy of SUA



## The SGI-USA's Sept. 11 Scholarship at SUA Is Growing

David Aoyama, Vincent Kane, Robert Miller and all the victims of the Sept. 11 tragedy will be honored, in perpetuity, at Soka University of America through an endowed scholarship fund in their names established by the SGI-USA. Each year, students will receive this named scholarship, students who otherwise might not be able to attend college.

Since the announcement in November, the fund for endowed scholarships at SUA has grown tremendously. Many thanks to the donors to our scholarship

funds! If you wish to donate to the fund, please ask for a lime-green contribution envelope through your local SGI-USA organization.

If you have questions, please e-mail Carol Manley at [cmanley@soka.edu](mailto:cmanley@soka.edu) or call her at (949) 480-4072.

For a taxable deduction in this tax year, please **date** checks by Dec. 31, 2001. Stocks, life insurance and real estate/LLC assignments must be legally transferred by Dec. 31 to qualify. Ask your employer about matching funds or consider charging your contribution by Dec. 31. **WT**

### Read the WT E-mail Express

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

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

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New SGI-USA Centers Open—Kauai, Austin, Houston, Orlando ..... Jan. 12  
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 Exhibition Opens in Linus Pauling's Hometown ..... Jan. 26  
 Dean Lawrence Carter Speaks in Los Angeles ..... Jan. 26  
 SGI General Director Wada Visits Denver ..... Feb. 2  
 Alternative Lifestyles Conference Coming Soon to FNCC ..... Feb. 2  
 SGI General Director Wada Visits Los Angeles ..... Feb. 9  
 Southern California Behind-the-Scenes Group Meets ..... Feb. 9  
 Northeastern Zone Kickoff Held ..... Feb. 16  
 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 15, Celebrated Nationwide ..... Feb. 23  
 Peace Fest Brings Portland Together ..... Feb. 23  
 SGI-USA Celebrates Chinese New Year ..... Feb. 23  
 Atlanta Hosts Children's Rights Exhibition ..... Feb. 23  
 African Culture Festival Kickoff Held in Los Angeles ..... Feb. 23  
 2nd annual Women's Health Conference SGI-USA New York ..... March 2  
 Northern Calif. Zone Boys and Girls Group Meeting ..... March 9  
 Soka Spirit Conference Held in Philadelphia ..... March 9  
 Interpreters/Translators/Food Service Conference ..... March 23  
 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Supporters Conference ..... April 6  
 Canyon Springs High School in Moreno Valley, Calif., Honors SGI President and Rosa Parks ..... April 13  
 Hawthorne, Calif., honors SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda ..... April 13  
 SGI-USA So. Calif. Zone Youth and Rainbow Chorus Perform for Los Angeles Marathon, March 4 ..... April 13  
 VOV Workshop Held at Santana High, Santee, Calif. ..... April 13  
 1st CEC of New Century, March 30–April 1, Santa Monica, Calif. ..... April 20  
 Gandhi, King, Ikeda Exhibition Opens in Atlanta ..... April 27  
 Prince of Jordan Receives First Community Builders Prize ..... April 27  
 SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda Visits Atlanta ..... April 27  
 Annual Denver Tree Planting Held, April 21 ..... May 11  
 Entrance Examination Held Throughout SGI-USA, April 22 ..... May 11  
 SGI President Ikeda Honored in Puerto Rico, April 24 ..... May 11  
 Fifteen-year Time Capsule Opened in Santa Monica ..... May 11  
 SGI-USA celebrates groundbreaking of Phoenix Culture Center, April 21 ..... May 11  
 WorldFeast 2001 Festival, April 29, South Florida Region ..... June 1  
 Embracing Differences in Portland, May 3 celebration of Oregon members ..... June 1  
 African Festival Honors Shared Humanity, May 20 ..... June 8  
 New England Members Plant Cherry Trees, May 6 ..... June 8  
 Annual Memorial Service Held at the Oasis of Eternity, SGI-USA's cemetery, Whittier, Calif., May 20 ..... June 8  
 Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, Opens the GK1 exhibition From May 14–28 ..... June 15  
 "Treasuring the Future" Exhibition Opens in Houston, May 18 ..... June 15  
 New Features On SGI Web Site ..... June 15  
 FNCC Celebrates Fifth Anniversary ..... June 22  
*The Way of Youth* Helps Launch a Book Review Program in High Schools Across the Country ..... June 22  
 Makiguchi Native Plant Garden Dedicated at Beyer Elementary School in San Ysidro, Calif., June 6 ..... June 22  
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 VOV Heating Up in Alaska ..... July 6  
 Phoenix Hosts "Dialogue With Nature," May 29 ..... July 6  
 Wisconsin State Capitol Hosts SGI-USA's "Children's Rights and Realities" Exhibition, June 1 ..... July 6  
 Dewey Center Honors SGI President Ikeda, June 6 ..... July 6  
 Thanks for All Your Daimoku! Soka Spirit Committee ..... July 13  
 The "Gandhi, King, Ikeda" Exhibition Continues World Tour in Months of June and July ..... Aug. 3  
 On July 25, *The New York Times* Features SUA ..... Aug. 10  
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 Dr. N. Radhakrishnan Lectures on *For the Sake of Peace* at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, Aug. 8 ..... Aug. 31  
 New World Culture Center Opens, Santa Monica, Calif., Aug. 22 ..... Sept. 14  
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 Soka Gakkai Launches Wiesensthal Exhibit, Sept. 12 ..... Sept. 28  
 Districts, Bookstores Partner to Share Buddhist Message ..... Oct. 5  
 Children's Exhibition Visits Indiana ..... Oct. 19  
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*World Tribune* Revitalizes Bureau System ..... Oct. 26  
 Remaining 2001 FNCC Conferences Cancelled ..... Oct. 26  
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 Toward a Victorious Finish in 2001, Nov. 18 Commemorative Discussion Meetings ..... Nov. 16  
 Virginia Straus of the Boston Research Center lectures at New York Culture Center, Oct. 20 ..... Nov. 23  
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 Fostering Resiliency in New York Youth, Oct. 30 ..... Nov. 30  
 SGI-USA General Director's First Visit to Oklahoma City, Columbia and the Gulf Coast Area ..... Dec. 7  
 York District in Pennsylvania Sponsors VOV Activity ..... Dec. 7  
 2002 FNCC Changes ..... Dec. 14  
 CEC Prepares for Year of Expanding Dialogue ..... Dec. 14  
 SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima Named to Second Term ..... Dec. 14  
 CEC Highlights ..... Dec. 14  
 Revitalizing America Through Dialogue, Nov. 18 commemorative discussion meetings ..... Dec. 21  
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**SGI-USA Responds to Sept. 11**

