

# World Tribune

No. 3194

THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

JUNE 5, 1998

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**'FRIENDS FOR PEACE' PULLOUT INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

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# Loyalty Is the Mark of a True Friend

*SGI President Ikeda sent the following message to the closing meeting of the SGI Spring Study Session in Tokyo, April 21.*

May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, will soon be here again. I am delighted to spend this profoundly significant time of year with all of you — friends and comrades from the remote past.

I sincerely commend each of you for your tremendous efforts in coming to Japan and partici-

pating in this SGI study session. Without a doubt, Nichiren Daishonin and the countless Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the 10 directions, along with President Makiguchi and President Toda, are rejoicing in and applauding your activities.

I hope that as leaders you will always express your appreciation for and do your utmost to support the many sincere members who are steadfastly exerting themselves in faith. The Dai-

shonin says that when you see someone who embraces the Mystic Law, you should rise and greet them from afar, showing them the same respect you would a Buddha.

Today I will share a story involving the great French writer and poet Victor Hugo (1802-85).

Hugo had a friend who suffered a nervous breakdown. As minister of education, the friend

PLEASE SEE LOYALTY, 10

**PETER NATHEN BANNE, PACIFICA, CALIF.**

# Riding the Crest

**Peter Banne is living his dreams, thanks to 23 years of wholehearted Buddhist practice. He rides the big waves, plays in a rhythm and blues band and enjoys a successful career. But most impressive to him: Both his parents are chanting, too.**

The struggle to build my life out of what appeared to be a tangle of frustrated dreams and fantasies began more than 20 years ago with a determination to chant two hours a day for a job. I was 26

PLEASE SEE CREST, 5



# Architects in U.S. Move To Save Sho-Hondo

**Some prominent architects in the United States are working to raise international awareness about Nikken's scheme to tear down the Grand Main Temple.**

By **DAVE McNEILL**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Santa Monica, Calif., May 27

SGI members aren't the only ones protesting Nikken's planned demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo). Not only have the Japanese architects and builders involved in the construction sent their objections to the temple — now saving the Grand Main Temple has gone global.

Last week, a group of prominent U.S. architects and preservationists announced the formation of the International Committee to Save the Sho-Hondo, based in New York. Still in the early stages of formation, the committee is urging the Main Temple's preservation from an aesthetic and architectural perspective. Their goal is to raise awareness of this issue in the international media and help galvanize the Japanese architectural community to protest the demolition that's to take place in their own backyard.

"The Sho-Hondo is locally significant because it has continually and successfully served its worshippers. It is nationally significant as one of the finest representatives of post-war architecture in Japan. And it's internationally irreplaceable as part of the archive of regional modernism," says David Anthone, the committee's chairman. "The proposed demolition seems incredulous to us all. Such an act would be recorded as one of the great architectural losses of the 20th century."

PLEASE SEE ARCHITECTS, 4



The *World Tribune* is the weekly newspaper of the SGI-USA.

**OUR ORGANIZATION**

SGI-USA (Soka Gakkai International-USA) is an American Buddhist organization based on the philosophy of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism. The SGI exists in 128 countries and has its international center in Japan, where the organization was founded in 1930. In the *World Tribune*, you'll see news of our organization both in America and internationally.

**OUR PURPOSE**

The SGI-USA promotes peace and individual happiness based on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Our position is that peace in the community — whether it be in a neighborhood or the world — is inseparably linked with individuals' happiness. SGI-USA members, through their faith, are seeking to become happier and contribute positively to society. In the *World Tribune*, you'll see experiences from members about this process, which we call human revolution.

**OUR PRACTICE**

Our basic practice is chanting the phrase Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon, our object of devotion. According to Nichiren Daishonin, the workings of the universe are an expression of the law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. So chanting it allows us to be in tune with our environment and create the most value. The *World Tribune* carries many study articles to explain the practice in detail.

**OUR HERITAGE**

*Myoho-enge-kyo* is the title of the Lotus Sutra, which is the foundation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha's highest teaching, sets forth that the Buddha nature is inherent in all living things — all people have the potential to become Buddhas. Nichiren Daishonin, a Japanese priest who lived in the 13th century, championed the Lotus Sutra and introduced the concrete way of putting it into practice, the chanting and sharing of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. In keeping with the sutra's teaching that people are Buddhas, the SGI teaches that the heritage of this Buddhism is passed from generation to generation of the people.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact the SGI-USA community center nearest you — there are more than 60 across the country. (You can look in the phone book or call our national headquarters at (310) 451-8811.) The community center can direct you to SGI-USA members in your town, so you can ask questions and find out more.

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# Expressions



Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco. Photo by Lisa Hollis.

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## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Reaching for the Moon

I recently read the "Perspective" by Bill Endsley ("We Can Reach for the Moon") in the May 1 issue. The more I read about how our expectations can change our life, the more I realized how my life can use some expectations.

No outside forces will make anyone happy. But, to take action and expect to make our lives better, that's what I want. Happiness in this world in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism means chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Everyone can experience the joy derived from the Law. Who can expect anything greater?

As an individual practicing this Law, if I do not make changes in myself toward a high life-condition no matter how difficult my human revolution is, how can I expect my family, friends and co-workers to see me in a different light?

A part of my favorite Goshu says, "Never let life's hardships disturb you. After all, no one can avoid problems, not even saints or sages." Like Mr. Endsley says, negative limited expectations become our reality.

When I put my mind to it, I can achieve anything. This article only affirms this conviction with its positive knowledge. I know that I can rise above the negative tide of our times and reach for the moon.

— DENISE THOMAS, Orangeburg, S.C.

### That Darn Cat

I was deeply touched by the May 1 article on the cat ("Honoring Sorrow"). I cried. I hardly ever cry. I tore out the article and gave it to a friend who usually doesn't care to discuss Buddhism. I'll be darned, that cat may open up the heart of my friend, too. I bet it comes back doing cat food commercials in its next life.

As to the more judgmental writers on the vegetarianism issue: nice shoes.

— JEFF LONG, Laguna Hills, Calif.

### No Apology Needed

Thank you for the "Perspective" by Karen Morono ("Falling Short — Not An Untold Story") in the May 15 issue. It is refreshing to see the *World Tribune* give space to an experience that does not end with the member getting the job, or the relationship, and then — apparently — riding off into the sunset.

I am one of the thousands of SGI-USA members, who, like Ms. Morono, do not necessarily have the material or visible proof to "show" the world for all our determination and practice. Approaching the end of my 16th year of embracing this Buddhism and the Gohonzon, I find myself unemployed, behind on my bills and without a relationship. But I know — and those members and leaders who have practiced with me all those years will testify — that my life-condition is brighter, my depression is lessened, and I am on the verge of realizing my dreams.

Ms. Morono has no reason to apologize, as she does at the end of her article, that she cannot show us the "trappings" of material and social success. As Nichiren Daishonin says, the treasures of the heart are the greatest of all.

— LAWRENCE J. CONGDON, Buffalo, N.Y.

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

*In the "Mailbox," we will also publish member' comments, suggestions and questions as they pertain to the World Tribune. Because of volume, not all letters can be printed or acknowledged, but they are all read. All letters are subject to condensation.*

# Taking 'Devilish Functions' Personally

## PERSPECTIVE

**Recently Tobie Marsh has begun to understand the seriousness of the conflict between the SGI and Nichiren Shoshu. As a result, I realize that I can no longer just passively sit back and watch this crucial period in the history of Buddhism unfold,' she says.**

By TOBIE MARSH  
VACAVILLE, CALIF.

The Devil of the Sixth Heaven hates the Buddha's Law" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 119). After reading the explanation of this passage in a recent issue of the *World Tribune*, I experienced a deeper understanding of the religion I have been practicing for 24 years.

From the time I began chanting, I have never been completely satisfied with the answers given to this question: Why is it that when you practice this Buddhism, especially when you determine to try even harder, do devilish functions arise to try to stop you? Usually, I would get the analogy of an airplane taking off, hampered by resistance, but then once in the air enjoying smooth flying. (For the most part anyway.)

But when I read "Why Hate Buddhism?" by Jeff Farr (March 13), I spontaneously felt this was the answer to that nagging question, an answer I don't recall ever hearing before, but just upon hearing once, truly believe. One that makes perfect sense: Devilish functions arise because they hate Buddhism.

For me, picturing devilish functions as haters of Buddhism provides a visual that makes the forces of evil more real. Not in a physical form but as a force within each of us: a powerful force that functions to, among other things, cause us to make stupid decisions, doubt the Gohonzon and, in the worst cases, abandon our faith altogether. Most frightening is this devil's skill in seeping into our minds and taking over without us even knowing it.

As I continued to chant and re-read the article over the next several days, I also began to see how the devilish functions have been extremely active since 1990, trying to prevent SGI members, including myself, from grasping a correct understanding of the temple issue. As Nichiren Daishonin says in the Goshu "Letter to the Brothers," the Devil of the Sixth Heaven confounds "the Buddha nature which is the people's true mind, ... causes them to drink the wine of greed, anger and stupidity, and feeds them nothing but poisoned dishes that leave them prostrate on the ground of the three evil paths. When he happens on one with a seeking mind, he acts to obstruct him" (MW-1, 136).

I was one of those SGI members who became "sick and tired" of hearing about the temple issue, especially in the beginning. There was never any question that I would stick with the SGI and follow SGI President Ikeda, but like so many other members, because I never

had any particularly close ties with the temple or priests anyway, I couldn't quite understand what was the big deal if each side went their separate way. Good riddance!

Only recently have I begun to understand the seriousness of the conflict between the SGI and the priesthood. As a result, I realize that I can no longer just passively sit back and watch this crucial period in the history of Buddhism unfold.

My turning point came at a district discussion meeting several months ago, where a soft-spoken member shared information from a meeting she had just attended where the temple issue had been discussed. An SGI leader at that meeting described the actions of Nichiren Shoshu as an attempt to "destroy Buddhism." I suddenly felt this jolt inside, hearing the words destroy Buddhism.

