



THE NSGI TIMES



Living the GOSHO

Those Who Spread the Mystic Law Are Infinitely Noble

The words “should rise and greet him from afar” [LSOC28, 365] indicate that the sutra passage is saying that one should without fail show the practitioners of the Lotus Sutra the kind of respect one would show to a Buddha.

From The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings (OTT, 193).

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT - Daijishi Anko

All of our SGI members, who are working for kosen-rufu in exact accord with the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, are infinitely noble and respectable. Each one is a genuine practitioner of the Lotus Sutra. We must always, therefore, show them the same respect as we would a Buddha.

The spirit to praise and encourage each other in our endeavors for kosen-rufu gives momentum to our movement. It spreads joy and benefit.

Let's make even greater efforts to illuminate our communities and society with the brilliant light of our lives, our faith, and our unity, in order to realize a peaceful world based on the humanistic ideals of Nichiren Buddhism.

(Translated from the June 27, 2013, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper)

SGI President Ikeda's Editorial

The Future Division: A Brilliant Source of Hope for the Entire World

The birth of a human being is a precious gift from the universe to earth.

Referring to the child as the “constructor” of humankind, the Italian educator Maria Montessori (1870–1952) said: “The child is endowed with an unknown power and this unknown power guides us towards a more luminous future.”

Viewed in the bright mirror of Buddhism, the children born and raised in this age possess within them enormous power and potential for leading the world forward in the 21st century. Let us, therefore, chant earnestly and work together to do everything we can to help them give full play to their unfathomably rich potential in their own unique way—in accord with the Buddhist principle of cherry, plum, peach, and damson.

At the assembly of the Lotus Sutra, the eight-year-old dragon king's daughter demonstrates for the first time the principle of attaining Buddhahood in one's present form, opening the way for the enlightenment of all people and bringing great joy to the hearts of all who witnessed it.

Nichiren Daishonin showed immense compassion and concern for the children of his followers—including the young Nanjo Tokimitsu and his siblings [the sons and daughters of Nanjo Hyoe Shichiro]; Oto [the daughter of Nichimyo]; and Tsukimaro and Kyo'o [the daughters of Shijo Kingo and his wife Nichigen-nyo].

The Daishonin writes: “Those

who believe in the Lotus Sutra are as if in winter, but winter always turns to spring” (WND-1, 536). This famous passage is addressed to the lay nun Myoichi, who had lost her husband. The Daishonin no doubt also intended these words as encouragement for her young children as well.

Children have the potential for infinite growth and dramatic positive development.

Speaking of families who were practicing Nichiren Buddhism, my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, said: “The children who cause their parents the most trouble often tend to grow up into the most outstanding individuals. Parents and children alike are both practitioners of the Daishonin's teaching, so they both should strive to grow and improve themselves in the realm of the Soka Gakkai. That attitude is the starting point for all positive change [in parent-child relationships].”

As third Soka Gakkai president, I established and personally fostered the future division.

On one occasion, I studied the following passage from the Daishonin's writings with a group of future division members: “At first only Nichiren chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, but then two, three, and a hundred followed, chanting and teaching others. Propagation will unfold this way in the future as well. Does this not signify ‘emerging from the earth’? “ (WND-1, 385). I told them: “One person is what counts. The principle of

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‘emerging from the earth’ is set into motion by one person. I want each of you to become that one person.”

In any time and place, a hope-filled future begins by encouraging a single young life.

Society today is awash with negative influences that can lead young people astray. In our local communities, the members of the Soka family watch over each child with a warm gaze conveying trust and confidence in them. They speak to them kindly and chant for, look forward to, and rejoice at their growth. The Soka family is a safe haven for children, setting them on the path to absolute victory.

Five decades ago, around the same time as the high school division [part of the future division] was established, a Japanese women's division member, married to an American, moved to the United States. Though she and her family often had barely enough money for food, she devoted herself wholeheartedly to kosen-rufu. Her eldest son interpreted for her, because her English was poor, and helped care for his younger brother, who was physically disabled. Learning the invincible Soka Gakkai spirit from his mother, who refused to let anything defeat her, he studied hard and participated eagerly in SGI activities, becoming the national high school division leader and youth division leader in the U.S. Filled with appreciation for all the encouragement he had received from those around him over the years, he is now teaching at Soka University of America and fostering many



bright young people.

Today, Bodhisattvas of the Earth are emerging exuberantly around the world in ever-growing numbers, united by eternal karmic ties and possessing boundless good fortune. The SGI will continue its triumphant advance as one person after another stands up to carry on the baton of our movement, true to their vow to “inherit the soul of the Lotus Sutra [Nam-myoho-renge-kyo]” (WND-1, 839).

You, the members of the future division, are a brilliant source of hope for the entire world. I call on you to actualize the great vow of kosen-rufu and usher in a future of peace and happiness for humanity.

My young friends,
may you soar into the skies
of the future
on the wings of learning
and create a rainbow of victory.

(Translated from the August 2014 issue of the *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai monthly study journal)

Opening a New Era of Kosen-rufu Together

(10) Sharing the Joy of Faith Is a Source of Boundless Benefit

People develop amid the struggle for kosen-rufu. I'm delighted that our members everywhere are growing so splendidly!

My mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, taught me two key elements for a flourishing organization: (1) advancing in solid unity of purpose and in beautiful camaraderie, and (2) each

The Lotus Sutra teaches that even the simple act of inviting someone to hear the teachings of Buddhism or offering to share one's seat with them at a Buddhist assembly allows one to gain immeasurable benefit (cf. LSOC18, 288; "The Benefits of Responding with Joy" chapter). How much greater still, then, is the benefit we gain from personally talking to others about



member brimming with the spirit "I am the Soka Gakkai!" based on unshakable conviction in faith.

Wisdom flows from a sense of responsibility. As leaders, we mustn't forget to show consideration and thoughtfulness toward others, even when we're busy. It's important that we greet members warmly, convey our sincere gratitude for their earnest efforts, and chant for their health and safety. We must also listen attentively to what members have to say, and take prompt action to deal with any problems or concerns they may bring to us. Speed is of the essence.

Our mission as leaders involves constantly giving thought to how we can enable everyone to engage in activities happily, enjoyably, and positively. I'm counting on all of you to show fine leadership.

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Buddhism out of a sincere wish for their happiness.

When talking to others about Buddhism, all we need do is honestly share the joy we gain from faith and our Buddhist practice. In sowing the seeds of the Mystic Law, our benefit is the same whether someone is inspired to start practicing right away, or just listens to what we say without embarking on the path of faith. I hope you will, therefore, continue to freely and confidently reach out to others in dialogue.

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "Anyone who teaches others even a single phrase of the Lotus Sutra is the envoy of the Thus Come One [i.e., the Buddha]" (WND-1, 33). Praising those who are devotedly spreading the Mystic Law sends forth infinite ripples of joy. Great benefit blossoms in the hearts of those who chant for the happiness of others.

(Translated from the March 9, 2014, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper)

(11) Prayers for the Happiness and Victory of the Youth Division

March 16 is a day when we renew the great shared vow of mentor and disciple to triumph over hardships and accomplish kosen-rufu.

Our youth division members are developing splendidly all throughout the world today. I am deeply moved and inspired to see this. Nothing makes me happier.

The age now belongs to you, my young friends in the youth division. I am praying for your happiness and victory.

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In a letter to one of his followers, Nichiren Daishonin writes: "The Buddha dwells within our hearts. . . . We ordinary people can see neither our own eyelashes, which are so close, nor the heavens in the distance. Likewise, we do not see that the Buddha exists in our own hearts" (WND-1, 1137).

