



THE SGI
Who are we? An overview of the SGI and our movement for peace, culture and education.

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NEW CHAPTER
SGI President Ikeda's second trip to America is chronicled in 'The New Human Revolution.'

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No. 3215

OCTOBER 30, 1998

BUDDHISM SPARKS DIALOGUE

Photo by JONATHAN WILSON



SGI discussion meetings provide a unique approach to revitalizing the human spirit. Please see 'Welcome and Congratulations' on page 2.

ANDREA KOVÁCS, GREENEVILLE, TENN.

A Story of Humane Connection

Photo by JAKE MYSINGER II

Buddhism teaches that the universe itself is compassion. SGI President Ikeda has said: "The path of the bodhisattva lies in supremely humane action. And such action, fundamentally, is at one with the function of compassion of the universe."

I was born with a great love of horses pulsing through my half-Hungarian blood. Although I was brought up in New York City, I cherished the times when my grandmother would take our family to At-

lantic City, where I could rent a pony to ride freely on the beach. Each summer at my grandfather's country home in the mountains, my powerful Hungarian father — pretending to be the horse I was never able to have — would pull me in an antique buggy.

But by the time I was in my teens, very painful circumstances in my home life turned me inward and made me afraid of life. I forgot my love for horses, as I was enveloped by sorrow and panic, eating

binges and starvation.

As my neurosis grew, I plunged deeper into despair until Debra Cohen introduced me to the SGI and Buddhism. On Feb. 22 of this year, I celebrated my 20th "birthday" as a Buddhist. Over the years, I have had many powerful transformations, including victory over my anorexia and depression. I also went on to great success as a photographic muralist, culminating in my biog-



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NOV. 18 MESSAGE

Welcome and Congratulations!

By FRED M. ZAITSU
SGI-USA GENERAL DIRECTOR

Congratulations on your activities celebrating Nov. 18, the 68th anniversary of the founding of the Soka Gakkai. My deepest appreciation to everyone for your daily efforts in contributing to your communities and your unwavering dedication to peace!



I would also like to welcome and thank all the guests for attending November commemorative meetings this year. Please enjoy!

The Soka Gakkai, which lit-

erally means Value Creation Society, was originally established as an association of educators by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and his disciple, Josei Toda, on Nov. 18, 1930. Fueled by their experience and passion as educators, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda earnestly applied the faith, practice and study of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to contributing to humankind's happiness and to the realization of world peace. This spirit is the origin of the SGI.

On Nov. 18, 1944, exactly 14 years later, Mr. Makiguchi died in prison while resisting the Japanese military government's religious oppression during World War II. His cherished disciple, Mr. Toda, in-

herited the spirit to preserve the purity of the Daishonin's teachings and emerged from prison to rebuild and develop the Soka Gakkai to a membership of 750,000 households before his death.

Mr. Toda's disciple and the current SGI president, Daisaku Ikeda, has continued to invoke this noble spirit to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism to 128 countries. This he has done by spending the last 51 years of his life, ever since he became a Buddhist, inspiring hope and confidence in the people he meets.

As practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism and as SGI members, commemorating this important day in the Soka Gakkai's history is a

time to refresh our commitment to peace and the happiness of humanity.

Since the Soka Gakkai's beginning, small discussion groups have always played the most vital role in our organization's growth. Today's district discussion meeting is an arena where people from all walks of life can gather to share their experiences and joy in faith. This is the place where people can encourage one another and study the teachings and spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Recently President Ikeda wrote in his essay "Sharing Our Faith": "Genuine Buddhist dialogue is discussing such crucial matters as the true values of life, what is right and

wrong, based on our daily lives and our personal experiences. This is the ultimate practice of humanism...."

With this original spirit of the Soka Gakkai in mind, let's continue to challenge any difficulties in our lives and complete this year victoriously. I hope we will use this Nov. 18 commemorative activity as an opportunity to deepen our bonds of friendships and refresh our determination to advance together for the happiness of ourselves and others.

I am convinced that this will be a great departure for each of us toward 1999 and the 21st century.

Once again, congratulations and my best regards to everyone! ☸

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FAITH

What's So Great About Buddhism?

By TED MORINO
STUDY DEPARTMENT LEADER

Q What's so great about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism?

A The greatness of the Daishonin's Buddhism lies in the fact that it is not mere theory. Through practicing it, we can actually change ourselves, change our destiny. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism enables us to realize the preciousness of our lives and the lives of others, and helps us establish a solid sense of self deep within our lives.

Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo may be the simplest of actions. But it has the most profound, positive impact. The Daishonin states, "To practice only the seven characters of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo may appear limited, yet since this Law

is the master of all the Buddhas of the three existences, the teacher of all the bodhisattvas in the ten directions, and the guide that enables all living beings to attain the Buddha way, its practice is incomparably profound" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2 [2nd ed.], p. 199).

Buddhism is premised on the idea that each person inherently possesses a supreme treasure called Buddhahood. And by chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo to the Gohonzon (a scroll that embodies the purest, grandest expression of life, and which the Daishonin inscribed for all people), we can start operating from the level of our innate Buddhahood rather than from the level of suffering, frustration, fear or anger. The fresh state of life we can unleash through heartfelt chanting can be likened to suddenly experiencing a blue sky emerging from behind a layer of dense clouds.

The benefit of chanting manifests itself in tangible results, but you don't have to take my word for it — you can try it and see for yourself. Buddhism does not require "blind belief." Rather, we deepen our faith through studying Buddhism and chanting, and by seeing actual proof of the efficacy of this practice.

On a fundamental level, Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism elucidates the true nature of life. It allows us to grasp the breadth as well as the intricacies of life's functions. Therefore, if we sincerely practice the Mystic Law, we can see definite and convincing changes in every aspect of our lives. This has been proven by millions of people throughout the world.

Through prayer to the Gohonzon, we can change our lives, expanding, enriching, strengthening, deepening, puri-

fying and polishing the "true self" or Buddha nature within each of us. In other words, by continuing our practice of faith, we can make Buddhahood our basic state of life, in which creativity, happiness, self-identity and purity become the norm. In this way, we can develop a well-rounded, dynamic character where the Buddha's life is vibrant and eminent.

Just as our life possess an innate enlightened state, we also possess fundamental darkness, which can be characterized as inertia, destructiveness, a lack of a desire to help others or even ourselves. It's important to remember that when we develop our Buddhahood, these devilish forces emerge in the form of discouraging obstacles in our environment, as well as from within ourselves in the form of doubt. The Nichiren Daishonin says: "A sword will be useless in the

hands of a coward. The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra must be wielded by one courageous in faith" (MW-1, 120). In other words, the key element in practicing Buddhism is courageous faith.

A profound upsurge of confidence in ourselves, which constitutes the core of our happiness and inner security and freedom, becomes ours when we can truly base ourselves upon the Law within. This is the ultimate message of Buddhism.

In "The Buddha" chapter of volume 3 of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda writes, quoting Shakyamuni, "Live in accord with the Law; rely on a solid 'self' as unmovable as an island — this is the very heart of Shakyamuni's lifelong teachings." Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism elucidates this Law and makes it possible for us to reveal its splendor. ☸

bodhisattva: A compassionate human being who is dedicated to helping others and who aspires to attain Buddhahood, characterized by boundless wisdom and infinite compassion.

Buddha: In Sanskrit, means "awakened one." An enlightened person; one who perceives the true, eternal nature of all life and leads others to attain the same enlightenment. The Buddha nature exists in all beings and is charac-

terized by the qualities of wisdom, courage, compassion, freedom, joy, perseverance and life force. Nichiren Daishonin teaches that by embracing the Gohonzon anyone can attain enlightenment in his or her present form in this lifetime.

daimoku: Literally, title of a sutra, it refers to the invocation or chanting of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, the title (and essence) of the Lotus Sutra.

