

World Tribune

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THE YEAR OF VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE NEW CENTURY

JUNE 19, 1998

INSIDE THIS WEEK

EDITORIAL

General Director Zaitis offers his views regarding the destruction of the Sho-Hondo.

PERSPECTIVE

A member shares her new understanding of community service.

STUDY

No more nuclear devastation.

PEOPLE

Remembering José Martí.

ESSAY

For the love of photography.

CHINESE PAGES

SGI President Ikeda's guidance from the spring training meeting.

WORLDVIEW

In celebration of Stonevall.

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Unclouded Eyes, Undistorted Vision

THE Third Stage OF LIFE

This is the sixth installment in this series. Participants in this installment are SGI President Ikeda, Seikyo Shimbun General Editorial Bureau Senior Director Osamu Matsuoka and Vice Director Katsusuke Sasaki.

IKEDA: We agreed to discuss today the life of Mary H. Cornwall Legh, an Englishwoman who spent many years in Japan. There is a monument to Ms. Legh in a park near the Soka Gakkai's Many Treasures Center in the town of Kusatsu in Gumma Prefecture. And her grave is also nearby. Local members have told me that she is still deeply admired and respected by the people of Gumma.

SASAKI: She devoted her life to the care and treatment of people suffering from Hansen's disease, or leprosy.

IKEDA: Yes. Mary Cornwall Legh was born into the British nobility, grew up on a large, wooded estate, and studied at a university, receiving the highest education possible for a woman of her time. Then she abandoned her life of comfort to work as a Christian missionary in Japan.

SASAKI: Ms. Legh was born in 1857 in Canterbury, England. When she was young, she traveled the world with her mother. After visiting North America and seeing Niagara Falls and many other sights, she came to Japan,

where she was deeply impressed by the country's scenic beauty.

IKEDA: After her mother's death, Ms. Legh in 1908 returned alone to Japan to begin her missionary work at age 51. At 59, she moved to the Yunosawa area of Kusatsu in Gumma to devote her life to the victims of Hansen's disease who had come to live there from throughout Japan.

MATSUOKA: The Yunosawa hot springs, located on the lower reaches of the Yukawa river in

PLEASE SEE VISION, 8

Photo by LISA HOLLIS

MICHAEL SASAKI, TORRANCE, CALIF.



A Winning Edge

Michael Sasaki began his skating career wearing rental skates and dreaming of the 2002 Olympics.

For the past four years, I have been working hard as a competitive figure skater. I began in the summer of 1994, wearing little green rental skates at a local mall.

What made me want to skate was watching Kristi

Yamaguchi win the gold medal at the 1992 Winter Olympics. I wanted to know how it felt to win a gold medal. So I vowed that I would be at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

After a week of fun-filled skating, I asked my mom if I could join the group classes. She said no at first, but after a couple more days of skating, I guess she saw the determination in my eyes. She finally said yes.

I enrolled in a group lesson. I was so eager — I was the first student on the ice that day and the first one to try everything. I think I bothered the teacher a bit. I kept on saying: "What's next! Can we move on?"

PLEASE SEE EDGE, 13

Stand Alone, Be Happy

How to create valuable relationships everywhere was the hot topic at a recent conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. The answer lies within us.

By TERRY ELLIS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Standing alone — together. Whether it's with our bosses, teachers and parents, or with our spouses, partners, friends and co-workers, this spirit to develop ourselves while respecting others is the key to happiness in relationships.

This was the Buddhist perspective on relationships presented during a recent conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. As it is in society, the question of how to create valuable relationships at home, at work and in the community is a hot topic among SGI-USA members — and one that drew a full capacity audience to the FNCC.

"The Buddha is the master of relationships," Greg Martin,

PLEASE SEE RELATIONS, 4



With Nikken starting to tear down the Grand Main Temple,

General Director Zaitso urges continued protest but affirms that nothing can destroy the true high sanctuary within the faith of the members.

By FRED M. ZAITSO
SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR

Nikken's destruction of the Grand Main Temple has apparently begun. Despite protests from SGI members and prominent architects and citizens around the world, Nikken is going ahead with his plan to level this monument of peace and masterwork of architecture. Unconfirmed reports from Japan say that several demolition companies from Osaka have started dismantling the building from within, detaching the marble panels from the walls. The plan is, supposedly, to sell these valuable panels to help pay the demolition costs.

That Nikken would do this, of course, is not surprising. Ever since he began his attacks on the SGI, his behavior has been characterized by an inability to empathize with the feelings and sincere wishes of millions of people. And his destructive nature is clear to anyone who is aware of his cutting down of cherry trees and his tearing down of the Grand Reception Hall.

This latest development, however, in no way lessens the significance of the voices of protest and outrage, and the calls for common sense that have been raised. These voices, representative of the people, have been and will continue to be recorded in the balance sheet of history.

In the past few weeks, from the *World Tribune's* first report on the demolition plans, SGI-USA members have reacted in various ways. I have heard many opinions and have considered the issue from many perspectives. Some members have gotten very angry at Nikken and are asking what we are doing to stop this travesty. Rallies and letters to Nikken are not enough, they say. After all, the Main Temple was meant to become the third of the Three Great Secret Laws. One person even suggested we try to

buy the building.

Other members, though understanding that Nikken is wrong, ask me why we should care so much about what Nichiren Shoshu — now a separate organization — does with a building that, although a gift from SGI members mainly, is legally theirs. And others have expressed confusion over the entire issue and asked for clarification. It is a complex issue.

To restate my view: Destroying the magnificent structure called the Grand Main Temple is an affront to the members who donated the money. It's also a tragic, unnecessary loss of a significant building for the ages. In short, I think it's wrong.

Nikken has offered a number of dubious reasons for destroying this building. First, through one of his magazines, he floated the idea that the building was structurally unsound, a position he has never personally, publicly stated in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence. Then he claimed that the building must be destroyed because it had been petitioned for by someone he considers a slanderer, a line of reasoning that, if followed to its logical conclusion, would require that Nikken destroy the hundreds upon hundreds of other temples and facilities that SGI President Ikeda suggested and the SGI eventually donated to Nichiren Shoshu. He has also now claimed — in a letter to a U.S. congressman who protested the destruction — that the building is uneconomical and too costly to maintain, hence justifying the \$35 million demolition price tag.

Despite all these claims, I firmly believe Nikken is doing this merely out of spite and jealousy. And I further believe that even the priests and their followers know it.

We in the SGI-USA are taking action to protest and try to end the demolition. We are in the midst of a letter-writing campaign and

Why Protest?

EDITORIAL

are investigating and pursuing various public, media and legal avenues.

Architects around the world are joining the cause (their motivation is not religious but based on an acute awareness of the waste and tragedy of destroying such an architectural treasure). Please be confident that the SGI-USA is looking for every practical and effective way to delay or stop this destruction.

In light of the fact that the demolition has already begun, our voices of protest may seem dampened or no longer significant. Yet it is important to continue to speak out. Only those who continue to speak out against a grave injustice can leave a clear and indelible historical record of what is right and what is wrong. This record will stand as a monument to the sincerity of those who dedicated their energy, sweat and tears to building the Grand Main Temple. It will also serve to highlight, for the future, the true destructive nature of Nikken and his priesthood — which we have seen over the last eight years in their efforts to undermine and hinder the SGI's efforts for peace and culminating in this final ridiculous act.

The Grand Main Temple was built with the intention that it would, at the time of kosen-rufu, become the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism, the third of the Three Great Secret Laws. These Secret Laws derive from the three types of Buddhist learning — precepts, meditation and wisdom. The high sanctuary is equated with precepts. This indicates our vow of faith in the Gohonzon and our promise to spread the compassionate teachings of this Buddhism throughout the world. Without people who embrace this vow, there can be no sanctuary. It can only exist where those with faith and a profound determination to accomplish

kosen-rufu gather.


Sad as it may seem, because priests who have subverted the Daishonin's precepts have usurped the Grand Main Temple and slated it for destruction, it has lost its significance as the High Sanctuary of True Buddhism. Even if Nikken succeeds in his plan to destroy the Grand Main Temple, he can never destroy the true high sanctuary; it exists only in the lives and faith of SGI members and is impervious to the destructive acts of those of base designs.

The Daishonin's Buddhism will never be destroyed so long as the SGI is grounded in his spirit to accomplish kosen-rufu and to secure the happiness of all people. Failing to shake us, Nikken has finally lashed out at an inanimate structure, one that in his mind symbolizes all that he envies and despises about the SGI.

There are three points I would like us all to keep in mind:

- We are protesting Nikken's actions, not begging him to stop. We're not giving him the satisfaction of seeing us, the people he hates the most, lose our dignity, hope or determination. Rather, we should transform our anger into a motivating force for us to continue our work to widely spread the Daishonin's teachings and prove the justice of the SGI.

- Nothing is wasted in our efforts for the sake of Buddhism. There is absolutely no way that the sincere efforts of those members who contributed to building the Grand Main Temple could ever be wasted. The results of the great causes we have made through our contributions will shine eternally. Nikken cannot destroy the law of causality. While the Main Temple stood as a monument to the sincerity, faith and compassionate practice of the members of the Soka Gakkai and the SGI, Nikken's act of destroying it will stand forever as proof of his true nature.

- The Daishonin's Buddhism is a philosophy of building. Of building lives, of building culture, of building peace. Those who use the name of Buddhism to serve their personal lust for fame and power will end up tearing down these things. They will continue until there is nothing left to destroy but themselves. Those with the Daishonin's spirit will continue working for the happiness of all people. 

We should transform our anger into a motivating force for us to widely spread the Daishonin's teachings and prove the justice of the SGI.

Corrections

- In the June 5 issue, the photo on p. 7 was incorrectly credited. The photographer was Jonathan Wilson. We apologize for the mistake.
- In the June 12 issue, Erica Gebhardt was identified as "representing Los Angeles Fire and Drum Corps members." In fact, she is the SGI-USA Fire and Drum Corps advisor. We apologize for the mistake.

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WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Yashiro Who?

I am writing to you concerning an article written by Lisa Jones in the May 22 "Seize the Day." The name of the article is "Meet Yashiro Kunishige." The article in part says, "When the Daishonin inscribed the Dai-Gohonzon, he wrote Yashiro Kunishige's name on it..." I have been unable to find Yashiro Kunishige on any Gohonzon. I have contacted various leaders, and they do not know where Yashiro Kunishige's name is on the Gohonzon. Is it to be found only on the Dai-Gohonzon at the head temple? Leaders say they have never come across that name in any of Nichiren Daishonin's writings. Can you please explain to me the name Yashiro Kunishige?

— MAXIMUS S. LOYA, Belfair, Wash.

Editor's note: Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the name Yashiro Kunishige at the bottom of the Dai-Gohonzon. The Daishonin often wrote the recipient's name on the Gohonzon he inscribed, but such names are not essential components of the object of devotion and hence are not reproduced on copies. Historically, there are several theories about who Yashiro Kunishige was, but Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, upheld the view that he was a fictitious person, an ideal believer, who existed only in Nichiren Daishonin's heart. He thus represents all believers of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings.

Double Standard?

Paul Robeson was a great singer and indefatigable fighter for the civil rights of African Americans (May 22 "Worldview"). The *World Tribune* correctly gave him the highest accolades in that regard.

But we must not forget that he was a stalwart believer in the Soviet Union and the communist cause, a country and ideology that oppressed, enslaved and murdered countless millions of people. This was public knowledge long before he, as the *World Tribune* claims, was "persecuted" by our government. If he had embraced a similar cause as a Soviet citizen, he would have spent the rest of his life, if he was not killed first, in the slave labor camps of the gulag.