As practitioners of the Mystic Law, all of you are experts in the art of happiness who have the power to make the life-state of Buddhahood shine brightly within you.

We may lead extremely busy lives and at times encounter difficult and painful challenges. The Mystic Law, however, enables us to transform earthly desires into enlightenment and change poison into

medicine. We can transform all delusions, sufferings, and trials into great good fortune and benefit. We practice the Daishonin's Buddhism, so that not only we, but all with whom we share a connection, can lead victorious lives radiant with happiness.

Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said: "The Daishonin's Buddhism is a teaching of supreme reason. We exert ourselves in faith so that we can shine with great vitality and savor genuine happiness in life. There is not the slightest doubt that each of us will ultimately be able to bring our unique potential to blossom in the best possible way."

A fresh story of victory from March 16 begins with reaching out to one person after another in joyful dialogue, our voices ringing with hope and confidence, and expanding our network of happiness and peace harmoniously, with wisdom and optimism.

(Translated from the March 16, 2014, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper)



Nepal SGI General Director Sahana Shrestha visits members in Illam to encourage them and give hope and confidence to challenge their sufferings through the power of daimoku.



THE WISDOM FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND PEACE

SELECTED EXCERPTS OF SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S GUIDANCE

Part 1: Happiness

Chapter 2: The Principle for Transforming Our Lives

Introduction to the Chapter:

As discussed in chapter 1, it is important to seek absolute happiness over relative happiness. How, then, do we go about achieving it? Absolute happiness is not something that is given to us. Based on the principles of Nichiren Buddhism, SGI President Ikeda explains that it can only be attained through our personal inner transformation.

Our lives possess a wide range of possibilities; they can move in a positive or a negative direction, and toward either happiness or unhappiness. We may at times find ourselves in the depths of suffering or at the mercy of our desires and instinctual urges. At other times, we may feel calm and content with our lives or feel motivated by compassion to reach out and help those who are suffering.

Buddhism explores these various potential conditions, categorizing them into ten states of life called the Ten Worlds. Among the Ten Worlds, the world of Buddhahood accords with our noblest potential and highest state of life.

Nichiren Daishonin identified the Law permeating the universe and life as Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and embodied it in the form of the Gohonzon, the object of devotion, thereby establishing a means by which all people can reveal their innate Buddhahood.

This chapter introduces the basics of the doctrine of the Ten Worlds—the principle that is the key to inner transformation—as well as the significance of the Gohonzon.

President Ikeda discusses the core teaching of Nichiren Buddhism that, through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the Gohonzon, we can establish the world of Buddhahood as the foundation of our lives and turn all suffering into nourishment for developing a higher state of life. Further, we can transform not only our own lives but help others do the same, and contribute to the betterment and prosperity of society.

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Three Thousand Realms in a Single Moment of Life



The essence of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha in India culminates in the Lotus Sutra, which reveals the principle that all living beings can attain Buddhahood.

Based on the Lotus Sutra, the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai (538–97), founder of the T'ien-t'ai school of Buddhism in China, systematized the totality of life in his doctrine of three thousand realms in a single moment of life. “A single moment of life” refers to life at each moment. The “three thousand realms” represents the integration of four concepts that focus on differing aspects of life—the Ten Worlds, their mutual possession, the ten factors of life, and the three realms of existence ($10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 3 = 3,000$).

The Ten Worlds are the ten states of life: Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Heaven, Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva, and Buddhahood. They are also referred to as the realms of hell, hungry spirits, animals, asuras, human beings, heavenly beings, voice-hearers, cause-awakened ones, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas.

The mutual possession of the Ten Worlds means that each of the Ten Worlds has all of the Ten Worlds inherent within it.

The ten factors of life are ten aspects shared by all living beings of the Ten Worlds—appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, internal cause, relation, latent effect, manifest effect, and their consistency from beginning to end.

The three realms of existence are the realm of the five components (form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness, which are said to merge to form an individual being); the realm of living beings; and the realm of the environment. This concept explains the existence and sphere of activity of beings of the Ten Worlds.

The principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life reveals the nature of life and the universe in their entirety—that all phenomena and all forces of the universe exist in every single moment of life.

Based on the Lotus Sutra and T'ien-t'ai's principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, Nichiren Daishonin expressed in the form of the Gohonzon (object of devotion) of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo the ultimate truth of life and the universe to which he became enlightened, and established a practice-oriented Buddhist teaching that enables all people to fundamentally transform their lives.

The practice of Nichiren Buddhism empowers us to transform not only our own lives, but also to make a positive difference to the lives of those around us, our environment, and all humankind. Because the teaching of Nichiren Buddhism is not empty theory but, rather, thoroughly directed toward the actual transformation of our lives and the world, it is known as the Buddhism of the “actual three thousand realms in a single moment of life.”

2.1 Heaven and Hell Exist within Our Own Lives

Introduction:

The way we perceive the world around us is largely influenced by our state of life. In this excerpt, President Ikeda explains that Nichiren Buddhism is a powerful teaching that enables us to elevate our state of life, improve our environment, and actualize genuinely happy lives for ourselves and prosperity for society as a whole, while positively transforming the land in which we live.

President Ikeda's Guidance:

From a speech at the 1st Wakayama Prefecture General Meeting, Kansai Training Center, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, March 24, 1988.

The English poet John Milton (1608–74) wrote: “The mind is its own place, and in itself ‘Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n.’” This statement, a product of the poet’s profound insight, resonates with the Buddhist teaching of three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

How we see the world and feel about our lives is determined solely by our inner life condition. Nichiren Daishonin writes: “Hungry spirits perceive the Ganges River as fire, human beings perceive it as water, and heavenly beings perceive it as amrita. Though the water is the same, it appears differently according to one’s karmic reward from the past” (WND-1, 486).

“Karmic reward from the past” refers to our present life state, which is the result of past actions or causes created through our own words, thoughts, and deeds. That state of life determines our view of and feelings toward the external world.

The same circumstances may be perceived as utter bliss by one person and unbearable misfortune by another. And while some people may love the place where they live, thinking it’s the best place ever, others may hate it and constantly seek to find happiness somewhere else.

Nichiren Buddhism is a teaching that enables us to elevate our inner state of life, realizing genuinely happy lives for ourselves as well as prosperity for society. It is the great teaching of the “actual three thousand realms in a single moment of life,” making it possible for us to transform the place where we dwell into the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.

Moreover, the good fortune, benefit, and joy we gain through living in accord with the eternal Law [of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] are not temporary. In the same way that trees steadily add growth rings with each passing year, our lives accumulate good fortune that will endure throughout the three existences of past, present, and future. In contrast, worldly wealth and fame as well as various amusements and pleasures—no matter how glamorous or exciting they may seem for a time—are fleeting and insubstantial.

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2.2 Buddhahood Is the Sun within Us

Introduction:

In this excerpt, President Ikeda gives a brief overview of the Ten Worlds and their mutual possession—concepts that lie at the heart of the Buddhist philosophy of life. He also underscores how Nichiren Daishonin, through his teaching, established a practice based on faith in the Gohonzon as the means for all people to manifest the highest and noblest state of life, that of Buddhahood.

President Ikeda's Guidance:

Adapted from the dialogue On Life and Buddhism, published in Japanese in November 1986.

Life, which is constantly changing from moment to moment, can be broadly categorized into ten states, which Buddhism articulates as the Ten Worlds. These consist of the six paths—the worlds of Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, and Heaven—and the four noble worlds—the worlds of Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva, and Buddhahood. The true reality of life is that it always possesses all ten of these potential states.