Before that evening I don't recall hearing those two words in the context of the temple

issue. If I heard them before, my life apparently wasn't ready to listen. A combination of learning that Nikken in fact is out to destroy Buddhism and the concerned way in which the member conveyed that understanding triggered for me the beginning of a new outlook on the temple issue.

Since then, I have come to believe that the temple issue is not something separate from our individual lives — our personal struggles — but that we all face a variety of "Nikkens" each day. Forces that are very powerful, very real and exist only to try to destroy our faith and prevent us from becoming happy. I also believe that the battle with our own tailor-made devils and the ongoing, noble fight with the priesthood are one in the same.

In the past, after reading an article about the temple issue or hearing it talked about at a meeting, I would sometimes sarcastically ask myself, "Well, what am I supposed to do about it?" Since I now believe that there is no difference between the basic

*I now believe that there is no difference between the basic premise of the temple issue and our personal struggles.'*

premise of the temple issue and our personal struggles, the answer seems perfectly clear.

As each of us score one victory after another, it seems only logical that our combined triumphs bring us closer, as a worldwide

force, to defeating an unprecedented enemy of the Buddha in the form of Nikken himself.

This is not just a battle confined to Japan. Nichiren Daishonin paved the way for people throughout the world to attain their enlightenment by embracing his Buddhism. A path the priesthood is threatening to destroy.

I appreciate very much having a better understanding of why it is absolutely imperative that efforts to stop this great force of evil, including ongoing discussion of the temple issue, continue unabated, until the delusion in all our minds clears, allowing our true selves to finally "get it." ■

## Statements of Protest

The following are excerpts from letters by some prominent American architects protesting Nikken's planned demolition of the Grand Main Temple, which was donated by SGI members:

**I AM ABSOLUTELY** horrified to learn of the intention of Nikken, the present high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, to order the demolition of the Sho-Hondo. This building does not simply belong to this Buddhist sect. It belongs to the great heritage of post-war Japanese architectural culture and is one of the finest examples of modern building culture. It would, in my view, grossly and gratuitously dishonor the culture of your nation to have this remarkable work to be so willfully destroyed.

— KENNETH FRAMPTON,  
Columbia University's Ware Professor of Architecture

**TO DESTROY SUCH** a significant structure is to create a vacuum in the architectural memory that represents the highest achievements of men and women. At the end of a century that has witnessed so much loss through human insensitivity to cultural and spiritual properties, the demolition of the Sho-Hondo would be a regrettable finale.

— TERENCE RILEY, chief curator,  
New York's Museum of Modern Art

**THE LOSS OF** a great building is always a cause for concern; the loss of an architecturally significant sacred site that powerfully speaks to millions of followers and reflects the cultural richness of a great faith and a great nation is nothing less than shocking. Such, potentially, is the case of the Sho-Hondo, currently threatened with demolition by the High Priest Nikken of Nichiren Shoshu. It's proposed demolition is inexplicable and, in my view, inexcusable.

— ROBERT STERN, director of historic preservation,  
Columbia University

**THIS BUILDING IS** not only the result of the great effort of many people to build it, it is also a cultural treasure of Japan and the world in that its design transmits humanity's highest aspiration through the language of modern architecture.... [It's demolition] would be a terrible loss for present and future generations of Japanese and all mankind, and the memory of this shameful act would live on.

— GUSTAVO ARAOZ, executive director,  
International Council on Monuments and Sites

**THE POSSIBLE DEMOLITION** of this sacred site — built with the funds of 8 million contributors — would be a terrible and unnecessary loss.

— PEG BREEN, president,  
New York Landmarks Conservancy

**WE WRITE TO** express our dismay at the recent decision of the High Priest of Nichiren Shoshu, Nikken, to demolish the magnificent complex of temple and garden, Sho-Hondo. The future of the temple is of worldwide interest and significance. We wholeheartedly support you in your efforts to prevent the destruction of this extraordinary monument.

— JAMES MARSTON FITCH, founder,  
Preservation movement in America

**THE DEMOLITION OF** this building would be both an artistic and environmental catastrophe. I believe that the demolition you [Nikken] propose is nothing short of a crime, and, in an appeal to common, human decency, I urge you to reconsider it.

— ALAN RITCHIE,  
Philip Johnson/Alan Ritchie architects

## Oasis of Eternity Dedicated

Photo by GREGORY NAKASUJI



In the Sky Rose Chapel at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, Calif., General Director Zaitzu addresses the audience at the dedication ceremony for the Oasis of Eternity, May 24. These burial grounds at Rose Hills are the first to be set aside for SGI-USA members and their families. In conjunction with the opening ceremony, memorial services were held for deceased Southern California members. Currently there are 200 burial plots available, and the SGI-USA has an option to purchase 500 more. The Sky Rose Chapel, located within the cemetery, will be available twice a year for conducting memorial services. Discussion and planning is ongoing toward the development of future sites in other U.S. cities. For information regarding the new facility and possible future sites, contact Tony Sugano at (310) 260-8981. (Please also see p. 6 for a Q-and-A on the Buddhist view of cemeteries.)

## U.S. Architects Move To Save Sho-Hondo

ARCHITECTS, FROM PAGE 1

Mr. Anthonie, who learned of the Main Temple's plight from concerned SGI-USA members, has written to many prominent architects in Japan, urging them to join his coalition. In this letter, he quotes several American architects deeply concerned with Nikken's demolition plans (please see "Statements" box on this page).

The Main Temple was completed in 1972 and was designed to last hundreds of years. The

temple's unique roof is just one of the many features praised by architects around the world. Symbolizing the wings of a crane about to take flight, the roof employs a semi-rigid suspension system with no support posts, allowing an audience of 6,000 people to each have an unobstructed view of the altar.

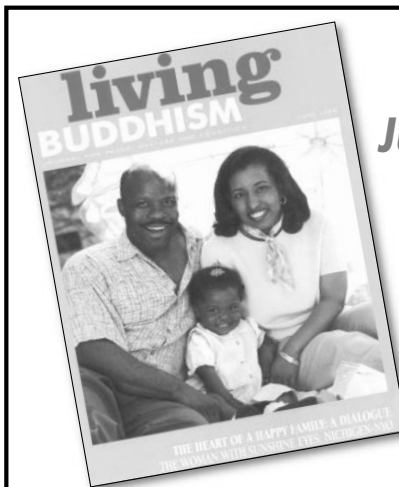
This semi-rigid system employs steel beams and concrete plates as the suspension system instead of steel cables, giving the roof a rigidity needed to withstand the forces of wind and

earthquakes over the centuries.

The designers consideration for the comfort and safety of the people who came to worship is evident throughout the temple, from the heating and air-conditioning to the separate entrance areas for good and bad weather.

For these and other reasons, architects like those on the committee say that the Main Temple is a modern masterpiece.

Tearing it down would be, as one of the architects in the committee wrote, "nothing short of a crime." W



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## CREST, FROM I

and had settled in a small city — 1,000 miles from home — after having been introduced to Buddhism by a complete stranger.

Trying this practice in a new environment proved to be much more than I had bargained for.

I remember riding my bicycle one evening up a steep hill in the freezing rain after working a 12-hour shift unloading fishing boats. Cold, tired, broke, smelling of dead fish, thinking that life couldn't get much tougher. I was wrong!

I proceeded to get myself hired and fired from a string of jobs over a period of 18 months, until finally I landed a position with an insurance company as a sales representative — an act of sheer desperation, or so it seemed at the time. Two years later, while trying to establish myself as a life-insurance professional, I decided to take the next step in becoming respectable: getting married. Five years later, after seeing my marriage crumble into ruins, along with what little financial fortune I had accumulated, I decided to try it again.

My "rebound marriage" didn't last long. It seemed that I was determined to experience all human sufferings in one lifetime.

But this Buddhist organization got me back on track whenever I became lost. Many of my leaders became my trusted friends. I received countless hours of compassionate guidance. I put my heart and soul into activities — from holding discussion meetings in my home to playing drums in the Brass Band. (Little did I know what the future effect would be.)

At the age of 48, I am now a certified financial planner, still with the same insurance company I started with 22 years ago. I have a well-established clientele, a six-figure income and the freedom to work where and when I desire.

Best of all, I can help people — listening to them, hearing their hopes and dreams, trying to solve problems. The work is always challenging, and occasionally clients will tell me that I have made a difference in their lives.

My career was the first experience I had in trusting the Go-honzon rather than merely using my head to make a decision. The wisdom to take this job and try my best, even though my mind had told me otherwise, came from listening to other members share their experiences about Buddhist practice and listening to lots of guidance.

The organization gave me the training I needed to turn what



Peter's band, 'Quarter to Blue,' plays every other Thursday at DeMarco's 23 Club in Brisbane, Calif.

seemed at first a ridiculous job into a great career: the encouragement to keep trying when I felt too tired or discouraged to go on. Even when my relationships, finances and unsuccessful business dealings seemed overwhelming, I could raise my life-condition by thinking about other people's happiness and kosen-rufu.

And so my career was launched by the time I was 35. But I always knew there was more to me than being a financial planner.

As a teenager, I had dreams of being a big-wave rider, and by the time I was nearly 40 years old, my surfing fantasies became reality — after overcoming numerous physical limitations. I had injured my back several times, and I was so nearsighted that I couldn't even read the large E on the eye chart. I hadn't exercised much from ages 20 to 35, and I had no self-confidence when it came to sports. Aside from the obvious physical training that was required, there were numerous financial obstacles, too. Worst of all was the seemingly endless ridicule and scorn from other more competent surfers out there in the water, sometimes in life-threatening situations.

I quickly found that riding big waves with contact lenses simply didn't work. When I happened to see an ad for radial keratotomy surgery while riding the bus one day, I decided to find out more about it. In those days (1986), radial keratotomy was still an experimental procedure. I got to know the physician who pioneered this procedure in the United States, and he was very supportive of my Buddhist practice.