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 Tragedy affects SGI-USA members ..... Sept. 21  
 "Offering Our Support," SGI-USA Director of Public Relations Ian McElraith ..... Sept. 21  
 Media coverage embraces Buddhist pacifism ..... Sept. 28  
 New York unites to support relief efforts ..... Sept. 28  
 "How Does Buddhism View Terrorism?" SGI-USA Vice Study Dept. Leader Jeff Kriger ..... Sept. 28  
 SGI-USA holds memorials across America, Sept. 12-16 ..... Sept. 28  
 SGI messages in the wake of Sept. 11 ..... Sept. 28  
 "Prayer and Action for Peace," SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck ..... Sept. 28  
 President Ikeda's interview with *Sankei Shimbun* ..... Oct. 5  
 New York members respond to tragedy with renewed determination ..... Oct. 5  
 "Our Mission of Hope and Courage," Message from SGI-USA Men's Leader Tariq Hasan ..... Oct. 5  
 "What I Know For Sure," SGI-USA Vice Women's Leader Linda Johnson ..... Oct. 5  
 Richard Perez, North Bergen, N.J., declares that everyone deserves to be called a hero ..... Oct. 5  
 "Things We Can Do," Assistant Publisher Greg Martin ..... Oct. 5  
 SGI-USA joins call for tolerance ..... Oct. 12  
 "Renewing Our Faith in Humanity," essay by President Ikeda ..... Oct. 19  
 Leslie Wines, New York City, has a profound realization of the need for peace ..... Oct. 19  
 Ned Robinson, Long Island, N.Y., refreshes resolve to work for a peaceful society ..... Oct. 19  
 Debbie Gonzales, New York City, determines to work even harder for peace ..... Oct. 19  
 David Bogoslaw, Brooklyn, N.Y., and fellow members help rebuild their community's confidence ..... Oct. 19  
 Making Sept. 11 a turning point in Washington, D.C. ..... Oct. 19  
 "Peace Begins With Empathy," President Ikeda's interview with *Mainichi Shimbun* ..... Oct. 26  
 Kathy Piscioneri, Kew Gardens, N.Y., finds new meaning in world peace ..... Dec. 21