None of the Ten Worlds that appear in our lives at any given moment remain fixed or constant. They change instant by instant. Buddhism’s deep insight into this dynamic nature of life is expressed as the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

In his treatise “The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind,” Nichiren Daishonin illustrates clearly and simply how the world of humanity contains within it the other nine worlds:

When we look from time to time at a person’s face, we find him or her sometimes joyful, sometimes enraged, and sometimes calm. At times greed appears in the person’s face, at times foolishness, and at times perversity. Rage is the world of hell, greed is that of hungry spirits, foolishness is that of animals, perversity is that of asuras, joy is that of heaven [heavenly beings], and calmness is that of human beings. (WND-1, 358)

The nine worlds are continually emerging and becoming dormant within us. This is something that we can see, sense, and recognize in our own daily lives.

It is important to note here that the teachings of Buddhism from the very beginning were always concerned with enabling people to manifest the noble and infinitely powerful life state of Buddhahood. And, indeed, that should always be the purpose of Buddhist practice. Focusing on this point, the great teaching of Nichiren Daishonin, by establishing the correct object of devotion [the Gohonzon of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo], sets forth a practical means for revealing our inner Buddhahood. As such, Nichiren Buddhism is a practice open to all people.

A look at history to this day shows that humanity is still trapped in the cycle of the six paths, or lower six worlds. The character for “earth” (*ji*) is contained in the Japanese word for “hell” (*jigoku*; lit. earth prison), imparting the meaning of being bound or shackled to something of the lowest or basest level. Humanity and society can never achieve substantial revitalization unless people give serious thought to casting off the shackles of these lower worlds and elevating their state of life. Even in the midst of this troubled and corrupt world, Buddhism discovers in human life the highest and most dignified potential of Buddhahood.

Though our lives may constantly move through the six paths, we can activate the limitless life force of Buddhahood by focusing our minds on the correct object of devotion and achieving the “fusion of reality and wisdom.”

Buddhahood is difficult to describe in words. Unlike the other nine worlds, it has no concrete expression. It is the ultimate function of life that moves the nine worlds in the direction of boundless value.

Even on cloudy or rainy days, by the time a plane reaches an altitude of about 10,000 meters (33,000 feet), it is flying high above the clouds amid bright sunshine and can proceed smoothly on its course. In the same way, no matter how painful or difficult our daily existence may be, if we make the sun in our hearts shine brightly, we can overcome all adversity with calm composure. That inner sun is the life state of Buddhahood.

In one sense, as the Daishonin states in *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*: “‘Bodhisattva’ is a preliminary step toward the attainment of the effect of Buddhahood” (OTT, 87). The world of Bodhisattva is characterized by taking action for the sake of the Law, people, and society. Without such bodhisattva practice as our foundation, we cannot attain Buddhahood. Buddhahood is not something realized simply through conceptual understanding. Even reading countless Buddhist scriptures or books on Buddhism will not lead one to true enlightenment.

In addition, attaining Buddhahood doesn’t mean that we become someone different. We remain who we are, living out our lives in the reality of society, where the nine worlds—especially the six paths—prevail. A genuine Buddhist philosophy does not present enlightenment or Buddhas as something mysterious or otherworldly.

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The New Human Revolution

Volume 24, Chapter 3
HUMANISTIC EDUCATION



SGI President Ikeda's ongoing novel The New Human Revolution, which he began writing in 1993, depicts the historical progress of the Soka Gakkai following his inauguration as its third president, as well as records the modern development of the Soka Gakkai and the SGI. It also serves as a practical guide on how to further expand our movement for Kosen-rufu (achieving peace and happiness for all people).

Humanistic Education 12

At the beginning of February, Shin'ichi spoke with the Soka Gakkai general director and vice presidents who were taking charge of the greater block chiefs gongo meetings on his behalf. During their discussion, the subject of how to strengthen the greater blocks arose. As if he'd been waiting for this moment, Shin'ichi started to speak: "The most important thing is unity among leaders. Such unity begins from our personal determination to take full responsibility for each greater block, instead of leaving it up to others.

"Each leader needs to be powerfully determined to create an organization that they can be proud of, representing the ideal Soka Gakkai.

"You should work together with the member and encourage each one of them, making our local organizations into places in which all members feel, from the bottom of their hearts, that you really care about them and are thinking about their problems and their welfare, and that their local organization is the most beautiful and warm group of members in the world, where they've learned the true meaning

of Buddhist faith.

"In particular, it is important that the men's and women's division greater block chiefs, the guardians of our greater blocks, the indomitable citadels of Soka, have the awareness that they, too, are the presidents of the Soka Gakkai.

"I rarely have the opportunity to meet with the members of the greater blocks on an individual basis, so I want you to be my representatives and speak to them, listen to their problems, rally them, inspire them, and warmly encourage them.

"Please think about what I would do as president of the Soka Gakkai, how I would encourage them, and then strive to surpass me in that spirit."

The top leaders listened to Shin'ichi's impassioned words, watching him intently.



"Next, it's vital that all the members experience benefit. To ensure this, you should talk to each of them at length and demonstrate for them the practice of chanting and propagating

Nichiren Buddhism—of dedicating one's life to the mission of kosen-rufu. This is a crucial way to creating benefit and becoming genuinely happy."

Humanistic Education 13

As Shin'ichi Yamamoto spoke, his words became more impassioned: "What is the purpose of the Soka Gakkai organization? It is for kosen-rufu, and for all its members to receive benefit and become truly happy. That's the aim of our Soka Gakkai activities. We must never forget this most basic point.

"When we receive benefit we gain heartfelt conviction in the greatness of the Gohonzon and the power of chanting daimoku. We're filled with joy and our confidence in faith deepens.

"It is also important that we tell others about our experiences of receiving benefit and share each other's joy and conviction. As we accumulate various experiences of receiving benefits, our conviction deepens, and when we know the joys of this Buddhist faith and practice we naturally want to talk about it with others. Through that practice, our joy is further increased.

"Strengthening the greater block depends, then, on how much benefit its members can experience, how much human revolution they can achieve, and

how joyful they are.

"Concretely speaking, an ideal example of a really strong greater block is one in which, when you ask its members in a discussion meeting, 'Can someone share an experience of receiving benefits?' everyone eagerly raises their hand, excited to tell others. This is not something that can be measured by statistics."

The top leaders were surprised at what Shin'ichi was saying. When Shin'ichi had started talking about strengthening the greater blocks, they expected him to talk about assigning multiple levels of leaders, and holding regular training sessions for greater block and block chiefs. Of course, such strategic measures are also important. But before looking at such structural issues, Shin'ichi wanted to return to the starting point of



being human and clarify the source of vitality in the organization's activities.

The human heart is what drives

everything. That's why a humanistic leader concentrates on inspiring people first and foremost.

Humanistic Education 14

“Happiness is the aim of human life, and as such must also be the aim of education.” This was the belief of Soka education founder Tsunesaburo Makiguchi.

The fundamental purpose of education is to



enable children to live happy lives.

On the evening of February 6, 1977, at a restaurant in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, Shin'ichi was dining and talking with a group of dormitory student representatives from the Soka schools.

Shin'ichi wore a happy expression as he listened intently to these young phoenixes who were developing both mentally and physically through their experience of studying at the Soka schools in Musashino, Tokyo.

Their faces were shining with hope as they spoke excitedly about their life in the dormitories and other school-related topics. The humanistic education taking place at the schools, a united effort of students and teachers, training and polishing each other's lives, with an awareness of their future mission after graduation, was clearly apparent.