GLOSSARY

Gohonzon: Object of devotion; a mandala that expresses the essence of the Lotus Sutra. The Gohonzon is the embodiment of the Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and the life of Nichiren Daishonin in the form of a scroll, which SGI members enshrine in their homes. Go means worthy of honor and honzon means object of fundamental respect.

gongyo: Literally, it means assiduous practice. In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo consists of reciting excerpts from the second and sixteenth chapters of the Lotus Sutra, chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and offering silent prayers.

Nam-myoho-enge-kyo: The fundamental component of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, it is the law of life. It is also the law of the universe. It expresses

the true entity of life that allows people to directly tap their enlightened nature. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is revealed only through its practice, the literal meaning is: *Nam* (devotion), the action of practicing Buddhism; *myoho* (Mystic Law), the entity of the universe and its phenomenal manifestations; *enge* (lotus), the simultaneity of cause and effect; *kyo* (Buddha's teaching), all phenomena.

What Is the Florida Nature and Culture Center?

The Florida Nature and Culture Center, located on the edge of the Everglades in Ft. Lauderdale, was built as a center for dialogue and exchange among members worldwide. Here amid the live oak trees and sabal palms native to the Florida landscape, discussions on philosophy and global issues take place among participants from North, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe.

The center comprises 125 acres of restored wetlands surrounding a 20-acre lake, from whose shores visitors can view aquatic birds. It also features a 1,000-seat outdoor amphitheater. A large central plaza invites visitors to meet and chat. Among the buildings is a 300-seat Miami Community Center, a 1,000-seat auditorium, several conference rooms, a dining hall, dormitory buildings and a gymnasium with an outdoor swimming pool.



1999 FNCC Conference Schedule (January — June 1999)

Month	No.	Dates	Conference
January	1	January 14-17	Third Stage of Life #1: Japanese (55 years old & above)
	2	January 21-24	Theme Conference #1: Happiness in This World
February	3	February 4-7	WD Conference: rescheduled from 1998 (Chapter and up leaders)
	4	February 11-14	Language Conference #1: Japanese
	5	February 18-21	Third Stage of Life #2: English (55 years old and above)
March	6	March 4-7	Language Conference #2: Chinese
	7	March 11-14	Language Conference #3: Korean
	8	March 18-21	Leadership Conference #1 (district and group leaders)
April	9	April 8-11	Language Conference #4: Spanish
	10	April 15-18	Theme Conference #2: Study of the Lotus Sutra
	11	April 22-25	Introductory Conference #1
May	12	May 13-16	Language Conference #5: Thai/Cambodian
	13	May 20-23	Theme Conference #3: Enhancing Our Relationships Through Buddhism
June	14	June 10-13	Theme Conference #4: Understanding and Sharing Buddhism in Modern America
	15	June 17-20	WD Conference #1 (district and up leaders)
	16	June 24-27	Conference on Parenting (Boys and Girls Group coordinators)

* Please see below for conference descriptions

Cool Conferences in a Hot Spot

Conference descriptions through June. Remainder of the year's schedule to be announced soon.

• **Third Stage of Life Conference** — This conference, previously referred to as the Pioneers Conference, is open to all members who are 55 and older, regardless of their length of practice. Two conferences are currently scheduled: January (in Japanese) and March (in English).

• **Theme Conferences** — Each conference will include lectures and discussion on the Buddhist perspective of the specific conference theme.

Happiness in this World — We practice Buddhism to achieve lasting happiness. This conference will help us define what happiness is and is not, and how we can attain it through our practice.

Study of the Lotus Sutra — This conference will focus on “Expedient Means” and “Life Span,” respectively the 2nd chapter and 16th chapter of the Lotus Sutra, and the “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra” series by President Ikeda.

Enhancing Our Relationships Through Buddhism — The focus is on creating better relationships with our parents, spouse, children, partners, friends, co-workers, and fellow SGI-USA members — for ourselves and for others through Buddhism.

Understanding and Sharing Buddhism in Modern America — This conference will focus on understanding the Daishonin’s Buddhism in the context of such traditional Western religious concepts as the belief in God, salvation, sin, etc. This conference is intended to strengthen our understanding of the Daishonin’s Buddhism and enhance our ability to share it with others.

• **Language Conferences** — These conferences are intended to provide members with the opportunity to study the Daishonin’s writings and President Ikeda’s guidance, discuss organizational direction and Buddhist practice in the United States, and share experiences and develop friendships in their native language. Japanese in

February. Chinese in March. Korean in March. Spanish in April. Thai and Cambodian in May.

• **Leadership Conference** — Participation is open to all members and leaders. The content of this conference, however, is specifically designed for district and group leaders. Conference will include such topics as caring for our members and the district and group activities.

• **Introductory Conference** — Participation is open to all members and their family members and close friends who are not SGI-USA members but who have an understanding of or interest in Buddhism. This conference will focus on introduction to the fundamentals of Buddhism and to the activities and goals of the SGI.

• **Conference on Parenting** — This conference focuses on the Buddhist perspective of raising children. Study material will include President Ikeda’s guidance on parenting and the raising of youth. Participation is open to all members, leaders and Boys and Girls Group coordinators.

• **Divisional Conferences** — Each division will conduct its own divisional conference. Participation criteria and conference content will be communicated later.

Participants will arrive at the FNCC on Thursday afternoon and depart on Sunday afternoon. Conferences are four days and three nights in length. Package price per participant — which includes double-occupancy accommodations, meals, ground transportation (airport transfers and bus tour), conference materials and more — is \$375 per person (price subject to change).

Earth Charter Symposium Focuses on Responsibility



The Florida Ikeda Chorus invites other local religious organizations to join in for the opening song, 'Heart to Heart,' led by Paul Eisenhart, director of the Florida Philharmonic Chorus.

By JIM DREISBACH
AND SHIRLEY WHITE
CORRESPONDENTS
Weston, Fla., Oct. 10

Some 500 participants representing various organizations, government agencies, environmental groups and the SGI-USA met at the Florida Nature and Culture Center today to discuss how to sustain life on the Earth. The Earth Charter, a document drafted by people concerned with the future of the world, was the focus of the gathering that drew people from as far away as Jacksonville.

"We're all connected, so we must take care of each other," said Bobbie C. Billie, spiritual and clan leader of the Independent Seminole Nation of Florida. In his address, he expressed the need for all the participants to value our Earth.

Keynote speaker Dr. Maximo Kalaw, executive director of the Earth Council Institute, struck a chord when he identi-

fied the most important issue humans face now is how to maintain our sacred relationships as we move from our heritage to the future.

"What separates the Earth Charter from so many other legal documents that pass through the United Nations is its popular support," said Dr. Kalaw. "It is the people's document. Through the voice of the people, it will have power in the United Nations. Further, its principles must be included in corporate policies, community welfare, church movements and taught to youth.... The process has to be an act of love — as your chorus sang, 'heart to heart' — or it will not succeed."

The Florida Ikeda Chorus had invited other local religious organizations to join them that morning for the opening song, "Heart to Heart," led by Paul Eisenhart, director of the Florida Philharmonic Chorus. As Mr. Kalaw mentioned, the chorus reflected the spirit of the day. "It was a project that goes beyond individual philosophies," said Mr. Eisenhart of the performance. "It was a learning experience that allowed each chorus mem-

ber to embrace their own philosophy and their own identity."

Martin Rogol, president of Earth Charter USA, also addressed the audience, stressing that people cannot rely on government to solve the world's environmental problems. "The Earth Charter has to be a grassroots movement," he said.

The community aspect of applying the Earth Charter principles was also brought home in a panel discussion by six local leaders. Representing diverse interests from universities, community action groups and environmental groups, the panel sought to identify local solutions to the very real dilemma between the continued

growth of the South Florida population and the dwindling Everglades ecosystems.

