

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT TOWARD THE NEW CENTURY

DECEMBER 19, 1997

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Los Angeles youth hosted a major summer festival in August 1995.

Major Festivals Announced for 1998

Although specific dates and locations of planned activities are not yet available, 1998 is shaping up to be an exciting year of landmark events.

Next June, the Chicago Grand Music Festival will celebrate the theme "A Symphony of the People."

In Los Angeles, planning is under way for the Global Family Festival, slated for March, which will mark the fifth anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's poem "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land."

Both events were announced at the recent Central Executive Committee meeting in Florida. ❧



In 1995, Chicago hosted a U.S.-Japan Youth Culture Festival.

Gosho Study Schedule for 1998

The following is the Study Department's bimonthly study material for 1998.

January/February

"The Opening of the Eyes" part 1 (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 49; *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], pp. 186-87; January 1998 *Living Buddhism*)

March/April

"The Opening of the Eyes" part 2 (*Learning From the*

Gosho, p. 59; MW-2 [2nd ed.], 187-88; March 1998 *Living Buddhism*)

May/June

"Letter to Ko-ama Gozen" part 1 (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 95; MW-4, 139-40; May 1998 *Living Buddhism*)

July/August

"Letter to Ko-ama Gozen" part 2 (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 107; MW-4, 140-43; July 1998 *Living Buddhism*)

September/October

"A Letter of Condolence" (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 154; *Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 1567-68; September 1998 *Living Buddhism*)

November/December

"The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future" (*Learning From the Gosho*, p. 178; *Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 563-64; November 1998 *Living Buddhism*)

Individual Happiness, Youth and Family To Be Focus in '98

Three activity guidelines for 1998 are outlined in the following excerpts from General Director Zaitu's speech to the Central Executive Committee, Dec. 4, at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. Mr. Zaitu related 10 visions he has for the ideal organization in 2001 (please see box, p. 5). While all 10 visions need to be continually addressed for the next four years, he urged that in 1998 the SGI-USA concentrate on three specific areas, devising new plans in these areas based on prayer. These guidelines were later adopted by the SGI-USA Council.

In 1998—the Year of Victory of the People for the New Century—the SGI-USA will focus on three major areas: supporting members' quests for happiness, nurturing youth and strengthening families.

Happy Members

When we talk about supporting members' quests for happiness, what do we really mean? We want to help the members show clear actual proof of their faith, carry out activities with conviction, strongly grasp Buddhist principles and be able to share these concepts with others. SGI President Ikeda has said: "When we have absolute confidence that we can definitely overcome any and all sufferings through faith in the Gohonzon, our lives are bathed in the light of boundless hope, and limitless strength wells forth. This is the strongest and most secure way of life."

For members to achieve this state of life, they need to have a solid practice of the basics: abundant daimoku, consistent practice of gongyo, the spirit to learn, and a spontaneous joy to share the power of faith in the Daishonin's Buddhism. Other important points include having the type of faith that continually challenges specific goals, having a seeking

PLEASE SEE GUIDELINES, 4

VOICES

Do you feel you follow SGI President Ikeda's guidance in all aspects of your life?

Members of San Diego Joint Territory respond:



Until I gave it some thought, I might have said no. President Ikeda is a remarkable individual for whom I have the utmost respect and admiration. I feel this guidance is his sincere effort to help us achieve our human revolution. Although sometimes it's not easy, I find it helps me every morning to first chant to stay focused on my purpose in life, which is to be a positive influence regardless of the circumstance.... I do try to implement his guidance in my life.

—CHERI McIVER, Poway, Calif.



I don't feel that I actually follow his guidance in all areas of my life. That's why I practice and chant and study, so I can bring his guidance into my life. I think that most of us are not perfect people. That's why we strive to follow his guidance. No, I don't follow his guidance in all areas of my life — but I want to.

—VANESSA EAGLE, San Diego



I follow President Ikeda's guidance because I want to be happy. Then I can encourage others. If I'm grumpy, then I can't encourage people.

—TOMEEM MOSHER, San Diego



I've been practicing since 1980, but since joining a study committee, my whole family, who practices, has noticed a distinct difference in me. I attribute this to President Ikeda's guidance about study. Ted Osaki, my first senior leader, used to carry around Goshu passages on index cards in his pocket. He told me to study 20 minutes a day, no matter what. President Ikeda talks about leaders of the 21st century. I need to read his guidance with my life, so I can develop a more profound understanding of it. I don't want to become a leader who regurgitates guidance.

—ANDY MARCOS, Mission Beach, Calif.



Absolutely. Organizationally I try to think, would President Ikeda be happy or sad with what I've done? Toward that end, in my home and community, I try to use this as my goal. I may not reach it, but I try.... In the areas that I don't, I try to see my weak points and overcome them. I want to support President Ikeda, so I'm trying to develop my practice more and more every day.

—JOE FIROVED, Santa Ana, Calif.

If you have suggested questions for our "Voices" column, please send them to the address in the box at right.

Beyond the Usual

EDITORIAL

New ways of thinking aren't easy to come by. But General Director Zaitzu recently said new thinking is exactly what the SGI-USA needs. "It is not enough to simply outline principles," the general director told the Central Executive Committee. "I feel we need to move beyond the usual to new ways of thinking, fresh ideas, clear definitions and renewed determination and prayer."

Going beyond the usual — that's a great challenge, but if the SGI-USA is going to make its 10 new visions (see p. 5) into 10 realities, new thinking is essential. Many of the leaders gathered at the FNCC for the committee meeting said that the SGI-USA is headed in the right direction, and that eventually we'll get there. But if we want to get there by 2001, they said, we need lots of new ideas.

It's important in this regard to consider where the best new thinking comes from — it seems to be found in our philosophical roots. Nichiren Daishonin writes in the Goshu: "When a tree has been transplanted, though fierce winds may blow, it will not topple if it has a firm stake to hold it up. But even a tree that has grown up in place may fall over if its roots are weak" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 109).

In this next stage of the SGI-USA's history, the new ideas that will stand the test of time are sure to come from those who rack their brains about the intent behind the 10 visions. Their intent is perhaps best expressed by the first vision, that *the members will be happy*. All the roots for new thinking are there in the 10 visions and their purpose to help people become happier.

Nichiren Daishonin understood this principle of roots better than anyone. In 1253, he introduced a new idea — that chanting Nam-myoho-

renge-kyo was the direct path to enlightenment — but it was an idea completely rooted in the Lotus Sutra. When the Daishonin said that all people could become Buddhas, he shocked the Japanese people, especially his priestly peers, but all he was saying was the same thing Shakyamuni had said thousands of years previously.

Of course, introducing new thinking often goes hand in hand with doing away with old thinking. When Nichiren Daishonin introduced Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, he at the same time denounced the old thinking of the Nembutsu, Zen, Shingon and Ritsu sects. Although an idea isn't bad just because it's old, there may be many old ideas in our organization we want to change. We may even feel like taking a chain saw to them and cutting a new trail through the woods. Watching old ideas topple over, after all, is sometimes a lot of fun.

But we shouldn't damage the roots. The ideas may be old, but we have to respect their roots and all the sincere effort that went into developing them. Their intent, too, was to help people become happier — this intent has remained constant throughout our organization's history. Without concentrating on and protecting our philosophical roots, nothing new will grow. "Without wood, the fire will burn out," Nichiren once wrote. "Without earth, plants cannot grow" (MW-1, 217).

Over the next four years through 2001, our 10 visions for the organization will be a tremendous source from which new thinking will appear. The more we can understand the purpose behind the visions and find practical applications of them, the closer we are to making the SGI-USA into the organization we know it can be.

Correction:

In "No Laptops Allowed" (Nov. 28 *World Tribune*), a look at SGI-USA activities in the Caribbean, the caption for the center photograph should have been captioned, "Cora Christenson addresses members at a meeting on St. Croix." We apologize for any confusion.

Contact us via the Internet . . . SGI-USA Web Page: <http://www.sgi-usa.org>
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**WORLD TRIBUNE
MAILBOX**

The Leap of Faith Debate

In response to the letters in the Oct. 17 *World Tribune* on Steve Piontek's mentor-disciple essay (Sept. 19 *World Tribune*), I disagree with Mr. McCloskey's assertion that the decision to take a mentor doesn't take a leap of faith but is a choice made.

"With our eyes wide open" — yes, it is true that it is a conscious and even thoughtful decision. However, to limit it to the prerequisite of being based totally on knowledge and reason discounts the huge number of people who truly are unsure yet are willing to take that leap of faith based on intuition, sense and feeling. That would exclude many people and make our movement a small, exclusive group, much as in Shakyamuni's early teachings. Only those with tremendous knowledge and rational ability — the men of the two vehicles of Learning and Realization — were then said to be capable of being disciples of the World Honored One.

Nichiren Daishonin says, "The Gohonzon is found in faith alone" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213)... It is the heart, not the brain, that moves the disciple. It is those many crucial moments when the disciple resolves, "It may not make sense to me, but I trust my mentor and therefore will follow."

Now don't mistake this for blind trust. What I mean is the superior wisdom of the Gohonzon, the Buddha, the mentor, that comes from substituting faith for (common mortal) wisdom. The wisdom of the heart and not the brain. Yes, we do not follow the mentor if "he goes against the Buddha's Law and propounds his own views" (from Nikko Shonin's admonition about when it is correct to not follow the high priest). But it is the heart based on correct faith that tells us that, not the brain. If it were not for this leap of faith, what would the disciple have to learn from the mentor? He/she would know everything already.

— MARC GINSBURG, Staten Island, N.Y.

I thought I'd add my two cents' worth to an ongoing debate over whether embracing a mentor is a leap of faith or a deliberate act. To me, it's a mix of the two.... Not only that, we repeat a pattern of taking a leap of faith followed by deliberately deepening our commitment throughout the mentor-disciple relationship.

Disciples come with varying degrees of skepticism. That's (partially) the reason why Shakyamuni tells the story of the excellent physician....