About a year and four surgeries later, my vision was 20/20 and somehow has even improved since then — a rather unusual

outcome. My doctor tells me my vision now is 20/15.

After each surgical procedure, there were weeks of intense chanting for my eyes to heal. At last, the morning after my fourth surgery arrived. Immediately upon arising, I knelt before my altar, lifted the patch from my right eye, and the very first sight that greeted my eyes was the Go-honzon, shining crystal clear in the morning light. I nearly cried with gratitude.

I have been catching and riding big waves ever since, from the Fiji Islands to Mexico. On all my surfing trips, I always take the writings of Nichiren Daishonin, copies of the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, and I chant a lot every day. I have fond memories of chanting at the beautiful community centers on the Hawaiian Islands, sharing experiences with the Hawaiian members, and always introducing Buddhism to people whenever the opportunity arises, wherever I go.

My other childhood fantasy was to be a drummer in a rock-and-roll band. Although I played many musical instruments in my life, I never felt truly "one" with any of them.

At the age of 46, I bought my first drum set and started jamming with a couple of talented musician friends. Two years later, we have a respectable rhythm-and-blues band, able to play an entire evening of dance music at a club or a party, and we write much of our music ourselves.

Thanks to Buddhism, I was not discouraged after my first half-hearted attempts at playing drums: I would jump on somebody else's drum set at a party or practice on a beat-up-thrown-together drum set that I shared with another musician friend, who let me practice in his warehouse bedroom while he was out play-

ing gigs.

I mostly learned to play on the job, with little training or even time to practice. What great fortune to play with excellent musicians who can give me helpful criticism when I need it and generous praise when I deserve it! I chant that I can accept the criticism, and pray before each performance for the music to lift people's spirits.

Of all the benefits I have received, perhaps the greatest is to be able to chant with my parents. When I first introduced my parents to Buddhism nearly 20 years ago in Los Angeles, I never actually expected that they would practice. After I connected my mom with some local members, though, she began chanting almost immediately. She recently told me that she has kept track of her daimoku and is now working on her 37th million.

My dad didn't practice until he had a stroke at the age of 85. They now chant 10 minutes together every afternoon.

Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo together with both my parents is a powerful experience that words cannot adequately describe. I am confident their happiness is assured in this lifetime and beyond, and their life force is remarkable. My dad, now 88, while unable to do much these days, is happy and content, while my mother, a world traveler at age 78, still teaches a stretch class

from the Daishonin's writings. I try to absorb each word, just as in reciting the sutra.

There is one passage from the Daishonin's writings that has always spoken directly to me about the power of faith in Buddhism. To me, this passage has been at times an anchor and at other times a lighthouse: "Although I and my disciples may encounter various difficulties, if we do not harbor doubts in our hearts, we will as a matter of course attain Buddhahood. Do not have doubts simply because Heaven does not lend you protection. Do not be discouraged because you do not enjoy an easy and secure existence in this life. This is what I have taught my disciples morning and evening, and yet they begin to harbor doubts and abandon their faith.

"Foolish men are likely to forget the promises they have made when the crucial moment comes" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 180).

I used to say that I would write an experience for the *World Tribune* when I was happily married.... I decided not to wait, because I realized just how remarkable my life has become and how much of my happiness I owe to the practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism, the guidance of President Ikeda and the support of the SGI.

In the coming chapter of my life, I want to be able to say that



Peter lives a surfer's dream in an oceanside condo — the Pacific is his backyard.

for senior citizens and regularly attends SGI-USA meetings. She just recently had her very first book published — a work of fiction based on her life experiences.

SGI President Ikeda encourages us to read the writings of Nichiren Daishonin every day. For this reason, I always comb the *World Tribune* for quotes

I have helped many people to discover the power of Buddhist practice and the joy of belonging to this organization. ❧

(Page 1 photo by Pamela J)

You can e-mail Peter Nathan Banne at: [nbanne@compuserve.com](mailto:nbanne@compuserve.com).

**WOW!**

**BREAKTHROUGHS IN UNDERSTANDING**

## Buddhas Have Real Feelings

By **M. LAVORA PERRY**  
EAST CLEVELAND, OHIO

It doesn't seem real to me [that he has died], and so I do not feel inclined to continue. I will write you again later" (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 157-58). The Daishonin wrote this letter to Nanjo Tokimitsu after Tokimitsu's younger brother, a teenager, died unexpectedly. When I first read it, I was deeply moved that Nichiren Daishonin himself, faced with the death of someone he dearly cared for, grieved so profoundly that he — one who wrote as easily as other people breathe — had to put down his pen because the event seemed so unreal.

I know what that dream-like state feels like. In 1991, while I was still living in New York City, I received a phone call from my mother. "La-Vora," she said, "Little Rudy's dead." Killed by a drunk driver. He was my oldest brother's 15 year-old son, Rudolph Perry III. I went numb. It really felt like I was in some weird dream riding the subway to work, doing SGI-USA activities, flying home wanting to be "strong" to show my Southern Baptist family how joyful Buddhists can be at funerals.

I remember being so grateful that an SGI-USA Cleveland member agreed to join me at the funeral for support. I remember feeling disappointed in myself for sobbing uncontrollably right along with everyone else at the service. But that member didn't seem disappointed in me. He cried, too. That may be one of the reasons why I married him.

When I read this letter to Nanjo Tokimitsu, I felt that the Daishonin was telling me, it's OK to love, laugh, and cry your eyes out when you need to, because, being people, Buddhas have real feelings. If not, how could we ever understand another's pain, pray for them as if for ourselves, and encourage them to deepen their faith in the Mystic Law to change their suffering into fuel for enlightenment? The Daishonin didn't ignore or hide his feelings. He felt and expressed them. I want to be like him.

*Did you ever say "Wow!" after studying Buddhism? E-mail, mail or fax your story to us (see p. 2 for contact information).*

## WHAT A CONCEPT

ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By **LISA JONES**  
STAFF WRITER

The whole point of practicing Buddhism is to attain Buddhahood. But how will we know when we've succeeded?

Nichiren Daishonin says that the attainment of Buddhahood is "nothing extraordinary" and a certainty for all people. But he also says that it's a rarity and "to attain Buddhahood is difficult indeed." Paradoxical as it may sound, these are not contradictory statements.

Buddhahood is a state of life that implies absolute freedom, happiness and compassion. It's a state in which we are awakened to the ultimate truth that manifests itself in all things. In this life-condition, we have the ability to perceive the workings of good and evil, and our wisdom and courage are limitless.

### BUDDHAHOOD

# Fully Awake, Fully Human

Buddhahood is one of the Ten Worlds — the other nine are Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Rapture or Heaven, Learning, Realization or Absorption, and Bodhisattva.

SGI President Ikeda explains: "The Ten Worlds are also called the Ten Dharma Worlds. *Dharma World* indicates the universe, the entirety of phenomena. The entire universe expressed as the Ten Worlds is a great entity of life, a great Buddha whose life is without beginning or end and who continually acts with compassion. For precisely this reason, all beings, whichever of the Ten Worlds is their dominant tendency, are one with this Buddha. When we realize that our lives are one with the great and eternal life of the universe, we are the Buddha. The purpose of Buddhism is to enable all people to come to this realization."

In other words, if we are alive, we can manifest all the qualities inherent in Buddhahood. But doing this isn't easy. The Daishonin urges us to have faith and chant wholeheartedly, to struggle against the darkness and evil that exist in the world (and in our own hearts). This is the way to strengthen the basis of our Buddhahood and illu-

minate our fundamental darkness.

It brings to mind a story: Shakyamuni Buddha was walking down a road in India. He looked so wonderful — he had such a glow and an atmosphere of freedom and happiness around him — that people not only stopped and stared at him, they came running from all over to get a glimpse. People asked him: "Are you a king? A god? An apparition?"

"No," he answered.

"What are you, then?"

"I am awake."

Buddhas aren't angels or superhuman beings. Rather, Buddhas are those who are fully awake, fully human, whose innate Buddhahood is fully developed.

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "The common mortal is the entity of the three properties, or the true Buddha" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 90). President Ikeda comments: "In essence what he is saying is that the common mortal is the true Buddha. I would like to interpret this as the ultimate declaration of the 'humanization of Buddhism.'"

Ten in a series

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON FAITH

## What's the Buddhist View of Cemeteries?

By **TED MORINO**  
STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

**Q** I understand that the SGI-USA is opening a cemetery in the United States. Does this mean I should be buried there? What does Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism teach about what should be done with a person's remains?

**A** The SGI-USA has made arrangements for cemetery property at a memorial park in Los Angeles at the request of members, mainly pioneer members and their families. Though such a facility is now available, no one ought to feel as if they "should" be buried there, and of course no special benefit accrues from being so. Still, some people feel comforted by the fact that their remains are buried next to comrades in faith in a specially designated area.

From the Buddhist viewpoint, how to deal with a person's remains is a matter of personal choice. Buddhism does not specify how funerals should be conducted; it doesn't discuss whether the deceased's remains should be cremated or buried or dealt with in any other manner. Buddhism's primary focus is on how to live, how to manifest Buddhahood.

In 13th century Japan, the time of the Daishonin, the culture was such that people would take the ashes of loved ones to a sacred place. Naturally, the Daishonin respected the customs of the time and country. We can read in the *Gosho* of the son of Abutsu-bo, a believer on Sado Island, visiting the Daishonin at Mount Minobu with his father's ashes. There is also the story of Toki Jonin, a believer in what is today Chiba, visiting the Daishonin with his mother's ashes. While the Daishonin embraced these acts of faith and filial piety, he did not teach that taking remains to a sacred place or to a revered person is necessary in Buddhist practice.

The Lotus Sutra states, "There is no need to enshrine the relics of the Buddha there" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 165). Implied here is that we should respect the Buddha's teaching, not the Buddha's remains. The Buddha's remains were not meant to be a holy object of worship.