Another 1,000 people joined later in the afternoon for a Jazz Up The Earth music and dance festival, which included children's activities related to the Earth Charter.

"We had a great time," said William Nutovits of Delray Beach, who, along with wife Suzanna and their two children, was invited as a guest for the afternoon. Each member of the family found something to enjoy: Suzanna went to the teachers and community action workshops, the kids planted flowers in the new Boys and Girls Group's

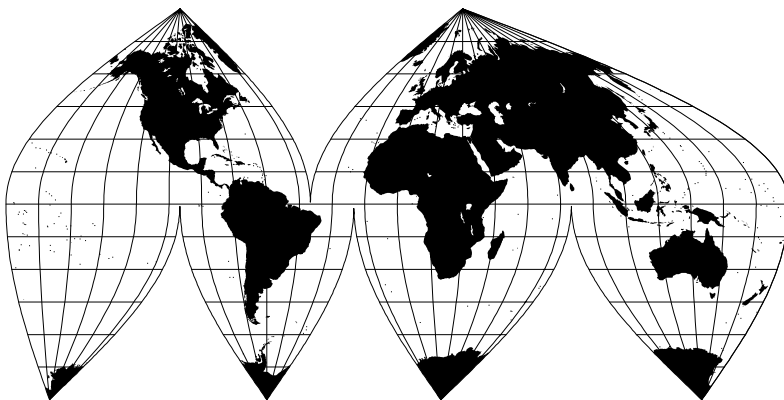
butterfly garden and William browsed through the environmental literature tables in the gymnasium, before enjoying the music with his family.

"I want to learn more about what I can do, how I can get involved," said Suzanna. WT

Photos by Paul Greco



Keynote speaker Dr. Maximo Kalaw, executive director of the Earth Council Institute.



Bobbie C. Billie, spiritual and clan leader of the Independent Seminole Nation of Florida.



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the new HUMAN REVOLUTION

a novelized history of the soka gakkai

'FRESH GROWTH'

VOLUME 7, CHAPTER 2, PARTS 1-2

As 1963 — the Year of Study — begins, Shin'ichi Yamamoto launches himself on what will be a year of ceaseless, intense effort. He looks at the significance of one of the year's first events, 500,000 members taking the Study Department Entrance Exam.

By DAISAKU IKEDA

*Today, again,
I spur myself on
As the Buddha's emissary
Striving until my final breath
To fulfill my vow to my
mentor*

Shin'ichi Yamamoto had composed this poem to express his resolve as a disciple in the year of the death of his mentor, Josei Toda, whom he had loved like a father.

On New Year's Day of 1963 — the start of the Soka Gakkai's Year of Study — Shin'ichi recalled this poem and launched energetically into a busy round of activities. Thinking of his mentor's spirit always filled Shin'ichi with boundless strength. Indeed, the vow he had made as Toda's disciple was the source of his courage.

He began what would be a year of ceaseless, intense struggle by attending a New Year's gongyo meeting at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters on Jan. 1. The next day, Jan. 2, was Shin'ichi's 35th birthday. That morning, he set out for the head temple to attend a leaders meeting at the Grand Lecture Hall.

At the meeting, a number of leadership appointments were announced. Three new vice general directors were named, including Katsu Kiyohara and Ittetsu Okada, and eight new directors appointed. Also at the meeting, Shin'ichi marked the start of the Year of Study by delivering a lecture on the Goshō "How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Bud-

dhahood through the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6).

Shin'ichi arrived back in Tokyo from the head temple on the evening of the third. The following day, he met with directors and other top leaders to discuss plans for future activities. And on the fifth, he concentrated on preparing for his overseas trip scheduled to begin on the eighth.

The Study Department Entrance Exam was held on the sixth, with approximately 500,000 people taking the test nationwide. This exam marked the full-fledged start of the Gakkai's activities for the new year.

For 500,000 people to take on the challenge of the examination was in itself remarkable. While it was one thing for students to sit for an exam, the examinees in this case were men and women of all ages and backgrounds — a good many of them middle-aged and older. All were earnestly studying the life philosophy of Buddhism, striving to deepen their understanding of how to lead the best possible life, and seeking the way to create happiness for themselves and for others. Moreover, while the rest of society had been swept up in the festive atmosphere of the New Year's holiday, the examinees and those coaching them had been studying the Goshō wholeheartedly in preparation for this test.

No other organization can compare to the Soka Gakkai in terms of its efforts to awaken and educate people. In its great movement to disseminate Buddhism exists a most fundamental impetus for bringing about a genuine age of the people on a wide scale.

On the morning of the sixth, Shin'ichi went around to a number of the exam sites in Tokyo to encourage the examinees. In the evening, he attended a young women's division leaders meeting at the Waseda University Memorial Auditorium in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward. On the evening

of the seventh, he attended a young men's division leaders meeting at the same venue.

At 10:30 on the morning of Jan. 8, Shin'ichi's flight left Tokyo International Airport in Haneda, carrying him on the first leg of a trip around the world to encourage and give guidance to members living outside of Japan.

On Shin'ichi's itinerary for this overseas trip was the formation of a number of chapters and the administration of study exams in various countries. He was determined that on this visit he would secure the foundations for the development of worldwide kosen-rufu 10, 30 or even 100 years down the road.

Every single day is of vital importance. Each second is decisive. Only when we strive to the limit of our ability to open the way ahead, seizing each moment and using it valuably, can we ensure that a brilliant future awaits us.

The main stops on Shin'ichi's itinerary were Honolulu, Los Angeles and New York in the United States; Paris, Geneva and Rome in Europe; Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, in the Middle East; India's New Delhi in South Asia; and Hong Kong in Southeast Asia.

Only Vice General Director Kiyoshi Jujo would be accompanying Shin'ichi on this trip from start to finish, but there would be three other parties traveling at the same time. These groups were informally identified as the Northern U.S., Southern U.S. and Europe delegations.

The Northern U.S. group consisted of Vice General Director and Women's Division Chief Katsu Kiyohara, Director and Student Division Chief Goro Watari, and Young Women's Division Chief Tokie Tani. These leaders would accompany Shin'ichi only as far as New York. After Shin'ichi went on to Europe, they would visit Washington, D.C., Louisville, Kansas

City, Chicago, Seattle and San Francisco, returning to Japan on January 24.

The Southern U.S. delegation consisted of just one person — Vice General Director Seiichiro Haruki — who would accompany the Northern U.S. group as far as Washington, D.C., and then set off on his own to visit Miami, El Paso, Colorado Springs and other cities, before rejoining the Northern delegation in Seattle.

The members of the Europe delegation were Vice General Director and Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki, and directors Shoichi Tanida and Yoshihiko Oya. Oya was a research assistant in the Faculty of Dentistry of Osaka University. This group would leave Japan on the evening of Jan. 9. After visiting Stockholm in Sweden, Dusseldorf in West Germany, and London in the United Kingdom, they would join Shin'ichi in the French capital of Paris. A multifaceted effort to provide guidance and encouragement to members living around the world now was under way.

Shin'ichi and Jujo left Japan on the eighth with Kiyohara, Watari and Tani of the Northern U.S. delegation and Haruki of the Southern U.S. delegation. During the flight, Shin'ichi envisioned in his mind a grand plan for the future development of kosen-rufu, his gaze focused on the distant future.

Their plane landed in Honolulu on schedule, just after 9:00 on the evening of the seventh, local time.

To be continued

Daisaku Ikeda appears in the novel as Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The events take place in 1962.

Illustrations by Ken'ichiro Uchida.





WHAT is the SGI?