From the early 1970s throughout Japan, numerous student-related issues had come to the fore, such as increasing numbers of students who couldn't keep up with their

schoolwork, a lack of recreational facilities, and growing cases of broken bones and stress-related gastric ulcers in children.

In December 1976, the Curriculum Council of the Ministry of Education announced the concluding results of a three-year study. It emphasized the need to create a less high-pressure and more fulfilling educational environment and set forth a policy for reducing textbooks and classroom hours. Based on the report, the Ministry of Education started to revise its curriculum guidelines.

Observing these changes in the educational realm, Shin'ichi thought about the future.

“Naturally it's vital to get a clear grasp of the present reality and reform our policies,” he thought. “But prior to that, I believe it's even more essential to establish an educational system that motivates each child and fosters their awareness of the greater purpose of school and studying.

“If we don't cultivate students' sense of personal initiative and spirit to challenge, this idea of a less stressful educational environment will result in a serious drop in academic achievement. In order to bring out this spirit to challenge, the attitude of teachers is vital.

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After his meal with the Soka schools students, Shin'ichi planned to attend the 1st Tokyo Education Department Gongyo Meeting, believing that the mission of the education department is extremely crucial in light of the issues confronting contemporary education.



The education department was established at the Soka Gakkai Headquarters General Meeting held on May 3, 1961, a year after Shin'ichi had been inaugurated as the organization's third president.

The education department inherited the source of the Soka Gakkai's founding spirit. The Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value-Creating Education Society; forerunner of the Soka Gakkai) was established when founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi stood up to reform Japanese education and published his book *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* (The System of Value-Creating Education), based on his commitment to improve conditions for students, the treasures of the future. At that early stage, most of the members of the groups were educators.

The education department carried on Makiguchi's educational philosophy that striving for the realization of the full potential of children in the educational system is the key to a prosperous society.

This is why Shin'ichi wholeheartedly devoted himself to fostering the members of the education department.

When he learned that the education department

was holding a general meeting, he overcame all sorts of difficulties to attend. On the occasions when he simply couldn't attend, he composed a message to the educators filled with his fervent prayers for them.

And in 1964, he conducted a special lecture series for representative members, based on one of Nichiren Daishonin's writings, “Choosing the Heart of the Lotus Sutra.”

Shin'ichi regarded the education department members as unparalleled champions who have a grand mission to transform society. This was his conviction and belief.

Society is an organic body created by human beings. As such, the future of society and the world rests on how its young people are fostered and raised, making education the most important of all human enterprises, demanding our utmost efforts.

Teachers are the most important element of the educational environment, exerting the strongest influence on children. Makiguchi stated that teachers are essential to educational reform. A teacher's ability to continue to polish and improve themselves is, from a broader perspective, the key to the further development of society.

Humanistic Education 16

Education must be grounded in a philosophy. It is vital that new morals and educational principles are established for the 21st century—principles for global citizenship that have a universal application, transcending national and



ethnic boundaries—firmly rooted in the philosophy of respect for life. That's the only way to open the great way forward for education.

In a passage in the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha declares his intent to enable all beings to become “equal to me, without any distinction between us” (LSOC2, 70). The Buddha opens the state of infinite possibility, the Buddhahood, that resides within all living beings, and

helps them all, equally, reach the same state of being, the same life condition as the Buddha. This, the Lotus Sutra says, is the Buddha's mission. Shin'ichi regarded this as the fundamental principle of humanistic education.

The purpose of education is to build character, to create human beings, not machines.

What a noble existence it is to be human! Human beings possess unlimited potential in the inner depths of their lives that is the source from which all culture is created. Humanistic education draws out that infinite potential,

polishes it, and brings it toward perfection, enabling children to lead happy lives and for society to prosper.

From the time of the student protests of the 1960s, when the deteriorated state of Japanese education was revealed, Shin'ichi had continuously stressed the urgent need to implement such a humanistic education.

At the beginning of 1971, in a lengthy message he sent to an education department gathering, Shin'ichi strongly emphasized the importance of humanistic education. It was the 100th anniversary of the birth of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the year of the opening of Soka University, and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the education department. The embers of the student protest movement were still smoldering.

“There is no nobler mission than fostering character. Education is the lifeblood of the new century. The importance of education has never been more critical than it is today.

“In the past, nationalistic education predominated, but it has proven to be completely bankrupt, and now the direction has shifted to a humanistic education. Today, we must focus on how we should live as human beings.”

Humanistic Education 17

In his message, Shin'ichi Yamamoto insightfully noted the current issues with education.

"The breakdown of the educational system reflects the decline of civilization as a whole and could ultimately lead to the deterioration of the human race itself. Many leaders today are only focused on short-



term gains and immediate concerns. They lack a broader perspective of what is needed to build a better future. They have closed their eyes to the living relationship between humanity and its environment; closed their ears to the melodic rhythm of diversity and have made no effort to listen to the real heartbeat of life. Like the nationalistic education of the prewar era, the education offered today is empty, regarding people as little more than cogs in a machine. It's only to be expected that the hearts of young people, which are so sensitive and pure, will find no place in this kind of education. This is the fallacy of our present age of alienation."

Shin'ichi went on to discuss how as educators they should advance humanistic education.

"Educators striving to perfect their characters and grow as human beings are the core of humanistic education. The quality of education will only improve when educators move beyond the traditional teacher-student relationship to one that enables the mutual growth of both teachers and students through focusing on creating a better future."

"You are the standard bearers of this

humanistic education. That means that you are also the standard bearers of a humanistic culture. A great new philosophy of humanity will surely be the source of a new education and culture."

When he'd finished writing this message, Shin'ichi contemplated a time a decade into the future.

"If educators burning with a commitment to the mission of humanistic education strive assiduously and tirelessly to study and improve themselves, they'll be able to make a breakthrough in an educational revolution that will illuminate Japan's future with a great light of hope. It's no exaggeration to say that the actions of the Education Department in the coming decade can salvage Japan."

Then Shin'ichi thought about 20, 30, and 40 years into the future.

"Eventually, a steady stream of Soka University graduates will enter the education profession and the Education Department will become even stronger. At that time Soka education, a humanistic education based on the philosophy of the dignity of life, will become a main current of education around the world."

Humanistic Education 18

At the start of 1971, the education department members were deeply stirred by Shin'ichi's message to them that called for humanistic education, and they each courageously stood up.

On August 2, the education department held its



7th General Meeting to commemorate the centennial of the birth of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the department, marking a new start in its practice of humanistic education.

Shin'ichi also sent a message to the meeting, sounding a warning about the present state of education: "It is often noted that in the name of modernization, our educational system places too much emphasis on acquiring information, and the crucial development of human potential is directed toward the struggle to survive. But behind that we can see a prevailing pattern of negligence that can only be described as a failure to take responsibility for education.

"Will we continue in that direction, or strive to change it? This, I believe, is the central problem we face today.

"The establishment of humanistic education is a call for a restoration of the mission and rights of education in response to this abdication of responsibility. I have the highest hopes for your profound wisdom and undying passion, as well as your superbly coordinated practical efforts, based on your awareness of education for building human

character enriched by compassion and dialogue."

Ultimately, educational reform comes down to the way educators live. Educational revolution depends on human revolution.

In 1973, based on the mottos "The Education Department, Open to Society" and "From the Podium to the Community," the education department attempted to contribute to the community level in various ways.

Shin'ichi had the highest hopes for the activities of education department members, and each time they held a major event he sent them a long message offering eternal guidance. He also regularly conferred with department representatives. Each time they received guidance and encouragement from Shin'ichi, they strengthened their determination to be practitioners of humanistic education, and they continued to make wholehearted efforts, trying various methods and ideas, to become the best possible educators.