When it comes to the remains of loved ones, it's only natural for us to handle them with respect and love. Such feelings accord with the Buddha's compassion

for all humanity. But Buddhism asserts that the remains are no more than remains. Therefore, how the remains are handled — cremated or not, buried in a cemetery, buried at sea, buried in an SGI cemetery, kept in an urn at home or scattered somewhere — has nothing to do

with the deceased's future happiness and well-being.

The most important thing is the life-condition a person displays at the moment of his or her death. Also important is the happiness the surviving family shows, for the causes we make in this life affect our families, according to Buddhist scripture, many generations in the past and many generations in the future. Our

prayers for the deceased offered day and night during gongyo especially contribute to our loved ones' happiness. 卍

**How remains are handled has nothing to do with the deceased's happiness.**

[This article is based upon the book *Common Sense and Uncommon Sense in Buddhist Formalities* authored by the Association of Youthful Priests Dedicated to the Reformation of Nichiren Shoshu, available only in Japanese.]

DISCUSSIONS ON YOUTH

# Weaving the Fabric of Peace

This is Part 2 of the final installment in a series of discussions on youth among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai high school division leaders Hidenobu Kimura (young men's leader) and Kazue Igeta (young women's leader), representing the high school division members.



Photo by KIRK CONDYLES

**IKEDA:** Every August, I recall the day World War II ended. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, 1945. It was a sunny day, and I was staying with relatives in Nishi-magome in Tokyo's Ota Ward. Our house had been razed by the authorities to create a barrier to block the spread of fires caused by air raids.

I heard that there would be an important radio broadcast at noon. I was expecting an announcement from the Imperial Headquarters, the nation's highest military council during the war, that we were going to launch an all-out attack on the United States. That was the general atmosphere at the time. That was what we had been taught to think.

Just before noon, I went to my grandmother's house in nearby Higashi-magome. Everywhere was quiet and still. I listened to the emperor's address, but the reception was poor, and I couldn't make out what he was saying.

Neither my grandmother nor I had any idea whether Japan had won or lost. When I got back to Nishi-magome, my younger brother came running to me in tears, crying, "We lost, we lost!" I thought the wartime hardships had finally driven him crazy.

We all stood about saying: "How could we have lost? It's impossible!" Not until evening did it finally begin to sink in that Japan had lost the war.

The city fell into a strange lethargy. People were worried what would happen when the occupation forces arrived. Until supper, everyone sat about in a stupor.

But, at the same time, we began to realize that the sound of bomber raids, which had continued through the morning, could no longer be heard. They had completely stopped at noon. The skies were quiet.

A sense of relief seemed to spread.

**'Kosen-rufu is not something that will end at some fixed point in time,' SGI President Ikeda says. "We won't sit down one day and say, "Well, now kosen-rufu is finished."**

That night, for the first time in months, we could turn on the lights in our homes as we pleased — we had been forced to live in semi-darkness during the air raids. "How bright!" I thought.

And I also thought what a good thing peace was. We were all relieved, yet no one dared to come right out and say: "I'm glad we lost. What a relief that the war's over!"

Many fine youth lost their lives in the war. My four elder brothers were sent to the front to fight.

**KIMURA:** I am reminded of this passage from *The Human Revolution*: "Nothing is more pitiful than a nation being swept along by foolish leaders."

**IKEDA:** My eldest brother died in Burma, which is now Myanmar. He was a fine young man of great integrity.

When we received the news, we couldn't believe it. About three years later, a young man who had served with him visited us and recounted how my brother had died. My brother had been hit by machine-gun fire from a low-flying aircraft and had fallen into a river during the drawn-out Battle of Imphal.

For a long time, I had difficulty picturing this. One day, many years later, I watched an in-depth TV documentary on the Battle of Imphal. At last I felt what it must have been like. And I was again

made aware of what a senseless, tragic campaign it was.

During this disastrous battle, the Japanese army left a trail of its own soldiers' corpses in its path, which became known as the Skeleton Trail. It was a tragedy caused by leaders who made terrible misjudgments, were preoccupied with self-serving interests and forgot completely about the men who were carrying out their orders.

**KIMURA:** Such dreadful things must never be allowed to happen again.

**IKEDA:** Yet today many warn of a resurgence of nationalism and authoritarianism in Japan. Everyone is beginning to forget the tragedy that took place just a half-century ago.

That's why the Soka Gakkai, which ardently cries out for peace, is so important. The initial reason I joined the Soka Gakkai was that I could completely trust Mr. Toda, because he had spent two years in prison during the war for his opposition to militarism. I didn't know anything about Buddhism. I believed in a person, in Mr. Toda. And following the path of oneness of mentor and disciple with Mr. Toda became the path of my human revolution.

**KIMURA:** That path has been the path of kosen-rufu itself, hasn't it?

**IKEDA:** The determination to accomplish kosen-rufu adds momentum to the determination to accomplish your human revolution. Human revolution is like a planet's rotation on its axis, while kosen-rufu is like the planet's revolution around the sun. Rotation and revolution are the foundation of all motion in the universe. It would counter the laws of the universe if a planet did not revolve around the sun.

**IGETA:** Some people don't clearly understand what kosen-rufu implies. One member asked whether it means converting everyone on earth to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

**IKEDA:** Kosen-rufu is the spread of the Mystic Law from one person to another. So, too, is its spread from 10,000 to 50,000. Yet, kosen-rufu is not about numbers. It is a process, an eternal flow.

Kosen-rufu is not something that will end at some fixed point in time. We won't sit down one day and say, "Well, now kosen-rufu is finished." Not only would that spell our spiritual death, we'd lose all motivation to do human revolution.

Kosen-rufu is unending. Although we can try to describe it by defining certain conditions, in reality, kosen-rufu has no set form.

**IGETA:** Can the same be said about our personal revolution, our human revolution? Is it a process, too?

**IKEDA:** Yes. When a seriously ill person recovers, that is great human revolution. When a mean person becomes kind, that is human revolution. When people who treat their parents poorly begin to respect and love them, that is human revolution.

Human revolution cannot be pinned down to one specific thing. It is any action that leads to positive change or improvement in the inner realm of your life. Like kosen-rufu, it is an ongoing process. What's important to ask yourself is whether you are on the path of continuous personal growth.

**IGETA:** What is the literal meaning of the word *kosen-rufu*?

**IKEDA:** *Kosen* means to widely declare. *Widely* implies speaking out to the world, to an ever-greater number and ever-broader spectrum of people.

*Declare* means to proclaim one's ideals, principles and philosophy. The *ru* of *rufu* means a current like that of a great river. And *fu* means to spread out like a roll of cloth.

The teaching of the Mystic Law has nothing to do with appearance, form or pride. It flows out freely. To all humanity the world over. Like a cloth unfolding, it spreads out and covers all. So *rufu* means to flow freely, to reach all.

Just like a cloth, kosen-rufu is woven from vertical and horizontal threads. The vertical threads represent the passing of the Daishonin's teaching from mentor to disciple, parent to child, senior to junior. The horizontal threads represent the impartial spread of this teaching, transcending national borders, social classes and all other distinctions.

Simply put, kosen-rufu is the movement to communicate the ultimate way to happiness. To communicate the highest principle of peace to people of all classes and nations through the correct philosophy and teaching of the Daishonin.

Photo by LISA HOLLIS

**IGETA:** It is natural to want to tell others how great something is that we believe in. This is not limited to our Buddhist practice.

**IKEDA:** That's right. Any vendor or salesperson, for example, believes that his or her product — whether it be televisions, fast food or fresh vegetables — is the best and tries to have as many people as possible know about it and buy it. This is an example, in a sense, of the widespread propagation of one's beliefs.

School administrators believe their educational institution employs the best methods and produces the highest quality students. They want to have as many people as possible know this. Their activities to promote their schools are the widespread propagation of their beliefs.

We also might say that Christianity carried out its own widespread propagation in the past. So did Islam, Hinduism and Communism. While we already know what happened when they were widely propagated, we don't yet know the result of widely propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism. We are now carrying out this grand experiment and creating history as we go.

**KIMURA:** That's wonderful. The work of kosen-rufu is really the most exciting drama.

**IKEDA:** But unless each of us is certain of our beliefs and proud that we practice the highest Buddhist teaching, we can't properly carry out kosen-rufu.

In all walks of life, there are and always will be corrupt, unscrupulous people. They find it impossible to remain for long in such a sincere, earnest movement. This was true of all who betrayed our organization in the past. Anyone who tries to join the kosen-rufu movement with a deceptive, scheming or malicious intent will soon be exposed.

**KIMURA:** Kosen-rufu cannot be properly carried out unless each person strives to do his or her human revolution.

**IKEDA:** You can also think of your human revolution as undertaking kosen-rufu in the microcosm of your own world. When many individuals are pursuing their human revolution, they can advance the kosen-rufu of society as a whole. In other words, kosen-rufu is advanced in direct proportion to the strides you make in your human revolution.



'From ancient times, it has been said that posterity judges teachers by their disciples.'

At the same time, when you abandon selfish interests and devote yourself to kosen-rufu, a movement to lead others to happiness, your human revolution will progress. That is how closely the two are related.

It is wrong to isolate yourself. Those who unite with caring, supportive seniors in faith, seniors who are sincerely devoted to kosen-rufu, grow by leaps and bounds and make great strides in their human revolution.

**KIMURA:** Some people ask why, if the Daishonin's Buddhism is such a superior teaching, everyone doesn't jump at the chance to practice it? And why those who practice are criticized?

**IKEDA:** It isn't practiced readily by all precisely because it is true and right. Being kind to one's parents is right, but how easy is that? Studying is the right thing to do, but how many do it? The same is true of Buddhism.

That human beings possess philosophy and ideals distinguishes us from other animals. All people ask, at least once in their lives, why they were born in this world. But animals don't ask themselves that question.

Another of our distinguishing features is our human yearning for principles that allow us to live honorably, peacefully, happily. It's also human nature that when we see a starving child on television, we want to do something to help. That is a natural instinct.

We cannot live alone, isolated from others. In Japanese, *human being* (Jpn *ningen*) is written with two Chinese characters that, when combined, mean between people. It is through our interactions with others that we polish our lives and grow.