Peace, culture and education

Our objective is to contribute to peace in society and the welfare of humankind by promoting culture and education and opposing all forms of violence. We believe that peace starts from within, based on the Buddhist view that all people inherently possess the limitless ability to create value in society and achieve harmony between themselves and their environment. Culture, therefore, is the lively expression of this uniquely human potential, while education is an essential vehicle for its development.



Who we are

The Soka Gakkai International-USA is an American Buddhist movement that promotes peace and individual happiness based on the philosophy and practice of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism. The SGI-USA works in association with 75 other SGI organizations comprising members in more than half the world's countries. SGI-USA activities are driven by our understanding of the link between individual happiness and the peace and

prosperity of our diverse communities. Our religious teachings place the highest emphasis on the sanctity of life. Nichiren Daishonin wrote more than 700 years ago that "life is the most precious of all treasures." Our members aim, through their faith, to improve their lives by taking up the challenge to care for their families, to live without fear, to create value, to take responsibility for their circumstances, and to live with compassion for others.



What we do

We address the urgent issues facing the individual and humanity as a whole through neighborhood discussion groups, youth activities, educational seminars, exhibitions and conferences. We emphasize the value of each individual living meaningfully and contributing to society.

At left, the photo depicts "Ecology and Human Life" Exhibition — developed by the SGI-USA Culture Department and co-sponsored by a number of federal, state and community organizations; it explored the environmental crisis, encouraging a shift in consciousness toward a recognition of our interconnectedness with the natural world.

What we believe

"A great revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a society, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of humankind" (Daisaku Ikeda, *The Human Revolution*).

Our core philosophy is rooted in the concept of human revolution, a process of inner transformation that centers on the idea that every action has an in-

fluence that extends beyond its immediate context. Our inner transformation will lead us to take the actions that bring about personal fulfillment and help us contribute to the development of society. In 1995, the SGI — our international organization — adopted a Charter that sets out a number of purposes and principles that can be summarized as follows:

- contribute to peace and to the culture and education of our communities
- embrace an unconditional respect for the sanctity of human life
- cultivate the virtues of wisdom and compassion
- respect and protect the freedom of religious expression
- promote tolerance and respect for human rights
- pursue nonviolent social change through inner reformation and dialogue



The first three presidents

an educators group — the Value Creating Pedagogical Society (Soka Kyoiku Gakkai) — has blossomed into an international

association of member organizations that share the philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

In the 1930s, Japan was plunging headlong into war. Makiguchi criticized the path his nation had embarked upon and was outraged by the attempt of his government to impinge upon religious freedom by imposing Shintoism as a national religion. Makiguchi continued to

organize community-based discussion meetings where religious and moral convictions were openly expressed. In 1943, Makiguchi was arrested and imprisoned as a thought criminal.

organize community-based discussion meetings where religious and moral convictions were openly expressed. In 1943, Makiguchi was arrested and imprisoned as a thought criminal. In less than 18 months, Makiguchi died of malnutrition and privations he suffered in prison. He was 73. His closest associate, Josei Toda, survived the ordeal and was released from prison on July 3, 1945, just weeks before the world's first use of nuclear weapons. Toda walked out of his prison cell into the horror of war-torn Japan. He immediately set about rebuilding the organization, which he renamed the Soka Gakkai in keeping with his resolve to expand Makiguchi's ideals beyond the field of education for the

betterment of all society. The Soka Gakkai's remarkable early growth stemmed from its commitment to help relieve people's suffering in the post-war chaos. Toda also reinforced the Soka Gakkai's pacifist stance in 1957 by taking a strong — and at that time pioneering — public position against nuclear weapons proliferation.

On May 3, 1960, Daisaku Ikeda became the organization's third president. Within six months, he established organizations in the United States and South America. The following year, organizations were established in nine European countries. The U.S. contingent, the SGI-USA, makes its headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., with more than 60 other centers throughout the United States.

The SGI has its origin in the educational theory of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, whose quest to understand the deepest meaning of life eventually led to his encounter with the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin. Here he discovered a philosophy that recognized and sought to develop the wisdom inherent in all human beings.

What began nearly 70 years ago as

the roots of the SGI worldview can be traced to the teachings of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, some 2,500 years ago. He abandoned a princely life and journeyed far and wide in a quest to understand the inescapable sufferings of human existence — birth, aging, sickness and death.

Shakyamuni traveled for 50 years, sharing the essence of his enlightenment. The term *Buddha*, or "enlightened one," refers to a human being whose awakening includes the real-

An age-old tradition

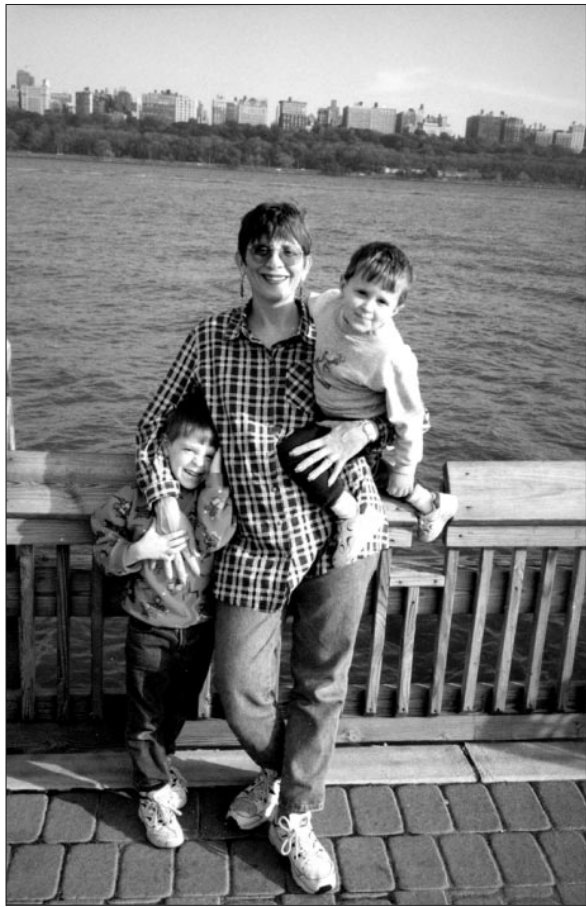
ization that one's present existence is part of an unbroken chain of birth, death and rebirth. His intuitive realization of this universal Law is most succinctly articulated in the Lotus Sutra. The Lotus Sutra profoundly affirms that the realities of daily life provide impetus and opportunity for positive self-transformation.

The Lotus Sutra gained prominence as it spread through Central Asia into China and the Korean peninsula. Buddhism and the Lotus Sutra reached Japan in the middle of the 6th century.

One of the most significant propo-



Ruins of a stupa, a religious shrine, in India



David, 5, Lorraine, Tommy, 3.

I grew up in a very dysfunctional family with a history of alcoholism, emotional abuse and instability. As a child, the atmosphere in my home was always one of extreme tension. My parents fought constantly. They seemed to hate each other. There was never any emotional support or nurturing in my environment. Being the youngest child, I was sensitive and withdrew into myself. I was extremely shy and would play alone for hours, imagining myself a famous actress.

Needless to say, by the time I reached my teens, I had deep feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and worthlessness. I had no sense of identity and was full of anger and depression.

My lowest point came at the age of 18 when I was found unconscious in the street from an overdose of barbiturates. By the time I was 21, I was recovering from my second stay in a psychiatric hospital as a result of a suicide attempt.

I was a high school drop-out collecting unemployment when my sister Eileen introduced me to the practice of Nichiren Daisshonin's Buddhism. She was just beginning herself, but I believed her when she said: "I don't really know much about it yet, except that it makes me feel better.

Why don't you try it?" So I did.

I began chanting one evening when I was desperate and depressed because I didn't have a date and couldn't find any drugs. My life was full of restlessness and pain that compelled me consistently toward self-destructive behavior. But that night, when I chanted, it soothed and calmed me. It was like a balm. I was able to relax and go to sleep. This seemingly simple incident was to me the actual proof I needed to continue chanting regularly. My sister and I received the Gohonzon at the same time.