**District News and Encouragement**

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 "Growing With a Sense of Mission," Mission District, Riverside, Calif. .... Aug. 3  
 "Expanding Districts and Entrusting Youth," panel discussion ..... Aug. 3  
 Shining Star District is Born, Phoenix, July 13 ..... Sept. 7  
 "The District: Growing, Nurturing and Winning," panel discussion ..... Sept. 7  
 "Daimoku and Determination Are the Keys to Victory," East District in Kansas City Area ..... Oct. 5  
 New District Blossoms in Bermuda ..... Nov. 2  
 Mockingbird District Hosts World Peace Meeting ..... Dec. 7

**Soka University of America News**

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 Welcoming the Real New Millennium at SUA ..... Jan. 26  
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 A Gift That Keeps on Giving ..... Feb. 23  
 SUA Staff and Faculty Move on Campus ..... Feb. 23  
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 SUA Announces Dedication Events ..... March 30  
 SUA Freshman Class Is Selected ..... March 30  
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 A High Tech Campus for the 21st Century ..... April 27  
 Former U. S. Surgeon General Lectures at SUA, Calabasas ..... May 3  
 SUA Dedicates Pauling Hall, May 2 ..... May 18  
 Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo dedication, May 3 ..... May 18  
 Representatives of the first class of SUA, AV meet May 3 ..... May 18  
 First public event and guest lecture at SUA, AV on May 4, by Dr. Lawrence Carter Sr. .... May 18  
 Introducing SUA's Humanities Faculty ..... June 29  
 Linus Pauling Exhibition a Success ..... June 29  
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 Introducing SUA's Humanities Team ..... Aug. 31  
 Gandhi, King, Ikeda Exhibition at SUA ..... Aug. 31  
 Dr. Radhakrishnan Visits SUA, AV ..... Aug. 31  
 SUA Welcomes First Class, Aug. 24 ..... Sept. 7  
 SUA, Calabasas Welcomes 8th Class, Aug. 21 ..... Sept. 7  
 "Ikeda Collection" Is Donated to SUA, AV, Aug. 23 ..... Sept. 7  
 SUA Students Begin Classes, Aug. 27 ..... Sept. 21  
 SUA Students Take Action Against Violence ..... Oct. 5  
 Introducing SUA's Student Enrollment Services Team ..... Oct. 26  
 SUA Attracts Students With Big Dreams ..... Oct. 26  
 Legendary Peace Activist, Dr. Joseph Rotblat Receives Honor at SUA, Oct. 16 ..... Nov. 9

SGI-USA Establishes Sept. 11 Scholarship ..... Nov. 23  
 Sir Colonel Vicente O. Novales, speaks to SUA freshman, Oct. 30 ..... Nov. 23  
 Interviews with SUA freshman class international students ..... Nov. 30  
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**International News**