Therefore, it's only natural that, with as many people as possible, we share and promote understanding of the philosophy,

the ideal, that we believe is most correct and valid. It is our duty and our right.

It's the nature of animals to accumulate food just for themselves. If we were to keep to ourselves the means we have found for attaining happiness, not sharing it with others, we would have succumbed to the states of Animality and Hunger. The wish to share the truth with others, to share the means for achieving happiness, is the hallmark of philosophy, of education, of culture and of Buddhism.

**IGETA:** That's what kosen-rufu is all about, isn't it? Widely sharing the Daishonin's Buddhism is a wonderful crystallization and expression of our humanity.

**IKEDA:** Yes. It's not being stingy or closed. *Kosen-rufu* means sharing with our fellow human beings through heart-to-heart dialogue and friendship, and striving with them to find the way to become better, happier

people. That alliance of individuals working for the happiness of all constitutes kosen-rufu.

**KIMURA:** I feel, President Ikeda, that I have gained a deeper understanding of your efforts to engage in dialogue with people the world over and forge an international alliance for peace.

On Aug. 24 last year, you celebrated your 50th anniversary of practicing the Daishonin's teachings. Fifty years ago, kosen-rufu must have seemed a fantastic dream. But today, because of your incredible efforts, the Daishonin's Buddhism has spread to 128 countries and territories.

**IKEDA:** I have only tried to keep my vow to walk the path of human revolution that my mentor, Josei Toda, taught me. Now I have fulfilled that vow to the letter. I have won. That's what's important — to win over yourself. That is human revolution. That is kosen-rufu.

I am not concerned with the immediate future. I am not afraid of persecution or criticism. I am thinking about 100 and 200 years from now. My actions today are based on the future 10 millennia hence.

From ancient times, it has been said that posterity judges teachers by their disciples. I have been the object of every conceivable groundless attack and insult, but I don't care in the least. Buddhism teaches that this is unavoidable.

I know, deep in my heart, that the evaluation of my true worth, of my success or failure, will be based on the activities, contributions and achievements my disciples will make in their local communities, countries and the world. There are many, many graduates of the high school division who are playing active roles in society all around the world. I find this enormously encouraging. It makes me very, very happy.

I have no regrets. I believe that I have done my best as a Buddhist and a leader.

My legacy will always be remembered. Why? Because I know that my disciples are achieving great things and making an important mark on our world. That means that my life has been victorious. I can claim proud, glorious victory in my efforts.

I hope, pray and trust that you, my young friends, and many others behind you will follow me on this triumphant path into the future.

That is my only wish.

*This concludes the series "Discussions on Youth"*

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

# NO BARRIERS



**President Ikeda tells the story of how President Toda won over a religious scholar who had a bad impression of the Soka Gakkai. 'Buddhism and society are one,' President Ikeda writes. 'There are no barriers....'**

April is the month when the cherry blossoms bloom, dance in the breeze, then scatter and fall. The second day of that month is the day on which our beloved second president, Josei Toda, passed away.

Mr. Toda was a great Buddhist leader. He also had many friends and a wide circle of acquaintances. Since I was assisting Mr. Toda, it often was my responsibility to contact those friends and acquaintances on his behalf, a task I considered a great honor.

Among his friends was a brilliant religious scholar, an associate professor at Tokyo University at the time. Later, he became a full professor and the president of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies.



In the spring of 1959, a year after Mr. Toda's death, this scholar contributed an article, which appeared in the April 10 issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, sharing his recollections of his late friend. He related that once, when he was leaving on a research trip, Mr. Toda had given him as a going-away present, a copy of his novel *Human Revolution* (written under the pen name Myo Goku). Opening the book, the scholar said, he found that Mr. Toda had written a poem for him on the flyleaf:

*Such is my state of mind now  
That, as I bid you bon voyage,  
I pray with all my heart  
For your happiness.*

What a warm poem it is, filled with wishes for a friend's happiness and good fortune as he heads off on his travels!



The two first met toward the end of November 1954. Mr. Toda was conducting a discussion with two scholars of religion at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters, one of whom was this friend. The content of their discussion was later aired on the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) radio show *The Religion Hour*. Mr. Toda presented the positions of the Soka Gakkai clearly and directly. I was present as well.

The scholar, who was younger than Mr. Toda by a decade, had developed a rather negative image of the Soka Gakkai. But during the discussion, Mr. Toda dispelled all his misunderstandings and misconceptions with great patience and tact. And he stayed in touch with the scholar after the program was finished.

Later, I visited this friend of

Mr. Toda at Tokyo University where, with members of the student division, we carried on philosophical and religious discussions. How fondly I look back on those times now.



I want to share a bit more of that scholar's recollections of Mr. Toda, as they appeared in the *Seikyo Shimbun*: "My role with regard to religion is to be an objective scholar," he wrote, "and I cannot become too closely involved with any religious organization. But I had a close personal relationship with Mr. Toda, one that transcended any religious matters. I am certain that even those who defame the Soka Gakkai would have been won over by Mr. Toda had they met him."

He also wrote in this article: "Mr. Toda once asked me to act as an intermediary and arrange a meeting among him and those who disliked him and the Soka Gakkai. Unfortunately, I was never able to accomplish this." How wonderful it would have

been if he had!

While Mr. Toda was uncompromising regarding his firm faith in Buddhism, he was remarkably flexible and broad-minded in relations with others, tolerant of the ways of the world and human nature. He could look beyond dogmatism and forge friendships and alliances with all.

After becoming a leader in his field, this scholar continued to offer us sound advice, always based on a sympathetic understanding of the Soka Gakkai and its mission.



I, too, have engaged in many dialogues with scholars and men and women of learning and culture. I have done this always firmly holding in my mind the image of my mentor, who could speak freely and persuasively with anyone and everyone.

I have spoken with and become close friends with many scholars, such as Professor Emeritus Bryan Wilson of Oxford and the late Professor Emeritus Shin Anzai of Sophia Uni-

versity, Tokyo. All of them have and do possess finely honed critical faculties regarding religion. That is precisely why I felt it so important for them to know the truth about the Gakkai.



The noble Soka Gakkai that Mr. Toda gave his entire life to building.

The Soka Gakkai — a citadel of conscience dedicated to human happiness and world peace.

The Soka Gakkai — a citadel of the people. Those who gather under its banner shine with the noblest human spirit. Kosen-rufu is the process of embracing one friend and then another in this radiant light.

Buddhism and society are one. There are no barriers between the Soka Gakkai and society at large. Nor can we permit any barriers to arise between one human heart and another.

Friendship is proof of our humanity. And Buddhism is what enables us to develop that humanity to the fullest possible extent. That is why it is so important for us to devote our lives to encouraging the flowers of enjoyable, worthwhile discussions to bloom. And to causing the fruit of friendship to grow and ripen.

**In this essay series, SGI President Ikeda uses his pen name Ho Goku, as he does in *The New Human Revolution*. This series is published as "Thoughts on *The New Human Revolution*" in the *Seikyo Shimbun*.**

From SGI President Ikeda:

\*The essence of Buddhism lies in living out one's life as a "great common mortal." To completely dedicate one's life to others; to thoroughly exert oneself for the Law and for society; and to die having fully expended oneself — that is the way of life of a bodhisattva and a Buddha. It's a matter of "laying down" one's life; of fearlessly speaking out on behalf of justice; of exhausting one's energy to bring people true happiness. Where this spirit is lacking, Buddhism does not exist.... Fundamentally, the Soka movement exists only where people manifest the spirit to dedicate their lives to spreading the Law. (August 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p.33)

\*Even when we are spreading the Law "without concern for our lives," we absolutely must not do anything that would reflect badly on the Law. Because we have the

## WORDS TO THE WISE

## PROPAGATION

**Only, I, Nichiren at first chanted Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, but then two, three and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Likewise, propagation will unfold this way in the future. (The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 93)**

highest concern for the Law, we need to fully exercise our wisdom in propagating it.... While teaching his followers the *shakubuku* spirit... Nichiren Daishonin also emphasized the importance of showing people genuine courtesy and respect, and of conducting oneself with wisdom. (September 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p.34)

\*We have to shed light on people, to give people light. We must also bathe ourselves in light. We must never remain in darkness, nor must we allow others to remain in the dark. Flowers will not bloom, the lotus will not blossom, in darkness. We have to send the light of the Mystic Law to all those we share a bond with. Doing so also increases

our own light. (November 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p.44)

\*Attaining Buddhahood in one's present form means developing in oneself the Buddha's strong spirit to unhesitatingly lead all suffering people to happiness. It is to take action cheerfully and with composure to help those who are suffering, even though one might be subject to ridicule or discrimination. Those who carry out such a practice shine as Buddhas just as they are. (July 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p.35)

\*Working to overcome misunderstandings and prejudices is a large part of our Buddhist practice in the Latter Day of the Law. Actively discussing and conveying the truth to others constitute the practice of *shakubuku*. (Aug. 22, 1997, *World Tribune*, p.8)

## LOYALTY, FROM PAGE 1

had been working to reform France's education system. He came under such intense fire from all quarters, however, that he fell into a state of utter despair. I think that's understandable. The fierce attacks of the kind that I myself have endured could easily cause someone to become mentally unsta-

ble, fall ill, or even commit suicide.

Overcome by the pressures, Hugo's friend resigned and locked himself up in his home. When Hugo went to see how his friend was doing, he found him looking gaunt and his hair unkempt. His friend was so depressed that he could not even muster a smile for his guest.

Hugo tried to cheer his friend

up, but the latter replied: "If you only knew what things they concoct; they are inconceivable.... These things, these villainies are secretly told and openly believed, and — no one defends me.... Victor Hugo, swear to me that you will not believe any calumny."

In reply, Hugo assured him of his firm friendship: "Doubt that the sky is blue, but do not doubt

that the friend who addresses you is loyal."