Physician refers to the Buddha. *Children* refers to mortals. The story opens with the children having taken poison by mistake and writhing in agony. That's a reference to common mortals who suffer from their delusions and are unhappy.

The physician mixes up a marvelous antidote to the children's poison.... Some of the children take it immediately and get well right away. That's a reference to those of us who embrace the Buddha's teachings and get happy. The remainder, because the poison has deeply entered their minds,...cannot embrace faith....

The physician goes away and sends a messenger home, saying to the children that the good doctor is dead. Fearing that this is the last chance to get well, even the most delirious child takes the medicine and is cured.

Many of us tend to be self-satisfied and don't search for a mentor until,...faced with a spiritual deadlock, we look for mentors in a variety of disciplines, ranging from sports and recreation to psychology and religion....

Being a disciple is serious business; it requires attention, effort, and a great deal of time, not to mention a lot of self-discovery, which can be unpleasant at times. Let's face it, most people are unwilling to fully invest in being a disciple for fear of not having a life of their own. Still, if a teacher looks even remotely promising, some of us will take a chance, timidly at first. That to me is the leap of faith. Later, if the teaching proves its efficacy, we change from skeptical followers to faithful ones. That is the deliberate act....

— SEWARD HUNG, New York

Reinventing the Holidays

PERSPECTIVE

By **CUQUI APONTE BONNELL**
MIAMI

Growing up in Puerto Rico, Christmas was a grandiose celebration. Not just Christmas day, but the whole month of December was devoted to preparations and festivities. Then, at the beginning of January, we had New Year's Day followed by the Day of the Three Kings. It was a time for good deeds, giving and thinking about others. It was also a time to show your appreciation for those who had been good to you.

I remember trays of delicacies and baskets of fruit and treats arriving at our home from people expressing their appreciation for my parents. We would also receive many beautiful cards. On Christmas morning, the children would wake up to a huge, decorated tree with what seemed like thousands of wrapped gifts below it. We visited grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, delivering and receiving presents. It was a magical time.

When I had a family of my own, I tried very hard to preserve that same magic for my four boys (in spite of the commercialism that had seeped into the holidays by then). We were living in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Christmas celebration there was just as passionate. Everybody re-painted their homes, made new curtains for the occasion and decorated their homes to the max. The Christmas music, called *parang*, was heard everywhere and every night there was a Christmas fete. Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's were enthusiastically celebrated.

All Trinidadians celebrate a variety of religious holidays with equal devotion. Trinidad and Tobago has a very diverse population. Hindus, Muslims and Christians live together peacefully in this small nation. Divali, the festival of light, honoring the

goddess Lakshmi of the Hindu religion, is enjoyed by all, no matter what their beliefs. The same goes for Phagwa, where colored water is sprayed all over the participants. Hosey, the Muslim festival where elaborate floats are paraded down the streets and dumped into the ocean, is a favorite of all Trinidadians. The Trinidad Carnival, famous all over the world, was originally a pagan festival, and everyone participates.

In Trinidad, a holiday is a holiday to be celebrated regardless of your religion. Trinidad is a living example of SGI President Ikeda's words:

True cultural exchanges encourage mutual respect among peoples of different races and cultural backgrounds and create bonds of peace among the hearts of human beings. (*Buddhism in Action*, vol. 7, p. 364)

So, when I became a Buddhist, I decided it was time to reinvent Christmas. I got rid of the angel on top of my tree and replaced it with a big red star. I made decorations with origami and fruit, and I bought cards with uncompromising artwork and a message of peace or happy holidays. I made a Christmas wreath with gold spray-painted lotus pods, and we even tried changing the words to the Christmas carols. Nevertheless, we continued celebrating the holiday with family and friends.

The magic of Christmas is in the spirit of the people. At this special time it is acceptable to be sentimental about

your appreciation for others, to be joyous and happy. It is a time to share and give, to be generous, compassionate and kind. All this is very compatible with Buddhism. In fact, as Buddhists we try to do this every day of our lives, not just during the holidays.

Christmas is also a celebration of childhood. We go to great lengths to make Christmas special for all children, whether with

glittering decorations, magical lights, treats or gifts. This is also the case in the Hindu celebration Divali, where children receive gifts, and gardens are decorated with tiny little oil lamps called *dejas* arranged in elaborate patterns. The celebration of Hanukkah also involves candles and gifts for children.

If we can find the common denominator in all the various cultural celebrations throughout the world, these special times can become the "bridges which link human hearts and pave the road for the advance of kosen-rufu" (*Buddhism in Action*, vol. 7, p. 130).

New Year's Eve, or Old Year's Night as it is known in Trinidad, is a good time to look back on our lives and make determinations for our future. New Year's resolutions are our determinations for self-improvement.

This is also a good time to get in touch with old friends and express appreciation. This way, we make the holiday a Buddhist experience.

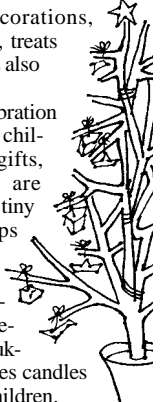
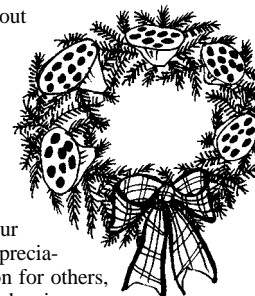
Incidentally, I put my angel back on the top of my tree when I found ancient Persian paintings of angels and realized that they are not just a Christian invention but a universal depiction of positive energies or *shoten zenjin* (protective forces). I make my own holiday cards now, with Buddhist guidance included, and I still use my gold lotus pods to decorate my tree and my wreath.

For me, this will always be a good time to remember President Ikeda's words:

As far as our daily lives are concerned, we must treat our friends with great respect, regardless of whether they share our faith or not. (*Buddhism in Action*, vol. 7, p. 130)

Because so many of us have come to this Buddhism from other faiths, it is comforting to know that we can continue to honor our family traditions while still practicing this great religion, which embraces all cultures, societies and individuals.

Illustrations by Cuqui Bonnell



SGI-USA Activity Guidelines for 1998

Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

GUIDELINES, FROM PAGE 1

mind for guidance in faith, and a sense of personal responsibility for kosen-rufu.

What specific strategies can we use to accomplish this first goal of happy members with strong faith?

Here are our national plans:

● **Study** — Since study is the foundation of strong faith, and hence our happiness, the Study Department will play an important role this year. The Study Department has revised and strengthened its study program. By supporting this program, especially the Entrance Exam in April 1998, we can help ensure that our members grasp this profound Buddhist philosophy.

The Study Department is also looking into improving its study program in various ways, including developing new and better study materials, such as books, pamphlets and CDs. Also, the Study Department wants to develop a lecturers training program and a more in-depth new members series for people who have decided to join the SGI-USA.

Also, each region and division is asked to consider the following:

● **A "calendar revolution"** — Person-to-person interaction is an important way to help members strengthen their basics of faith and practice. However, many times leaders are too busy in planning meetings and other administrative meetings. It is hoped that all regional and divisional leaders will

comb through their calendars, eliminating unnecessary meetings and making as much time as possible available for one-to-one dialogue with the members.

● **Propagation activities and seminars** — It is suggested that local organizations develop activities specifically designed to introduce new people to our organization and teach them the greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism. This is in addition to regular discussion meetings and the in-depth new members series the Study Department will develop. It is also suggested that seminars on propagation be held in each area with the goal of helping people learn how to share this Buddhism with their friends.

● **Opportunities to teach** — The best way to deepen our understanding about Buddhism is to teach others, and naturally, propagation allows us to do this. But it is also suggested that each region create further ways to get more people involved in giving various types of study presentations.

● **Studying the temple issue** — Temple issue study meetings are encouraged on the grass-roots level so that even the newest member can understand and confidently share with others the essence of the issue.

Nurturing Youth

The second area of focus for next year is the developing and nurturing of youth. This means many things, including helping



A national, four-divisional task force for nurturing youthful successors is one of the specific plans the SGI-USA will implement in 1998.

young people understand the connection of faith to their lives and making the organization relevant and appealing to them — to make it "cool" or "awesome," so to speak. It also means to help youth increase their commitment and sense of mission, to tap their passion and creativity and to increase their influence throughout the organization. The idea is to give hope to the youth, especially teenagers, and help them increase their capability to contribute positively to our society.

To further this end, several

new initiatives are proposed:

● **A national, four-divisional task force** — In 1998, the national organization will form a task force to tackle the issue of how best to nurture youth. We plan to include people of all four divisions as well as professionals in the fields dealing with youth, such as teachers and counselors.

Some ideas they will consider are: redefining the age range of the youth division; programs to help older youth division members make the transition to the men's and women's divisions and for Boys and Girls Group graduates to enter the youth division; mentoring programs for young people; interest "clubs" for young people, to which they can easily bring their friends and where they can make new friends.

Once this task force is formed, we will welcome all input and ideas.

● **Increased four-divisional involvement** — Please discuss this thoroughly in each region and division. The men's and women's division members are asked to take an active role in raising young people, including: supporting the youth division's efforts to develop youth leaders in the districts; home visits on youth; introducing young people to the practice; encouraging youth to get involved in activities; and helping with transportation to district and youth activities.

Strengthening Families

The third area is strengthening the family. One fundamental reason for faith is to create happy families, which come in all forms. A happy family is one in which all the relationships are based on love, respect and caring. This caring is not limited to just our own family but is spread to others.

In those families with children, parents who are showing actual proof can surely raise their children to be successors in faith. And certainly Gakkai activities can play an important role in making a happy family life.

Again, here are some of our national plans:

● **Publications** — To support this focus on the family, the Publications Department will include more materials on relationships and family in the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*. It will also work toward other books to support families, such as children's books, a collection of guidance on relationships and family, and volumes containing President Ikeda's popular "Discussions on Youth."

● **Research committee** — The national organization will also form a research committee, to include professionals experienced in family issues, to help find ways to make our organization more family friendly.

And the regions are asked to consider:

● **Seminars** — Family matters can be some of the most difficult to deal with. Therefore I urge that each region, using the talent of the members or friends of the SGI, conduct seminars on various issues related to the family.