The SGI Responds to El Salvador Quake ..... Jan. 26  
 The SGI Donates to Relief Effort in India Quake ..... Feb. 9  
 SGI President's Annual Peace Proposal Released ..... Feb. 23  
 Caribbean Studies Association appoints SGI President Ikeda Honorary President, May 28 ..... July 6  
 SGI-USA Tonga Friendship Expands ..... Aug. 3  
 "Year of Expanding Dialogue" is SGI's theme for 2002 ..... Oct. 26  
 Soka Gakkai Youth Make Refugee Donation ..... Oct. 26  
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Gianluca D'Ipolito, Miami, Fla., medical researcher develops confidence to attain happiness ..... Jan. 1  
 Marion Ruiz, Amherst, N.Y., conquers adversity to care for daughter with multiple disabilities ..... Jan. 12  
 Brian Kubota, Weston, Fla., age 6, breaks records, wins two gold medals in national competition ..... Jan. 26  
 Maiko Nakano, Houston, makes friends at SUA, Calabasas ..... Jan. 26  
 Sarah Bretz, San Diego, Calif., starts life completely over after nearly fatal auto crash ..... Feb. 2  
 Terri Johnson, New York, overcomes chronic depression through Buddhist practice, therapy, medication ..... Feb. 9  
 Kory James, Los Angeles, overcomes depression and chants to change family's mental health ..... Feb. 9  
 Beth La Mure, Hollywood, Calif., learns to trust, creates happy family and career ..... Feb. 16  
 Joni Herman, Huntington Beach, Calif., finds mentoring at-risk kids brings new meaning to her art ..... Feb. 23  
 Valerie Kurita, New York, determines that mental illness will not dictate her son's future ..... March 2  
 Gary De Veyra, Los Angeles, helps his family heal the wounds of abuse ..... March 9  
 Juanita Maberry, Alexandria, Va., and her husband break down the racial barriers that divide ..... March 16  
 Stephen Shaye Elliot, Las Vegas, begins his Buddhist practice and sees things around him differently ..... March 23  
 Keith and Rebecca Thomas, Madison, NJ., look back on three decades of family revolution ..... March 30  
 Nancy Simms Lee, Los Angeles, Calif., reevaluates her relationship with her mother ..... April 6  
 Evelyn Rivera, Puerto Rico, in quest to build a family, finds strength and compassion ..... April 13  
 Felix Ortiz, North Hollywood, Calif., defeats a life-threatening illness ..... April 20  
 Zami Aiea, Hawaii, moves from a troubled past to victory ..... April 27  
 Debra Barsha, New York, learns the importance of winning in every part of her life ..... May 3  
 Sibyl Forsberg, Los Angeles, overcomes depression and loss to discover true self ..... May 11  
 Kazuhiro Nagahama, Los Angeles, uses his practice to overcome health problems ..... May 18  
 Kathryn D. Brown, Phoenix, uses her practice to save her job and beat a life-threatening illness ..... May 25  
 Jonko Sigmon and Jennifer Obidah, Atlanta, learn the value of appreciation from each other ..... June 1  
 Steve Depiro, East Wenatchee, Wash., after 25 years of practice learns to be happy in spite of himself ..... June 8  
 Chieno Takaki, Torrance Calif., and her husband uncover a plan to defraud them ..... June 15  
 Marc Goldenberg, White Plains, N.Y., learns the importance of prayer and commitment ..... June 22  
 Kazue Elliot, Los Angeles, shares some of her experiences over 45 years of practice ..... June 29  
 Cathy Robinson, Long Island, N.Y., appreciates the importance of abundant daimoku ..... July 6  
 Takako Hashimoto, Crystal River, Fla., realizes the importance of Buddhism in her life ..... July 13  
 Sanjay Gaur, Los Angeles, works for solutions to global environmental problems ..... July 20  
 David Kasahara, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., now sees great victory in his life ..... July 27  
 Frank Hotchkiss, Santa Barbara, Calif., realizes that true happiness is not a new car ..... Aug. 3  
 Pat Nakamishi, Pearl City, Hawaii, uses her Buddhist practice to change her relationship with her mother ..... Aug. 17  
 Elizabeth Vengen, Hope, N.J., uses her Buddhist practice to help her son hear ..... Aug. 24  
 Mike Kikumura, Los Angeles, is proud of the life he has led ..... Aug. 31  
 Larry Jones, Fort Smith, Ark., learns the power of chanting for his students with determination ..... Sept. 7  
 Takako Lewis, Louisville, Ky., uses her Buddhist practice to overcome health problems ..... Sept. 14  
 Kimberly Strong-Fuller, Chicago, uses her practice to lead her to victory ..... Sept. 21  
 Grace Takakuwa, Los Angeles, learns the importance of working with President Ikeda ..... Sept. 28  
 Richard Perez, North Bergen, N.J., declares that everyone deserves to be called a hero ..... Oct. 5  
 Trude and Michael Lisagor, Vienna, Va., use their Buddhist practice to deal with disease ..... Oct. 12  
 Leslie Wines, New York City, has a profound realization of the need for peace ..... Oct. 19  
 Ned Robinson, Long Island, N.Y., refreshes resolve to work for a peaceful society ..... Oct. 19  
 Debbie Gonzales, New York City, determines to work even harder for peace ..... Oct. 19  
 David Bogoslaw, Brooklyn, N.Y., and fellow members help rebuild their community's confidence ..... Oct. 19  
 Tsuyako Liebmann, Chicago, dedicates herself to peace with her fellow Chicago members ..... Oct. 26  
 Deborah Lyons, Fort Knox, Ky., uses Buddhism to stay strong and full of hope ..... Nov. 2  
 Paul Lim, Los Angeles, determines to use his victory to inspire other young people ..... Nov. 9  
 Ajay Malhotra, Overland Park, Kan., shows actual proof and determines to raise capable youth ..... Nov. 16  
 Mike Clark, New York City, realizes his dreams by embracing his Buddha nature ..... Nov. 23  
 Joseph O'Rayeh, Saipan, having the time of his life after 47 years of practice ..... Nov. 30  
 Bill Ray, Visalia, Calif., develops the strength to never give up ..... Dec. 7  
 Carole Powell-Henry, Silver Spring, Md., gets a last lesson in compassion from her mother ..... Dec. 14  
 Kathy Piscioneri, Kew Gardens, N.Y., finds new meaning in world peace ..... Dec. 21