Mr. Robeson was not dumb. He knew what he was doing. He was not just a hapless, helpless fellow traveler along for the ride. He knowingly looked the other way as others unsparingly gave up their lives, liberties and fortunes in the quest for freedom. If he truly wanted to "make freedom ring" he could have spoken out against this horrible bane of humanity and really "take[n] the path far more difficult" in the fight for human rights.

Recently the *World Tribune* apologized for and retracted a page which mentioned a scientist with controversial views on race. Would the *World Tribune* highlight someone who, in the past, was a Nazi sympathizer? Probably not. Please, let's not create too great a double standard.

— STAN KLEMANOWICZ, Torrance, Calif.

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

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

Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Send letters to "Mailbox," World Tribune, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401; or via e-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org.

Looking Into the Heart of Another's Faith

PERSPECTIVE

After focusing her efforts on the SGI-USA community, one member ventures out into the larger community — and finds a whole world waiting for her, a world full of people also working for peace.

By TERRY MITCHELL
LONG BEACH, CALIF.

I began practicing this Buddhism at age 18 — 31 years ago. At the time, there was an endless pit of despair widening in my soul about life. I felt like a pawn in the universe, and that something greater than myself was maneuvering us all into painful circumstances over which we had no control.

That began to change after my first SGI-USA meeting. The joy, spontaneity, explosive energy and diversity overwhelmed me. I left that evening with two messages: 1) I had the power to change any painful circumstance into something glorious; and 2) I could contribute to world peace.

My major focus over the years has been the SGI-USA community. And during these years, I can honestly say I have grown in many ways.

In 1992, I began my journey into the community that I live in. This journey started with volunteering at a child abuse counseling center, which led to the position of volunteer director for four years.

Soon after leaving that job, my husband was diagnosed with cancer — Hodgkin's Lymphoma

— and I spent the next six months fighting the greatest battle of our life. Again, my friends in faith surrounded my husband, my two daughters and me with deep love and support, and I thank all of you who were there for us. Your prayers and kind words are deeply imbedded in our hearts. I am happy to say that my husband has had two cancer-free CAT scans since then.

Over the last few months, I have ventured back into my community. I recently became involved in an organization called United Religions Initiative 2000. Its mission is to create a permanent assembly where the world's religious and spiritual communities can gather daily, in prayer and meditation, dialogue and cooperative action to address peace among nations, urgent human needs, and the healing of the Earth.

As I attended planning meetings for the Los Angeles Regional Conference for this initiative, I learned many things about myself. How narrow-minded and ignorant I was about other religions! My tolerance or acceptance of other faiths, I discovered, was superficial.

Over the years, I felt great pride in my efforts for peace through SGI activities. What I missed by focusing only on my own organization is that there are thousands of people all over the world diligently working for peace who do not practice this Buddhism. SGI President Ikeda said at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute: "The trend of the times is clearly for religious matters to be left to the discretion of individuals. This is all the more reason education must help assure that religious sentiment does not become self-righteous or intolerant and is always directed toward the most peaceful and valuable outcome."

I realized that I was guilty of denying the power of prayer of others and having the attitude that the SGI alone will achieve world peace. How arrogant.

Through the interfaith activities I have attended, I have met people with beautiful hearts and people committed to the same values and dreams we in the SGI have for ourselves, our families, our communities and the world.

President Ikeda is always reminding us that one person standing alone can make a difference. Over the years, he has shared many examples of common people creating monumental changes in education, art, science, government, etc., by continuously working for the good of humanity — Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and numerous others. Most of these great human beings did not practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

President Ikeda said in the same speech: "When mistrust is directed against others, it takes the form of the refusal of dialogue and ultimately violence. Mistrust breeds mistrust. Hatred breeds more hatred. How can this deadly cycle be broken? Here, I believe we need to call forth what might be termed a holistic, or even cosmological, humanism, one that regards the life of the individual human as extending out to and embracing the entire cosmos, and therefore meriting the most profound reverence."

My underlying attitude that only we, SGI members, can create peace and harmony on this planet is a cause for disharmony with my fellow human beings.

I have come to the realization that the SGI cannot achieve peace alone. For me to become a world citizen, a person who seeks to include and embrace others, I need to open my heart to the others' faiths, to discover our commonalities instead of our differences. WT

Talk Back To Us

Been wanting to WRITE something for the *World Tribune*? • A short ESSAY? • Study article? • News Brief? • Opinion piece? • Now's the time to sharpen your PENCIL or fire up your COMPUTER. • We're looking for volunteer WRITERS who want to talk about Buddhism in a FRESH, INSIGHTFUL way. • Three general guidelines for written submissions: clear, concise and from the HEART. • Critical thinking is always welcome and appreciated. DESPERATELY SEEKING SEEKING MINDS. E-mail: wt@sgi-usa.org.

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Perspectives and Worldviews should be 600–900 words; Experiences and Essays, around 1000 words; Wow! columns, 300 words; Study articles, 500–600 words.



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NEWS BRIEFS

SGI Joins 'Buddhism in America' Conference

The second annual "Buddhism in America" conference was held May 22–25 in San Diego. More than 300 participants of various Buddhist traditions gathered to discuss the future of Buddhism in America. Among the topics covered were: Buddhism in psychology and medicine, relationships, feminism, empowerment and socially engaged Buddhism.

Maria Guajardo Lucero, Ph.D., director of assets for Colorado Youth and an SGI-USA member from Denver, conducted a workshop titled "Cultural and Social Change in Action." Citing from the works of SGI President Ikeda and using various Buddhist principles as a framework for her talk, Ms. Lucero led the participants through various exercises that demonstrated how stereotypes are formed and broken down; the importance of listening during dialogue; and finding congruence between past, present and future in order to deepen understanding of oneself and others. Focusing on finding and appreciating value in diversity, Ms. Lucero also emphasized living with congruence between one's Buddhist practice and daily life.

— NANCY SIMMS, Santa Monica, Calif.

Mongolian President Visits Soka University

On May 14, President N. Bagabandi of the Republic of Mongolia visited Soka University in Hachioji, Tokyo, where he delivered a lecture to the faculty and students.

Mr. Bagabandi affirmed that exchanges in fields such as the sciences, arts and education have been pivotal in laying the foundations for the strong cooperative relationship that has developed between Mongolia and Japan in recent years. He particularly lauded Soka University and the Mongolian National University for their initiatives in this area. SGI President Ikeda, who is the founder of Soka University, he noted, received an honorary doctorate from the latter institute, the leading university in Mongolia.

The visiting head of state thanked the SGI leader for promoting Mongolian studies at the Tokyo school, and he stressed the vital importance of education to the future development and prosperity of Mongolia. In closing, President Bagabandi expressed confidence that the friendship and cooperation between Mongolia and Japan will continue to grow.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

Ecology Exhibition Opens in Venezuela

The "Coexistence and Hope: The Amazon — Its Environment and Development" exhibition opened on May 14 in Caracas. This showing, the fifth in the exhibit's tour of Latin America, is one of the official events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation (TCA).

The treaty was signed in 1978 by eight countries — Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela — to preserve the environment and promote the social and economic development of the Amazon region. The exhibition is being co-sponsored by the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SGI and other agencies.

At the opening, attended by some 350 distinguished guests and Venezuelan officials, SGI-Venezuela General Director Ramón E. Regalado read a message sent by SGI President Ikeda. The SGI leader stated that the essence of the environ-

PLEASE SEE BRIEFS, NEXT PAGE

Standing Alone...

Photo by LINDA ST. HILAIRE



Since Andrew Persad's wife, Giselle Spieler, introduced him to Buddhism, he's learned that he is a 'valuable person.'

RELATIONSHIPS, FROM PAGE 1

SGI-USA vice Study Department leader, pointed out during the opening lecture. In terms of Buddhist practice, he said, this means to first of all purify your own life. In other words, take control of the one person you can control — yourself.

"As long as we think [the key to the relationship] is the other person, our relationship with that person will, as Nichiren Daishonin writes in 'On Attaining Buddhahood,' be 'an endless painful austerity,'" Mr. Martin said.

Sheila Edwards, SGI-USA vice general director, shared her experience of being a leader in the organization while married to a person who didn't practice Buddhism. It took her years to realize that the image of a Buddhist she was conveying to her family "was not a pretty picture." Dinnertime often was interrupted by phone calls, and companionship with her husband took a backseat to organizational activities. It was only when she began to change herself that her family began to appreciate her work for kosen-rufu.

Naomi Sasaki, SGI-USA vice women's division leader, shared another experience of overcoming difficulties early in her marriage. At one point, she even considered returning to Japan. She prayed to the Gohonzon, "Let me trust him, respect him, love him." Later, when faced with children who wouldn't listen to what she said — and even fought against her — she again turned to the Gohonzon again for wisdom.

"I learned that I didn't have to change somebody else; I needed

to elevate my own life condition," said Mrs. Sasaki.

Any relationship also needs praise and appreciation, a point that the Daishonin astutely made when he said, "When praised one does not consider his own risk, and when criticized, he can recklessly cause his own ruin" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 92).

"Even when we're motivated by love, we may focus on what's missing — not what there is to appreciate," said Mr. Martin. "Our expectations become a burden. We already have something wonderful. If we nurture it and feed it, the relationship will blossom in its own fashion."

At every FNCC conference, participants spend more time in small groups for dialogue and shared experiences than in lectures. At the conference on relationships, the power of this approach was apparent. People openly shared their heartaches and victories, and often discovered someone who already had walked the same path.

The experiences of those who attended could fill a book. Here are a few of those voices, selected because they arrived at the FNCC in pairs.

The Newlyweds

Andrew Persad and Giselle Spieler, Brea, Calif.

Andrew Persad and Giselle Spieler came to the Florida Nature and Culture Center to build on the peaceful relationship they already enjoy. They saw it as a second honeymoon — a "hon-

ymoon of the spirits."

For both, the trip was a reaffirmation of the direction they hope to take in their marriage — one of mutual respect and appreciation.

"What I've gotten out of this is that I'm a very assertive person, and I can be intolerant of people who don't have the same viewpoint," Mr. Persad says. "I've learned to be tolerant with my wife, and now I need to be tolerant with other people. This is something I've identified in my life through this conference. Being tolerant is a part of growth."

A former special forces agent in drug enforcement, Mr. Persad says that death and violence were facts of life for him before his wife introduced him to the practice of Buddhism two-and-a-half years ago.

"I saw the peace she had, and I wanted it," says Mr. Persad, explaining what attracted him to Ms. Spieler's practice of Buddhism. "After I started practicing, for the first time in years I said to myself, 'I'm a valuable person.' Life is valuable. Life can be fun.... Now I'm more emotional."

"He was the one who cried at our wedding," says Ms. Spieler, who teaches college math at Rio Hondo Community College in Whittier, Calif. "When I was in the young women's division, I made a list of the things I wanted in a husband. I realized that I needed to develop a relationship with myself first."

"We don't have to get into fights," she continued. "We have a peaceful relationship, strongly based on this practice. Our life is

PLEASE SEE FNCC, NEXT PAGE

...Together

FNCC, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

wonderful because it's based on the Gohonzon. We're a team, and we chant together about everything."

Mr. Persad chimes in: "We're not perfect. It takes work and action. But like Greg Martin said in his lecture, we have the power. We have to take action and make changes.... I'm so happy to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I never forget appreciation to my wife."

Mother and Daughter

Yukie and Anna Johnson, San Diego

Yukie Johnson and her daughter, Anna, made the long trip from San Diego to Florida in memory of their son and brother, Ricky, who was killed in January. Among the beautiful young trees growing at the Florida Nature and Culture Center is one planted in his memory. And they wanted to see it together.