● **Family activities** — As part of the calendar revolution mentioned earlier, it is suggested that each region plan monthly activities that the whole family can enjoy together. It is also suggested that you consider making significant days in our religion — such as Feb. 16, April 28 or Oct. 12 — traditional family celebrations.

These are some suggestions and strategies to consider. We hope that everyone will employ new ways of thinking, along with renewed determination and prayer, to develop fresh ideas to accomplish these goals in your local organizations.

The Student Files

Name: Yan Er Ng
School: Oklahoma State University
Major: Management
City: Stillwater, Okla.



I feel that it is hard to study in the United States because of my English. I am not as good as Americans. I have to put a lot of hard work into my studies. Furthermore, I suffer because my parents give me a lot of money for my studies. I also feel that there is discrimination in my classes between international students and Americans.

I am studying several subjects about

management — financial management, management information systems, human resources management, organization behavior and English composition II. I always chant a lot when I face problems in my studies. And when I feel down, I remember what I learned from the Fife and Drum Corps in my country. Then I decide I will not give up, and I try my best in my studies.

Ten Visions for a Successful Organization

To devise concrete plans for the SGI-USA toward 2001, General Director Zaitzu and representative national leaders and Headquarters staff met for two days in early December. Asking themselves, "What would a successful organization look and feel like?" this group identified several visions or descriptions. (Please see "Strategic Planning" on this page for more details of this process.)

General Director Zaitzu introduced these visions at the recent Central Executive Committee meeting, and they were adopted as guidelines for the organization toward 2001. As Mr. Zaitzu said: "These objectives are not listed in any order of importance, and they also overlap. For example, to develop youth, we need capable leaders. To meet the spiritual needs of the American people, we need to be a model of harmony in diversity. Each one of these is equally important to creating the kind of organization we all want."

While these 10 form the overall vision toward 2001 and will each be worked on in each of the next four years, the items in **bold** are the focus areas for 1998. (See "Individual Happiness..." p. 1, for more details.)

1. **Have happy members who show clear proof of their faith, carry out activities with conviction, strongly grasp Buddhist principles, and can share these concepts with others.**
2. Be a member-centered organization.
3. Be deeply rooted in the community.
4. Be able to identify and meet the spiritual and religious needs of the American people.
5. Be a model of harmony in diversity.
6. **Develop and nurture young people as successors.**
7. Develop leaders who embody the bodhisattva spirit and behavior.
8. **Help members embrace faith to create happy families.**
9. Gain greater public awareness and respect.
10. Be financially sound.

Strategic Planning Sessions Lead to a Clear Vision

By **DAVE McNEILL**
MANAGING EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., Dec. 11

Imagine the year is 2001. Imagine the SGI-USA has grown into an organization with 100,000 active members and some 1 million friends who support our ideals. Imagine, too, that we've successfully neutralized in the United States the negative influence of Nikken and his distorted ideas.

The May 3, 2001, issue of *Time* magazine has a cover story on the SGI-USA. What would the cover say? What would the article say? What would this successful organization look and feel like? What would members and society be saying about our organization?

This visionary exercise is exactly what General Director Zaitzu and a group of about 20 national leaders and Headquarters staff went through for two full days before the latest Central Executive Committee meeting in Florida. This strategic planning session, as it was called, had four main points: to create a shared vision; to identify long-range and short-range objectives; to pinpoint those strengths that can help us get there and those weaknesses

that could stop us dead in the water; and to develop a concrete plan of action and follow-up.

Each person brought to the table his or her ideas, and from them 10 common visions (see accompanying box) emerged. Naturally, under each vision were listed many subthemes, and many of the visions overlap. But the general feeling was that these 10 are the keys to creating an ideal organization.

Mr. Zaitzu emphasized that all 10 are important, and that we need to progress on all 10 fronts. "However, year by year, we want to place particular emphasis on just a few," he said. "This does not mean the others are left out or forgotten. Rather, to make clear progress, I feel we need to focus on a few at a time, putting most of our thought and energy in them, while still advancing in all areas."

(The three focal points this year — supporting people in their quests for happiness, nurturing youth and strengthening families — are detailed in the article on p. 1.)

Despite all the strategizing, however, Mr. Zaitzu made clear that everything comes down to our determined prayer and ac-

tion. "We should not merely use this as a slogan, but rather think about how can we absorb these guidelines in our lives and share them with our members," he told the regional leaders. "Now we must go back and discuss how to implement these goals. As Nichiren Daishonin says, 'What matters is one's heart.' As national leaders, our heart is so crucial in making these goals a reality. This is most important.

"The best way to materialize these guidelines is our practice for oneself and for others," he continued. "Our spirit for propagation is essential, and I am sure that if we, as leaders, have a strong determination, it will permeate throughout the membership. As SGI President Ikeda has said many times, the SGI is the organization of *shakubuku*. And we must also take action by promoting our publications and finding ways to make our district meetings successful. Leaders should always think about these points. These are ways not only to help others, but also to change our karma and do human revolution, overcoming problems in our lives." ❏



Florida Impressions

One of my best memories is of the last night of the conference (intended for longtime pioneer members), when the Sunshine Cafeteria at the FNCC was festooned with balloons. Several people were called up to the front and presented with beautiful orchid leis. I saw General Director Zaitzu coming and went to thank him for this wonderful weekend and for his guidance and speeches when he'd come to Philadelphia in the past. I told him they had meant a lot to me, since I'd only had the Gohonzon one year, and that I felt honored to be together with the pioneer members. Hearing this, he looked at my name tag and ran off. I thought: "Now I've done it. He's going to want to know what I'm doing here." Suddenly, Wendy Clark, SGI-USA women's division chief, called me up to the front — and Mr. Zaitzu was announcing that I was a new member, and he was proud of me and happy that I was there with all of them. People applauded as I walked toward him, and he placed one of those orchid leis around my neck. "But I'm not a pioneer," I said. He put his hands on my shoulders and gave me a firm little shake, saying, "You are a future pioneer."

— Sandi Drew Biron, Philadelphia



RENEE BOOKER, CALABASAS, CALIF.

Toward a Contributive Life

Photo by SAFIYAH SCOGGINS



Renee Booker's journey out of virtual homelessness was paved with a passion to understand that her life and the Gohonzon are one.

In March 1997, I celebrated my 11th year of practicing this Buddhism. In 1993, after a job-related injury, I had the opportunity to complete my bachelor's degree with hopes of one day finding a career in education. But two years later, with a degree in French from San Francisco State University, I was unemployed and my savings were rapidly disappearing. I mistook a relaxed attitude for confidence that I could resolve this situation with the Gohonzon — before things reached a critical stage.

As a graduation present, a friend in Denver sent me a plane ticket to visit. During my stay, I convinced myself to move there. At the time, I couldn't see that it was an emotional decision and not at all based on faith or even common sense. Upon my return, I gave up my place and sold most of my belongings.

But the move never happened. I was left without a place of my own and no income. Without seeking wisdom from the Gohonzon, I recklessly invested my remaining funds in a business venture. I was chanting for the success of my business but lacked experience, which contributed to its failing. Gradually I lost the motivation to push the products.

I found a house-sitting arrangement for six weeks, but after that, I lived with different friends for what seemed like an eternity, desperately struggling to get on my feet. Until then I had always enjoyed a comfortable

lifestyle. It seemed impossible that this virtually homeless situation had become my life. It seemed like I was acting out someone else's misfortune.

Over seven months, I had eight different living arrangements. And usually I had to bargain or trade something in lieu of rent or some portion of it.

Despite everything, I chanted to encourage the members and continued to home visit them. Few people knew how severe my situation had become. I tried my best to hide it from my mother, who had doubts about my SGI-USA activities and faith in Buddhism. I sustained hope by propagating, chanting, doing activities and receiving guidance.

Last year, I was invited to participate in the SGI-USA Sophia Group, a study activity for women. That was where I was inspired to chant with a deeper appreciation for my life. I began chanting to improve my study of Buddhism and to show brilliant actual proof of happiness in my life. I wanted to enhance my passion for kosen-rufu and to build a career in society that would contribute to humanistic education — education that would foster global citizens. This, I knew, was SGI President Ikeda's dream, and continues to be my determination.

While studying *The New Human Revolution* along with the women in the Sophia Group, I experienced a dramatic change in my practice. I was inspired by

reading and understanding that deepening one's faith leads to fulfilling one's dreams. I had no idea how to deepen my faith, but with a pure seeking mind I chanted to do so.

Then I read an excerpt from the book *Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death* by President Ikeda, in which he writes that the Gohonzon is the crystallization of the Mystic Law (Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo), as are our lives.

I wondered, what on earth does that mean? As I chanted and chanted to understand how to bring the Mystic Law out from within my life and how the Gohonzon functions inside me, I could feel myself chanting with a different attitude. I realized that there was a connection to be made, and I wanted to make it.

One morning as I chanted with this desire, I was distracted by the wind blowing outside my window. And as I looked out, I was swept by the feeling that there was no separation between me and the wind, between me and the world, between me and the Gohonzon. I was surprised to feel, and actually believe, that my life and the Gohonzon were one.

In November, my women's division district chief suggested I apply for a temporary job at Head-Royce School where she works. I was hired, and that week I also accepted two other temporary jobs doing Christmas retail sales. Two weeks later, a friend

and I moved into a house one block from my new job at the school. A year and a half later, I was still there — I had become a member of the faculty.

With Sophia Group as the starting point, my Buddhist study really took off. I became one of five members who presented the youth division-sponsored Goshō lectures for the East Bay Headquarters. Also, I became a member of the Research Group, which does preparatory research for Goshō lecturers in the Bay Area.

My focus has evolved from being self-centered into a desire to do more for others. I want everything I do to be a catalyst toward world peace. How do I develop my life, how do I contribute to world peace?

I thought about President Ikeda, who has devoted his entire life to the happiness of others. If I can learn from his example, I thought, I can make a difference in my circle of society as he has in his. And so I'm learning what it means to have a service mentality — not one of self-sacrifice. When I give to others, I receive the most. By embracing President Ikeda's dream for world peace, I find myself working to become the best I can be. This is my constant prayer.