For the first time in my life, I felt the joy and power of hope well up inside of me. I began to prefer a drug-free reality right away, and stopped the drugs completely within a few months. The early years of my practice were about building my confidence and forging my identity. I chanted to go to college, which to me seemed impossible. I had to confront my fear and insecurity over and over again in front of the Gohonzon in order to follow through with

LORRAINE FERRANTE, PALISADES PARK, N.J.

An Artist in Life

Twenty-two years ago, when Lorraine Ferrante was 21, she was recovering from her second stay in a psychiatric hospital — as a result of a suicide attempt. That's when she was introduced to Buddhism. 'Through the limitless power of this practice, I have forged my freedom and identity,' she says. 'I have deeply changed my karma over the past 22 years.'

all of the steps necessary to enter college. After chanting much daimoku, I received my high school equivalency diploma and was accepted into college with full financial assistance.

Once in college, I chanted to

“
I could be happy no matter what I did or whom I did or didn't have in my life, and at the same time I could chant with fierce determination to fulfill my dream.
 ”

know what I wanted to do with my life and re-discovered my childhood dream of being an actress. I majored in drama and upon graduation was nominated to represent my school in a na-

tionwide audition for scholarships to the top theater training centers in the country. I was accepted into one with a scholarship and teaching assistantship.

The training program was extremely rigorous, and I frequently felt overwhelmed. I was commuting, teaching, studying and rehearsing almost every waking minute. I kept challenging myself not to give up and I chanted every spare moment. All of my tremendous efforts paid off when I received my master of fine arts degree in 1986. I have had many opportunities to act as a paid professional in a variety of great roles. I had made my childhood fantasy a reality!

By this time I had been practicing about 10 years. I was no longer the shy, insecure, self-destructive person I used to be. I was a strong, confident, bright and accomplished woman. Although my life had grown in leaps and bounds and my career was fulfilling, there was still a deep emptiness inside of me. What I wanted most in all the world was

to be married and have a family.

I did not have a great track record in relationships with men. Though I must say that over the years, as my human revolution progressed, I went from bad relationships with the wrong men, to good relationships with men who just weren't right for me, to no relationships at all!

Through all the years of my practice, I had consistently chanted to meet the right man for my life and to have a family. At the age of 35 I found myself suffering from a profound loneliness and depression, accompanied by the booming tick of my biological clock. Each evening when I sat in front of the Gohonzon I could not stop the tears. I had changed so much, but still somewhere deep inside of me lived the little girl who thought she was worthless and unlovable.

Through daimoku and guidance I came to understand that I needed to take responsibility for my life-condition. I could be happy no matter what I did or whom I did or didn't have in my life, and at the same time I could chant with fierce determination to fulfill my dream. I envisioned my life with my husband and family in concrete

PLEASE SEE ARTIST, NEXT PAGE

ARTIST, FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

and specific detail and began to chant with true confidence and joy that my vision would someday be a reality.

My life-condition became lighter and brighter. Instead of focusing on my loneliness, I concentrated on my members and my practice. Very soon, I met a very special man and one year later we were married!

He is everything I chanted for — a warm, kind, sincere, honest and loving man who also wanted a family. He was 44 at the time we married, and I was 36. We decided we didn't want to waste

any time and started to plan for our family right away. When I failed to become pregnant, we decided to go for fertility testing and the results were not positive. Basically, we were told that we were an infertile couple and the chances of our becoming pregnant were very slim.

After the initial shock wore off, I lost no time in getting in front of the Gohonzon. This time I did not wallow in pain and tears but went straight to the fierce determination part. I told the Gohonzon that we would definitely have a baby, no matter what! I didn't know how or when, but I had complete faith that it would happen. I felt the deepest sense

of freedom and power in my life when I made this determination. There was no pain. Then I told my husband, who doesn't practice and was quite depressed, the same thing. "We will have a baby. I have the Gohonzon and with Gohonzon, nothing is impossible. You'll see."

One month later I found out I was pregnant. Today, I am the proud, often harried mother of two beautiful healthy boys, and we're expecting our third child in March. My family life is rich, and my sons could not have a more devoted and doting father.

I have deeply changed my karma over the past 22 years. The legacy of dysfunction has

ended for my family. I really feel the truth of the teaching that through practice we change our karma seven generations back and forward. My two sisters and I are in strong, secure marriages, and my two brothers, who battled addiction for many years, have now been in recovery and sobriety for more than six years. Through the limitless power of this practice, I have forged my freedom and identity. My family and I have changed our destiny.

Today I have new challenges. In addition to raising a very active 3-year-old and 5-year-old, I care for my aging father — my mother recently passed away —

and I work toward fulfilling a new dream with a career in education. In theater school we were taught that the most important thing was to enjoy the process. Performances are short-lived, so enjoying the process is of primary importance. That reminds me a lot of living as a Buddhist.

Life will always have ups and downs, but if I can enjoy my daily practice and if I keep going back to the Gohonzon time and again with my fears, my tears, my hopes and my dreams, I will create a life of the richest value. I will be an artist in life leaving a legacy of challenges and dreams fulfilled. W

EXPERIENCE, FROM PAGE 1

raphy being published by Times Books in *Visible Light*.

As I cured myself, my original dreams resurfaced. One summer, in my sixth year of practice, I had a desire to vacation in Montawk, where I could ride once again on the beach. There, at a dude ranch, I saw a horse that was skin and bones. I was told by a neighboring ranch that the owners were methodically starving their horses to death.

I came home from that vacation perplexed and wondering how I could rescue that brown mare, who swaggered so gracefully in her dissipation. The Buddhist members in my New York group all encouraged me to save her.

I chanted hard about the situation and opened Nichiren Daishonin's writings to a random page and read: "Incidentally, I pastured the mare you gave me, and she has found a mate and given birth to a chestnut-colored colt. What a wonderful horse!" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 3, p. 73). That was enough to convince me. I purchased her for \$600, shipped her to a farm upstate and found out that the owner of the farm had owned her five years previously. I had purchased a \$5,000 Tennessee Walking Horse.

She was frenzied, and when the farm owner heard me chanting to her, he started to chant to her, too, while I was in the city during the week.

Going to visit Princess became the joy of my life and reconnected me to a dream of living in the mountains. As the years went on, I began looking for a small, inexpensive farm to move to with Princess. I decided to look in Tennessee — to bring Princess "home." After

my dear mother passed away, my daughter, Amanda, and I found a beautiful farm in Greeneville, Tenn. and moved here two years ago with Princess.

For a while, I felt content to own a farm with my daughter and have Princess close. But one evening, my daughter and I decided to acquire a companion for Princess at the Kingsport Livestock Auction. I had an image of a black horse. On the way up, I told Amanda the story of Black Beauty.

Andrea Kovács set out to rescue a horse that had been mistreated and was destined for slaughter. The horse, whom she named Storm Quest, inspired her to found Storm Haven Farm, an equine sanctuary.

There was a wild lightning storm that night, and we arrived at the auction late. We approached the dark, dank auction corrals only to find a few horses left and men riding them too hard. I was mocked and laughed at as I asked to buy a black horse.

Suddenly, from across the huge room, I saw a startling black mare with bold white blaze and powerful neck staring straight at us. I pulled my little girl through the corrals and said, "Honey, there she is!" I felt we had made that journey to find her.

When I looked down, though, I saw such a horrifying sight that I almost puked. Her back left leg from knee to ankle was as large as a ham shank, open to the bone, a bleeding mass of scar tissue. She was dragging it as they began loading her onto a wagon.

I spoke to the man in charge, who said that she was being sent to slaughter. With fury and ferocity, I shouted, "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo!" The man stopped and walked over to me threateningly and shouted, "What did you say?" as if I were cursing him.