Ricky, 16, was killed by another teenager who tried to steal his skateboard. The whole community has been touched by Ricky's death, and many voices expressed the neighborhood's need for a safe place for teens to ride their boards. As a result, a new skateboard park named after Ricky is under construction.

While still facing the pain of her loss, Mrs. Johnson used her trip to the FNCC as a stepping-stone to challenge her difficult relationship with Anna. As is the case in many households where children are growing into young adults, the last few years have been rocky ones in their home.

"It's not the environment, it's me," says Mrs. Johnson, reaffirming the message shared during the relationships conference. "I have to change myself. My daughter is going through a very difficult age. She's more independent. She and Ricky grew up together, and now she's feeling more hurt inside. I have to change and let her go. I have to be more protective behind the scenes and trust her more."

"She's like a mirror," Mrs. Johnson continues. "I have to understand my daughter and what she's thinking, what she's doing. I have to trust her Buddha nature and continue practicing for kosen-rufu.... When I focus on that, I know I can overcome this problem."

A month later, looking back on her experience in Florida, Anna Johnson says that going to Florida



Photo by LINDA ST. HILAIRE

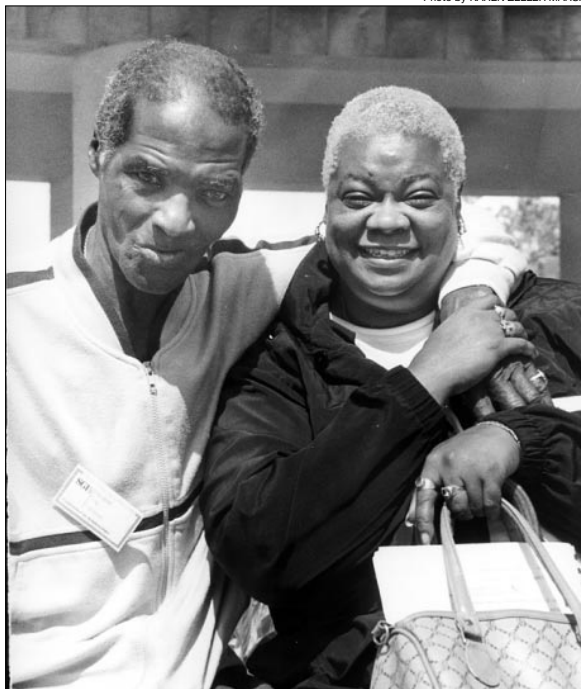


Photo by KAREN ZELLER MARSH

(Top) Yukie Johnson recognizes that she has to better understand and trust her daughter, Anna (left). (Bottom) Clay Douglas and Clair Crawford say their trip together to the FNCC is another beautiful memory.

helped her realize more clearly that now she and her mother have only each other. Seeing her brother's tree made her happy and more confident that he is OK. She redetermined to finish her high school education next year.

Perhaps she'll be a lawyer, she says. Then all the fighting she has done with her mom will have been practice for her day in court. "I can fight things that are wrong," she says.

After 30 Years

Clay Douglas and Clair Crawford, Orange County, Calif.

After 30 years together, not even losing their baggage on the way to Florida could stop Clair Crawford and Clay Douglas from building a beautiful memory to-

gether at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

"We have been soul mates for so long, and he always supported me through sickness and other problems," says Ms. Crawford. "I wanted to make a cause to further our happiness. I've always wanted to do this kind of trip with my best friend."

Mr. Douglas took a part-time job to finance his trip to the conference on relationships in Florida — a trip he says he made out of curiosity. "It's better than I expected — the food, the accommodations, the members," he says. "We're all alike. We accomplish kosen-rufu together."

"I'm more convinced than ever," says Ms. Crawford, "about the power of this practice." ■

With reporting by Karen Zeller Marsh

NEWS BRIEFS

BRIEFS, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

mental issue lies in the actions people take based on their attitude to nature. The question is not so much whether to develop or protect the environment, he asserted, but whether there is a fundamental spirit to harmoniously coexist with nature. Mr. Ikeda went on to stress the significance of the exhibition, which introduces ways to ensure sustainable development based on the Buddhist philosophy of the sanctity of life.

— Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER

Indiana Members Say 'We Are Family'

It was a family affair at the 2nd annual Day of Indiana. With the theme "Celebrating Family: The Foundation for World Peace," the diversity of today's family was celebrated in the form of exhibits and performances.

A presentation on the dysfunctional family and a poetry reading were on the program. Displays on topics from interracial family to parent/child relations were also entertaining and informative. A particular standout was an exhibit on families with same-sex partners. Among the many items on display were a photo album from a family with same-sex partners, a video of a same-sex commitment ceremony performed at the Indiana Community Center, and various *World Tribune* clippings that focus on same-sex issues.

As with many SGI-USA activities, the preparation was joyful but not necessarily easy. "The process was illuminating, especially in the way it helped me to strengthen bonds with fellow members," said John Fox, who worked on the display concerning families with same-sex partners. The committee members started out as strangers but ended up knowing a little more about one another and developing friendships, he said.

And by knowing fellow members better, the movement for world peace becomes a more unified, joyful experience. Just like a family should be.

— GARY RUSSELL, Correspondent

Jacksonville Members Support U.N. Association

In their latest support for the United Nations, four SGI-USA members from Jacksonville, Fla., attended the U.N. Association-USA Florida Division Annual Conference held in their city in May and talked about the SGI's activities and vision from local to international levels.

At one session a conference delegate asked the guest organizations — the SGI-USA, AFL-CIO and Catholic Charities — to share causes of special concern to them. The SGI-USA representative mentioned that the Soka Gakkai in Japan is collecting 13 million signatures on petitions for the abolition of nuclear weapons, as well as international efforts to support the Earth Charter. None of the conference attendants had previously heard of the Earth Charter, so the SGI-USA representative delivered information packets about it the next day.

— ANDREW BRUCK & NICK ALEXANDER, Correspondents

ANOTHER RELATIONSHIP CONFERENCE IS COMING THIS SEPTEMBER!
Sept. 10-13 at the Florida Nature and Culture Center
Check with your regional office for more info!

the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

'THE FLOWER OF CULTURE'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 1, PARTS 17-18

A life-moment encompasses 3,000 realms — Shin'ichi Yamamoto believes this Buddhist principle is the key to new creativity and a new kind of art.



In addition to dialogue with the world's leaders, Shin'ichi Yamamoto also believed that cultural exchange would be important in promoting understanding among people of different countries at the grass-roots level. Violence and barbarism were the essence of war; culture and civilization their opposites. While war equaled destruction and the oppression of people by military force, culture equaled creation, an exquisite flower nurtured by the inner power of the human spirit.

Culture was also the most effective way to understand a people and a nation. While each culture was distinct, each also possessed universal traits that aroused a response in others. Culture acted as a magnet, drawing people together, transcending ethnic, national and ideological differences. Shin'ichi thus made it his mission to bring to bloom the flower of a truly humanistic culture.

The September Soka Gakkai Headquarters Leaders Meeting was held at the Tokyo Gymnasium on Sept. 27. Separate academic and arts departments were established within the Culture Bureau at that meeting. A single, combined academic

and arts department with two sections had been formed in December the previous year, the first section of university professors and others involved in the academic world and the second of those in the arts. Now, the sections were upgraded and made into independent departments.

Hiroshi Yamagiwa, a Soka Gakkai director who had been a researcher in instrumentation engineering and had taught for a time at Tokyo Metropolitan University, was appointed Academic Department leader. Director Kunio Shiroya, a former Sendai Chapter leader and the first student division leader, was appointed Arts Department leader. All the members of these two departments had fine reputations in their fields.

There was a special excitement and expectation about the Arts Department. With its diverse membership of painters, dancers, calligraphers, composers, pianists, singers, actors and other artists, it was highly regarded as a pacesetter for cultural creativity.

Shin'ichi had great hopes for it. He fervently prayed that the Arts Department members would become cultural pioneers

and inspire the blossoming of grand, brilliant flowers of culture from amid the rich soil of the people.

That autumn, following on the heels of each area's sports meet, music festivals were held throughout Japan. Then, as an initial test of the concept, a culture festival was held for the first time by members in the Tokyo area.

The 1st Kansai Music Festival was held Oct. 6, with Shin'ichi in attendance. Music festivals were also conducted with great success in Hokkaido and the Chubu region, Oct. 7, and in Kyushu, Oct. 14. The first-ever youth division culture festival was slated for Oct. 14 and 15. The idea for holding these musical and cultural events had come from Shin'ichi.

Art is an irrepresible, natural expression of humanity. And it is inextricably linked to religion. For example, many of the great masterpieces of Western painting housed in the Louvre represent an exquisite flowering from the spiritual soil of Christianity. Though these works adopt many different forms of expression and though each shines

with its own genius, they express the Christian view of the universe and the world with powerful emotion.

The life and essence of art — whether it be painting, music or dance — lies in expressing, through a wellspring of emotion, the universal realm of the human spirit. It is a melding of the individual and the universal. That is why great art reaches out beyond ethnic and national barriers to move people the world over.

There's the Buddhist principle of a life-moment encompassing 3,000 realms — in other words, that all universal phenomena are contained within a moment of an individual's life. Likewise, that one moment of an individual's life pervades the universe. That is the highest, most universal truth, a truth that permeates and includes all humanity and the cosmos.

Shin'ichi was certain that Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism would serve as a basis for magnificent new art.

The Daishonin wrote: "Although you are not the Venerable Mahakashyapa, you should leap for joy! Although you are not Shariputra, you should rise and dance! When Bodhisattva Jogyo [Bodhisattva Superior Practices] emerged from the earth, he leapt forth joyfully" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 161). When Shakyamuni's most venerable disciples Mahakashyapa and Shariputra (who was foremost in wisdom) heard Shakyamuni preach the Lotus Sutra, the supreme teaching for attaining enlightenment, they leapt to their feet, their hearts dancing with joy.

And when, during his preaching, Shakyamuni called forth the

great legions of bodhisattvas from the earth, entrusting them with the mission of propagating the Lotus Sutra after his death, in the Latter Day of the Law, Bodhisattva Superior Practices, their leader, sprang forth joyfully.

The tremendous joy they experienced when they learned the supreme truth of the universe and decided to spread that truth, to bring happiness to all living things, caused them to leap exuberantly to their feet.

In such a deep, spontaneous expression of joy, this expression from the essence of our being, we find the flowering of art.

The Soka Gakkai is a gathering of ordinary people who have awakened to their mission of working for human happiness and a peaceful world. They are joyfully dedicated to sharing the Daishonin's teaching with many others. Shin'ichi firmly believed their presence would give birth to new creativity. He had suggested holding music and culture festivals convinced that the spread of kosen-rufu would eventually give rise to a "third civilization," one marked by an unsurpassed blossoming of the arts that would enrich and deepen people's lives.

To be continued

Ho Goku is the pen name of Daisaku Ikeda, who appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962. Illustration by Kenichiro Uchida.

Announcements, Greetings, Congratulations...

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- Send your message to Fine Print, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401, or e-mail fineprint@sgi-usa.org.

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BODHISATTVA

Being Your Selfless Self

SIGN POSTS APPLYING NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S WRITINGS TO DAILY LIFE

No More Tragic Scars

By JEFF FARR

SGI-USA YOUTH DIVISION STUDY COMMITTEE

Life itself is the most precious of all treasures. Even the treasures of the universe cannot equal the value of a single human life. ("The Gift of Rice," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 267)

India's excited about the bomb. Pakistan's excited about it. I'm not.