A year ago, I came across information about graduate admissions qualifications for Soka University of America. I recall my

surprise that I met all the qualifications. Right then I knew I had to chant about it to see if it could be for me.

President Ikeda says of SUA: "Makiguchi asserted that the human being must progress from a condition of dependence, to self-reliance, and finally to a contributive way of life. The mission of SUA is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life."

After the holidays, I reached the assistant dean, who spoke with me at length and patiently answered my questions. With her encouragement and lots of love, I began preparing the Statement of Purpose for admission. It's the kind of thing you stress over, because it's weighed heavily in the acceptance process.

One of the teachers at my job acted as a positive force by volunteering to edit my statement. She helped me find the confidence that I could make this dream a reality.

And she encouraged me to visit the SUA campus, so I went to the town of Calabasas in the beautiful Santa Monica Mountains, where the university is just a 10-minute drive from Malibu beaches and 45 minutes from downtown Los Angeles.

When I got there, I was warmly welcomed and then met with the dean, Dr. Tomoko Takahashi. We exchanged photographs — hers of previous SUA students and mine of my adorable first graders at Head-Royce School. Instead of an admissions interview, it felt like meeting with an old friend.

Afterward, I was invited to join the students for lunch, then to sit in on a class. During the break, a student and I bicycled across campus, so I could see the dorms. It was a very impressive break.

I'm overjoyed that I was accepted to Soka University! Also, I was awarded one of only two full academic scholarships offered by the school. I am now enrolled in the master's program of Second and Foreign Language Education with an emphasis in English as a Second Language.

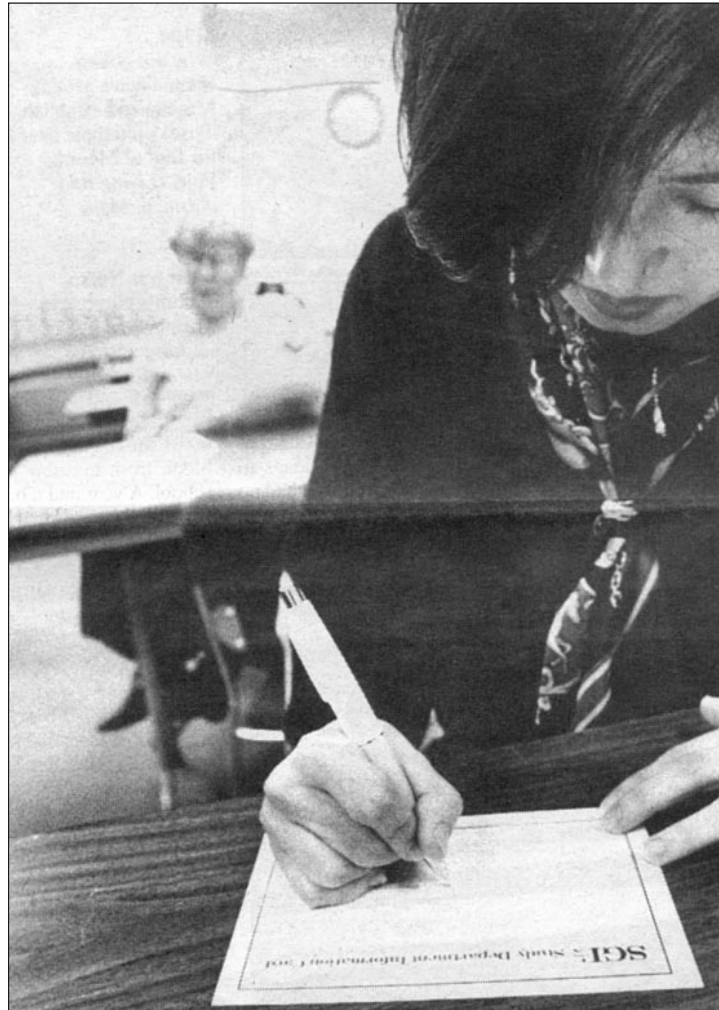
I am learning the methodologies and academic foundations of language teaching and learning, which include cross-cultural awareness.

During my development at SUA, I intend to deepen my mentor-disciple relationship with President Ikeda. My prayer to the Gohonzon is: What can I contribute as a global citizen? How can I contribute to world peace? I am grateful to the Gohonzon and to my friends in faith for this tremendous opportunity. ❧

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE ENTRANCE-LEVEL EXAM

Next year marks a new round of SGI-USA Study Department exams, beginning with the Entrance-level Exam to be held April 19, 1998. Actual questions for the exam will be based on the sample questions that follow. These sample questions are provided for the benefit of lecturers, exam proctors and those who will be taking the exam.

The page numbers that appear in parentheses at the end of each question direct the reader to where the answer can be found in the *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook* and the



December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*. (The material published in *Living Buddhism* is taken from *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp.

233–47, *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 11–18, 56–78 and 83–115, and the pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, “Introduction” and questions 2 and 4.)

The actual exam

questions will be in a multiple-choice format. Correct answers then need only be selected from among several possibilities. Therefore, this sample test is more difficult than the actual exam will be. It is not necessary to learn the Japanese-language version of terms or principles.

Also, of the questions in the following pages, only 40 to 50 percent will appear on the exam, which is expected to consist of 25 to 35 questions. We hope this information will assist you in preparing for the exam.

— The Study Department

'The Life of Nichiren Daishonin'

from *Living Buddhism*, pp. 14–35

Q1: What was the practice that Nichiren Daishonin proclaimed on April 28, 1253? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 15)

Q2: Describe the significance of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution in terms of Nichiren Daishonin's identity. (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 17–18)

Q3: After the attempt to execute Nichiren Daishonin at Tatsunokuchi proved unsuccessful, he was exiled to a cold and forbidding place that he was not expected to return from. What was this place? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19)

Q4: What did the Daishonin teach his disciples in response to their discouragement over his exile? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 18–19)

Q5: During the Sado Exile, the Daishonin completed the theoretical foundation of his teachings. What two works written during this period established the theoretical framework for his inscription of the object of worship? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 21)

Q6: Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly stated in his writings that a Buddha is what? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 18)

Q7: After what event did Nichiren Daishonin start inscribing the Gohonzon? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23)

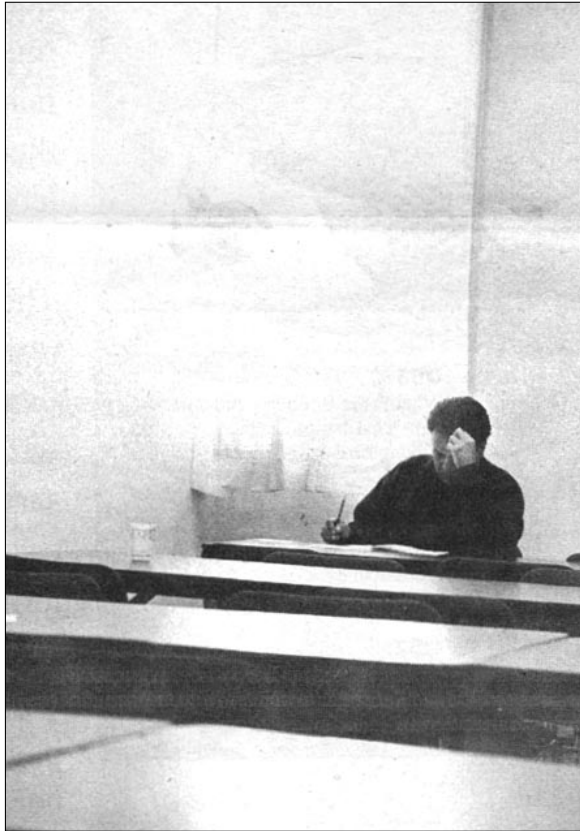
Q8: The inscription of "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" and "Nichiren" on the Gohonzon indicates what principle? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 23)

Q9: Following a Chinese proverb that says if one's warnings go unheeded three times by the sovereign, one should leave the country, the Daishonin retired to Mount Minobu and prepared for the great task of eternalizing his Buddhism. Retirement did not mean a life of leisure for the Daishonin. What three things did he do at this time? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 25)

Q10: To foster the faith of the disciples he was training at Mount Minobu, the Daishonin gave an important series of lectures. What were these lectures on, and under what name were they set down in writing by Nikko Shonin? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 24–27)



Photos by KINGMOND YOUNG



Q13: Who did Nichiren Daishonin name as his legitimate successor? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 32)

Q14: Why did five of the six senior priests abandon the Daishonin's teachings after he died? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

Q15: What slanderous acts did the five senior priests commit? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

Q16: Why did Nikko Shonin leave Mount Minobu and establish Taiseki-ji temple near the foot of Mount Fuji? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 34)

Q17: What was Nikko Shonin's purpose in writing "The Twenty-six Admonitions"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 35)

'On Attaining Buddhahood'

from *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook*, pp. 6–31

Q18: How do the Daishonin's teachings about the Mystic Law differ from the views of most other religions? (p. 10)

Q19: What does it mean to "perceive the nature of your own life"? (p. 21)

Q20: What is the Daishonin trying to illustrate by using the analogy of a poor man counting his neighbor's wealth day and night? (p. 21)

Q21: What attitude will lead us to feel that our practice is an "endless, painful austerity"? (p. 23)

Q22: What constitutes the attitudes of non-Buddhists according to this letter? (pp. 22–23)

Q23: What does this letter emphasize as a key element in our Buddhist practice? (p. 23)

Q24: What attitude prevents us from experiencing "great joy" in our practice? (p. 22)

Questions 25–26 are based on the following passage:

If [the Jomyo Sutra] further states that if the minds of the people are impure, their land is also impure, but if their minds are pure, so is their land. There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds. (MW-1, 4)

Q25: What Buddhist principle is illustrated by this passage? (pp. 26–27)

Q26: What does "the good and evil of our minds" mean? (p. 25)

Q27: Where is the Buddha land? (p. 25)