They also tried in a variety of ways to make contributions to the local community. By constantly thinking about what they could do for society and taking action, a fresh creative force was born.

Humanistic Education 19

The Educational Counseling Program, set up by volunteer members of the education department, also made a major contribution to society.

This Educational Counseling Program was started in September 1968, during one of Shin'ichi's



discussions with representative members of the education department, he asked Shigeo Sugimori, who was teaching in a special needs classroom, if there wasn't some way she could put her experience and her strengths to use in the community and society at large.

After careful preparation, about ten volunteers established a free educational counseling program for students and the families of students suffering from various problems, such as truancy, speech disabilities, bedwetting, and other emotional disorders.

At that time, there were very few public institutions offering educational counseling. There were some privately run ones, but the cost was unaffordable for many families.

Humanism begins by adopting the perspective of those who are suffering the most, the viewpoint of ordinary citizens.

The Educational Counseling Program was held once a week. The participating counselors would resolutely make their way to the counseling center, sometimes without having enough time to eat dinner, out of their earnest desire to offer any help they could to

suffering children and parents.

The program administered psychological testing and counseling for children and parents. It was quite well received, and as time passed the number of people seeking counseling quickly grew.

The members participating in the counseling program also held training sessions aimed at improving their counseling skills and psychological insight into people's problems. It was a continuous challenge, but they kept growing.

Gradually, they also came to offer a wide range of general educational counseling, and the movement spread throughout the country.

The slogan for their activities was "The Joy of Living with Our Children!"

They were committed to valuing the individual and basing their activities on personal needs, because that's the key to actualizing education based on the true dignity of life.

The counseling members did their very best for each child. They weren't looking for anything in return. Their activities came from their sense of mission as Buddhists and were an expression of their conscience.

Humanistic Education 20

The community and social activities of education department volunteer members unfolded in various forms spreading a humanistic education movement.

Some children are unable to keep up with the pace of their classes, but with just a little extra help and care,



most of them can gain an understanding of the materials and begin to make progress. To help such students, teachers in Narashino, Chiba, established special weekend remedial sessions for elementary and junior high school students. They called the program “Hope Classes.”

The children who showed up for these special sessions looked anxious and unsure of themselves, but they all wanted to be able to understand their schoolwork.

As the teachers looked for the areas where the students were having trouble and set about helping them overcome their difficulties, the children’s eyes began to shine. They had discovered what they needed to understand their schoolwork.

Their expressions gradually became much brighter, and they began to smile.

One of the aims of the special course was to enable children to experience the joy of learning through positive reinforcement. Once they begin to understand, they would continue to

feel motivated and eager to study.

Teachers in Sumida Ward, Tokyo, and Kashiwa City, Chiba, also began a “Jishu Gakkan” movement to inherit and further developing the concrete practice of the theory of value-creating education used by Josei Toda in his private school Jishu Gakkan.

They used Toda’s deductive arithmetic methods in the mathematics classes, and in composition classes they adopted a structured approach. Adapting the educational principles and methods of Makiguchi and Toda to contemporary needs, they strove to develop the unique potential of children and foster their character to be able to create value.

Another group was organized to perform puppet shows and shadow plays for very young children to promote their emotional development. Teachers also started classes offering instruction in a variety of subjects, such as calligraphy, painting, crafts, and music.

The unity of “many in body, one in mind” means that everyone shares the same goals and works together, but each person takes the initiative to make the best use of his or her personal capabilities. That’s the pathway to victory.

Humanistic Education 21

The foundation for the proper training and character formation of children is, of course, the family. Even after they start attending school, children still spend much more time at home.



As a result, the kind of education children receive in the family and the attitudes that parents have toward education and the family are crucial factors in raising a child.

The local community also exerts a powerful influence on children. In other words, these three realms—school, home, and the community—need to work together and cooperate in order to improve our children’s educational environments.

Since 1972, members of the education department, together with parents in the local community, formed a parenting class to cooperate in finding concrete solutions to problems concerning academic development and raising children, as well as instilling hope and confidence in parents. The class was aimed at offering ideas for child-rearing and also at providing opportunities to help bridge any divides between parents and teachers.

Lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and discussions were held on

the topic of the ideal relationship between parents and children.

The parenting class originally started as a class for mothers run by education department volunteer members, as part of the education department’s efforts to contribute to the local community.

Yoshimasa Hagino, a youthful elementary school teacher with six years of experience who lived in a public housing complex in Chuo Ward, Tokyo, was a leader of one of the first parenting classes. Because he was a teacher, local mothers often came to him for advice about educating their children. In this way, he learned that many more parents than he imagined were concerned about problems regarding education and child-rearing. Some of the parents said they wished there was a special class where they could receive advice.

The first step in contributing to society is listening to what people have to say and responding to the needs they voice.

“If it will help my community, I’ll be more than happy to start such a class!” Hagino willingly undertook the project as a way of showing his gratitude to his community.

Humanistic Education 22

Though Hagino had decided to start a parenting class for mothers, he still had a great many unresolved concerns—among them how to reach out to the local



community, where to hold the sessions, and what content to present.

In the beginning, Hagino had to prepare the posters and flyers announcing the course, as well as put them up and hand them out, all by himself. Eventually community members, noticing his tireless efforts, began to help him.

Some even undertook the printing of the flyers.

Several dozen mothers participated in the first class. Hagino presented lectures on how to effectively praise and discipline children.

He shared how scolding children when they expect a scolding is an ineffective way of correcting them, and is often counterproductive, only causing resentment. The purpose of scolding shouldn’t be to vent the adult’s emotions, but to encourage the child to reflect on their actions.

As both a teacher and a Buddhist, Hagino believed firmly that no child is bad at heart. Often

referring to his personal experiences as a teacher, he spoke earnestly to the mothers. He was so impassioned that sometimes his face would glisten with sweat. He also took questions and had discussions with the participants. The course was a huge success.

The class was held regularly. Because it was held on Sundays and holidays, some fathers also expressed their wish to attend, and as a result it was renamed “Parents Class.” The class was conducted across the country by education department volunteers, and eventually evolved into subsequent education seminars and family education discussion meetings.

Hagino had joined the Soka Gakkai in the spring of 1961. A friend’s mother had introduced him to Nichiren Buddhism shortly after he had graduated from high school at a time when he was wondering about what to do with his life. After starting to practice Buddhism, he decided to attend university and entered Tokyo Gakugei University. As he took part in student division activities, he found himself in deep sympathy with the Buddhist teaching that all people have the Buddha nature and possess infinite potential, and he resolved to become a teacher so that he could help children tap their immeasurable inner potential.

Faith and Reason

"While the Buddha's enlightenment may transcend the realm of reason, it is not irrational, nor does it resist rational examination. Faith in the Buddha's teaching is in fact the basis for a mode of intellectual examination which enlists not only analytical capacities but also seeks to develop the intuitive wisdom found in the deepest spiritual strata of the human being."

Faith, or belief, and reason are commonly seen as being fundamentally in opposition to each other. Many people regard any kind of belief--and religious belief in particular--as some sort of paralysis of the faculty of reason, an intellectual crutch. Currently, however, this presumption of a sharp opposition between belief and reason, which has been the hallmark of modern thought, is being reexamined.

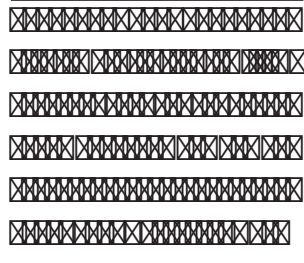
Twentieth-century philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and José Ortega y Gasset have pointed out that each of us lives, acts and thinks within a system of beliefs that is largely unconscious but without which we would be incapable of any thought or action. "Our beliefs are already operating in the depths of our lives when we begin to think something," writes Ortega y Gasset. Reason, in this sense, is founded on belief. If belief is the foundation of life, we don't really have a choice of whether to believe or not. We can choose, however, what to believe, what the substance of our faith will be.