The recent nuclear tests sent me back to President Toda's 1957 declaration against nuclear weapons and Nichiren Daishonin's teaching that "life itself is the most precious of all treasures." It's frustrating that the world still doesn't believe Toda or the Daishonin — bombs are still No. 1, human life still No. 2 (or 3 or 4). There's a long way to go to convince the world that one human life is worth more than a nuclear stockpile.

But isn't it naturally our desire, as the successors of Toda and the Daishonin, to prove the truth of what they taught? Until we do — until nuclear abolition is secure — we cannot say that we have completely won as disciples, in my opinion. Not until humanity really shows faith in humanity.

I've been busy lately with preparations for the first nationwide conference of the SGI-USA student division (this August at the Florida Nature and Culture Center). We recently realized that the start date of our conference, Aug. 6, is the 53rd anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, and the end date, Aug. 9, the Nagasaki bombing anniversary.

This renewed my feeling that the youth of the SGI-USA have a big role to play in ending this nuclear age. It reminded me that when I asked Dr. David Krieger if nuclear abolition were truly possible, he said: "You have to have a certain amount of faith. You must have a certain amount of hope that peace is possible. It really is an act of faith."

In *The New Human Revolution*, volume 1, SGI President Ikeda describes how the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings left "a tragic scar on human history." With a "certain amount" of faith and hope, I want to win in convincing the world that life is the most precious treasure. Then there will be no more tragic scars. ■

WHAT A CONCEPT

ON THE BASIC IDEAS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN'S BUDDHISM

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

Altruism (as opposed to egoism) is a noble idea, most people agree — the idea that the proper goal of an individual's actions is to ensure the general welfare of society. Often, though, this is interpreted as sacrificing one's individuality to a collective ideal or enduring personal suffering and dissatisfaction for the sake of a larger good. But the Buddhist concept of bodhisattva encompasses both individual freedom and social responsibility, both personal satisfaction and humanitarian service.

In Sanskrit, *bodhi* can mean enlightenment, to be alert, or to recognize; *sattva* means being or existence. So, in a sense, a bodhisattva is a being whose essence is enlightened. According to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, our enlightened life-essence is Buddha, and the real-world expression of this essence is bodhisattva action.

In one sense, bodhisattva action could be summed up as seeking to live your life to the fullest. More specifi-

cally, it is motivated by four universal vows, the first of which is to lead as many people as possible to become Buddhas. This vow is fulfilled by living the other three, which are explained in light of the Daishonin's Buddhism: to continuously "burn the firewood of earthly desires," fueling your life force; to infinitely deepen your faith in and understanding of the Mystic Law; and to constantly manifest wisdom, courage, endurance, forbearance and compassion, the characteristics of an enlightened person.

It could be said that a bodhisattva is one who is devoted to overcoming his or her egoistic shallowness, but that doesn't mean that we have to annihilate our sense of self in order to be bodhisattvas. Rather, it implies that our concept of the self extends beyond our physical body and immediate surroundings.

Bodhisattva action is rooted in the understanding that the self is eternal, abundant and interwoven with the lives of all other beings. In other words, the self is selfless. It's inextricable from the lives of others. Ultimately, there's no separation between self and other (a point that is explained by the Buddhist concepts of two but not two and the oneness of life and its environment).

Accordingly, there's no clear separation between practice for oneself and practice for others. Buddhist practice — which could be summed up as faithful chanting and dedication to fulfilling our

bodhisattva vows — is by its very nature both for self and others.

Whether you're determinedly struggling to get out of debt, inspiring others with the story of how you overcame a serious problem, or praying and working to realize your dreams, you're taking bodhisattva action. By demonstrating the efficacy of Buddhist practice, you're leading others to their Buddhahood, their absolute freedom and joy. What's more, our life-condition is expanded by bodhisattva action; SGI President Ikeda, for example, has attributed his high life-condition to his consistent prayers for the happiness, prosperity and good health of SGI members.

Ultimately, a person's Buddhahood is expressed in his or her actions. Regarding this, President Ikeda said recently: "The Bodhisattvas of the Earth are in fact Buddhas. But the term *Buddha* is inevitably taken to mean a being who is somehow transcendental or superior to ordinary human beings. The Bodhisattvas of the Earth thoroughly devote themselves to the way of human beings. This is a point of tremendous significance."

All in all, being a bodhisattva means being yourself in the truest sense.

Eleven in a series

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

Karma vs. Mission

By TED MORINO

SGI-USA STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

Q I have heard leaders say that "your karma is your mission." I'm not sure what that means....

A Our karma, or our destiny, allows us to see the total ledger of our past conduct. What we are at this moment is the end result of how we have lived. This view, however, tends only to be backward-looking.

Some even say that destiny, not wisdom, controls our lives. This view isn't just backward-looking — it's pessimistic and easily produces apathy.

Originally, destiny as expounded in Buddhism was to teach people the strictness of the law of cause and effect so that they could become mindful of their behavior, speech and intent. It was not meant to discourage or intimidate them; it was actually an expression of the Buddha's compassion and wisdom to help people to cherish the present.

Buddhism also has the idea, though, that a person chooses to be born with a specific

kind of karma to prove the greatness of Buddhism. President Toda once said: "If every aspect of our lives were perfect, we might find it difficult to mingle with those who have the various problems we had never experienced. We have taken the trouble to be born in this world, destined to have a specific problem such as poverty or illness, in order to prove the greatness of the Mystic Law. We do this by solving our karmic problems through Buddhist practice."

Viewed from the most essential standpoint, then, it can be said that we have chosen our destiny so that we can fulfill a specific mission in this lifetime. This means, of course, that our destiny is ultimately of a surmountable nature.

When we are convinced of this point, we can tap a profound sense of mission in our lives. At the same time, we can then place our karma in the right perspective.

In Buddhism, our great challenge is to revolutionize our determination or life-condition through this correct awareness of the reality of life. Since the idea of mission by nature implies what we will do in the future, beginning with our present

life-condition, it's a positive, forward-looking thing.

SGI President Ikeda encouraged Sonia Gandhi after the death of her husband, Rajiv, saying, "Please change your fate into value, your destiny into mission." This is the challenge we all face.

When we are too hung up on the idea of our destiny, it's easy to wind up getting nowhere. When we focus instead on what we have to do now and continue to accumulate many "minor" good causes, we'll eventually look back to find that we have made a "major" breakthrough in our lives. We'll realize that we have achieved a great change in our destiny.

One characteristic of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is that "We live for the present and future," as is written on the Gohonzon. We are practicing Buddhism so that we can develop our life-condition to the point where we can say — with a great upsurge of joy in our lives — "I will use my life, my destiny, for kosen-rufu."

Thus, in the end, our destiny always comes down to a very positive thing. In the end, it becomes our greatest source of joy. ■

VISION, FROM PAGE 1

Kusatsu, became a kind of settlement for sufferers of the debilitating disease. They came seeking the beneficial, medicinal effects of the water there, which had a high sulfur content.

SASAKI: In those days in Japan, Hansen's disease was thought not only to be incurable but hereditary. [It carried such a great social stigma that families of sufferers would usually try to conceal the presence of the illness.] Many victims came to live in this isolated community of fellow sufferers in Yunosawa [either voluntarily or because they had been cast out and had nowhere else to go]. Their lives were filled with great material hardship and emotional pain.

IKEDA: Ms. Legh was a dedicated Christian, and she established medical and educational facilities for Hansen's disease patients and their children, giving her life to bring them security. She built several nursing and residential homes for patients.

Eventually, she also built a clinic for them, where they could receive free medical treatment by a qualified doctor. She paid for all these things herself, using her enormous personal wealth.

And what is really remarkable is that she began this great labor in the latter part of her life.

Ms. Legh lived modestly. When her patients witnessed her humble, selfless way of life,

they felt a surge of pride in enduring poverty.

SASAKI: During her weekly visits to give Bible instruction in Shimoma, some distance away from Yunosawa, Ms. Legh stayed overnight in a tiny, makeshift hut without amenities of any kind. She was also known to be kind not only to people but to animals.

IKEDA: In winter, she wore the same straw boots as the locals to walk through the deep snows and visit the bedsides of the sick. Later, when rubber boots became available, she said she was happier about the invention of rubber boots than the light bulb. And she even used to wear those boots on her visits to Tokyo.

MATSUOKA: When other Westerners saw her poor attire and the humble circumstances in which she lived, they would exclaim that she lived like a beggar.

IKEDA: Though she had been born and bred in the British upper classes, she was prepared to do anything to serve the people. She was an admirable person. She could do what she did because of her unselfish spirit.

I think we can safely say that, at least in one respect, such selflessness has contributed to the development of Christianity as a world religion. Similarly, it is precisely because of her labor that we have worked so hard for the betterment of society and the welfare of humanity, not seeking personal glory or gain nor abusing our organization, that the

SGI has become a world presence, too.

MATSUOKA: Taminosuke Nuki, who shared Ms. Legh's labors, wrote a book about her titled *The Life and Work of Mary Cornwall Legh*.

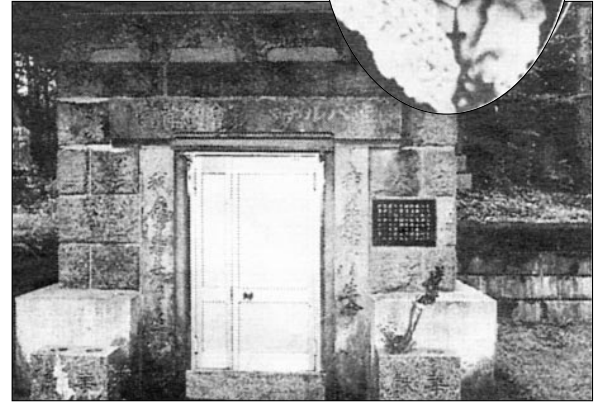
IKEDA: Yes. He wrote: "Anyone observing the life of Madame Legh could see that it transcended all logic and calculation. She had no hunger for worldly fame or fortune. She cared only for befriending, with justice and compassion, the sick whom the world had abandoned. She sacrificed herself. She labored endlessly. She spared no effort. She gave all her wealth to their encouragement and comfort." How admirable!

SASAKI: Inspired by Ms. Legh, more than 900 people converted to Christianity. She personally washed and prepared for burial some 300 of her converts — all sufferers of Hansen's disease — when they died.

IKEDA: She was loved by all. They called her Mom. For her 77th birthday, they made an album for her with that title. They dedicated it with profound gratitude to "She who mothered us all, who had mothers once but lost them." It included the poems:

*Though it is sad indeed
To be ill
But how fortunate we are
To be blessed with
Such a mother.*

Mary H. Cornwall Legh (right), an English woman who spent many years in Japan. There is a monument to Ms. Legh in a park near the Soka Gakkai's Many Treasures Center in the town of Kusatsu in Gumma Prefecture. And her grave is also nearby (below). She is still deeply admired and respected by the people of Gumma. Photos courtesy of Seikyo Press.



*Though she wears
Only rough garments
Our mother's
Face shines
With love.*

church at Kusatsu, along with those of many of her patients.

MATSUOKA: The Pacific War had officially begun just 10 days before her death, and Japan and the United Kingdom had already severed diplomatic relations. The wartime slogan "The Americans and British Are Devils and Beasts" was on everyone's lips.

SASAKI: But the Japanese Minister of Health and Welfare sent a representative on his behalf to attend her funeral. The next year,

How moving these are!

SASAKI: After her 77th birthday, Ms. Legh, who had been untiring until then, began to show signs of deteriorating health. And eventually, she moved to Akashi in Hyogo Prefecture to convalesce. She died at 84 in 1941, never once forgetting her beloved "family" in Kusatsu.