Q28: In the principle of "the mutually inclusive relationship between life and all phenomena" what does *life* represent? (pp. 18–20)

Q29: In the principle of "the mutually inclusive relationship between life and all phenomena" what does *phenomena* represent? (pp. 18–20)

Q30: According to Nichiren Daishonin, what beliefs constitute inferior teachings? (p. 21)

Q31: When would chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo still be considered practicing provisional teachings? (p. 20)

Q32: The Daishonin teaches us that when chanting to the Gohonzon we should "summon up deep conviction that _____." (p. 23)

Q33: What action of Buddhist practice does the Daishonin compare to polishing a mirror? (p. 29)

Q34: According to this letter, what is "the direct path to enlightenment"? (p. 9)

'The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon'

from *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook*, pp. 32–53

Questions 33–36 are based on the following passage:

Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people

who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions.... The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, "Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood." (MW-1, 213)

Q35: What is Nichiren Daishonin urging us to seek within our own lives? (p. 39)

Q36: What is the meaning of the passage "The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions"? (p. 42)

Q37: In this letter, Nichiren Daishonin refers to the Gohonzon as "perfectly endowed." Why are the other Buddhist objects of worship incomplete compared to the Gohonzon? (pp. 43-44)

Q38: No one has unwavering faith from the outset. How can we define faith at the beginning of our practice? (p. 49)

Q39: When we chant daimoku to the Gohonzon we experience the interaction of the four powers. Two of the four powers are 1) the power of the Buddha and 2) the power of the Law. How can we activate the power of the Buddha and the power of the Law in our own lives? (p. 41)

Q40: Shakyamuni's disciple Shariputra was considered to be the "foremost in wisdom," yet even he could not attain enlightenment through his wisdom. How did he attain enlightenment? (p. 46)

Q41: Even though doubts are natural and unavoidable, it is important to strive for doubt-free faith. Instead of worrying or tormenting ourselves, what should we do when we have feelings of doubt or insincerity in our practice? (p. 51)

Q42: What two actions express faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism? (pp. 51-52)

Q43: What point is the Daishonin trying to teach us in this writing through the examples of the Emperor of Han and Li Kuang? (pp. 51-52)

Q44: Down the center of the Gohonzon, inscribed in Chinese characters, are the words "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren." What Buddhist principle does this indicate (include the compo-

nent parts of that principle)? (p. 38)

'Happiness in This World'

from *Living Buddhism*, pp. 7-13

Q45: How can we elevate our inner life-condition? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7)



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

Q46: Why is it important to elevate our inner life-condition? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 7-8)

Q47: Why does Nichiren Daishonin state that "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 7-8)

Q48: What enables us to experience the "joy derived from the Law"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8-9)

Q49: How is "joy derived from the Law" different from the "joy derived from desires"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8-9)

Q50: Why is attributing the cause of our happiness or unhappiness to someone else contradictory to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9)

Q51: Practicing with what determination in our Buddhist practice contributes to the development of our state of life? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 8-9)

Q52: How does the phrase "Happy and at ease" relate to our lives? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 9)

Q53: What does it mean to be a Buddha of absolute freedom? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 10)

Q54: What does achieving "peace and security" mean? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 11)

Q55: What is the Buddhist understanding of "life's hardships"? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 12-13)

Q56: Why does Nichiren Daishonin tell Shijo Kingo to "strengthen your faith more than ever"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 13)

Q57: What is the meaning of Nichiren Daishonin's advice to Shijo Kingo to "just chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, and when you drink sake, stay at home with your wife"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 12)

Q58: What is the purpose of our practice of faith? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 7)

'Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue'

Questions 59-63 are based on the "Introduction":

from *Living Buddhism*, pp. 36-41

Q59: What is it about the nature of Buddhism that challenges those interested

in passivity and unquestioning obedience from believers? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36)

Q60: What passage from the Lotus Sutra regarding persecutions applies directly to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 36)

Q61: How does Buddhism characterize opposition by authority? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 37)

Q62: What is the meaning of obstacles to our Buddhist movement? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 36-37)

Q63: What does opposition from the priesthood mean to the SGI? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 37-38)

Questions 64-66 are based on question 2:

"Why is it important to know about the temple issue?"

Q64: How can we benefit by understanding the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

Q65: What is meant by "correct faith"? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

Q66: In terms of the future, why is it important to understand the temple issue? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 38)

Questions 67-70 are based on question 4:

"What is the real difference between the temple and the SGI?"

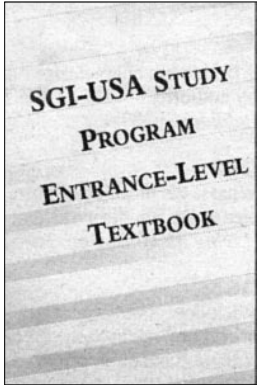
Q67: What is Nichiren Shoshu's position on the equality between lay members and priests? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 39)

Q68: How does Nichiren Shoshu's view of the Gohonzon contradict Nichiren Daishonin's view? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 40)

Q69: Nichiren Daishonin clearly states what it means to receive the heritage or lifeblood of faith. How is Nichiren Shoshu's view different from the view of the Daishonin? (*Living Buddhism*, pp. 40-41)

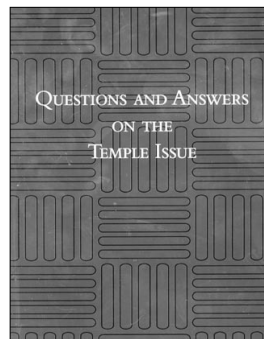
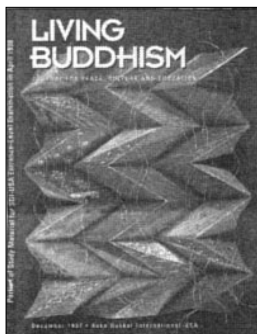
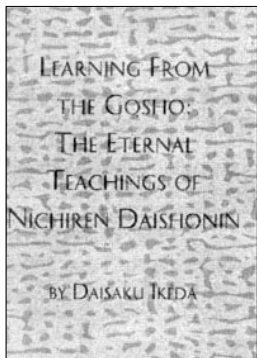
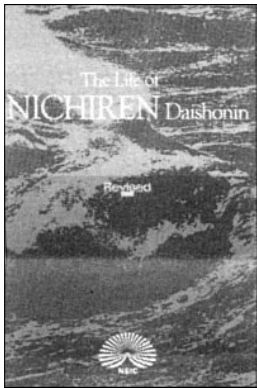
Q70: How does Nichiren Shoshu and the SGI differ in action and commitment to kosen-rufu? (*Living Buddhism*, p. 41)

Study Resources



The study material for the Elementary Exam (to be held on April 19, 1998) can be found in the *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook* and the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

(The material published in *Living Buddhism* is taken from *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 233–47, *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 11–18, 56–78 and 83–115, and the pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, “Introduction” and questions 2 and 4.)



New SGI-USA Study Department Curriculum

The following is the revised SGI-USA study curriculum for each level from 1998 through 2001. The page numbers listed indicate the material from which the exam questions will be derived. The December 1997 *Living Buddhism* (pp. 7–43) and the *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook* comprise all the necessary material for the Entrance Exam.

ENTRANCE-LEVEL

The Entrance Exam will be held on April 19, 1998; in spring 1999; in spring 2000; and in spring 2001. Any SGI-USA member who has no Study Department position is eligible to take this exam.

1. *SGI-USA Study Program Entrance-Level Textbook*
 - “On Attaining Buddhahood” (pp. 6–12; 20–29)
 - “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon” (pp. 32–43; 47–52)
2. *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*
 - “Happiness in This World” (pp. 223–246)
3. *The Life of Nichiren Daishonin*
 - Nichiren Daishonin’s life (pp. 11–18; 56–78; 83–115)
4. *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*
 - “Introduction”; question No. 2; question No. 4 (pp. 4–6; 9–10; 13–16)

ELEMENTARY-LEVEL

The Elementary Exam will be held in October 1998 and in the fall of 2000.

1. *SGI-USA Study Program Elementary-Level Textbook*
 - “Letter to the Brothers” (pp. 6–13; 22–5; 31–51; 57–61; 67–74; 80–84; 89–104)
 - “The Person and the Law” (pp. 107–127)
 - A life-moment possesses 3,000 realms (pp. 128–160)
2. *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*
 - “One Essential Phrase,” parts 1 and 2 (pp. 73–94)
3. Volume 1 of *Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*
 - The “Expedient Means” chapter (pp. 5–43; 53–83; 133–140)
4. *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*

INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL

The Intermediate Exam will be held in the fall of 1999.

1. *SGI-USA Study Program Intermediate-Level Textbook*
 - “Risshō Ankoku Ron” (pp. 75–136)
2. *Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*
 - “The Opening of the Eyes,” parts 1 and 2 (pp. 49–72)
3. Volumes 2, 3, *Lectures on the “Expedient Means” and “Life Span” Chapters of the Lotus Sutra*
 - The “Life Span” chapter (specific sections to be decided)
4. *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*

ADVANCED-LEVEL

The Advanced Exam will be held in fall 2001.

1. *Selected Lectures on the Goshō*
 - “The True Entity of Life” (pp. 3–24; 30–38; 58–70; 87–89)
 - “Heritage of the Ultimate Law” (pp. 95–109; 121–123; 150–155; 169–172; 192–195)
 - “The True Object of Worship” (pp. 203–223; 240–281)
2. “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra” series
 - Specific sections for the exam will be decided in the future (please begin studying the series, which began in the April 1995 *Seikyo Times* and continues in *Living Buddhism*)
3. *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*

SIGN POSTS

APPLYING
NICHIREN
DAISHONIN'S
WRITINGS TO
DAILY LIFE

Buddhism From the Heart

By VALERIE THOMAS

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Others read the Lotus Sutra with their mouths alone, reading only the words, but do not read it with their hearts. And even if they read it with their hearts, they do not read it with their actions. Praiseworthy indeed are those like you who read the sutra with both body and mind! (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 127)

During the holiday season, I always spend time with my family and friends who do not practice this Buddhism. I want to show proof to them of this practice and often find myself focusing on material proof — a great job or relationship or financial security.