Wishing to encourage him, Hugo went on:

You have your enemies; but who has not?... Have I not been for 20 years past hated, rended, sold, betrayed, reviled, hooted, taunted, insulted, calumniated? Have not my books been parodied and my deeds travestied? I

also am beset and spied upon; I also have traps set for me, and I have even been made to fall in them.... But what is all that to me? I disdain it. It is one of the most difficult yet necessary things in life to learn to disdain. Disdain protects and crushes. It is a breastplate and a club. You have enemies? Why, it is the

PLEASE SEE LOYALTY, NEXT PAGE



# THE Fine Print

[fineprint@sgi-usa.org](mailto:fineprint@sgi-usa.org)

## GREETINGS

We would like to send warm greetings and best wishes to all the wonderful friends we have met while participating in Soka Gakkai activities since 1968 in Misawa and Yokota, Japan, Great Falls, MT, Tampa, FL, Great Lakes, IL, Stockton and Sacramento, CA.

Jerry Farr  
Kikue Watanabe Farr  
Gina Farr-Anderson

Perfect timing! The May 1st issue had a story on Sandy Patrick — my former leader. I wondered if I could reach her somehow. There were several instances where her guidance was incredibly helpful. I'm sure there are others who feel the same. Be well, Sandy, I think of you often.

Dorie Houser, Las Vegas

I've been a SGI member for 19 years and have practiced consistently during that time. I am the 46 year old mother of 3 children and 1 grandchild. In 1997, I moved from Indianapolis, Indiana, to go to the Florida Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in St. Petersburg, Florida. I love the organization and the members. I never go anywhere without contacting the members in that place.

Denice M. Gaddie

To Jan Martinez, L.A., Calif.  
Aloha from Hawaii.... Hi Jan, remember me? Kapi'olani, on the white Harley? I want to thank you for introducing me to the Daishonin's Buddhism and the SGI. I practice and study faithfully, and will soon receive my Gohonzon. Thank you again and hope to hear from you.

Aloha, Kapi

To Harold, our beloved brother:  
Ultimately, whether we are victorious in our lives and throughout the three existences of past, present and future, is determined by our efforts today; it is determined by our resolve at this moment!"

We continue to pray for your good health and eagerly await our family reunion in the very near future. Happy birthday on August 7!

Please keep chanting. We love you. We miss you. NEVER GIVE UP!!!  
Love, Michael and Tracey

## AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

"Faith alone is what really matters" — Nichiren. That's the quote that greeting card writer and SGI-USA member LaVora Perry turned in to her editor at American Greetings when she was asked for a religious quote to put on a blank card for the company's African American card line, Baobab Tree. Currently the card is the top seller in its category. "That quote always lifts my spirits, that's why I chose it," says LaVora. "I thought it would be encouraging to a wide range of people, whether or not they are Buddhists or African American. If someone reads the card and wants to learn more about Nichiren, all the better." The card features a smiling, brown-skin angel and brightly colored art.

A clarinet, saxophone, flute player and music arranger for the US Navy Band, Patrick Hawes of Gurnee, Illinois, received the following award recently: NAVY AND MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL for outstanding achievement in the superior performance of his duties. Petty Officer Hawes demonstrated an extremely high level of proficiency on both clarinet and saxophone.

Joseph Brawer-Smith of Arlington, VA, will be the recipient of an award of superior academic achievement by the Civic Coalition for Minority Affairs. He is ten years old and attends Patrick Henry Elementary. He is in the fourth grade and participates in the Boys and Girls group in Northern Virginia. Both his parents are SGI members and extremely proud of his accomplishments: Congratulations, son. You are a winner! Keep up the Chanting!

My daughter Zahra Hall on your 18th birthday, June 22, 1998. Congratulations for graduating with an A average from high school. Congratulations upon receiving an academic and basketball scholarship to college. First Buddhist WNBA. Congratulations for challenging my being in prison and your mother being deceased. Your mom is now happy and at ease. Congratulations for championing the just cause of doing your human revolution at "my mother's house"! ...Stay con-

nected to the SGI family NO MATTER WHAT! I love you my daughter! Thanks for being a fortune child.

Ambbee Henri Happi Hall

Congratulations to Duemece Martinez-Aragon, SGI-USA member in Pueblo, Colorado, for receiving her degree from the University of Southern Colorado in Political Science. Duemece and husband Dan have 6-year-old Devene and a second child due in June. Best wishes from family and friends in your continued studies.

To Teresa Smith and Nancy Chambers: Congratulations on your graduation from Cal State Northridge. May you be successful in your future endeavors.

Your friend, Tanya Nelson

I would like to congratulate my wife, Nancy, on making 16 years of practice, May 22, 1998, and for continuing to always "go to the Gohonzon" first when dealing with any and all problems. She's my #1 Favorite Person!

Husband, Rick

## LOST & FOUND

I am looking for Marilyn Fr. and Susan Gar. (maiden names). We were roommates together at 125 Park Street in Brookline during the early days of our practice. I am so sorry to have lost touch with you. If you read this, please contact me at [simpattico@aol.com](mailto:simpattico@aol.com) or call (212) 315-1251.

Love, Patti

I have been practicing since 1972. There are many people around the country that I have introduced to this practice that I have lost track of. Now that my heart is beginning to open up I would like to know how they are doing. Would it be possible to print this along with my name, address and phone number?

MariLynn Lorenz, 2745  
Common, Warren, MI 48092;  
(810) 558-9321.

Does anybody know the whereabouts — so I can contact — longtime SGI member — Alex Ballintyne — used to live in San Francisco early '80s. Please e-mail [merepeace@rmci.net](mailto:merepeace@rmci.net)

or call (208) 338-9667. Ask for Angie. Thank you.

## MILESTONES

Carrie Diane Rogers and Donald William Sanders were married Saturday, April 11, 1998 in Malibu, California.

Here at last! Erika and Patrick Monis born on April 13, 1998. Happy parents are Victor and Kay Monis and delighted grandparents are George and Yuriko Fujioka of Honolulu, Hawaii.

My mother, Ruth A. Hubbard, passed away on April 29, 1998 at 11:00 a.m. after a short illness. She was 97 years old. She joined NSA in April 1968 and was about to start her 31st year. She was truly a pioneer and was an inspiration to everyone who met her (WT, Tuesday, January 1, 1991 article). A memorial service was held at the Chicago Cultural Center on Sunday, June 7, 1998.

Skip Hubbard

New arrival born May 3, 1998. Dylan Shien-Ping Hung. Parents: Ken & Cheryl Hung, leaders in San Jose, Ca. Congratulations!

Richard & Nancy Owens,  
Paradise, Ca.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY MOM AND DAD!!! June 7, 1998. Eric and Bonnie Ann Dela Cruz of Kahului, Maui, Hawaii.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,  
Makanani and Kahealani  
Dela Cruz

Victoria and Keith Brown of SGI-Kentucky (Louisville) hope you will join

them in welcoming their son, Satchel Louis Brown to the world. Satchel was born May 9, 1998, and was 9 1/2 pounds, 21 inches. They wish him a long, happy life and practice.

Best wishes to Alex and Teresa Ruby on their milestone birthdays in July. You guys just keep on developing! With love from your Mom's shimmering shakubuku.

## EVENTS

The Rainbow Lotus Group in San Diego, California is hosting a Culture Revue, featuring performances by members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. Sunday, August 16 at Kearny Mesa High School. For more information, please contact Mary Rodriguez at (619) 482-0114.

Taking the global family spirit into the community, SGI members support Hathaway Family Resource Center in the production of the play, "Isis and Osiris," to be performed Saturday, June 6, noon to 1:30 p.m. in San Pascual Park, Highland Park, Northeast Los Angeles. For more info: Lynette (213) 256-6372.

## COMMENTS

Try as I might, I can't find any grammatical support for the word, "guidances," as in "Sensei's guidances." I have checked the dictionary, my nephew, who's a professor of English and Rhetoric, other English teachers. I've only seen it in SGI parlance. It's a noun like "advice," not plural, right?

Angela Baden, Washington, D.C.

## SEND IT TO FINE PRINT!

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• To be considered for publication, you must send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (if you have one) along with your message.

• Send your message to Fine Print, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401, or e-mail [fineprint@sgi-usa.org](mailto:fineprint@sgi-usa.org).

**Ad space is offered free of charge. No dating or pen pal ads. No advertising for products, services or commercial transactions. Please keep in mind that we can't guarantee a specific publication date for your message.**

## LOYALTY, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

story of every man who has done a great deed or created a new idea. It is the cloud which thunders around everything, which shines. Fame must have enemies, as light must have gnats. Do not bother yourself about it; disdain. Keep your mind serene as you keep your life clear. Do not give your enemies the satisfaction of thinking that they cause you grief or pain. Be happy, be cheerful, be disdainful, be firm.

Thanks to these rousing words, his friend gradually regained his spirits and composure. This person remained a staunch friend of Hugo's throughout his life.

## Nichiren Daishonin: 'I Feel Immense Joy'

Nichiren Daishonin endured relentless persecution at the hands of the state and was maligned on every side. Yet he could view his imminent execution at Tatsunokuchi as an event of great fortune to be rejoiced. And in the face of equally daunting trials, he exclaimed: "I feel immeasurable delight even though I am now an exile" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 94), "I feel boundless joy" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 356), and "What good fortune! I am overjoyed to have lived with my life the sutra passage 'again and again we will be banished'" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 963).

We can find countless examples of such senti-

ments in the Daishonin's writings — the Gosho is filled with his optimistic voice: "How joyful!" "How happy I am!" The schemes of those ruling authorities and corrupt priests who sought to undermine him were utterly foiled. Let us, likewise, view with disdain, as Hugo suggested, the foolish ploys of those who try to hinder our progress, and continue advancing with confidence, composure and joy.