At her request, her ashes were interred in the ossuary of the

PLEASE SEE VISION, NEXT PAGE

GLOSSARY

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

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

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

gongyo: Literally, "assiduous practice." In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo means to recite the "Expedient Means" (2nd) chapter and the "Life

Span of the Tathagata" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo in front of the Gohonzon.

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

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

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

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

Latter Day of the Law: The period be-

ginning 2,000 years after Shakyamuni's death, when his teachings lose their power and the true Buddha appears to lead all people to enlightenment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON

VISION, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

when the missionary's ashes were returned to Kusatsu and a ceremony conducted, a representative of the town's mayor as well as the chief of police and other local officials attended.

IKEDA: A memorial park was built on a hill overlooking Yunosawa, and a monument to Ms. Legh's life erected on it, indicating just how well-respected and beloved she was, regardless of her nationality. Ms. Legh had a wonderful life, I am certain. She found a noble cause to devote herself to, took it up gladly and bravely and gave everything to fulfill her chosen vocation.

In Buddhism, a person's true greatness lies in his or her behavior, in how he or she has lived life. It is important to develop a way of looking at the world and at people with unclouded eyes, with undistorted vision, transcending doctrine and orthodoxy.

The ultimate measure of faith is found in the spirit to devote one's life, far transcending any quest for personal merit. This spirit of devotion is true selflessness. It is to cast aside selfish desires. It is complete dedication to the Law and to humanity. The Soka Gakkai is what it is today precisely because its members have always acted with such a spirit, with such total commitment.

I will never forget those who have worked so hard alongside me to support the Soka Gakkai through the years. I am sure that Nichiren Daishonin also praises their tremendous efforts. Because they have worked so hard, I want all members from those early years to stride vigorously through their third stage of life and bring their lives to wonderful completions.

MATSUOKA: You composed a poem to commemorate your 50th year of practicing faith:

*For 50 years
I have advanced with a
spirit
Of selfless devotion
At last fulfilling
The vow I made for this
lifetime*

Reading it, I was struck anew how important that spirit is.

IKEDA: Just the other day [Aug. 25, 1997], I met with Li Chengxian, widow of the late Chang Shuhong, the director of the Dunhuang Relics Research Institute and custodian of the treasures of Dunhuang. Madame Li and her husband pledged together to devote their lives to



'Each of our lives is like a canvas. The question is what kind of picture do we paint there?'

preserving, studying, promoting and passing on to the next generation the treasures of Dunhuang. They never gave up, in spite of the loneliness of the desert, the impoverished conditions in which they lived, the scorn of thoughtless people, and persecution by the authorities.

Madame Li has spent her life in selfless service to the art of Dunhuang by her own choice. Even today, the fires of creativity burn undiminished within her. She has recently embarked on a project to create new caves at Dunhuang for contemporary wall paintings. Her grand vision is to invite artists from around the world to participate. She wants to build a modern-day version of the Mogao Caves and the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas in these coming years spanning the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. At her advanced age, she still has glorious plans. I was moved talking with her.

SASAKI: I know many may consider it rude to mention a woman's age, but Madame Li is 72. She is still healthy and active. In the August meeting, she described her excitement at meeting you for the first time in Beijing 17 years ago, saying that she could still see that moment as clear as day.

IKEDA: Yes, I met Madame Li and Chang Shuhong in April 1980 on my fifth visit to China.

Sun Pinghua, who was then president of the China-Japan Friendship Association, introduced me to them. On that trip, Deng Yingchao, the widow of the late Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, invited me to her home in Zhongnanhai, Beijing. I also met with many of China's new leaders and gave a commemorative lecture at Beijing University on receiving an honorary doctorate from that institution.

MATSUOKA: I remember Sun Pinghua, who understood your busy schedule, saying to you in his fluent Japanese: "There is someone I really think you should meet. He is a wonderful person. I know how busy you are, but please make just a little time. You will not regret it." He was referring to Chang Shuhong.

IKEDA: Chang Shuhong and Madame Li came to see me at the Beijing Hotel. The day before, the 77-year-old Mr. Chang had just returned from what was then West Germany. We had a pleasant meeting and conversation that lasted two-and-a-half hours, talking about the Silk Road and Dunhuang to our hearts' content. I was deeply struck by his passion for and commitment to Dunhuang, which earned him the nickname Desert Freak.

MATSUOKA: Mr. Chang's greeting upon first meeting you was

memorable: "This morning I heard on the radio that Madame Deng Yingchao met with you yesterday. I have heard your name many times in the past. I am so happy to meet you today in person!"

SASAKI: Now, 17 years after that first meeting, Madame Li relates, "I have met Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda many times over the years in China and Japan, and each time our friendship deepens."

IKEDA: In our published dialogue [available only in Japanese and Chinese to date], Mr. Chang related his fateful encounter with the art of Dunhuang in a book of photographic plates. He was then a student in Paris, and, on learning of the existence of such wonderful paintings in his homeland, he returned to devote his life to preserving them for all humanity.

In the years that followed, he met with much hardship and persecution. But still, in his last years, he said that he knew he had not been mistaken in choosing the life he did. He never regretted it, he declared. This is the way we ought to live.

SASAKI: A life dedicated to kosen-rufu is like that, isn't it?

IKEDA: Yes. When I asked Mr. Chang what profession he would choose if he were to be reborn as a human being, he replied, "If I

really could be reborn human, I would once more choose to be Chang Shuhong and finish the work I have started."

In terms of our mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, we who embrace the Mystic Law dedicate our lives to an eternal mission that exists across the three existences — our mission to continue the great undertaking of kosen-rufu.

SASAKI: The beautiful ties of friendship between you and this Chinese couple reminds me of the magnificent oil painting of Chomolungma, or Mount Everest, that they painted together and presented to you a few years ago. This masterpiece now adorns the entrance hall of the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.

MATSUOKA: Yes. I am sure it is the result of a warm friendship that grew from your "making a little time" on your 1980 visit to China.

IKEDA: Each of our lives is like a canvas. The question is what kind of picture do we paint there?

We don't have to be celebrities or geniuses. What's important is to fill our canvas in our own style and to our satisfaction, depicting the brilliant drama of a life devoted to our individual mission. With all our heart and being. Up to the last moment. ☐

Because He Was a Living Flame

Dr. Cintio Vitier — Founder and President of the
Center for the Studies of José Martí

Recollections

By Daisaku Ikeda

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda meets with Dr. Cintio Vitier.

Inspired by the life of José Martí, Dr. Vitier dedicates his life to perpetuating Martí's ideals. Martí endured every conceivable insult for the sake of his beloved compatriots — much like loving parents are willing to undergo any suffering or submit to any indignity if it means saving the lives of their children.

The figure's visionary gaze was focused on the future. I was riveted to the spot, looking up at the photographic portrait of the revolutionary hero himself, there at the Center for the Studies of José Martí in Havana. Here, I thought, is a hero for the ages. His brow reveals an intelligence that seemed to understand all; his calm bearing, the perfect composure of a person unafraid of death. He had the heart of a lion, a will of steel. His clear eyes were beacons of justice and goodness, and his face shone with a noble glow.

José Martí (1853–95) was the spiritual father of the Cuban Republic, a living flame of a man. A passionate cry echoed from the depths of his being: "Rise and fight until slavery has been abolished from the Americas! Until our society is cleansed of all corruption! Until the people are free from suffering!" This bold cry flew like sparks from his pen, from his lips.

Because he was a living flame, he sent a light of hope to his compatriots who felt alone and abandoned. Because he was a living flame, his warmth extended to all — there was nothing more alien to him than coldness or lack of passion. Because he was a living flame, he changed his form at will. He could be a poet, a philosopher, a journalist, a teacher, an orator, an accomplished organizer and, in the struggle for independence, a leader of the revolutionary forces. Though his form changed, the fire that burned within was unchanging — a fire fueled by love for the weak and exploited. He was a bodhisattva from the Caribbean. His motto was "Live to serve others! Live to love others! Say good-bye to yourself! And if you fall, fall the right way so you may rise again!"

Because he was a living flame, he was pure. Anyone who came near with selfish interests or ambitions was scorched by the intensity of his searing integrity. To Martí, his nation was an altar upon which he would sacrifice his life, not a steppingstone to personal glory. The ill, the oppressed and the poor were his altar. It was to them that he bowed his head in veneration.

When he was 9 years old, he witnessed a sugar plantation slave being whipped. He never forgot the scene. Spanish rule of Cuba was growing more and more oppressive until, in 1868, the Cuban Revolu-

tion — which continues to this day — began. It was a revolution to win the right to be free of outside control and exploitation. At its inception, José Martí was 15 years old.

Spain's reaction was harsh, and Martí's mentor, the patriotic poet Rafael María de Mendive, was arrested. The young Martí comforted his teacher's weeping wife, assuring her that he would avenge this injustice. This is the spirit of a true disciple. It is the same kind of dedication I felt toward my mentor, Josei Toda.

At 16, Martí himself was arrested. The pretext was a single letter in which he had criticized the authorities. The letter was signed by Martí and a close friend, but Martí insisted that he alone had written it. That declaration resulted in a six-year prison sentence.

The prison for political prisoners was a living hell. Forced to wear chains around their waists and attached to a metal cuff on their right ankles at all times, prisoners worked in a rock quarry from before dawn until sunset. Some of the prisoners were sick and elderly, and there was even a 12-year-old orphan. The sound of harsh beatings constantly assaulted their ears, as did the scornful laughter and insults of the guards as they brutally abused their prisoners. When a prisoner collapsed under such torture, he was left to die.

With every move the prisoners made, the leg cuffs cut into their flesh. The wounds became infected, crusted over in blood and filth and dust from the quarry. Many people were left with festering sores that never healed to the end of their days.

From these horrific firsthand experi-

ences, Martí learned the true awful nature of tyranny. Because tyranny reigned, countless innocent people had been murdered; children lived in fear, hovering wraithlike in the shadows; mothers went mad with grief. Martí was outraged at the smug, smirking individuals who perpetrated such evil. But he knew that those who caused such terrible suffering to others would eventually be judged themselves. He declared that while it might be possible to sully a person's reputation, to subvert justice, or to destroy all, the ideal of good itself would always rise to the top, indestructible and eternal.

The burning fires of extreme suffering branded this young life, forging an invincible revolutionary.

Dr. Cintio Vitier, founder and president of the Center for the Studies of José Martí, said: "Martí's will of iron was at the same time a will of love. There was nothing forced about it; it was simply born of his single-minded commitment to serve those who were suffering."

Martí endured every conceivable insult for the sake of his beloved compatriots — much like loving parents are willing to undergo any suffering or submit to any indignity if it means saving the lives of their children.

Martí was released from prison after six months. For his revolutionary activities, however, he was eventually forced to leave the country and live in exile abroad. He never enjoyed a moment's peace or comfort until he died at age 42. He experienced poverty, illness and the betrayal of his comrades. But he bore it all. He was a flame. Because he was a flame, the stronger the winds of adversity

blew, the higher he rose and the fiercer he burned.

"If Martí were alive today," Dr. Vitier said, "I am sure he would completely agree with the idea of human revolution. The armies of force always perish. What we need is an army of human love."

Dr. Vitier is a second-generation scholar of Martí. His father, Dr. Medaldo Vitier, was a well-known researcher who published Cuba's first in-depth biographical study on Martí. The senior Dr. Vitier was appointed as education minister in an earlier administration, but he quickly wore out his welcome because of his firm convictions. He walked out of the ministry in disgust and resigned. Later, he founded a private school in his own home.