But what I sometimes do not focus on is simply how I treat people. I need to really understand and show evidence of this practice with my whole life. This is what I feel Nichiren Daishonin is stressing in this passage.

Like many people, I was traveling on the Thanksgiving holiday. As I traveled back on Sunday afternoon, I found myself surrounded in a busy airport by travelers anxious to get home. What I observed was that in their haste, they were treating each other badly.

As I was waiting in line for my seat assignment, the woman in front of me, who had been late and missed her plane, was yelling at the reservation agent, angry that there were no seats available on the busiest travel day of the year. As I watched her, I realized how counterproductive her treatment of the agent was. Her abuse of him certainly did not motivate him to help or respect her. I was as exhausted and anxious as anyone, but when it was my turn, I greeted the agent with a big smile and thanked him for his help. He looked so happy to be treated humanely. It was a simple action, but through it, I am confident that I touched his life positively.

As we approach the sometimes stressful holiday season, I am going to focus on my interactions with others. In this way I hope to show Buddhism, as Nichiren Daishonin stresses, with my heart and actions. ☐

STUDY PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEATH PENALTY

Human Revolution Means All of Us

By MARK KAPLAN

SAN FRANCISCO CORRESPONDENT

During the Timothy McVeigh trial, I heard something on the radio that made me reconsider my whole view of the death penalty. People who knew Timothy were testifying, and at one point, a neighbor said: "I knew him pretty well. I liked him." And then, "I can't believe he could have done a thing like this." At that point, Timothy covered his mouth and began crying.

This interaction made me realize two things. First, I was reminded how important is our respect for one another. I asked myself, if Timothy had felt a little more love or respect from the people around him, would things have turned out differently?

People are not absolutely good or evil. As SGI President Ikeda says in his "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra": "Good and evil are not substances. They are relative concepts. Therefore it cannot be said that a particular person is intrinsically good or intrinsically evil." And as Nichiren Daishonin says, "Even a heartless villain loves his wife and children. He too has a portion of the bodhisattva world within him" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 53). Essentially we are all mixtures of the same things.

Second, and more important, I felt that as much as Timothy appeared to be obliv-

ious to the proceedings, on some semi-conscious level, he deeply regretted what he had done. He might not have even been able to verbalize this regret, but I couldn't help feeling that there was a tremendous energy in that regret, which, if handled correctly, could create incredible value.

In every defeat lie the seeds of victory. Buddhism embraces the concept that from the muddy swamp blooms the lotus flower. Our mistakes create the energy and insight for our greatest growth.

But in our society we tend to want to Whiteout every negative experience or event. And to start all over again in a clean, chlorinated pool. Such an attitude doesn't allow either the criminal or society to grapple with the situation. It puts the problem outside ourselves. Kill this person and be done with it — we have a clean sheet of paper once again.

But as much as we'd like to believe this is possible, this person is a part of our society. President Ikeda explains that "the Buddhist principle of dependent origina-

tion describes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life, continuous over past, present and future. We are urged to understand that it is impossible to found lasting prosperity on the suffering of others." By acknowledging our connected-

ness and helping another do his or her human revolution, we end up growing and developing ourselves. This is the Buddhist teaching that if we light a lamp for another, our own way will be lit.

On the other hand, I am not advocating leniency or tolerance. As Bryan Wilson says in a dialogue with President Ikeda on this subject: "There may be times when the question we face is not life versus death, but whose life and whose death. If that is an effective choice, then I should like to choose life

for the innocent." As long as the innocent are protected, I think we are wasting a tremendous opportunity for human revolution — both for the individual and society — when we institute the death penalty. ☐

Good and evil...are relative concepts. It cannot be said that a particular person is intrinsically good or intrinsically evil.

— SGI President Ikeda

To Kill the Will To Kill

By PATRICIA FORD

KANSAS CITY, MO., CORRESPONDENT

In the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni declares that life is the most valuable jewel in the universe. Nichiren Daishonin also says: "Life is the most precious of all treasures. Even one extra day of life is worth more than ten million *ryo* of gold" (MW-1, 230). With the recent death sentence of Timothy McVeigh, capital punishment and this related philosophic issue of the value of life are once again being discussed.

What is the Buddhist view of the death penalty? In *Choose Life*, the dialogue between SGI President Ikeda and historian Arnold Toynbee, the sanctity of human life is discussed. President Ikeda advocates a criminal justice system that values life above everything else.

By having such a system, he says, the Buddha nature inherent in every human's life is acknowledged. He explains that his reason "for insisting that the death penalty ought to be abolished everywhere is based on Buddhist respect for the dignity of life." If every person's life were valued, then it follows that death would not be chosen as a means of punishment.

President Ikeda also examines the death penalty in *Human Values in a*

Changing World, his dialogue with sociologist Dr. Bryan Wilson. Here he places valuing life above valuing crime prevention, saying that "life must not be manipulated as a means to an end, even the admirable one of restraining crime." Indeed, despite the use of the death penalty in many states, some statistics show that crime has not significantly decreased to justify the death penalty.

President Ikeda also discusses with Dr. Wilson the lost chance for a criminal to feel remorse for the crime he or she has committed. Buddhism teaches that the only way to cure society's ills is for individuals to do human revolution and change their karma. In killing someone who has committed murder, we leave no chance for this person to change his or her karma, no chance for him or her to "kill the will to kill," as Shakyamuni put it. (Shakyamuni had been asked which living beings could be killed and which could not.) Buddhist thought implies that a person who has not killed the will to kill may just enter the next life and commit the same crime. And on the other hand that even a murderer can change his or her karma in this lifetime.

Does the state become a murderer itself by imposing the death penalty? What kind of karma does a state or coun-

try create by killing people? These are serious questions, especially when we consider that we as citizens comprise the state — it's our karma, too. Ultimately, vengeance based on governmental law leaves too much room for error. It is not the Buddhist way of solving the crime problem.

Our emotions about murder are understandable. At times we may feel such remorse or anger that capital punishment for certain crimes, such as the Oklahoma City bombing, seems deserved. But in the end, the taking of life, even when sanctioned by the government, only continues the cycle of killing. It is a grave cause and creates more negative karma.

To oppose the death penalty of course does not mean to advocate letting the guilty walk away. Life imprisonment is a better alternative than taking criminals' lives — then they have the chance to think long and hard about the mistakes they have made.

Every human being has a Buddha nature. Even a person who commits the most heinous crimes has the potential to someday reach Buddhahood. All people, in fact, are equal in the eyes of the Buddha. And as long as a person has this potential to change and create value, he or she has the potential to contribute to society, to make a better world. ☐



Since the days of my youth, my motto has been ‘The greater the resistance waves meet, the stronger they become.’ This conviction resonates at a fundamental level with the idea of challenge and response, the theory of history espoused by the great British historian Arnold Toynbee. He maintained that a civilization would continue to develop as long as people had the energy and vitality to accept life’s inevitable problems and obstacles as challenges and respond to them by growing stronger themselves.

— Daisaku Ikeda

The Strictness of Victory and Defeat

SGI President Ikeda sent the following message to the Yamanashi Prefecture Women’s Division Leaders Meeting, at the Yamanashi Culture Center in Kofu, Japan, Sept. 30.

My sincere congratulations to all of you, the wonderful women’s division members of Yamanashi Prefecture! Yamanashi is leading the way for the rest of Japan. Steadfastly dedicated to upholding and proving the validity of the correct teaching just as Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko

Shonin taught, you are courageously denouncing the malignant forces that seek to destroy Buddhism. As a result, the vigor and momentum of your activities continue to grow, and your lives abound with inexhaustible benefit and joy.

You who are spearheading these noble endeavors on the very forefront of our movement are people of the loftiest mission. Without question, you enjoy the protection of all Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout past, present and future, and of all Buddhist gods, the protective functions of the entire uni-

verse. As an expression of my deep respect and gratitude for each of you who possess such a profound purpose, I will share a few words with you today.

History Bears Witness

Nichiren Daishonin writes, “In the Latter Day of the Law of both Shakyamuni and the Buddhas before him, the rulers and people who despised the votaries of the Lotus Sutra seemed to be free from punishment at first, but eventually they were all doomed to fall” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p.

241). The Buddhist law of cause and effect is very strict.

In another Gosho, the Daishonin declares that the acts of persecution against him will result in severe retribution within a period of “one hundred days after my exile or execution, and again on the first, third and seventh anniversary [of the persecution]” (MW-1, 177). And in perfect accord with the Daishonin’s prediction, the Kamakura shogunate that had so harshly persecuted him fell to its ruin as a result of the two calamities of internal strife and foreign invasion. History bears clear witness

to this fact. And needless to say, this principle of cause and effect has also been clearly verified in the present day as well. Such instances offer abundant proof of the correctness of the SGI.

Hei no Saemon’s Pitiful End

Hei no Saemon was the key person behind the official persecution of the Daishonin, ordering first his execution and, when that failed, his exile to Sado. What was the fate of Hei no Saemon and his family? When it was discovered in 1293 that he and members of his family were involved in a conspiracy against the government, Hei no Saemon’s entire line was consigned to oblivion. I have discussed this matter on other occasions, but I hope that through reviewing it we can renew our appreciation of the strictness of victory and defeat in Buddhism.

Hei no Saemon and his second son, Sukemune, who were directly implicated in the conspiracy, met a grim end by being beheaded at Hei no Saemon’s residence in Kamakura — the very place where Hei no Saemon had the three martyrs of Atsuhara executed. Nikko Shonin comments on the incident as follows: “This was no ordinary occurrence. They incurred the actual punishment of the Lotus Sutra” (*Honzon Bun’yo Cho* [List of the Recipients of the Gohonzon]).