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 "Changing Poison Into Medicine," Bea Alleyne ..... Jan. 26  
 "Devil King of the Sixth Heaven," Ted Morino ..... Feb. 9  
 "Buddhahood vs. Negative Functions," Ted Morino ..... Feb. 16  
 "Prayer in Buddhism," from *SGI Quarterly* ..... Feb. 23  
 "The Oneness of Mind and Body," Mark Koral ..... March 2  
 "Brave and Vigorous Practice," Geoff Rohde ..... March 9  
 "The Treasure Tower," Dave McNeill ..... March 16  
 "The Enlightenment of Women," Barbara Ford ..... April 6  
 "Dependent Origination," Mark Koral ..... April 13  
 "The Three Evil Paths," Geoff Rohde ..... April 27  
 "The Lotus Flower," Dave McNeill ..... May 18

"The Oneness of Good and Evil," Mark Koral ..... June 8  
 "The Three Powerful Enemies," Dave McNeill ..... June 15  
 "The Four Kalpas," John Kasahara ..... June 22  
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 "The Oneness of Person and Law," Dave McNeill ..... July 13  
 "The Simultaneity of Cause and Effect," Mark Koral ..... Aug. 17  
 "The Gods Same Birth and Same Name," Dave McNeill ..... Aug. 24  
 "The Four Debts of Gratitude," Fred Kaplan-Mayer ..... Sept. 14  
 "Three Proofs: Documentary, Theoretical and Actual," Dave McNeill ..... Oct. 12  
 "The Ceremony in the Air," Shin Yatomi ..... Nov. 16  
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 "Putting Respect Into Action," Greg Martin ..... March 2  
 "Confidence in Introducing Buddhism," Greg Martin ..... March 9  
 "What's Happiness Got To Do With It?," Kathleen Olesky ..... March 23  
 "As Indestructible As a Diamond," Doris McCloske ..... April 20  
 "Causing Protective Forces To Support Us," Greg Martin ..... April 27  
 "Ordinary and Extraordinary," Ronnie Smith ..... May 11  
 "The Importance of Grasping the Time," Kathleen Olesky ..... May 18  
 "Riding the Great Vehicle To Happiness," Doris McCloskey ..... June 1  
 "The Great Law Is for Everyone," Phyllis Goodson ..... June 8  
 "The Sun of the Great Pure Law Rises," Ronnie Smith ..... June 22  
 "The Mighty River of Kosen-rufu," Greg Martin ..... July 6  
 "Three Powerful Enemies," Kathleen Olesky ..... July 13  
 "Protective Forces Come From Within," Doris McCloskey ..... July 20  
 "Blue Deeper Than the Blue of the Indigo," Phyllis Goodson ..... July 27  
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 "Does the Gohonzon Need an Eye-opening Ceremony?" Kryssi Staikidis ..... Oct. 19  
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 March 16, 1958: Kosen-rufu Day, Stephanie Celano ..... March 2  
 April 2, 1958: Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's death, Jamie Liptan ..... March 16  
 April 28, 1253: Founding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, Jason Henninger ..... April 20  
 June 6, 1871: Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's birth, Jamie Liptan ..... May 25  
 July 3: Mentor-and-Disciple Day, Jason Henninger ..... July 15  
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Aug. 24, 1947: President Ikeda joins the Soka Gakkai, Alexis Trass ..... Aug. 3  
 Nov. 28, 1991: The Day of Our Spiritual Liberation, Jason Henninger ..... Nov. 2