I said: "Those are Buddhist words that mean compassion — and that's what we need around here — a little more compassion. Take that horse off the wagon now!"

He came toward me, then started to laugh, grabbed my arm and said: "Lady, I like you. You've got guts. Get the mare off the wagon."

I asked what he would take for her. He said \$400. I said fine and went to the office to pay. They refused to accept my New York check, and as I was imploring them, the man loaded the mare and drove off with her into the raining, thundering night. I ran out and watched them disappear, put my face up to the heavens and wailed a cry of great despair — great defeat — great pain and great compassion for all the living beings at the mercy of man's cruelty.

I returned home in dismay. A friend called and I shared my feelings of defeat. But, paradoxically, our conversation instilled in me an iron-willed determination to find that horse — this was my turning point from cowardly failure to courageous victory. I went to the Gohonzon and began chanting hell-raising, gate-breaking, General Stone



Amanda Mandara Sky, with Princess and Storm Quest.

Tiger daimoku to reverse the situation and win.

I assumed that she was on her way to Canada, where many of the horse slaughtering plants were. (Horse meat is used in dog food and is consumed by people in some countries.) For me, the entrance to hell on earth is through the gates of a horse slaughtering plant. I spent several hours that night, early the next morning and the following night trying to block the slaughter and putting up a reward for this astonishingly beautiful black mare with a mangled leg.

One call led to another and another. All were dead ends. I had one number left to call in Kentucky. Discouraged, I let the phone ring a long, long time. Just as I was about to hang up, a man answered. He told me, "The guy who shipped out your horse is at the Sugar Creek Auction in Ohio today."

I called there and told the man, "I'll double her price — just bring her back." Two days later, he drove up to my farm and unloaded my stunning black mare. Because our search was so singularly directed and because we went through a severe storm without faltering, I named the horse Storm Quest.

Because acquiring her gave me a sense of absolute and ex-

hilarating mission to save horses, I named our farm Storm Haven Farm, an equine sanctuary. I have subsequently rescued six more horses.

It's been more than a year and a half since I have been treating Storm Quest and healing her. Her leg closed up just recently. It is larger in circumference than her other legs and the hardened scar is ragged and ugly, but she is sound. She gallops and rears magnificently. Because she is such a fine horse, I felt I needed to learn correct riding and the proper guides; I started taking equitation lessons.

Recently, I saddled up my beautiful black mare and rode her at sunset to the top of our land. From that vantage point, we could look out at the full panorama of the Great Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee.

As she pranced feistily and powerfully down that hill, I felt at one with her. Because of her, I was able to manifest the never-give-up spirit of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. She enabled me to test how victorious this life could be — how one, based on compassion and unflinching strength, can change the impossible to possible and create even just a small stronghold for kindness in our rather cruel world. W

On Love

Happiness is not something that someone else, like a lover, can give us. We have to achieve it for ourselves. And the only way to do so is by developing our character and capacity as human beings, by fully maximizing our potential.

Rather than becoming so love-struck that you create a world where only the two of you exist, it is much healthier to learn from those aspects of your partner that you respect and admire and continue to make efforts to improve and develop yourself. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author of *The Little Prince*, once wrote, "Love is not two people gazing at each other, but two people looking ahead together in the same direction."

On Work

A tree doesn't grow strong and tall within one or two days. In the same way, successful people didn't get to where they are in only two or three years. This applies to everything.

There is a saying that urges us, "Excel at something!" It is important to become trusted by others wherever you are, to shine with excellence.... "What one likes, one will do well," goes another saying....

Once you have decided to work at a certain place, it is important that you pursue the path you have chosen without being discouraged or defeated, so that you will have no regrets over making that choice.

On Sadness

It is crucial that we become strong. If we are strong, even our sadness will become a source of nourishment, and the things that make us suffer will purify our lives.

Only when we experience the crushing, painful depths of suffering can we begin to understand the true meaning of life. Precisely because we have experienced great suffering, it is imperative that we go on living.

The important thing is to keep moving forward. If each of you use your sadness as a source of growth, you will become a person of greater depth and breadth — an even more wonderful you. This is the harvest of your pain and suffering.

On Friendship

What is friendship? It is not simply a matter of being favorably disposed toward someone because he or she spends a lot of time with you, lends you money, is nice to you or because you get along well and have a lot in common. True friendship implies a relationship where you empathize with your friends when they're suffering and encourage them not to lose heart. And where they, in turn, empathize with you....

Buddhism in Daily Life

SGI President Ikeda's thoughts on various topics, excerpted from 'Discussions on Youth,' volumes 1 and 2.

it was the other way around.

Even those who consider themselves not to be religious pray for something. Just wishing for the good health of one's children or resolving to improve oneself in some way constitutes a prayer, even if you don't want to call it that.

Prayer in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism — chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon — directly fuses all our diverse prayers with reality, based on the universal law of life. In short, religion came into being out of the human desire for happiness.

On the SGI

People began forging bonds with one another, and then those ties of friendship spread, naturally giving birth to the Soka Gakkai organization. For that reason, we must be aware that the organization exists for people. People don't exist for the organization. Please never forget this point.

On Religion

Religion is proof of our humanity. Of all the animals, only human beings have the capacity for prayer, a most solemn, sublime act....

Human beings have an undeniable instinct for prayer. Religion first came into being in response to this. Prayer did not come into existence because of religion;



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WHO IS DAISAKU IKEDA?

Daisaku Ikeda was born in Tokyo in 1928. He studied under his mentor, Josei Toda, and, in 1960, succeeded him as president of the Soka Gakkai, a position he held until 1979. Since 1975, he has been president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). He is the founder of a university, junior and senior high schools, elementary schools, kindergartens and two art museums, and is honorary president of the Seikyo Press. His writings have been translated into more than a dozen languages.

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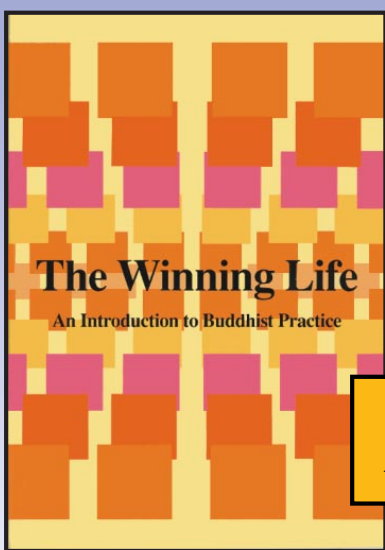
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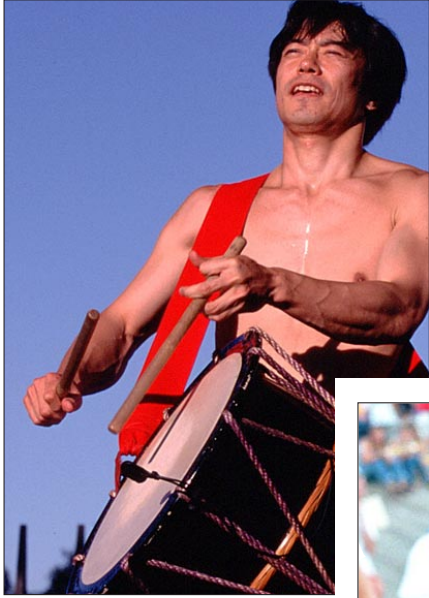
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PHOTO ESSAY — DIXON HAMBY, SEATTLE

River of Music

I love culture festivals for the great music and the wide array of interesting people. There is nothing like the joy expressed by individuals of all ages and walks of life enjoying themselves among art and music. SGI President Ikeda says: "It is the creation of art and music, coming from the depths of our lives, which expresses the rich spirit of a people or an age and communicates itself directly to the hearts of all humankind.... Art is a weapon for realizing peace. It is also an expression of supreme victory in life. Every drop of sweat shed of the sake of art adds to the river of human peace and culture. I pay respect to artists several times, tens of times more than I do to politicians or those in the economic sector."