In his commentary on the Gosho “On the Selection of the Time,” the 26th high priest, Nichikan (1665–1726), who is venerated as a restorer of the true spirit of the Daishonin’s Buddhism, discusses the matter in greater detail, saying:

Reflecting on these events, it is clear to me that the reason why Hei no Saemon was beheaded was that [when he and his warriors stormed into the Daishonin’s dwelling to arrest him during the Tatsunokuchi Persecution] his subordinate struck the founder Nichiren in the face. And the reason why his most beloved second son [Sukemune], then lord of Awa Province, was beheaded was that he [Hei no Saemon] tried to behead the founder Nichiren, who was born in Awa Province. (*Fuji Shugaku Yoshu* [Selected Works of the Fuji School])

Hei no Saemon’s eldest son, Munetsuna, jealous of the favoritism his father bestowed on his younger brother Sukemune, secretly informed the authorities of the conspiracy, thereby setting in motion a chain of

PLEASE SEE VICTORY, NEXT PAGE

VICTORY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

events that led to the destruction of the entire clan. He himself was sent into exile on Sado.

On this point, Nichikan declares that the reason why Munetsuna was exiled to Sado was that Hei no Saemon had exiled the Daishonin to that island. He therefore concludes: "These facts perfectly match [the founder Nichiren's prediction of actual retribution based on the law of cause and effect]. It is inconceivable, therefore, that those who commit grave offenses can avoid severe retribution."

Any act of persecution or harassment directed against those who are exerting themselves to widely propagate the correct teaching will, in the words of the Lotus Sutra, "rebound upon the originator" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 304). In other words, the destructive effects of such actions are sure to boomerang back to the perpetrators themselves. The suffering they cause others will return to them in its

entirety; to the extent that they have brought misery and pain to others, their lives will become filled with misery and pain, and they will plummet toward their self-destruction.

I hope you will have a profound awareness of the uncompromising workings of the law of cause and effect, engraving it forever in your heart.

An Unchanging Rule

Since the days of my youth, my motto has been "The greater the resistance waves meet, the stronger they become." This conviction resonates at a fundamental level with the idea of challenge and response, the theory of history espoused by the great British historian Arnold Toynbee. He maintained that a civilization would continue to develop as long as people had the energy and vitality to accept life's inevitable problems and obstacles as challenges and respond to them by growing stronger. Conversely, when people lose the energy and vitality

to respond positively to challenges, a civilization will begin to decline.

In the second volume of his epic work, *A Study of History*, Dr. Toynbee explains this concept by citing a passage from Goethe's *Faust*. Faust declares to Mephistopheles, the devil personified, and to the obstacles he must fight against, "Should ever I take ease upon a bed of leisure, / May that same moment mark my end!" (lines 1692-93).

The moment you assume the attitude "There's no need to continue making effort. I can just take it easy and relax. I don't need to expand my activities or challenge myself any further" — from that instant — your downhill decline starts.

Dr. Toynbee argues that this is an unchanging rule of history. This rule also holds true for individuals and for organizations. No matter how great the problems or obstacles that beset us, by challenging them and turning them to our advantage, we can become stronger and develop further.

History's Victors

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Doesn't a fire burn more briskly when logs are added?... Were it not for the flowing rivers there would be no sea" (MW-1, 9). Just like these examples, practitioners of the Mystic Law grow stronger and more resilient with each obstacle they encounter. Those who advance with such vigor are history's victors. Those who advance with such dynamic energy are winners in life. The important thing is to temper and forge oneself and to work to strengthen the SGI.

Nichiren Daishonin proclaims, "So long as one maintains firm faith, he is certain to receive the great protection of the [Buddhist] gods" (MW-3, 198). He is also saying here in a sense, "Don't depend on others!" He is urging us to abandon the indulgent tendency to assume that someone will naturally protect us or take our side. It is essential that we become

stronger ourselves. This passage attests to the fact that the protection of the Buddhist gods, the protective forces in the universe, and victory in our lives can only be gained by strengthening our faith and determination.

The second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, declares: "Those who malign the Soka Gakkai are maligning a gathering of emissaries of the Mystic Law. Therefore, they cannot possibly avoid incurring unequivocal retribution. You should observe closely how these people fare in the future. You should also keep your eyes open for the great and wondrous benefit that those who sincerely believe in the Mystic Law receive" (*Toda Josei Zenshu* [The Collected Works of Josei Toda]).

My dear friends of Yamanashi, I pray with all my heart that your lives will shine with ever-increasing good fortune and benefit.

Please take care! Let's meet again soon.

With best wishes,
Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda 卍

GLOSSARY

Buddha: One who perceives the true nature of all life and leads others to attain the same enlightenment. The Buddha nature is inherent in all beings and is characterized by the qualities of wisdom, courage, compassion, spiritual strength, hope and unshakable happiness.

daimoku: Literally, "title." Refers to the invocation, or chanting, of Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo.

Gohonzon: The embodiment of the law of Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo and the life of Nichiren Daishonin in the form of a mandala. *Honzon* means "object of fundamental respect"; *go* means "worthy of honor." The *Gohonzon* takes the form of a paper scroll inscribed with Chinese and two Sanskrit characters. Together, these characters represent life in its highest condition: Buddhahood. "Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo, Nichiren" is written down the center of the Gohonzon.

gongyo: Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism,

gongyo means to recite the "Expedient Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life Span of the Thus Come One" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

Gosho: Literally, "writing worthy of great respect": the writings of Nichiren Daishonin.

ichinen: Literally, "one mind." The life-moment, or ultimate reality, that is manifested at each moment in common mortals.

karma: Sanskrit word meaning "action." The life tendency or destiny that each individual creates through thoughts, words and deeds. One's actions in the past have shaped one's reality at present, and actions in the present determine in turn one's future. This is the law of cause and effect at work.

kosen-rufu: Literally, to "widely declare and spread (Buddhism)." To secure lasting peace and happiness for all humankind through the propagation of

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Latter Day of the

Law: The period beginning 2,000 years after Shakyamuni's death, when his teachings lose their power and the essence of the Lotus Sutra will be propagated.

Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo: The fundamental component of Buddhist practice, which expresses the ultimate truth of life and allows each individual to tap his or her innate enlightened nature directly. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo is revealed only through the practice of chanting it, there is a literal definition for each of the component words: *nam* (devotion) means to fuse one's life with the universal law; *myoho* (Mystic Law) is the fundamental principle of the universe and its phenomenal manifestations; *rengo* (lotus flower) refers to the lotus, which blooms and seeds at the same time, symbolizing the simultaneity of cause and effect; and *kyo* (sutra, or teaching of a Buddha) broadly indicates

all phenomena or the activities of all living beings.

Nichiren Daishonin (1222-82): The Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. *Daishonin* literally means "great sage" and is used as an honorific title for Nichiren. He inscribed the Gohonzon and established the invocation of Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo as the universal practice to attain Buddhahood.

Shakyamuni: Also known as Siddhartha Gautama. The first historically recorded Buddha, he is the founder of Buddhism.

Soka Gakkai: Literally, "Society for the Creation of Value." The name of the lay organization of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

Soka Gakkai International (SGI): The umbrella organization led by President Daisaku Ikeda, which includes organizations in 128 nations. It was established in 1975.

ten worlds: Potential conditions of life inherent in each individual. They are: Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Rapture, Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva and Buddhahood.

Now Available in Six Languages

The pamphlet *Questions and Answers on the Temple Issue*, which seeks to provide succinct information on this important issue, is now available in six languages — Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Thai. It is available free of charge through the organization and can be downloaded from the SGI-USA web page (www.sgi-usa.org).



人生目的·為人服務 充實自己·勝利之源

國際創價學會會長池田大作

以下是池田會長九月二十五日在東京牧口紀念會館舉行的本部幹部會上的講話內容(註：因為篇幅限制，此文曾刪減)：

今天菲律賓索賈州的弗里巴爾多州長專程到日本來為我頒發一名譽州長的頭銜，他是菲律賓年紀最大、最窮的州長，但也以最廣闊民意、最爲民眾鞠躬盡瘁爲榮。自一九五五年以來，連任八次，今年十月就八十二歲了。他爲人樸實，爲州民留下種種功績，卻只有以椰子樹葉爲屋頂的老家，堪稱世界罕有的政治家。

州長的信念是「走路」，「靠自己的雙腿，去和不幸的人進行對話」。他說：「這個方法最實在、最有效，是累積多年經驗的結論。」

由於他和民眾不斷進行踏實的對話，而深獲民心。有位州民甚至說：「即使弗里巴爾多州長死後，我們也還想投他一票。」我也常常教導幹部：「要到現場去！」照這樣做的領導，他所屬的地區在成長；傲慢而不投入現場的領導，他的地區在衰落。

新世紀民眾勝利之年

一九九八年將是國際創價學會信徒又一勝利的年度。在不久之前舉行的大會中，SGI宣佈九八年的主題是「新世紀民眾勝利之年」。SGI副會長秋谷榮之助說此主題包含三方面的勝利：一、剷除我們和平運動障礙的勝利；二、廣布活動的勝利；三、在家庭、工作崗位上、社區和生活當中的勝利。

秋谷先生談到戰勝障礙時表示：我們在世界各地的弘法活動，就是不斷破壞的行動。他說：透過龐大的真面目，而破壞就是信心的勝利，民眾的勝利。舉例而言，極力想要推毀SGI的日顯宗就是魔。

生活是嚴厲的戰鬥，不是勝利就是失敗，而且最重要的是：克服自己。他說：當我們二克服本身的煩惱時，就可以發展人性的光輝，開發佛智，建立堅強的人格。

將出版。自一九七三年起，智利受殘暴的軍事獨裁統治長達十六年。窮苦、流亡的人數高達數十萬。扭轉智利的命運的就是艾爾文前總統。我在對談集的序言裡寫道：「我敬愛對抗強權的人。其中一位代表人物就是青年革命男兒艾爾文先生，他的人生令我敬佩。平凡、順利、風平浪靜的人生，就某方面而言，或許更可說是了不起的人生，但是，爲創造更美好的社會、更美好的將來、更美好的前程，而不惜豁出性命，投身正義鬥爭的人，我深感敬佩和理解。」