## Take the First Step

The Japanese translation of a book for younger audiences by Rosa Parks, one of the great champions of the American Civil Rights movement, was recently published. Mrs. Parks wrote a special foreword for the Japanese edition, and the other day I received an autographed copy of the finished book from her. In the foreword, she writes:

My friendship with Dr. Ikeda, who is a Buddhist, has confirmed for me that as human beings who desire peace, we can overcome any racial and religious differences through friendship and spiritual exchange and create great value together. So doing will in turn set a fine example for our youth, on whom the future depends.

These are most gracious words. I believe she is saying that the noble path of friendship that all of us in the SGI are forging is the greatest hope for the world and the future of humankind.

In the same volume, Mrs. Parks

also writes: "I have learned that in order to bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try. Each and every one of us can make a difference."

The important thing is the courage to take the first step.

## Expand the Flow of Kosen-rufu Eternally

The "Medicine King" chapter of the Lotus Sutra says:

In the last five hundred year period [i.e., the Latter Day of the Law] you must spread it [the Lotus Sutra] abroad widely throughout Jambudvīpa [the entire world] and never allow it to be cut off, nor must you allow evil devils, the devils' people, heavenly beings, dragons, yakshas or kumbhanda demons to seize the advantage! (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 288)

We must not allow demons to seize the advantage — this point is key. In light of this passage, Nichiren Daishonin says: "Strengthen your faith day by day and month after month. Should you slacken even a bit, demons will take advantage" (MW-1, 241-42). He said this to his followers at the time of the Atsuhara Persecution.

It is important, too, that we strengthen the flow of kosen-rufu "day by day and month after month," so that it lasts for all eternity. Unless our movement grows stronger with time, developing solidly from one generation to the next,

"demons will take advantage." That's because the Devil of the Sixth Heaven is always looking to catch us off our guard.

Right now, I am standing ever alert and resolute. But to ensure that the flow of kosen-rufu is not cut off in the years to come, it is vital that the youth rise and unite. This is the key to our future. It accords with reason and is also what the Lotus Sutra decrees. The Lotus Sutra and Nichiren Daishonin call out, "Youth, bravely stand up and carry on the task of spreading the Mystic Law!"

We have entered the age of the youth division. I hope that you will devote utmost energy toward fostering the youth wherever in the world you may find yourself.

## The Buddha's Injunction: 'Advance!'

In the Gosho "On the Buddha's Behavior," the Daishonin writes:

Now we are at the beginning of the Latter Day of the Law and I, Nichiren, am the first to set out on the worldwide propagation of Myoho-enge-kyo. These five characters are the heart of the Lotus Sutra and the source of the enlightenment of all Buddhas. During the more than twenty-two hundred years that have passed since Shakyamuni entered nirvana, no one has ever embarked on this mission, not even the greatest of his followers, Mahakashyapa, Ananda, Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Nanyueh, T'ien-t'ai, Miao-lo or Dengyo. My disciples, form your ranks and follow me, and you shall surpass even Mahakashyapa or Ananda, T'ien-t'ai or Dengyo! If you quail before the threats of the rulers of this little island country and abandon your faith, how will you face the even more

terrible anger of Ema, the King of Hell? You have pro-

claimed yourselves to be the messengers of the Buddha. But if you falter, there will be no one more despicable than you. (MW-1, 176-77)

To exert oneself completely in accord with these words is the noble spirit of the SGI. Because we of the SGI are advancing just as the Daishonin teaches, our benefit is boundless and immeasurable.

## A 'Golden Stage' Shining in the Morning Sun

Kosen-rufu is a supreme, golden path extending throughout the Latter Day of the Law into the eternal future. Let us continue to advance boldly and intrepidly along this path as Nichiren Daishonin instructs. This is the only way world peace will be accomplished. If we do not widely spread the principles and ideals of the Daishonin's Buddhism, there will be no hope for the peace and happiness of all humankind.

There are many dissolute, mean-spirited and directionless people in society. With the resolve to gladly undertake daunting challenges, let us courageously reach out to and go out among such people.

There is no place in the SGI for cowards or for egoists who are given to arbitrary and self-serving views. Our movement has no need for the fainthearted who are filled with doubt and who readily succumb to negative influences.

Let us strive for the Law and live with pride and dignity as members of the SGI! The 21st century shall be the essential phase of our movement. Bathed in the brilliant light of dawn, let us take our places on that golden stage and lead truly magnificent lives!

Members of the SGI: Please advance with the spirit of unity and goodwill, opening your hearts in friendship to all around you.

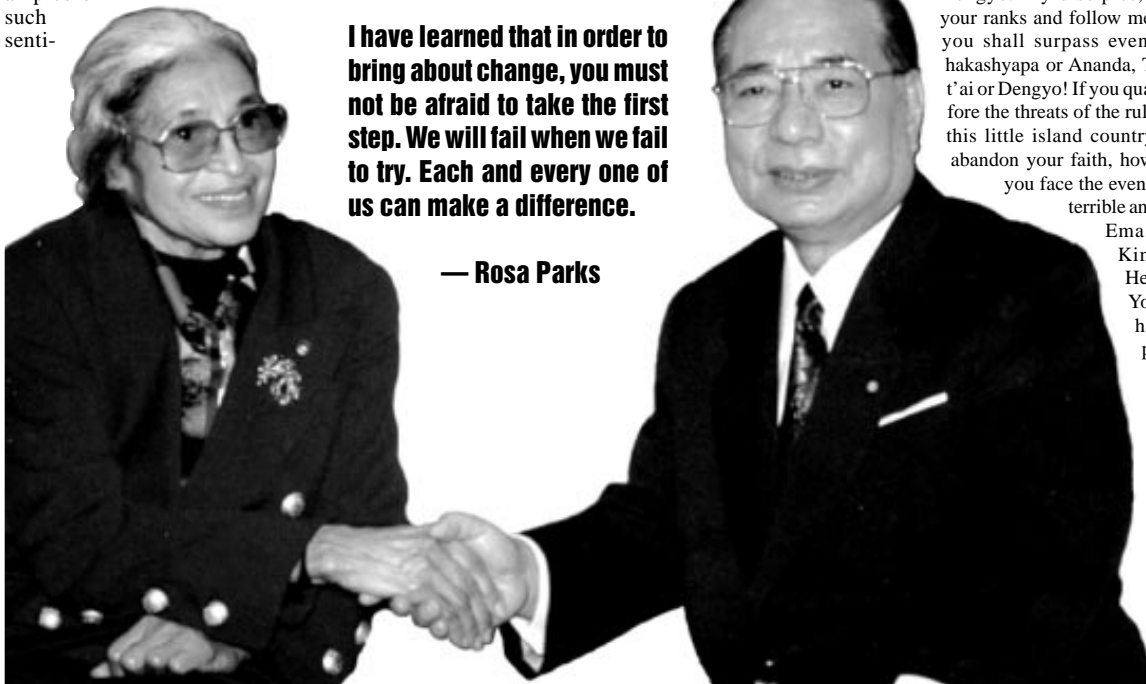
The Gohonzon encompasses the entire universe. Therefore, we who believe in and chant daimoku to the Gohonzon can live out our lives with the greatest serenity and composure. Please be confident that through faith in the Mystic Law we can definitely lead a wonderful and unsurpassed existence.

When you return to your respective countries, please convey my warmest regards to your families and to all your fellow SGI members.

Throughout my life, I will continue to send daimoku for your happiness. Let's meet again soon! Again, thank you all for your untiring efforts. I am eternally grateful!

**I have learned that in order to bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try. Each and every one of us can make a difference.**

— Rosa Parks



# A True ENTREPRENEUR

By JANTYLER  
Denver Correspondent

**Businessman and  
cable TV pioneer Bill  
Daniels of Denver  
puts his money  
where his heart is:  
giving kids a  
headstart. What's  
more, his multi-  
million-dollar grants  
to the University of  
Denver are  
earmarked for  
educating business  
professionals in  
ethics, integrity,  
manners and social  
involvement.**

**T**he radio station is clearly the most popular place to work at Young AmeriTowne, a frenetic yet award-winning miniature city where more than 13,000 Denver schoolchildren get a hands-on education in daily life each year. But the centerpiece of this youthful city is Young Americans Bank, the first bank ever chartered for kids. Today the bank boasts 19,000 customers under 22 from all 50 states and 13 foreign countries.

Bill Daniels, cable pioneer and benefactor of the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver, established the bank in 1987 so kids could "be better prepared for the future." Daniels spent two years persuading Colorado's banking board to issue a state charter. And he convinced 20 founding sponsors, including American Express, the Bank of Boston, and Silverado Banking, to give his new bank \$50,000 to \$100,000 in non-interest-bearing CDs. At the time, most bankers believed Daniels' was throwing away his personal investment of \$2 million on a cute idea.

Daniels, who made his fortune by taking risks in the cable industry, brushed off his critics and pushed ahead. To date he has invested some \$7 million in the bank. "When you've gone as far as I have, a lot of people judge you for what you have, but that's not right," Daniels said in a 1989 interview. "What you are matters more. I want other businessmen to see that they should treat kids the same way they treat adults."


Today Young Americans Bank offers loans to children for buying everything from puppies to computers and pays competitive interest rates on the money they deposit. Customers walk into a lobby designed to make them comfortable, with low counters and cheerful decorations. They've borrowed start-up capital for everything from renting recording studios to expanding dairy goat herds. And they usually pay back their loans early.

"What I wanted this bank to do was motivate kids," says Daniels. "If you show kids where hard work and motivation lead, they've got a head start on the business world."

It's a point of view based on Daniels' experiences in the business world. He has worked hard and been successful, but he's also never forgotten how he felt as a child watching his family struggle through tough times. Easy money is not how Daniels' fortune could be described. At different times he worked as a bell-hop, ice cream salesman and oil field roughneck. And, when he needed to borrow \$5,000 to start his first cable system to bring television to Wyoming, he applied to many different banks before he got his financing.

Daniels also took up another cause in Colorado education in 1988, when he donated an \$11 million matching grant to the University of Denver. The only stipulation was that the university revamp its MBA program to include new required courses on ethics, integrity, demeanor, communications, negotiation, manners and social involvement. Since then, Daniels has given another \$11 million to build new facilities for the Daniels College of Business.