From the time he was a boy, Dr. Vitier had a great love of poetry. When he was 17, he sent some of his work to a Spanish poet visiting Cuba, Juan Ramón Jiménez. Mr. Jiménez invited the young Vitier to meet with him. Sitting together in the huge dining room of the hotel where the poet was staying, the poet read aloud each of Dr. Vitier's poems and offered his praise and approval. "You are a poet," Jiménez told the youth. These were words of tremendous encouragement for Dr. Vitier since Jiménez was one of the outstanding successors to the contemporary poetry movement started by Martí. Later, in 1956, Jiménez won the Nobel Prize for literature.

A poet is a witness, says Dr. Vitier. In each fleeting, ephemeral moment, the poet discovers beauty, resurrects it, expresses it and affirms it for all eternity. In that sense, Dr. Vitier's work to preserve Martí's timeless legacy for future generations is well suited to a poet.

I have met with Dr. Vitier twice to date — once in Havana and once in Tokyo. His wife, Dr. Fina García Marruz, is also a distinguished Martí scholar. Dr. Vitier and I are making arrangements for a dialogue on the theme of Martí. I am looking forward to it, because I believe that a nation which holds in high esteem a great humanist philosopher is a fortunate nation indeed — a nation that will always be spiritually rich, whatever hardships it may face. Martí declared that an irreligious nation will die because it has no means to nurture virtue.

Martí was a source of constant spiritual nourishment. He told his fellow citizens that an upturned face is far more beautiful than one gazing downward, urging them also to look, not at the clouds, but the sun. And he proudly proclaimed, "I am a good man, and for that goodness, / I will die looking up at the sun!"

The freedom fighter wanted to die on the battlefield. He devoted himself to preparing the groundwork for liberating his country. He organized the stirrings of revolution in different regions into a unified movement. He wrote until his arm

By HO GOKU

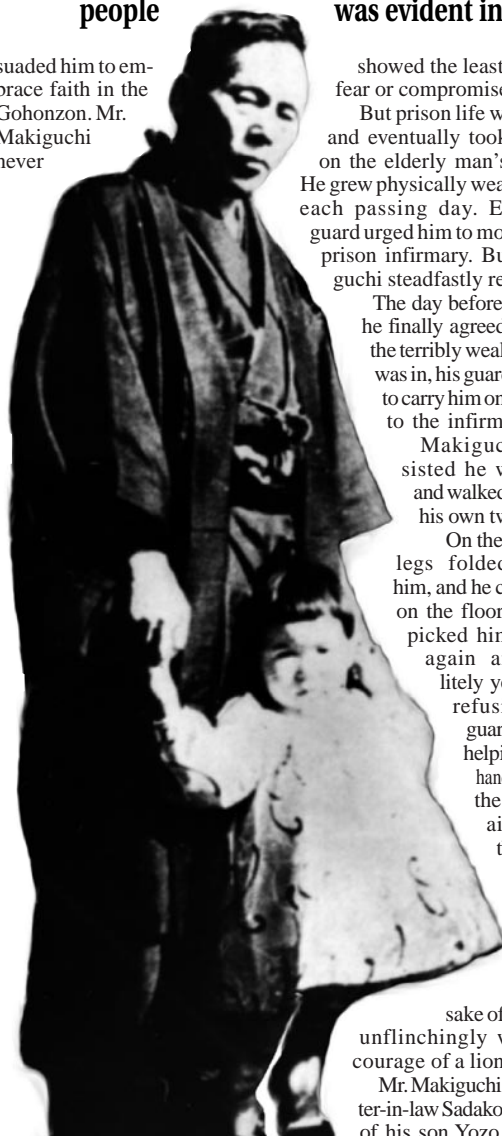
SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

STEEL WILL AND WARMTH: PRESIDENT MAKIGUCHI



Tsunesaburo Makiguchi wasn't all steel will and self-discipline, President Ikeda writes on Makiguchi's 127th birthday. While absolutely strict with himself, a tremendous love and compassion for his students and the people was evident in the way he lived.

sued him to embrace faith in the Gohonzon. Mr. Makiguchi never



showed the least trace of fear or compromise.

But prison life was harsh and eventually took its toll on the elderly man's health. He grew physically weaker with each passing day. Even his guard urged him to move to the prison infirmary. But Makiguchi steadfastly refused.

The day before he died, he finally agreed. Seeing the terribly weak state he was in, his guard offered to carry him on his back to the infirmary. Mr. Makiguchi insisted he was fine and walked there on his own two feet.

On the way, his legs folded under him, and he collapsed on the floor. But he picked himself up again and, politely yet firmly refusing the guard's helping

hand, finished the trip unaided. To the end, he faced his persecution for the sake of the Law

unflinchingly with the courage of a lion.

Mr. Makiguchi's daughter-in-law Sadako, the wife of his son Yozo, learned

these details directly from the guard.

Yet for all his steel will and rigorous self-discipline, Mr. Makiguchi was an infinitely warm, gentle person. When he was starting out in his career, teaching at an elementary school attached to Hokkaido Teachers College, the present-day Hokkaido University of Education, he would go outside on snowy mornings to meet his students part way and walk them to school. He'd carry the little ones on his back and hold the hands of the older girls and boys.

He was especially considerate of those children who suffered from weak constitutions or were ill. If any of the children had frozen, badly chapped hands, he'd heat some water in the classroom and gently soak their hands until they were warmed.

When he was principal of Mikasa Elementary School in Tokyo, he would even provide lunches out of his own money for those students too poor to bring their own. He was aware of the situation of each and every child. And he tried to help them all.

He was a very caring, loving teacher.

One winter evening, a woman came to him for guid-

ance. When she was about to return home, her infant bundled on her back, Mr. Makiguchi tucked some folded newspapers into the back of the child's kimono. "If you do this, he'll be as warm as if he were wearing an extra layer of clothing," he said.

Another time, Makiguchi knelt down on a wintry, windswept train platform to repair the broken sandal strap of an elderly woman. What consideration and kindness he displayed! This rare combination of courage so strong it was fearless in the face of death, and boundless concern for others is true testimony to the greatness of Mr. Makiguchi's character.

He had a tremendous love and compassion for people, which inspired him to boldly champion the cause of truth and justice and fight with fierce determination against all that is evil and destructive.

Indomitable faith and unflagging courage give us the capacity to embrace others with limitless warmth and compassion. True kindness to others is always backed by inner strength.

Ignoring injustice brings unhappiness to all. Such a society worries me deeply.

Mr. Makiguchi's life was based on the belief that failing to do good is doing evil. He lived a life of great moral good and service to humanity.

This month marks the 70th anniversary of Mr. Makiguchi's conversion to the Daishonin's Buddhism, and June 6 is his 127th birthday.

Let us ever bear in mind that the Soka Gakkai spirit is perpetuated through our valiant efforts as champions of justice and humanism, just as Mr. Makiguchi did before us — to fight the world's wrongs and to warm and illuminate the hearts of our friends and fellow members with the radiance of character.

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*.

Sincerity, earnestness, strictness, integrity — these words come to mind whenever I see photographs of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, father of the Soka movement and first Soka Gakkai president. I always feel the penetrating gleam in his eyes.

He was a strict mentor to his disciples, but he was even stricter with himself. His powerful, indomitable faith, which led him to fight resolutely against military oppression and, indeed, die for his beliefs, is unequivocal proof of this.

At this year's Soka Gakkai Day (May 3) Commemorative Headquarters Leaders Meeting, I shared the little-known fact that Mr. Makiguchi had once taught an ethics class at the Tokyo Higher Technical School, predecessor of the Shibaura Institute of Technology. According to the recollections of a former student, Mr. Makiguchi, who wished for world peace more than anything, denounced the widespread anti-Chinese attitudes among the Japanese at that time.

"Many Japanese maintain that the Chinese are given to lying and deceit," Mr. Makiguchi observed, "but that is not true. If it were, then how could their marvelous culture have flourished as it has for 5,000 years? That doesn't make sense."

He further asserted: "If we trust others and communicate with them openly and honestly, they will respond in turn. That is the theory of value." These remarks were when the country was in the midst of the Sino-Japanese War. He wanted to break through the narrow-minded prejudices of his fellow Japanese.

A short time later, the student who shared these reminiscences received his draft notice and was forced to interrupt his studies to fight in China. There he met the Chinese people face to face and learned that everything Mr. Makiguchi said was true.

Even after Mr. Makiguchi was arrested and imprisoned, he continued to speak out with confidence and conviction. During interrogations with the prosecutors, he boldly stated his views on correct and erroneous religious teachings.

He even told his guard about the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and per-

By HO GOKU

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S ESSAY

MY LOVE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY



A life of continuous effort, of cherishing and living in the moment, makes us each a great artist of life, SGI President Ikeda writes.

Beauty unites humanity all around the world. Recently, the Val de Bièvres Photo Club in France presented me with a Diploma of Photographic Art and made me an honorary member. The club was founded in 1949 by André Fage and his father, Jean. It is a well-respected and prestigious international cultural organization whose aim is to create a worldwide network of amitié, or friendship, through the art of photography. I will regard it as an unsurpassed privilege if I am able, in some small way, to share in the work of spreading such a noble ideal as friendship around the world.



In a discussion with Mr. Fage when we met several years ago, I learned that the great French writer Victor Hugo was an aficionado of photography. Mr. Fage was kind enough to show me a rare photograph that Hugo had taken during a sojourn in Bièvres, a town on the outskirts of Paris.

Hugo was later driven into exile by the dictator Napoleon III. During his nine years abroad, he took several photographic self-portraits and sent them back to France.

The photographs were an announcement of sorts to enemies who had plotted his downfall: "I'm still here — hale and hearty as ever!" Taking photographs, too, can be an unceasing spiritual struggle.



As I recall, the first time I took up a camera was about 1970. I was feeling a bit run-down from overwork, and a friend gave me a camera, hoping it would provide a break from my normal routine. I wanted to show my appreciation for the gift by sending him a photograph I had taken, and so little by little I learned the art of photography.

In June 1971, a group of members and I were driving at night down a road along the edge of Lake Onuma in Hokkaido. Though the night was dark as pitch, there was a mysterious light coming from behind the distant mountains. One of my colleagues suggested it might be the lights of the nearby city of Hakodate, but I didn't think so.

We drove toward the light. Suddenly, we found ourselves staring up at a huge and brilliant moon. Its beauty took my breath away. On the lake's surface, the moon shimmered in gold and silver waves, creating a scene of magical beauty.

"This moment will never come again!" I thought, and I quickly grabbed my camera and snapped the shutter.



As such "dialogues with nature" accumulated over the years, they eventually took form as an exhibition of my photographs that has traveled around the world. I am humbled to have so many people view my work. At the same time I am happy if my photographs have given others the opportunity to commune with nature themselves and have enriched, in

even the smallest degree, their experience of the beautiful world around us.

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "In a single day a person has 840 million thoughts" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 471). The human heart is a fragile, ever-shifting thing, but nature stands majestic and immovable, providing us with a mirror to view our own lives.

The "Robert Capa Retrospective Exhibition" is currently on display at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum. Robert Capa was one of the greatest photojournalists of the 20th century. His work documents the terrible and repeated tragedy of war from the battlefield, the front line of life and death.

Cornell Capa, Robert Capa's brother, founded the International Center of Photography in New York to carry on his brother's mission. During one of our several meetings, I said, "I believe that what motivates the photographer is a love of each irreplaceable moment, a love of life." I also said, "Beautiful works of art cannot be created by a person whose life has grown soft through idleness and laziness."



Nichiren Daishonin tells us that "life does not go beyond

the moment" (MW-5, 34). Buddhism focuses on this single moment of life. The great life-entirety of time without beginning is also contained in this transitory life-moment. We cannot postpone life to some vague future date; it is the here and now that counts, upon which all depends.