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 "10 Great Reasons To Study SGI-USA Publications," Dave Baldschun, *Living Buddhism* Managing Editor ..... Nov. 9  
 "Grammy Winner Stands Up for Peace," Nestor Torres, Miami ..... Nov. 9  
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 "Five Tips for Raising Youth in the SGI-USA," David Joray, Mid-Atlantic Bureau Chief ..... Dec. 7

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## SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE 7TH GRADUATING CLASS OF SUA, CALABASAS

# Transcending Our Differences

To the precious graduates of the 7th Graduating Class of the Soka University of America Graduate School: I heartily applaud you on this auspicious occasion, one that marks exuberance not only over your achievements thus far but the opening moment of a 21st century of education, as well!

As founder of this university, I wish especially to thank Dr. Maria Guajardo Lucero and other distinguished guests for joining us today in spite of their demanding schedules, and for their kind support of our institution over the years.

I am also deeply grateful to Dean Tomoko Takahashi and all the faculty members of the Graduate School for the judicious wisdom and character they have shown and with which they have nurtured the students. Surely in each of these students has blossomed the sense of mission with which they arrived at SUA.

And finally, let me extend my wholehearted congratulations to the families and friends who have gathered to honor today's graduates.

It is a source of inestimable joy to see you advance on this new path in your life, toward specialization in language education. My heart dances with anticipation as I envision you, the receivers of the heritage of Soka education, becoming vital actors on the world's stage.

How wondrous a thing to utter words that are your own! In *The Story of My Life* (1903), Helen Keller recounts the elated discovery she made: "It is an unspeakable boon to me to be able to speak in winged words that need no interpretation. As I talked, happy thoughts fluttered up out of my words that might perhaps have struggled in vain to escape my fingers."

At an early age, Ms. Keller had lost her sight and hearing; her world was a solitary and speechless one. She learned first to spell out words with her fingers, to associate words with her exploration of the world around her, and then to communicate through an interpreter. These alone were amazing achievements, yet she dreamed of one day speaking her own words.

The sense of touch was her learning tool for speech. She studied the formation of sounds and words by lip reading with her fingers and feeling with her hands the vibrations on the



The 7th Graduating Class of Soka University of America, Calabasas, with Dean Tomoko Takahashi (center).

throat. Through these painstaking efforts, she indeed did learn to speak.

What vast potential all human beings possess! Ms. Keller's life surely attests to this fact. Using the well-sharpened senses of her being, she came to understand and communicate with the people and the world around her. She went on to study at Radcliffe College and graduated *cum laude*. She grew to love theater, sculpture and music, and wrote numerous books about her travails and successes in life.

Words do have wings! Appreciating the exemplary life of Ms. Keller in facing what must have seemed at times insurmountable challenges, I firmly believe that language education is a noble undertaking. It emboldens the human heart to soar high in the boundless skies of life.