Within the Buddhist tradition, the relationship between faith and reason has been the subject of sustained inquiry since ancient times. While this tradition has always held that the Buddha's enlightenment cannot be grasped or expressed in its entirety by reason or language, Buddhism has consistently held that reason and language should be highly valued.

While the Buddha's enlightenment may transcend the realm of reason, it is not

irrational, nor does it resist rational examination. Faith in the Buddha's teaching is in fact the basis for a mode of intellectual examination which enlists not only analytical capacities but also seeks to develop the intuitive wisdom found in the deepest spiritual strata of the human being. Learning and knowledge can serve as the portal to wisdom; but it is wisdom that enables us to use knowledge in the most humane and valuable way. The confusion of knowledge and wisdom, arguably, is at the root of our societal distortions.

Nichiren likewise developed and presented his teachings very rationally. He is well known for his scholarship and his willingness to debate. Many of his important writings take the form of a dialectic question and answer in which doubts are presented, responded to and resolved.



Sraddha, prasada and adhimukti are three Sanskrit terms translated in the Lotus Sutra as "faith" or "belief." Sraddha, defined as the first stage of Buddhist practice, means "to arouse faith" and also "to possess curiosity about." The term thus includes the meaning of a sense of awe or wonder that seems to be at the root of all religious sentiment.

Prasada expresses the idea of purity and clarity. It could be said that, from the perspective of Buddhism, the proper purpose of faith is to cleanse the mind in order to enable our inherent wisdom to shine forth.

Adhimukti literally means intent, that is, the orientation of one's mind or will. This is the mental attitude of deepening one's understanding, cultivating and polishing one's life toward perfecting the sublime state of prasada. Faith thus purifies reason, strengthens it and elevates it and is an engine for continuous self-improvement. Daisaku Ikeda has defined faith as "an open, seeking mind, a pure heart and a flexible spirit."

The above terms can be contrasted with bhakti, another Sanskrit term for faith. Bhakti, originally meaning "to become part of," is a faith associated with a practice of surrender to--and unification with--a tran-

scendent deity. This term is seldom, if ever, used in Buddhist texts.

The modern age seems convinced that intellect is an independent faculty, operating independently from feeling or belief. Yet it is becoming clearer that many trends, such as efforts to exert technological mastery over nature, rest on highly subjective beliefs or value judgements.

What is called for now is new unification of belief and reason encompassing all aspects of the human being and society, including the insights achieved by modern science. This must be an attempt to restore wholeness to human society, which has been rent asunder by extremes of reason artificially divorced from belief and irrational religious fanaticism.

This synthesis must grow from a dialogue based on mutual respect. Both sides must approach this dialogue, not with the desire to establish dominion over the other, but with a spirit of learning, of mining deeper and richer veins of truth. This will only be possible if all participants keep firmly in view the goal of human happiness. Does a particular position, approach or belief advance the human condition, or does it drive it back? Only on this basis can a dialogue between faith and reason produce true and lasting value for humankind.

[Courtesy October 2001 SGI Quarterly]

..... continued from page 4 (Happiness)

What is important for us as human beings is to elevate our lives from a lower to a higher state, to expand our lives from a closed, narrow state of life to one that is infinitely vast and encompassing. Buddhahood represents the supreme state of life.

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2.3 Establishing the World of Buddhahood as Our Basic Life Tendency

Introduction:

Based on the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, President Ikeda in this excerpt introduces the idea that each of us has a basic or habitual life tendency—a tendency that has been formed through

our repeated past actions encompassing speech, thought, and deed. He further clarifies that "attaining Buddhahood" means establishing the world of Buddhahood as this basic life tendency.

Yet, even with Buddhahood as our basic life tendency, we will still face the sufferings of the nine worlds that are the reality of our existence. Irrespective of the problems and hardships we may encounter in life, however, compassion, hope, and joy arising from the world of Buddhahood will well forth within us.

In his treatise "The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind," Nichiren Daishonin offers an example of "the nine worlds inherent in Buddhahood" (WND-1, 357), citing the Lotus Sutra passage where Shakyamuni states: "Thus since I attained Buddhahood, an extremely long period of time has passed. . . . I have constantly abided here without ever entering extinction. . . . Originally I practiced the bodhisattva way, and the life span that I acquired then has yet to come to an end" (LSOC16, 267-68). We could say that a practical expression of this passage can be found in living our lives with Buddhahood as our basic life tendency.

President Ikeda's Guidance:

Adapted from the dialogue The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra, published in Japanese in December 1998.

One way to view the principle that each of us is an entity of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds is to look at it from the perspective of our basic life tendency. While we all possess the Ten Worlds, our lives often lean toward one particular life state more than others—for instance, some people's lives are basically inclined toward the world of Hell, while others tend naturally toward the world of Bodhisattva. This could be called the "habit pattern" of one's life, a predisposition formed through karmic causes that a person has accumulated from the past.

Just as a spring returns to its original shape after being stretched, people tend to revert to their own basic tendency. But even if one's basic life tendency is the world of Hell, it doesn't mean that one will remain in that state 24 hours a day. That person will still move from one life state to another—for instance, sometimes manifesting the world of Humanity, sometimes the world of Anger, and so on. Likewise, those whose basic life tendency is the world of Anger—driven by the desire to always be better than others—will also sometimes manifest higher worlds such as Heaven or Bodhisattva. However, even if they momentarily manifest the world of Bodhisattva, they will quickly revert to their basic life tendency of the world of Anger.

Changing our basic life tendency means carrying out our human revolution and fundamentally transforming our state of life. It means changing our mind-set or resolve on the deepest level. The kind of life we live is decided by our basic life tendency. For example, those whose basic life tendency is the world of Hunger are as though on board a ship called *Hunger*. While sailing ahead in the world of Hunger, they will sometimes experience joy and sometimes suffering. Though there are various ups and downs, the ship unerringly proceeds on its set course. Consequently, for those on board this ship, everything they see will be colored in the hues of the world of Hunger. And even after they die, their lives will merge with the world of Hunger inherent in the universe.



Establishing the world of Buddhahood as our basic life tendency is what it means to "attain Buddhahood." Of course, even with the world of Buddhahood as our basic life tendency, we won't be free of problems or suffering, because we will still possess the other nine worlds. But the foundation of our lives will become one of hope, and we will increasingly experience a condition of security and joy.

My mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, once explained this as follows:

Even if you fall ill, simply have the attitude, "I'm all right. I know that if I chant to the Gohonzon, I will get well." Isn't the world of Buddhahood a state of life in which we can live with total peace of mind? That said, however, given that the nine worlds are inherent in the world of Buddhahood, we might still occasionally become angry or have to deal with problems. Therefore, enjoying total peace of mind doesn't mean that we have to renounce anger or some such thing. When something worrying happens, it's only natural to be worried. But in the innermost depths of our lives, we will have a profound sense of security. This is what it means to be a Buddha. . . .

If we can regard life itself as an absolute joy, isn't that being a Buddha? Doesn't that mean attaining the same life state as the Daishonin? Even when faced with the threat of being beheaded, the Daishonin remained calm and composed. If it had been us in that situation, we'd have been in a state of complete panic! When the Daishonin was exiled to the hostile environment of Sado Island, he continued instructing his disciples on various matters and produced such important writings as "The Opening of the Eyes" and "The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind." If he didn't have unshakable peace of mind, he would never have been able to compose such great treatises [under such difficult circumstances].