Above, Leonard Ito at Bumbershoot.



Western swing band at Seattle Folklife Festival.



Right, Hank Voss, SGI member and drum teacher. Below, Hank and one of his students.



African dancers at WOMAD (World Music Festival), Redmond, Wash.



SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION

Give Up?...Never!

By FRED M. ZAITSU
SGI-USA
GENERAL DIRECTOR

I was shocked to see this headline screaming from the front page of the Japanese Nichiren Shoshu lay publication *Emyo*: "Gakkai members...give up!" A huge photo shows the demolished interior of the once majestic Grand Main Temple, with rubble strewn around what is left of the altar where the Dai-Gohonzon was once enshrined. The temple's error in making the above statement is obvious: No destructive act could ever dampen our spirit to bring the great light of hope that is the Dais-honin's Buddhism to every heart that seeks it.

To convey such hope, to accomplish kosen-rufu, is a creative act of the highest order. It requires calling forth the most powerful and essential creativity, the kind that has propelled the SGI's growth and nurtured wisdom and happiness in millions of people. The Grand Main Temple was an expression of this creative, constructive force.

To be sure, images of the Grand Main Temple's demolition make it clear that saving the building now is impossible. Just as a murdered person cannot be brought back to this life, an obliterated building cannot be preserved. Though tragic, this demolition is in no way a cause for despair, however.

We SGI-USA members have continually opposed this wanton and wasteful act. With rallies, letters and petitions, we have voiced our opposition and outrage. Many professionals, unrelated to our Buddhist movement, have also decried this as an unbelievable desecration of an architectural and cultural treasure. For example, David G. De Long, professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote: "Rarely has a building of our own time so pervasively overcome

limits of culture and place to speak to all humanity. Perhaps this extraordinary accomplishment has contributed to its proposed undoing, for great accomplishments have, throughout history, excited opposing forces of envy and fear..."

While this is not the first time in human history a religious structure has been destroyed because of hatred or dogmatic imperative, it is the first time that a religious clergy has chosen to destroy its own hall of worship; this clearly out of "envy and fear" of those who built and donated it.

Regarding the destruction, *Emyo* states, "With this, the Soka Gakkai has nothing to do with kosen-rufu." Amazingly, Nikken's supporters believe that through this act they are destroying our faith and our dedication to kosen-rufu.

Yet no act by an external enemy can ever defeat us. As President Ikeda has said, "The cause for defeat lies not in the obstacles we face or the severity of our situation but only in an ebbing or breakdown in our inner determination." Only if our inner determination to work for kosen-rufu crumbles will we be defeated. Con-

versely, by strengthening our inner pledge to fulfill the vision for a peaceful world based on the Mystic Law, we can make ourselves impervious to the kind of "spiritual demolition" Nikken aims to wreak upon us.

Praising the devotion of his lay follower Toki Jonin, the Daishonin wrote, "When you make your way to Eagle Peak, you should proclaim, 'I have contributed four kan of coins for the construction of the world's foremost hall dedicated to the Lotus Sutra' (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 995). Here, he commends Toki for giving money to help build a lodging temple at Minobu, where the Daishonin later trained disciples and lectured on the Lotus Sutra.

Such dedication by millions of Soka Gakkai members built the Grand Main Temple. Whether we contributed to its building or not, so long as we maintain this spirit, we will enjoy eternal good fortune.

The law of cause and effect says that those who strive to build something of essential value will add value to their lives; those who work to bring fortune and joy to the lives of others will themselves experience fortune and joy. At the same time, those who contrive to undo that work and disparage those who carry



The front page of a recent *Emyo*, a Nichiren Shoshu lay newspaper. One of the headlines declares, "Gakkai members...give up!" The photo shows the inside of the Main Temple with the altar where the Dai-Gohonzon was once enshrined.

it out will suffer loss. In this light, Nikken's sudden hospitalization, on the very day that his demolition team felled the last of the Grand Main Temple's five pillars, gives us cause to reflect on the strictness of this law. Common sense tells us that malice and hatred undermine one's health. The malicious destruction of the fruit of 8 mil-

lion people's sincerity and faith could only be a cause for self-destruction.

This being the case, I feel it is our responsibility as Buddhists to strongly oppose those who use the name of Buddhism to damage and destroy. We must also save others from being misled by them. Chanting daimoku with deep resolve, I'm convinced, is the most effective way to accomplish this. Those of us who have friends who have chosen to follow Nikken can open our hearts to them, pray for their happiness and share with them our sincerity and conviction. We can also pray strongly and consistently to defeat the ill intentions of Nikken and his fellow priests who are happy only when people spiritually depend upon them.

Some members in New York, for example, after chanting daimoku concertedly for months, were gratified to learn that an NST branch temple office in their neighborhood suddenly closed down on its own accord. While dedicated to freedom of religion, their prayer was that their fellow members not be targeted by priests who actually seek to destroy their faith and spiritually subjugate them.

Above all, I feel that the temple's current actions afford us the greatest opportunity to refresh our commitment to kosen-rufu, the ultimate creative movement. ☸



The ongoing demolition is changing the face of the Fujinomiya City neighborhood where the head temple is located.



A detail of the circled section at right shows brown waste water from the demolition site flowing into the Urui River.



The Current State of Nichiren Shoshu

Several months after Nikken's announcement of the Grand Main Temple's demolition, what's the current state of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood?

By **JEFF FARR**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When Nikken announced in April that the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo) would be razed, he intended to draw a thick line between the last eight years during which the priesthood aggressively tried to win back Gakkai members and the priesthood's next stage, one in which Nikken wishes to totally disassociate from Gakkai members.

Nikken's Gakkai-free head temple — one in which no building there will remind anyone of the temple's glory days with the Gakkai — is starting to look like the sleepy Taiseki-ji of his boyhood. When Nikken was a child, before the Gakkai was formed in 1930, there were no

modern buildings or facilities at the head temple.

Nikken is finding, though, that this trajectory toward the past is forcing him to face the present; for instance, he's learning the severe price to be paid in the arena of public opinion for destroying a masterpiece of modern architecture, the Main Temple, beloved both in Japan and throughout the world.

The problems start right at home, in Fujinomiya City, where the head temple is located; neighbors are outraged by the demolition, particularly by the spillage of demolition waste water into the surrounding water supply and the annoying noise pollution of the de-construction going on every weekday.

Concern about the demolition has also been international, as the *World Tribune* has reported on since the April announcement. But just as Nikken ignores the voices of his neighbors, so he continues to ignore the voices of SGI members, scholars, conservationists, politicians and architects worldwide — millions of voices from every corner of the

globe protesting the demolition on both religious and cultural grounds.

Recently, some experts have started criticizing Nikken for profiting from the resale of the structure's fine construction materials. (This is expected to offset the cost of the demolition by a large margin.)

All these voices of protest are making many priests nervous. "There is no discussion taking place in the priesthood," one chief priest recently expressed in an internal newsletter. "How can the priesthood remain silent? I'm afraid that we will be judged severely by posterity."

At the same time, Nikken's apparently failing health has led to much speculation among the priests over what might happen when he dies — and no one's sure what that might be. In August, Nikken, now 75, developed a fever and missed his early-morning prayer services for a three-day stretch. Then, on Sept. 28 came the news that he had been admitted to a Tokyo hospital for a three-week stay.

Another worry for the

priests is that temple membership in Japan is now stuck at around 60,000, tops; this is considerably lower than Nikken's 1990 dream of having at least 200,000 of his own members — and it's basically the same as the temple's pre-1930 membership. An all-Japan pilgrimage last summer aiming to gather 50,000 drew only 40,000.