爲正義吶喊，無須顧慮

智利的國民抗暴運動如何開始呢？在飽受陰險權力的妨礙、威脅下，一九八三年人民約定在某個黃昏，家家戶戶都取出鍋、水壺等器具，同時敲擊三十分至一小時，製造巨大的噪音，訴說人民的憤怒。這就是智慧、民眾的智慧、取勝的智慧。

我們也應吶喊，當民眾毫無顧忌地宣洩「真正的心情」時，時代就會改變。爲正義吶喊，無須顧忌，顧忌就等於惡。

敲響戰鬥鐘聲——參加第一次行動的人數寥寥無幾，但這股力量隨著時間愈益強大起來，終於在一九八八年迎接了開世界歷史性的一天，人民通過投票毅然拒絕軍事政權：「No!」不「接受獨裁」！了不起的「民眾勝利故事」。

動腦筋才是領導人

不管怎樣，問題是如何創造「廣宣流布的新力量」。思考這個問題是領導人的任務、智慧。動腦筋的人才是領導。不論聚會或其他活動，如果總是惰性地一成不變，便會索然無味，失去新鮮感而停滯不前。

在朝著二十一世紀的今天，日本、世界都缺乏明瞭的展望。新的前進、新的力量所必須的是甚麼？那就是自己領先「行動」、「開始」、「創造故事」。這是唯一的方法，如此做的地區會勝利。

人生爲何而有？

艾爾文前總統在談及他的人生哲學時，言淺意深。他說：「我們不是『爲受人服務』而活，是『爲服務人』而活。」

說得對。領導人存在的目的是「爲人民服務」。要求人民爲領導人服務是背道而馳，社會的不幸也會開始。此外，他還說：「我一直認爲人生是經常從今開始的作業，是達成自己的天命、持續的挑戰場所。對我而言，所謂天命，概括地說就是正義。」

經常從今開始。田先生非常這樣說。人生是永遠挑戰、永遠奮鬥。最後的勝利才是真正的勝利。

艾氏重視的「領導人必備的條件」是甚麼？其中之一就是「真相實說」，他徹底厭惡「謊言」，他把軍事政權踐踏人權的真相暴露在大化日下。他說：「謊言會招致猜疑，猜疑招致憎惡，憎惡招致暴力。」又說：「謊言是通往暴力的等候室，『真實爲主宰』是民主社會的基石。」

「對權力的橫暴沈默」是懦弱

艾氏對日本的國家主義化深表畏懼。他談及日本知識分子沈默地坐視權力的橫暴。雖然有人表面上批評權力，但幾乎沒有人大膽直言以致於受到迫害。結果，受騙而成為權力犧牲品的是人民。

艾氏說：「我擔心這樣的權力，在與把日本導向悲慘命運的軍國主義有著同樣性質的政治中，是否會再度抬頭。」所以，他再三對「正義的團體創價學會」表示深厚的信賴。

學會精神是「該說的話就說」

學會發展的主要因素是甚麼？牧口先生指出，那是因爲毫不顧忌地說出必須說的話，大膽折伏。應該說的話，必須明確地說出來。

對的事情就說「對」！錯的就說「錯」！「那是騙人的話！」「那是謊話！」「那是計謀！」「學會一直以來明確地說出這些話，所以發展起來。」「該說的話就明確地說！——這是折伏精神、學會精神。」

一切勝利要靠青年的力量！

這是青年的時代，所謂青年，既不依賴別人，也不跟別人背後。靠自己闖出路來，自己推進廣宣流布，自己令創價學會得勝，這才是青年，愛護學會的真正接班人的表現。

剛入信時，我實在無法喜歡當時的學會。許多幹部擺架子、賣弄權威。不但不自己認真活動，也不愛惜後進，這種前輩令我討厭，讓我感到他們不明白戶田先生的心意。

戶田先生知道我的想法，於是跟我說：「既然如此，大作，你來創造自己喜歡的學會不就行了嗎？」

我遵照他的話奮鬥。由於責任感，有時不免會和前輩發生衝突。對於這種事情，青年用不著介意。因此，我要吶喊：「青年啊！要超越前輩前進！」「廣宣流布要青年去幹！」

斬斷惡根

有關日本這個國家，日蓮大聖人說：「有名一闍提人之謗法者，爲地獄監守者所留，彼等子孫蕃殖，是今世日本國之一切眾生。」(佐渡御書，御書選集

、九頁) 名爲「闍提人」(正法的眾生)的謗法者，(當其他人已憑法華經成佛，仍)被地獄的獄卒拘留。他們整齊地成爲今世日本國的一切眾生。

「護目蓮之法師等，爲日本國祈禱，是國亡日感矣！」(王舍城事，御書選集五，二五頁) 誹謗日蓮的和尚們，若爲日本國祈禱，國家便愈益接近滅亡吧。所以，絕對必須把惡根連根拔起。

大聖人教導弟子：「日蓮弟子不可膽怯。」「(修行御書，御書選集五，一四六頁) 要知善是不思議，惡乃一定。心中要想著，情況好是可不思議，情況壞是理所當然。必有難來，以安樂處之可也。」「(御書口傳，御書選集三，一四〇頁) 有難來應作安樂想。正如大聖人所說，若行法華經，一定會有難出現。有難才證明是真正的法華經行者。」

在現代一身承受大難的，是創價學會歷任會長。「惡黨難多，不能勝。善。」「(異體同心事，御書一，二〇頁)「南無妙法蓮華經如獅子吼。」「(經王殿御返事，御書一，一〇七頁) 希望各位務必以此確信前進。」

充實你自身的力量

明年已定名爲「新世紀民眾勝利之年」。

戶田先生像留下遺言般說：「沒有東西比人的嫉妒心、人的魔性更可怕。因此，充實你自身的力量吧！你自身要懷著無悔的信心！」

愈是在動盪的時代，愈是要充實自己的力量，愈是要堅強起來。自己勝利，大家也勝利。這是「民眾勝利」的原則。

今後，朝著二十一世紀，發揮堂堂的創價學會的潛力吧！明朗愉快地前進吧！

全國的各位同志，天氣開始轉冷，小心不要著涼了。請多多保重，再會！謝謝！



▲日顯宗拆毀了學會員在一九六四年捐贈的大客殿，這個客殿是日蓮上人任內僧侶團結的象徵，日顯以不合安全標準爲藉口，將它拆毀。但是，根據建築審查員，這個客殿遠超過所有安全規定。日顯的目的是興建更合他品味的建築，新的客殿將有身延風味。

GLOBAL WARMING

SUMMIT
Kyoto, Japan

■ **Kyoto:**
1.5 million population; one of Japan's oldest cities; southeast of Tokyo; was nation's capital from 794-1868; site of many cultural treasures

THE THREAT FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Kyoto conference

The largest gathering on the environment since the Rio Summit in 1992 will be held in Kyoto, Japan.

When: Dec. 1-10, 1997

Who's attending: Negotiating teams from 160 countries

Purpose: Agree on international plan to clean up Earth's atmosphere by limiting greenhouse gas emissions

Issues: What emission limits will be and whether poorer nations need to help

JAPAN

Sea of Japan, Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku, Pacific Ocean, East China Sea

0 100 Miles

Global warming summit

SOURCE: World Book Encyclopedia, World Factbook, news reports; research by JUDY TREIBLE

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It's Up To All of Us

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Most of the limelight at the climate conference in Kyoto last week went to conflicts over who should be held responsible for the Earth's environmental ills. Developing countries paired off against developed nations, environmentalists against business interests. In the end, few people seemed to be satisfied.

So where do we go from here? Many people both in the public and private sectors already have acknowledged the obvious: They can't rely on international treaties and large-scale negotiations. And these people are moving voluntarily in their communities and businesses to make changes, often in conjunction with non-profit and government agencies.

"There are significant programs that the Department of Energy and the EPA already have in place that will be expanded to help meet these commitments (to reduce greenhouse gas emissions) — government-private partnerships," said Amber Jones, with the media office of the DOE. These include research and cost-reducing programs to promote solar roofs, alternate fuel vehicles and energy-efficient buildings and appliances.

A recent study by the DOE, Jones said, shows that businesses, industry and consumers over the long run will save money by investing in energy-efficient, clean technology. And at the same time significantly reduce greenhouse gases.

Businessmen like Richard A. Abdo, chairman and executive officer of Wisconsin Electric Power Company, already are proving that point. He has committed his company to reducing greenhouse gases 16 percent by the year 2000. His strategy includes technological improvements in both generating and distributing electricity, as well as waste-to-energy projects.

"One of my strongest beliefs is that you can do the right thing, and do it cost effectively," Abdo said in an interview for The Nature Conservancy. "We have to break out of the old command-and-control regulatory paradigm."

In addition to what he's doing at home, Abdo also brought his company into the U.S. Initiative on Joint Implementation, a volunteer program administered by the federal government that helps companies invest in international projects to reduce, avoid or capture carbon emissions. Twenty-four of these projects are now in progress, but Abdo was involved in one of the first — the Rio Bravo Project in Belize. Developed by The Nature Conservancy working with a local partner, Programme for Belize, this project secured 14,400 acres of threatened forests and funded a sustainable forestry program. Wisconsin Electric Power, along with Cincergy, PacificCorp, Utilitree and Detroit Edison, gave \$2.6 million to fund the project. The acreage is expected to capture 3 million tons of atmospheric carbon dioxide over four decades.

Under the agreement in Kyoto, the United States cannot use programs such as Rio Bravo to reach its new 14-year goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7 percent from 1990 levels — that issue will be discussed again next year at a conference in Argentina. But business leaders like Abdo, who grew up in the Great Lakes region, aren't in it just to earn carbon credits.

"Depending on the season, I'm not just a chairman and chief executive officer," he said. "I'm also a fisherman, a naturalist and a hiker... When you grow up enjoying clean air and water and the pristine beauty of nature, you notice what happens when people don't protect it." ❧



The environmental group Greenpeace places a dinosaur made from fossil fuel debris in front of the conference hall of the U.N. global warming convention aimed at establishing legally binding cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, Kyoto, Japan, Dec. 5.