This concern with ethics also originates in Daniels experience in business. As one Denver journalist wrote, "Bad fortune has not wavered his strong ethical beliefs that nice guys can finish first." Although he has been associated with many successes (including Ted Turner's CNN), he's also known failure. After his ownership of the Utah Stars and the now-defunct American Basketball Association failed, Daniels was forced to declare bankruptcy. But he returned almost 10 years later to refund ticket holders' money. When almost 15 percent of these people could not be located, that money was given to the Utah Symphony.

How would Daniels like to be remembered? "I hope people would say I was reasonably intelligent," he says, "that I was a visionary and long-range thinker; that I was a true entrepreneur — that I was a man of integrity, which I value highly, and that I handled myself properly." 



**COMING NEXT WEEK:**

**President Ikeda's speech on Mother's Day**

SPECIAL  
PULLOUT  
SECTION

# FRIENDS for Peace

JUNE 5, 1998

## PARENTS KLUB SHARES

by Diana Decker, Phoenix

The February Boys and Girls Group meeting had a new twist — the kids brought their parents along. The new Parents Klub, with sessions focused on parenting tips, met while kids did crafts and learned karate.

Children age 5 and younger created bird feeders with pine cones, peanut butter, birdseed and string, while youngsters ages 5 to 12 learned basic kicks in karate class or crafted and painted three-dimensional spring animals in arts and crafts.

Meanwhile, moms and dads were shown a way to be more in tune with their hearts. Using a method of focused attention, the parents were helped to see their children from the place of original love they experienced when their child was a new-born baby.

At the end of the session, moms, dads and kids got together to share their experiences and kids serenaded parents with a song, "Move Over (Generation Next)" by the Spice Girls. 🎵



SPOTLIGHT



with BOYS and GIRLS



## EXPERIENCES

### LAURA CURRY, 5

Memphis, Tenn.

Hi! I was born into this practice. In November 1997, I wanted to be in an ice-skating competition. My mom (Nancy) helped me chant and do gongyo so that I could skate well. I practiced hard on the ice, and my teacher helped me with the music.

I competed and won first place in my age division.

My goal is to grow up and be an animal doctor. Thank you. 🌟



### ARIA GRIFFIN, 8

Philadelphia

When we had our meeting about courage, I played the violin for everyone. At first I had been scared to learn how to play the violin. It took a lot of courage, and I did it! 🌟



### JASMINE CHANAY

Philadelphia

I have an experience to tell you about my glasses. I was changing my clothes, and I took off my glasses and put them on the bed. I did not have them on the rest of the day. Then the next day it was time for me to go to school. As I was getting ready I found out that my glasses were lost. I came back home and told my grandma, "I LOST MY GLASSES!" and I was grounded until I found them. I still didn't find them.

I chanted to find them. My grandma told my mom about my glasses. My grandma didn't want to talk to me. I was chanting even when she told us, "Time to get ready for bed." When I got ready for bed I looked inside my basket, and my glasses were sitting on the side of my bed. And now I know that chanting works! 🌟

### STACY KOYAMA, 8

Pearl City, Hawaii

Hello. I'm in the third grade. I started to chant daimoku three times every morning and night since I was 3 years old. When I started going to Boys and Girls Group meetings, I learned how to do gongyo by myself from Nov. 19, 1997, every night. Now I've been doing gongyo for about six months, and the problems that I had have been fixed. One of my benefits is that now I get along with my friends more, and I feel happy.

Another benefit is about my dad. He is always getting called to go to work on weekends, and one Sunday

recently we had plans to go to the SGI Sports Festival. I told my mom that I hope Dad doesn't go to work on Sunday. My mom told me to chant for 10 minutes. I did chant for 10 extra minutes when I did gongyo on Saturday night. On Sunday, we all went to the Sports Festival and had a nice time together. My dad didn't get any calls from work until we came home in the afternoon.

I believe that doing gongyo and daimoku can change a miserable life. Thank you. 🌟



### NICOLE HICKS

Philadelphia

This is a picture of me and my grandmother. She brings me to the Boys and Girls Group meetings. Once I led gongyo for boys and girls, and after that my mom started doing evening gongyo, and we did gongyo together. 🌟

"FRIENDS for Peace" thanks everyone who contributed to this issue. Please send your experience (around 150 words), comments, questions or news article to: "Friends for Peace," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

## CLEVELAND AREA CHILDREN CREATE A LOTUS FLOWER

by LaVora Perry, Cleveland, Ohio

We made this Lotus Flower in April at our Boys and Girls Group meeting on diversity. The flower's center shows some of the ways all people are alike. Each child picked one petal to decorate and show how we are special in our own way.

When we respect and celebrate the things that make each person special, and when we see the ways we are all the same, we can unite. The greatest thing we can unite for is world peace. The greatest thing that's alike about all people is that we can all bring out our Buddha nature by chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. ☸



Anne Martin  
sent this report  
from  
Philadelphia

In April the Boys and Girls from Philadelphia and New Jersey performed a "Silent Play" about diversity and respecting one another's differences and cultures.

## ASK AMANDA

HEY, KIDS!

IS YOUR BROTHER DRIVING YOU CRAZY?  
DO YOU SECRETLY LIKE A BOY WHO  
LIKES YOUR BEST FRIEND?  
IS YOUR TEACHER HOMEWORK-HAPPY?

Well, "Friends For Peace" is going to have its own advice column, "Ask Amanda." She'll share a little Buddha wisdom with you to put in your backpack. Send letters to:  
"Ask Amanda" c/o "Friends for Peace"

SGI-USA  
525 Wilshire Blvd.  
Santa Monica, Calif. 90401

Don't forget to include your age, your phone number and your address. Amanda is waiting for your letter!

Members of the Boys and Girls Group take part in the May 3 Commemorative Meeting at the Miami Community Center.



# FRIEND

to

# FRIEND

What is seeking spirit?

SGi President Ikeda writes:

"The task before you now," [Shin'ichi Yamamoto] said, "is to develop tremendous passion, study harder than anyone else and devote yourselves to your practice of faith. What lies in store for those who neglect to train and strengthen themselves in their youth is a life as fragile as a castle built on sand. I would like you to advance steadily and patiently, diligently applying yourselves to your studies and thoroughly develop yourselves so that you will emerge

as great people in the future. (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 42)

The important thing is to be determined to learn from everything. You should strive to climb the slope from yester-

day to today, and from today to tomorrow, refreshingly determined to reach a deeper understanding. This kind of vitality and seeking mind will guarantee your victory in life. You should never forget this. (May 1995 *Seikyo Times*, p. 55) ☸

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION...

**INSTRUCTIONS: IF MY LIFE COULD BE A MOVIE... WHAT IF YOU COULD WRITE THE MOVIE OF YOUR LIFE? YOU CAN! BUDDHISM TEACHES THAT YOU ARE A STAR AND CAN WRITE AND DIRECT THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE. SO DREAM BIG AND USE THIS OUTLINE TO HELP YOU THINK OF IDEAS.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) have just been asked to write, direct and be an actor in a wonderful new hit movie titled "My Seeking Spirit."  
In this great human drama and true story, I will play myself as a young person and will use the name: \_\_\_\_\_. At the time the story takes place, I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old, and I'm living in my hometown called \_\_\_\_\_.  
I will play the starring role as a young Buddhist who chants N \_\_\_\_\_-m \_\_\_\_\_-r \_\_\_\_\_-k \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gohonzon.  
In the first scene of "My Seeking Spirit," a big picture will flash across the screen. You will see something like a painting — or blueprint — of what I am going to do in my life. I want you to see what kind of dreams I have at this age. I want to share my dreams with you and the audience and share what my goal is when I grow up. Three of my biggest wishes you will see on that screen are:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

President Ikeda says: "The more specific the blueprint we have in our hearts, the better. The point is to continue vividly painting the target we have and to advance toward that goal single-mindedly. Then at each instant, the reality of our lives will gradually approach the painting that is our aspiration."

Next, I will show some of the "mountains" or obstacles and problems I might have while I struggle to fulfill my dreams. Obstacles and problems are only natural. In this part of the movie, you will see the drama of incredible feats, lots of fun, and I will have the courage of a lion. It takes guts to make my dreams come true. No matter what, I will have the courage to continue even when I am faced with problems (name three obstacles you might have in the movie):

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

In the "My Seeking Spirit" movie of my life, I will include how stories from the writings of N \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_, the original B \_\_\_\_\_, encouraged me — stories such as, the one of Oto Gozen's mother who undertook very very difficult journeys across the sea and across rugged land in order to see the Buddha and listen to his teachings.

"My Seeking Spirit" will be an epic adventure written on the pages of life itself! At the end of my incredible journey, you will be able to see how my life became as bright as a jewel, and as beautiful and shiny as the stars.

In "My Seeking Spirit," some of my scenes may include (check off/describe what you want to include):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The action I took to be victorious.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Why I worked so hard to achieve something great.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How I chanted to prove the power of the Gohonzon. | <input type="checkbox"/> How my effort will help others.                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What books I studied to learn about my dream.     | <input type="checkbox"/> How I kept my dream alive day after day.                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The friends I made on my journey to victory.      | <input type="checkbox"/> How I learned to seek answers.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How the Gosho encouraged me to keep going.        | <input type="checkbox"/> What my victory will mean for other people like me.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who encouraged me with their words.               | <input type="checkbox"/> How I believed with my whole heart that my wishes would come true. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who did I encourage to keep going?                | <input type="checkbox"/> Why I believed I would win, no matter what.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Words from President Ikeda that helped me.        | <input type="checkbox"/> How I felt when I saw part of my dream come true.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What I did each morning when I got up.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Who really helped me the most?                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The diary I kept during the pursuit of my dream.  | <input type="checkbox"/> What I did to thank special people in my life.                     |

## DO YOU WANT TO BE A CORRESPONDENT FOR



If you want to report on activities and people in your areas, please fill out the form below and mail to us:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Area and Region: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_