Attendance at the 2nd Overseas Believers General Pilgrimage, also last summer, was only 2,000 (including 500 from the United States), but the priesthood sees expanding its overseas membership (especially in America) as a great avenue for future growth.

Again, whereas in the past the priesthood's main focus was on getting Gakkai members "back," now many priests are encouraging temple members to stop contacting Gakkai members. Overseas, they're encouraging their members to instead think of the millions and millions of people who have never heard anything bad about the priesthood (and don't know the SGI either).

Gathering 300,000 members

for a pilgrimage in 2002, however, seems unlikely, even with rapid growth overseas. And this 300,000 figure is, indeed, Nikken's next big goal. Three years from now, he hopes to have a temple of more traditional Japanese design set up for the Dai-Gohonzon in the Main Temple's place and 300,000 believers visiting there to hear his esoteric sermonizing.

For priests fretting over posterity, Nikken's new temple symbolizes not the opening of some brighter tomorrow but their imprisonment in the priesthood's past, in a time before the Soka Gakkai brought the temple all its prosperity.

Before 1930, there were not the 1,000 priests of today — Nichiren Shoshu could not even support 100 priests with just 60,000 followers. How many priests can Nichiren Shoshu continue to support if it can't grow?

By the time Nikken's new Main Temple is completed, many of today's Nichiren Shoshu priests may be in the unemployment line, wishing that Nichiren Shoshu somehow could have escaped its past. ☐



(Above) Created in 1990, Nikken's Clear Mirror Pond was once home to a school of carp. Waste water from the demolition so contaminated the pond that Nikken had to drain it (top) and remove the carp. (Left) Waste water is clouding the once crystal clear streams that flow through the head temple grounds.



A column in front of the Main Temple is felled a few weeks ago.

Q-and-A on the DEMOLITION of the GRAND MAIN TEMPLE

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Q Why are Nikken and the other priests wrong in demolishing the Grand Main Temple?

A They are wrong because their act is a betrayal of the 8 million people whose sincerity, correct faith in the Daishonin's teachings and dedication to kosen-rufu made the Main Temple possible. More than 30 years ago, these millions of people believed the priests when they said that they would cherish the Main Temple as the high sanctuary and would house the Dai-Gohonzon there for hundreds of years. These believers donated to its construction trusting the priesthood's intentions.

Now these priests are completely betraying that trust. After years of proclaiming it as the high sanctuary, Nikken is now contradicting himself and the previous high priests, saying it is not. The Dai-Gohonzon has been moved; the Main Temple is coming down.

In April, when Nikken announced his plan to transfer the Dai-Gohonzon from the Main Temple and then demolish the building, he said that he would do so in order to "completely refute the great slander of [SGI President] Ikeda and others." In effect, Nikken is saying that he's demolishing the Main Temple to reject and debase the long-standing efforts of SGI members to support the priesthood and widely spread the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The wrongness of this stance can also be seen in the priesthood's unwillingness to be up front about it from the outset. They felt they needed a more reasonable-sounding pretext. Therefore, first, stories of corrosion, faulty construction and seismic danger were floated in temple-related publications such as *Emyo*. But when these assertions were solidly refuted, the high priest himself began citing the fact that it was built by Daisaku Ikeda and SGI members as the reason for destroying it.

In short, by demolishing the Main Temple, the priesthood is



All five columns at the entrance of the Grand Main Temple have been toppled.

trying to demean the faith of the SGI members and the SGI movement; it is a childish act.

This symbolic action is meant to discourage SGI members in their faith and amounts to an attempt — an obviously failed one — to undermine this harmoniously united order of believers, an offense that Buddhism regards as the most serious of all.

Q Whose idea was building the Main Temple?

A The construction of the Main Temple was originally conceived by the late Josei Toda, the Soka Gakkai's second president, and achieved by his successor, President Ikeda. In 1964, President Ikeda proposed a plan, which was accepted with delight by both Soka Gakkai members and the priesthood, to actualize his mentor's dream to create a grand sanctuary where people from around the world could come to worship the Dai-Gohonzon. In 1965, some 8 million people donated ¥35.5 billion (\$100 million at the time; \$270 million at today's exchange rate) for the project, which was completed in 1972.

Regarding the religious significance of the building, Nittatsu Hosoi, the 66th high priest (Nikken is the 67th), stated in an "Admonition" dated April 28,

1972, that it indeed was "the supreme edifice that shall be the high sanctuary of the temple of true Buddhism."

In the late '60s and early '70s, the priesthood repeatedly stated that the Main Temple would fulfill this role of the high sanctuary — in accord with the Daishonin's mandate, expressed in his writings such as "On the Three Great Secret Laws" and the "Minobu Transfer Document," that such a sanctuary be established.

This interpretation of the building's significance — agreed on by both laity and priesthood — became an integral part of the construction and opening of the Main Temple.

Q What does 'high sanctuary' mean?

A The high sanctuary is one of the Three Great Secret Laws (called secret because they had never been revealed before); that is, one of the three core elements of the Daishonin's Buddhism. They are the object of devotion of true Buddhism (the Gohonzon), the invocation of true Buddhism (chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo) and the high sanctuary of true Buddhism.

High sanctuary originally meant a place of religious practice where people accept various ascetic precepts — rules of prac-

tice and discipline — which they agree to uphold to achieve enlightenment. In the Daishonin's Buddhism, however, there is no need to keep such austere precepts, because having sincere faith in the Gohonzon is alone equivalent to accepting all the Buddhist precepts. All we need to attain enlightenment is our faith and practice.

For this reason, wherever people practice the Daishonin's Buddhism with faith in the Gohonzon is generally regarded as the high sanctuary of true Buddhism.

But the Daishonin also talks of the high sanctuary in the specific sense in documents like the "Minobu Transfer Document": "When the sovereign of the nation establishes this Law, the high sanctuary of the temple of true Buddhism shall be built at Mount Fuji" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1600). So, while the high sanctuary is generally wherever people practice this Buddhism correctly, he also imagined a very specific place where those committed to the propagation of the Mystic Law would gather.

What does "When the sovereign of the nation establishes the Law" mean? In a democratic age like ours, the people are sovereign. Since the Daishonin's mandate is that the high sanctuary be built on the condition that the sovereign of the nation — in our day, the people — establish the Law,

the *raison d'être* of this temple's establishment is that the people are widely spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Put simply, the Daishonin established the Gohonzon and Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and entrusted his future disciples to spread his teaching widely — as a result of which the high sanctuary would be built.

The Main Temple was built, then, to be the high sanctuary, testifying to the unprecedented spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism through the efforts of Soka Gakkai members after World War II. It was, as well, the crystallization of their resolve to continue their efforts on a global scale.

Q Now that the demolition, which we have protested, is well under way, what is the SGI-USA's stance toward this action?

A The rallies that we held last summer to protest the demolition were a great success; we raised awareness both inside and outside the SGI-USA of the priesthood's unjust action. As a direct result of our protest, many non-members, including noted architects, politicians and scholars, also started to voice their opposition to the priesthood's plan.

It is important, both from the standpoint of Buddhism and from that of ordinary human conscience, to not allow the Main Temple's demolition to proceed unchallenged. If this action goes unopposed, faced with no vehement voice of protest, people both now and in the future will think that the priesthood's action was simply tolerated. Worse yet, they will fail to see the priesthood's grave betrayal of the Daishonin's intent to always cherish those dedicated to spreading his Buddhism.

To set the record straight, we will continue to raise our voices of protest against the priesthood's action. It may be too late to save the structure, but it is never too late to save people, including future generations, from unfortunate misunderstandings of this event and, more important, from misunderstandings of the Daishonin's Buddhism itself. **WJ**