Who influenced and inspired Ms. Keller to strive to reach beyond the small world of her existence? It was her teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy. Acting as an extension of her student's ears and mouth, Mrs. Macy taught her to interpret and communicate by touch. Her own sight impaired since childhood, this remarkable teacher until the end of her life— for nearly half a century—remained the constant companion of her student.

We learn from Ms. Keller's book *Midstream* (1929) that Mrs. Macy was an extraordinary individual of intelligence

and wisdom. Had she wished, she might have demonstrated formidable leadership among women or risen to prominence as a writer. She chose instead to dedicate her life to education, as Ms. Keller recounts: "The story of her teaching is the story of her life, her work is her biography."

"By the vitalizing power of her friendship," Ms. Keller wrote of her teacher, "she has stirred and enlarged my faculties. She has made my good impulses more fruitful, my will to serve others stronger.... Happiness flooded my being as the sun overflows the earth, and I stretched out my hands in quest of life."

We learn from Ms. Keller that it was Mrs. Macy who roused in her the will for happiness that otherwise lay dormant deep within her life.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, educator and founding father of value-creative or Soka education, proposed this as the principle attitude of a teacher: to "come down from the throne of respect, and be a public servant who guides others toward the throne. He should be not a master who holds himself up as the ideal [to emulate] but a partner who guides [others] to emulate their own ideals [trans.]"

Accordingly, the education process cannot be accomplished by an osmotic flow of knowledge transferring from on high. A teacher must be a partner to the students, an aide and confidant in the students' quest for education.

"The happiness of students is

my glory!"—this is the spirit and essence of value-creative pedagogy. For myself, I have embraced this ethic in founding Soka educational institutions, and it is my deep, abiding desire to see you confidently continue along the path of glory.

Peering back to the bleak times in early 20th-century Japan, when Mr. Makiguchi put forth the principle framework of value-creative education, we find a social and cultural climate entirely controlled by the Japanese military government as it trampled neighboring countries on its way to ultra-nationalism. Passionate in the belief that only a reformed education system held the promise of changing the course of the country, Mr. Makiguchi published four volumes of *The System of Value-Creative Pedagogy* (Jpn *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* [1930–34]). We understand that he had planned the complete work to comprise 12 volumes, the remaining eight of which were to be a collection of empirical findings by educators and instructors succeeding him in applying his proposals.

Meanwhile, across the Pacific in the United States, Ms. Keller was keenly aware of the ominous clouds gathering over the world, of a stirred frenzy idealizing militarism and racial extermination. Against this lightless gloom, she used her skill to speak—to speak out for justice with her whole being.

She loved Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, one poem of

which, "This Moment Yearning and Thoughtful," echoed her own hope for her country:

*This moment yearning and thoughtful sitting alone,  
It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and thoughtful,  
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany, Italy, France, Spain,  
Or far, far away, in China, or in Russia or Japan, talking other dialects,  
And it seems to me if I could know those men I should become attached to them as I do to men in my own lands,  
O I know we should be brethren and lovers,  
I know I should be happy with them.*

The human spirit, the hearts and minds of people everywhere come into harmonic resonance as differences in language or culture are transcended. When language becomes not a barrier but a bridge, this resonance holds the promise to envelop the whole world in a symphony of peace. I believe that the struggle to transform barriers into bridges is precisely the mission that all of you shoulder.

It is interesting to note that in recent years in Denver, a place Walt Whitman loved, cherry trees bloom to full magnificence. The harsh climate, it was once thought, presented an impossible environment for cherry trees to take root. A handful of individuals with vision and passionate resolve took on the challenge, and the cherry trees have thrived with their loving care.

Facing adversity does not mean one's aim is impossible. This is a tenet cherished by Dr. Guajardo Lucero.

That said, dear members of the 7th Graduating Class, the future is entrusted to you. Let us each in our endeavors strive henceforth to further the goals and objectives of Soka education. Let us transcend all difficulties with great courage and determination. Let us achieve in our lives the unpublished volumes of empirical proof left to the successors of Mr. Makiguchi's system of value-creative education.

On a final note, I wholeheartedly look forward to the day that I may meet each of you in person. Until then, may you be in good health and high spirits!

Daisaku Ikeda  
Founder

Soka University of America  
December 12, 2001