Our daily practice of gongyo—reciting portions of the Lotus Sutra and chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo—is a solemn ceremony in which our lives become one with the life of the Buddha. By applying ourselves steadfastly and persistently to this practice for manifesting our inherent Buddhahood, we firmly establish the world of Buddhahood in our lives so that it is solid and unshakable like the earth. On this foundation, this solid stage, we can freely enact at each moment the drama of the nine worlds.

Moreover, kosen-rufu is the challenge to transform the fundamental life state of society into that of Buddhahood. The key to this lies in increasing the number of those who share our noble aspirations.

When we base ourselves on faith in Nichiren Buddhism, absolutely no effort we make is ever wasted.

When we establish Buddhahood as our basic life tendency, we can move toward a future of hope while creating positive value from all our activities in the nine worlds, both past and present. In fact, all of our hardships and struggles in the nine worlds become the nourishment that strengthens the world of Buddhahood in our lives.

In accord with the Buddhist principle that "earthly desires lead to enlightenment," sufferings (earthly desires, or the deluded impulses of the nine worlds) all become the "firewood" or fuel for gaining happiness (enlightenment, or the world of Buddhahood). This is similar to how our bodies digest food and turn it into energy.

A Buddha who has no connection to the actual sufferings of the nine worlds is not a genuine Buddha—namely, one who embodies the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. This is the essential message of the "Life Span" (16th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

The world of Buddhahood can also be described as a state of life where one willingly takes on even hellish suffering. This is the world of Hell contained in the world of Buddhahood. It is characterized by empathy and hardships deliberately taken on for the happiness and welfare of others, and arises from a sense of responsibility and compassion. Courageously taking on problems and sufferings for the sake of others strengthens the world of Buddhahood in our lives.

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..... To be continue on next issue

Joyful Women's Division 18th General Meeting

Report by: Bhadra Thapa

Early in the morning, clad in different colorful attire, 60 Nepal SGI women division members along with their friends and family gathered to commemorate the 18th Women Division General Meeting at Nepal SGI peace centre. Sonorous sound of daimoku resounds around the hall imparting joy and courage. "Joyous faith for harmonious family" is the theme set for this year.

A group of beautiful women with beautiful hearts step on the stage and welcome all the participants by singing a fabulous song "batash chalyo ramailo hera...." Women division vice chief Ramita Bajracharya then welcoming all urged to strive together like a sun to brighten the home and bring harmony in the family. Joyous faith is vital to achieve this goal, she added.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda sent a message for the event that was read by Women division Vice Chief Laxmi Bajracharya. In his message, President Ikeda quoted his mentor Josei Toda's saying: "Our faith exists to battle against all kinds of karma, emerge victorious and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. Let's take on this battle with tenacity without being impatient and the battle must be fought based on faith! Let us all manifest the magnanimous and supreme life state of Buddhahood, summon forth all the Buddhist gods (positive, protective functions) from the entire universe and achieve a decisive victory together!" He also stated that one who embraces the Mystic Law, there are no problems in life that she cannot overcome. All we need to do is to have absolute conviction in this, pray to the Gohonzon with wholehearted faith and boldly forge ahead with composure.

NSGI Honorary Advisor Yoshiko Kawamura also sent a message on the occasion that was read by District WD Leader Bijaya Shrestha. In her message, Kawamura said: "the power for creating the future resides boundlessly in the lives of our future division and youth division members, who are the treasures of the SGI. It is especially important that we sincerely nurture and encourage our younger people, helping them realize their full potential and come to shine as individuals." She also appreciated tireless and courageous efforts of a women's division member to share this Buddhism with and work for the happiness of others. She applauded the sincerity behind the establishment of a district in a hilly town situated in far eastern Nepal, Ilam.

The meeting was then followed by the wonderful experiences of members who overcame life's challenges and showed the validity of faith in the Lotus Sutra. Hearing their courageous stories, participants must have engraved their courage, compassion and perseverance in their life. Vice women division Chief Kanta Rizal shared that the

problems and sufferings in life are tools to polish our life. At first, she felt awkward to invite problems through chanting daimoku because basically people want suffering free life. The Swiss philosopher Carl Hilty (1833–1909) said: "If I were to erase all of the sufferings from my life, I would have no good memories left. Everything grew out of such times [of suffering]." "The road to the happiness in life is to be able to engrave problems and polish our life. This is what I learned from the practice of Nichiren Buddhism," she said. While chanting for problems she came across unexpected sufferings of bearing the loss of her mother and a sister this year. But I never doubted the Gohonzon but instead chant for my deceased for their enlightenment. Another two women division members Bimala Shrestha and Haseena Dangol Viswokarma shared their successful operation ofand that they deeply felt the meaning of life going through this operation. They committed to dedicate their life for kosenruffu. Yet another experience, Jolly Pradhan shared how her strong prayers brought back all the jewelry that was once stolen from the house. Usually, we seldom hear that stolen things were found and it takes a long time to get it back, but my story is different. I've received all those stolen jewelry in two weeks with the support of police and the thief himself. More than that, she said: "I am much happier to prove my maid was innocent, yet who was suspected of the theft."

Engraving this year's theme "joyous faith for harmonious family" WD Chief Ujjwal Nayan Ranjit, took the stage for sharing this year's determination. 1) to share this Buddhism to as many people as possible. 2) continue study meetings to deepen the understanding of Nichiren Buddhism and 3) to do cleaning activities at kaikan every month.

"Happiness is not given by any other person, it has to be created by own self and everything is depend on self and how you perceive things. Therefore, the first step towards happiness is to overcome our own weaknesses," quoting sense's guidance General women division chief Bima Singh encouraged all the women's division to strive hard in their daily life. Nepal SGI Vice GD Anjali Basnet congratulated all the women's division members and said: that through fervent prayer always wear wisdom, patience and responsible in your respective responsible place and to win in life for eternity. Finally, WD members joyfully performed a dance and a song that was applauded by all. Student division and Future division members also supported with their wonderful 'Thali dance' in celebration of women division's 18th General meeting. The meeting ended with a beautiful smile which was captured in a commemorative photograph.



MESSAGE

My heartiest congratulations on your invigorating gathering today to commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the Women's Division formation. Congratulations to one and all!

Kaneko and I are sending daimoku to each and every one of you and we are warmly watching over your wonderful gathering today.

This June, many SGI countries around the world are holding a combined meeting for the Women's and Young Women's Divisions exuberantly whereby members and friends come together to study the life-affirming philosophy of Buddhism and create a groundswell of dialogue on peace, culture and education.

Wherever it is around the world, it is the members of the Women's and Young Women's Divisions who are striving every day for the sake of peace and the realization of the happiness for both oneself and others by sharing Buddhism and advancing the movement of kosen-ruffu with great sincerity and earnestness.

In his letter to his female disciple, Nichinyo, Nichiren Daishonin wrote: "A woman who makes offerings to such a Gohonzon invites happiness in this life, and in the next, the Gohonzon will be with her and protect her always. Like a lantern in the dark, like a strong guide and porter on a treacherous mountain path, the Gohonzon will guard and protect you, Nichinyo, wherever you go." (WND-1, p 832) This is a promise that the Daishonin makes.

What the Daishonin describes here, is exactly the noble life condition that all of you will enjoy as individuals who are single-mindedly exerting yourselves for kosen-ruffu with wholehearted dedication.