The renowned Russian physicist Dr. Anatoli Logunov, who was in Japan recently, said to me: "What makes you so strong, President Ikeda, is that you've never had time for a moment's pause. That, I feel, is the key to your strength."



The struggle to propagate Buddhism never stops for an instant. As the Lotus Sutra says, "This, the Buddha's work, I have never for a moment neglected" (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 226). We must devote our entire beings to this great undertaking with all our passion and energy; we must make our lives shine to illuminate that goal each second of our lives without cease. Only in that continuous effort can we walk the path toward lives of eternal brilliance and splendor. I believe that such a person can be considered a truly great photographer, a great artist, of life.

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda takes a photo of the cherry blossoms in Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Garden, April 1997.

FLAME, FROM PAGE 10

became sore and swollen. And all the time he was hoping to fall in a hail of bullets. He wanted to give his life to illuminate the way for his comrades to realize their shared ideal.

He was a flame. His desire was to give every moment of his life, every breath of his being for his cause until there was nothing left. He knew that only when we blaze brilliantly ourselves can we illuminate others.

"Logs endure death to provide illumination. Are human beings less brave than logs?" he asked.

In 1895, Martí finally returned to his homeland. A month later, he was killed in action on the battlefield. Struck by an enemy bullet, he fell from his horse. He fell face upward, looking at the sun. His followers vowed, their voices choked with tears, that they would avenge him. His noble sacrifice inspired thousands to rise up and join the struggle. The seed

of the revolution grew and germinated in the people's hearts.

While Spanish rule was replaced with United States' rule, the sufferings of the Cuban people continued. But the spirit of Martí was alive and well. It spoke to the people; it lit their way. The Cuban Revolution finally toppled the corrupt Batista regime in 1959.

When the young rebel leader Fidel Castro was arrested in 1953 in the midst of the struggle, he was questioned at a military tribunal, "Who is your leader?"

He replied, "Our intellectual leader is José Martí!" That was 58 years after Martí's death.

In the visitors' book at the Center for the Studies of José Martí, I expressed in the form of a poem the emotions that rose in my heart when I thought of Martí's courageous life:

*The great and good
Meet troubles fierce as the
harshlest gale
But on such a person, too,*

*A great sun of eternal glory,
victory and acclaim
Shines with brilliant
grandeur without fail,
Always and without fail.*

Buddhism teaches the principle of emanations of the Buddha. The burning spirit of one great person lights a flame in the hearts of thousands and millions who become emanations of that spirit, spreading like a prairie fire across all time and space.

Photos by USA HOLLIS



Michael Sasaki, 15, says that 'Buddhist practice is my foundation.'

EDGE, FROM PAGE 1

After the class, my teacher pulled me aside and told me that I was too advanced to be in that class, so she put me in a more challenging one. After two days, she said that I was still too advanced. She suggested that I take private lessons.

But my mom was reluctant to pay for private lessons. Buddhism teaches that it's important to have a big dream for your life and a strong determination to fulfill it. So I chanted for my mom to see how much skating meant to me. Finally, she agreed to let me take private lessons.

One day, I went to the Skating Edge ice rink where I saw every-

one doing double and triple jumps all over the place. I was amazed. So many young people were such good skaters! It encouraged me to work even harder, but at the same time I started questioning myself: "Now how am I going to the Olympics?"

Later that day, I sat down in front of the Gohonzon and started chanting. As I was chanting, I saw myself accepting the gold medal in the 2002 Olympics. Right then, I knew I had the strength to work hard, compete and win.

I started skating at the Skating Edge more often. I also got a new coach, Tina Palica. For a while, I only took one lesson a week, but eventually I worked my way up to three a week.



Michael and his coach, Tina Palica. Without her, he says, 'I would be lost in the skating world.'

I joined the U.S. Figure Skating Association. As a pre-preliminary or first-level USFSA member, I participated in my first competition. I did very well and placed first. I was so happy. I slept next to my trophy that night.

As the months went by, I took more tests in the USFSA. By the end of 1995, I was participating in the regional championships. I placed fourth, which made me second alternate for the U.S. Junior Olympics. And I had only been skating for one year! I felt that this was proof of all my hard work and determination.

My goal was to pass the next level, which was intermediate, and to qualify for the U.S. Junior Olympics. But through the 1996 season, my skating went downhill. I participated in four competitions and expected to finish first in all of them, but I won only one.

At school, I got involved with bad friends. More social life, less chanting. I drifted away from skating. Soon, it was time for the regional championships again. Despite my less-than-winning attitude, I won the bronze medal and qualified for the sectional championship, which was in Utah.

But in Utah, things didn't go right. On the night of my long program (known as the freeskate), I had a lot of bad thoughts in my mind: What if I fall? What if I mess up? What if I don't make it to the Junior Olympics?

I placed fifth in that program and did not qualify for the Junior Olympics. I was so disappointed. After the competition, I called my mom. She told me that she knew this was going to happen.

"How?" I asked.

With all my partying and socializing, she said, she knew I wasn't going to make it. She told me that I needed to come home and chant and think about why I was skating.

When I arrived home, I chanted for about 30 minutes. Afterward, I noticed that I was starting to feel good inside again. Then, as I was walking up the stairs, I missed a step and fell. Thump! I started to laugh. I thought, this is what I need: to relax and have fun. I am doing this sport because I love it, not because I am told to. I need to skate the way I used to — when I first started, when I really loved it. I went back to the Gohonzon and chanted another 30 minutes. My determination again was to go to the Junior Olympics and skate my very best!

1997 was really relaxing and fun, just like I wanted it to be. That year, I won seven competitions out of eight. My double axel

was as solid as a rock. My self-confidence was high. In November, I won the regional championships. At sectionals, I won the gold.

I was on my way.

As I practiced for the Junior Olympics, which were to be held in March in Dallas, I landed two triple jumps for the first time! My confidence soared.

Actually, I think my head got too big. After about a month of practice and a week before the Junior Olympics, I could no longer do my triples. I was so angry. I wanted to just skate for 10 hours and get my triples back. My problem was that I thought I could do everything without effort, winning every competition with ease. I guess I forgot one of the most basic concepts in Buddhism: determined effort based on prayer to the Gohonzon is what makes dreams become reality. I even forgot about my friends.

I left Los Angeles with a BIG question mark over my head. Even after I arrived in Dallas, I still couldn't get over the fact that I had lost my triples.

The day before my short program (in which eight required elements must be completed), I had a practice session. When I stepped on the ice, I felt chills running down my spine — but those chills were good chills, not the chills you get when you watch scary movies. They were the kind of chills you get when you know something good is going to happen. Still, I was frustrated because I didn't land any of my triples. I almost lost my double axel.

The next day, I had to wake up at 5:00 a.m. to go to practice — it was 3:00 a.m. Los Angeles time, so I was dead tired. My practice went bad. NO triples and NO double axel.

Later, I went to the hotel and chanted for an hour. I asked my mom, "Why is this happening to me?"

My mom made a very good point. She said that this religion is not magic. You can't wish for something and hope it will appear someday. You have to make the effort; you have to work hard.

I thought about what she said and felt good about it. So I vowed to work hard — and I placed first in the short program.

The night of my long program, two days later, I was really nervous, but chanting an hour calmed me down. As I stretched, I heard the crowd go wild for the other skaters. Every time I heard cheers, I felt more butterflies in my stomach.

In my warm-up, I did every jump — except the triples. My coach and I decided that I could

still do well without the triples.

To music from *Lawrence of Arabia*, I began to skate my program. I landed my double axel. I singled a double at the end, but I skated as if everything were going perfectly. I got off the ice with a big smile on my face, knowing that I had just done a great long program.

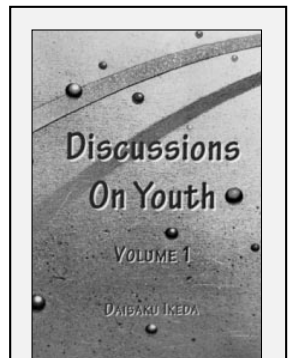
I took my skates off and watched the other skaters in my group. They were really good. The thought of winning first place was erased from my mind. But I knew I would get second or third.

I said to my mom, "It really doesn't matter what I get, as long as I did my best."

I usually don't like to see my results get posted, so I go to the dressing room to be isolated. As I waited there, my mom walked up to me in tears. I asked, "Did I do that bad?"

She raised her finger. "First!" It was a dream come true. During the awards ceremony on the ice, I received my gold medal and silver plate. I skated a victory lap.

As I was going back to the hotel, I told my mom that through my struggles I had learned to appreciate everything. Without my parents, I would be nothing. Without my coach, Tina, I would be lost in the skating world. My brothers have supported me every step of the way. And especially, I appreciate the Gohonzon: I feel that Buddhist practice is my foundation. ❖



Discussions On Youth

This compilation of dialogues among the SGI president and high school division leaders of the Soka Gakkai was published to commemorate May 3, Soka Gakkai Day.

Topics explored: love, dealing with hardships, friendship, the importance of reading literature, finding happiness at school and in the workplace, and how to bring out the best in oneself.

Price: \$5.00 M/O#: 0110

友情交流中創造價值 黃金大道上勇往直前

池田會長

四月二十一日下午三時，SGI春季研修會在日本創價國際友好會館舉行結業典禮，池田先生稱讚來自四十六個國家和區域的二百二十五名尊貴的朋友。以下是他的演講。

能夠與久遠以來的同志，共同慶祝意義深遠的五月三日，實在是非常高興。

SGI研修會真是辛苦大家了。

相信日蓮大聖人以及十方無量諸佛諸菩薩、牧口先生和戶田先生，一定會為各位的活躍感到非常高興及喝采。

並且希望身為幹部的各位，對樸實又勇敢奮戰的無名會員，給予最大的守護與稱讚。

大聖人教示，遇到妙法的同志，要如迎接佛一般，遠遠見到時就要起立出迎，致以最高的敬意。

鼓勵成為眾人的朋友

我想談一談法國大詩人維克多·雨果的逸事。

他的友人那時得到神經衰弱症。這位友人任職教育部長，著手於教育改革，卻飽受人們的責難和攻擊，變得非常頹喪。

不是沒有道理的，我也獨自一人遇到過同樣的情形。一般在同樣情況底下的人，不是得神經病，就是生病，或早就自殺了。

雨果的友人辭退部長一職，藏在家裡不願露面。

雨果去探望時，只見他面容憔悴蒼白，頭髮蓬鬆，沒有一絲微笑，沉浸在悲傷之中。

當雨果鼓勵他時，友人這麼說。

「我的敵人居然捏造謊言，到處散播，要陷我於孤立無援之中。」維克多·雨果，希望你向我發誓，決不相信任何的中傷。」

雨果向他說：「即使懷疑天空的碧藍，也不要懷疑你眼前的朋友誠實的心。」就是說，我永遠站在你這邊。有光就有蟲，有行動就會招引敵人。接著開導他說：

「你有你的敵人。但是想想，世上誰沒有敵人？」

「二十多年以來，我不是被憎惡、被毀謗、被敵人出賣、被背叛、被罵、遭人起哄、被嘲笑、被侮辱、被中傷嗎？我的作品不是受人諷刺，行動受人挖苦嗎？被人糾纏、受到監視、被設下陷阱，更甚至掉進圈套不是嗎？」

「但是，這又算甚麼呢！你看，我一直以來，我都是一笑置之。我學會了「一笑置之」這件事。」

「這是一生中最難，卻也是最必要的事情。」

「不要理他！漠視他。漠視他可以保護自己。受到漠視是對方最大的打擊。」

「你說你有敵人？那是任何成就大事業的人，樹立新思想的人都會有的。光輝的太陽的周圍，經常聚集著放肆地發出噪音的黑雲。『有名聲就有敵人』。如同有光的地方周圍就有飛蟲群聚。」

「甚麼敵人，不要在意！一笑置之吧！不要理會他們。這是敵人想要看你煩惱，看你鬱悶而做的。決不可正中下懷，如敵所願！要快樂、明朗。要提高境界，別管世間這些騷動。堅強地活下去，把這些煩惱一笑置之吧！」

由於雨果的這番話，友人漸漸回復身心的健康，重新站起來，並向雨果保證兩人的友情一生不變。

大聖人「樂哉！樂哉！」

大聖人在「惡口罵詈」與「權力彈壓」的重圍中，教示「此等喜事，一笑之可也！」

「雖為流人不勝喜悅。」

「喜悅盈身。」

「幸哉！我身當於『數數見損出』之文。我哉！我哉！」

如此般反覆地教示。

御書中充滿著大聖人「樂哉！樂哉！悅哉！悅哉！」的歡聲。

欲使大聖人沮喪的權勢者和惡僧，

其「詭計」完全失敗。

我們對於無聊的陰謀，也要「一笑置之」，以明朗的心情、愉快地、堂堂地闊步前進。

「友情的正道」是世界的希望。美國的「人權之母」羅莎·帕克斯為青少年寫的著作，在日本出版了。前幾日，收到了她簽名贈我的書。

在這本書中，談到與我的相逢，內容是這樣的。

「我透過與佛教人士池田博士的友情，我感覺到：同是冀望和平的人，可以超越人種與宗教的差異，通過友誼與精神的交流，產生偉大的價值。並且，這也會成為對肩負未來的青少年，值得感謝的一段話。」

不只是對我的鼓勵，這也是對各位的鼓勵，指出你們所開拓的「友情大道」，正是世界的希望，未來的指標。

而且，帕克斯女士在書中這麼說：「我至今所學習到的，就是在改革時，絕對不要害怕踏出最初的第一步。」

在印度，長達十五個星期的慶典中，一千萬名的印度教徒跳入恆河中，因為他們相信河水能夠洗濯靈魂，斷除生死輪迴。三百一十萬的回教信徒，湧入沙烏地阿拉伯的麥加聖地參加一年一度朝聖，這是所有強健的花得起旅費的回教徒必須做的事。

對於許多宗教而言，到聖地朝聖是信仰重要的一環。過去多年來，SGI也是如此，我們盼望著前任大石寺，與全世界各地的信徒一起「朝聖」。

於此可見構成宗教所謂的聖地的標準是：人。地本身並不神聖，而是由於信

仰妙法信託的純淨信心導致的。日蓮大聖人在「南條殿御返事」御書中說：「法妙故人貴，人貴故所尊」（御書，第二一七頁）。

自從日顯將大御本尊從正本堂移到奉安殿的消息傳出以後，許多信徒回想

起當年到日本，在大御本尊前祈禱的美好回憶。朝聖的主要目的之一就是讓會員加強信心與重下決意。因此當年登山

沒有想要嘗試時，就已經是失敗。我們任何一個人，都可以造成改變的。」

最重要的是「勇氣的第一步」。

永遠擴展「廣宣流布」的潮流。

法華經樂王品中如此說示：

「末法之時，請於全世界廣宣流布

惡的天界之人、龍、夜叉、惡鬼等，決不讓他們有襲擊的機會。決不讓他們乘虛而入。」

這是教示「不可讓魔有機可乘」的經文。

日蓮大聖人本著此經文，教示說：

「日月、日日，須益堅強，稍有懈怠，必受魔侵。」

這是在熱原法華之中對門人的鼓勵。

邁向末法萬年廣宣流布的「潮流」，也必須是「日月、日日，須益堅強」。

必須隨著時間日益堅強，隨著世代的接替更有所發展，不然「必受魔侵」。

第六天魔王經常在窺視我們的「弱點」。

現在我雖然在守護著，但是將來，為了不讓廣宣流布「滅絕」，只有靠青年來接班，只有靠青年的團結。

這是道理，法華經的指示。

法華經，以及大聖人高呼著：「青的聖訓，勇敢無所畏懼地在這「黃金大道」上，更努力邁進！

除此之絕對無法得到全世界的和

現今是「青年部的時代」。

不論在哪个國家，希望能夠傾注全力來培育青年。

「前進！」的佛教

「種種御振舞御書」中說到：

「釋尊入滅之後，二千二百年之間，雖然迦葉、阿難等，馬鳴、龍樹等，南岳、天台等，妙樂、傳教等，仍然未能弘揚法華經精髓，請佛眼目的妙法蓮華經五字，今天日蓮率先弘揚，這是妙法蓮華經在末法之初弘揚於全世界的瑞相。

我的門下，必須接二連三，相繼奮起，勝過迦葉、阿難，超過天台、傳教。

若是害怕畏縮小島之主的威嚇，受到閻魔王的責罵時又該如何（須知不奮戰而墮入地獄，其痛苦更超過現在

以佛的使者之名卻畏懼於難，是最低下的人們。」（白話譯文）

崇高的學會精神，就是遵從此金言的奮戰。

正是因為我們遵照大聖人的教示前進，所以身為創價學會的功德是無量無邊的。

站在「黃金的舞台」，沐浴旭日下廣宣流布是邁向末法萬年盡未來際的「黃金大道」。

今後我們SGI會繼續遵從大聖人的聖訓，勇敢無所畏懼地在這「黃金大道」上，更努力邁進！

回國之後，也請向家人以及各國的同志們問好。

今天我也將一生送題目給各位，為御本尊包含全宇宙。因此，信奉御本尊唱頌的各位，比任何的人更可以心胸寬大地，悠然渡過一生。

請確信這是最美好、最崇高的人生。

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人責故所尊

須做的事。

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險長途跋涉到身延山，深受大聖人讚美和感激。

然而大聖人也明確指出，阿佛房妻子千日尼留守

因此，登山拜見日蓮大聖人是一個大善因，但

並不是成佛的必要條件。然而，當今的宗門卻聲

稱，到大石寺登山朝聖可以「消除業障，在現今

與未來二世得到福報」。對於僧侶而言，最重要

的是「地點」，而不是「信心」。

自從第二任會長戶田城聖開始，除了在大御本

尊前祈禱以外，學會主辦的研修課程成了登山活動的一部份。研習御書，分享體驗，尋求信心指導等活動都有助於信徒們藉著登山活動加深對佛法的瞭解，加強修行的決意。

現在，除了固定的活動外，身在美國SGI的我們有機會在自己的地域參加各種特殊的講習會，以及在佛羅里達州自然文化中心定期舉行的各種研修會。許多參加過FNCI研修會的信徒留意到，他們在FNCI幾天的時間如何使他們的信心與修行得到復蘇。此外，我們也可以看見，人們聚集一處追求妙法的精神如何造成積極的洋溢著希望的經驗。不是FNCI的大樓，也不是大沼澤地，更不是溫和的佛羅里達夜晚所產生的結果。雖然優美的環境有助於鬆弛心境，恢復活力，而最能激發人心正是信徒們的信心。

日蓮大聖人的精神活生生的存在民眾當中的。當然啦，追根究底，成壞就是人們安置御本尊和唱頌的地方，所以我們勿需遠離自己的起居室與各地的會館。功德是基於我們信心的強度，心的虔誠度，而不是我們修行的地點。

平。因為不推進廣宣流布，就得不到全人類的安穩與幸福。

現今的社會有太多墮落、壞心眼、沒有目的、沒有使命感的人。

讓我們以堅強的決意，抱持著「甘願接受鍛鍊」的精神，勇敢地闖進這個人群中去吧。

學會不需要怯懦的人。也不需要主觀武斷，自我中心之輩。更不需要被緣所紛紛、多疑而沒志氣的人。

讓我們一起堂堂正正為法而戰，堂堂正正和學會生死與共，渡過堂堂正正的人生吧！

二十一世紀可稱為我們的「本門」。讓我們沐浴著旭日的光輝，躍上黃金舞台，寫下自己的偉大「歷史」吧！

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Pride & Prejudice

In June 1969, when the police made a routine raid on a gay bar — the Stonewall Inn in New York's Greenwich Village — the bar's patrons took a stand. Many people feel that this act of resistance gave birth to the modern equal rights movement for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people.

By LISA JONES
STAFF WRITER

Home Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad," sniped the headline in *The New York Daily News* on July 6, 1969. Late that June, police had raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar. At that time, gay bars were no longer illegal in New York City, but gays and lesbians were still routinely harassed and arrested.

At Stonewall, the bar patrons resisted arrest, touching off a series of riots in Greenwich Village. *The New York Times* claimed that 400 youths participated in the first riot, which lasted about 45 minutes. At the next evening's riot, observers estimated thousands of participants. Almost overnight, "Stonewall" became the rallying cry for freedom from homophobic oppression.

Stonewall wasn't the first time that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people stood up for themselves and the sake of equal rights. Even so, GLBT communities throughout the United States commemorate Stonewall each June with pride festivals, parades and protest marches.

In this decade of *Ellen* and openly gay congresspeople, though, many people ask: What is there left to protest?

"Every social justice movement in American history has introduced into society new ideas about law, civil rights, government policy and social relationships," explains Urvashi Vaid, policy institute director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "The gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered movement is no exception. Our struggle for equality over the last several decades has been built on new interpretations of human sexuality, individual freedom, gender roles, family structure and conventional morality. These ideas



A picture from an early poster for the gay rights movement, which is commonly dated from the Stonewall riots of June 1969.

have been forged out of painful legacies of stigma, prejudice and discrimination that continue to this day."

Hostile Climate: A State by State Report on Anti-Gay Activity, published in 1997 by People for the American Way, concludes that "while 1996 saw real progress made in the battle against anti-gay prejudice and discrimination, the overall climate for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals continues to be hostile indeed."

The report tracks ballot measures, legislation, local ordinances, court cases and anti-gay rhetoric aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms of GLBT people. For example, as part of the negative backlash toward Hawaii's same-sex marriage

case, the "Defense of Marriage Act" passed by congress and signed by President Clinton permits states to bar same-sex marriages. And 15 states passed bills that denied legal recognition to same-sex marriages, even if legally recognized in another state.

Also, according to the report: In Florida, a judge awarded custody of an 11-year-old girl to her father, the convicted murderer of his first wife, rather than grant custody to the child's mother, a lesbian. The judge stated that the child should have "the opportunity and the option to live in a non-lesbian world."

In other words, it's better to be raised by a murderer than a lesbian — and forget about an option

to live in a world where one's sexual orientation is a non-issue.

So, in commemoration of Stonewall, there's reason to celebrate social progress and greater freedom — and to protest the still extant forces of bigotry and repression.

This month, as GLBT people take to the streets to express their pride and determination to overcome discrimination, they'll display the symbols of a human rights movement that's much older than the Stonewall riots. One example is the pink triangle: The Nazis forced Jewish people under their jurisdiction to wear yellow stars of David; they extended this classification scheme to other prisoners, using pink triangular cloth to identify men convicted of homosexuality. Les-

biens were considered asocial and were accordingly marked with a black triangle. Today, these symbols are worn voluntarily to demonstrate solidarity with those who suffered persecution in the past, as well as those who are still persecuted.

But the most widely visible symbol of the GLBT movement is the rainbow flag, with horizontal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. According to Gilbert Baker, the flag's designer, the colors represent, respectively, life, healing, sun, nature, art and harmony. It symbolizes the diverse community that has blossomed over the past few decades despite — and perhaps in response to — vitriolic and often violent efforts to squelch it.

It's a banner of optimism. ❖

COMING NEXT WEEK:

▶ The youth division's 'Seize the Day'