In reality, on top of having to cope with the busiest schedule everyday, I believe that life must be a succession of hardships and painful struggles for you, most of which you must have quietly kept o yourselves. However, please rest assured that the Gohonzon and the original Buddha is fully aware of everything.

All hardships that you go through for the sake of kosen-ruffu will never fail to be transformed into good fortune and benefits. In Buddhism, no efforts will ever go to waste. Those who have strong faith will surely enjoy great benefits.

My mentor, Josei Toda once said in his guidance:

"Our faith exists to battle against all kinds of karma, emerge victorious and attain Buddhahood in this lifetime. Let's take on this battle with tenacity without being impatient and the battle must be fought based on faith! Let us all manifest the magnanimous and supreme life state of Buddhahood, summon forth all the Buddhist gods (positive, protective functions) from the entire universe and achieve a decisive victory together!"

For one who embraces the Mystic Law, there are no problems in life that she cannot overcome. All you need to do is to have absolute conviction in this, pray to the Gohonzon with wholehearted faith and boldly forge ahead with composure. I ask that each one of you accumulate great good fortune and benefits in your lives, show remarkable actual proofs of faith, and become brilliant suns in your family, workplace, communities and societies, illuminating and soaking the lives of the people around you with the radiant sunshine of hope and courage.

Kaneko and I will be praying earnestly for the continued good health and victory of each and every one of you, my most precious members in Nepal whom I cherish with all my heart, and that your family will enjoy happiness.

Please take good care of yourselves and stay well always!

June 14 / 21, 2014
Daisaku and Kaneko Ikeda
President, Soka Gakkai International

Treasures of the Heart

Among the vast number of parables in Buddhist literature, SGI President Ikeda wrote an essay around the core teachings of Buddhism and their relevance to our daily lives.

The Battle without Retreat

Here lies the father of this land,

Here people visit to pay him homage.
I pray that both the father and his children
Will be blessed throughout eternity.

Thus I wrote in the visitors' register when I went to the I cemetery at Raj Ghat in India where Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was cremated. It was on 8 February 1979, and the area was enveloped in fresh greenery.

When I think of India, I recall that it is the birthplace of Buddhism, and, at the same time, the name Mahatma Gandhi also comes to mind. They are both equally familiar to me. I visited India twice, and each time the people's unchanging reverence for Gandhi further deepened my understanding as to why he is called *mahatma*, "the Great Soul".

Gandhi was a "warrior" who dedicated most of his nearly 80-year life to the independence of India. His efforts towards the realisation of independence were an irrepressible expression of his spontaneity as a human being, which also showed itself in the indomitable battles he fought.

The French writer Romain Rolland (1866-1944) depicted this calm "warrior" as follows:

His complexion is tanned, but sunburned rather than dark. The profile of his skull is elongated, and this impression is accentuated by the absence of front teeth which renders his mouth ratlike - his fairly big lower lip protruding and the upper lip bearing a grey, sparse moustache. The nose is straight, rather deepset, flattened at the end with two wide nostrils. The ears stand out. The forehead is wide and well-built; it is deeply wrinkled when he speaks; but the cheeks and the rest of the face, substantially strong, do not show the web of wrinkles of our European faces.



Gandhi was a "warrior". Although he never resorted to weapons — more precisely, because he never took up weapons — he was a "soldier" who fought the battle for truth. The indignation he felt towards the oppressive administration of the British colonialist powers was not just anger; it was a wrath of love and faith which emanated from the depths of his being. That is why he resorted to his own wisdom rather than to guns and ammunition.

The Salt March is an example. Salt was an everyday necessity for peasants who laboured in the fields under the burning sun of India, especially during summer. But the British government imposed heavy taxes on it, even though it was an essential of life. Gandhi stood up and declared: "Unless the government abolishes the Salt Laws, we will march on the seashore and manufacture salt, which has been a government monopoly, by our own hands."

The government ignored his appeal, so Gandhi began the long march towards the village of Dandi on the seacoast farther south, leading his 79 followers. Peasants along the way welcomed them — sprinkling water on the dusty roads, showering them with leaves and waving flags. The village officials abandoned their official work for the government, while many villagers joined in the march. The news of the march spread throughout the world. Gandhi finished the 24-day procession, stood on the seashore of Dandi, and the group extracted salt from the ocean by themselves. The making of a handful of salt instantly became

widespread as a symbol of the independence of India. As a result, the somewhat stagnant independence movement again became more alive; with a rising surge, it began to gain momentum.

Gandhi's movement, which was called 'Nonviolence', never meant nonresistance, which rules out all kinds of fighting. He only ruled out violence as a means of conducting his movement; he opposed the repressive colonial administration and continued to fight against it throughout his life.

No adversity or obstacle ever caused his faith to waver or drove him into despair. Gandhi's movement for independence was a relentless struggle continued without pause until he was shot to death by a Hindu fanatic.

In the world of literature, we can also find many great works which beautifully describe man's unwavering tenacity. Since my youth, Tolstoy has been one of my favourite writers, and even now I am one of his ardent readers. Each and every work is deeply fascinating because, it seems to me, every character in his literary works has taught me something about the life of Tolstoy himself who, possessing an inexhaustible curiosity about human beings, devoted his entire life to seeking the truth about life.

Commander Kutuzov, who appeared in Tolstoy's master-work *War and Peace* as an intelligent, experienced, though aged, veteran, was impressive. In 1812, the invasion of Russia by Napoleon's French army was imminent, and the Russian resistance was inevitable. In this confrontation, the battle of Borodino is well-known. All the Russian generals had already given up the battle, foreseeing defeat, but Kutuzov alone said, "We will win the fight at Borodino."

The circumstances surrounding the battle seemed hopeless and disastrous to

the Russians. Kutuzov, however, endured the criticisms of the people around him until finally he succeeded in luring Napoleon's army into his own battlefield in the dead of the winter cold and turned the hopeless circumstances of the war to Russia's advantage.

Kutuzov was never shaken in the face of adverse circumstances and marched forward in spite of all the difficulties, with a firm belief in final victory. His unwavering strength casts a noble light on the humanity of a man who thoroughly lived up to his faith and determination.

Though of a different kind, the entire life of Nichiren Daishonin was also a series of battles and struggles. He conducted his battles with an indomitable spirit throughout his life, just as he stated in his writings: "It has been twenty or more years since I found myself in that situation and began the great battle. Not once have I thought of retreat," or "[T] he wise will rejoice while the foolish will retreat." Even when he was about to be executed by the authorities, he never wavered in his confidence and said to the high official of the government: How amusing! Look at Hei no Saemon gone mad! You gentlemen have just toppled the pillar of Japan."

I firmly believe that the essence of the Mahayana spirit runs through the indomitable battles that the Daishonin waged. I think that he also shows us one of the most respect worthy ways to live as a human being. No life is as noble as that of a man who lives out his determined faith throughout his life. The end of one's life will be disastrous if one has always been influenced by the prevailing circumstances of the times. Let us remind ourselves of the necessity of constant battles and struggles so that we will never live an unhappy life. Indeed, a noble life means to do battle with an indomitable spirit.

AUGUST				NSGI Monthly Meeting Schedule			SEPTEMBER		
Date	Time	Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Meeting	Venue		
Aug 1	17:00	Friday Peace Prayer	NPC	Sep 5	17:00	All Leaders Meeting	NPC		
Aug 2	08:00	Dhaulagiri Kosenrufu Meeting	NPC	Sep 6	08:00	Machhapuchhre Kosenrufu Meeting	NPC		
Aug 9	08:00	New Era District Zadankai Meeting	District	Sep 13	08:00	New Era District Zadankai Meeting	District		
Aug 16	08:00	Men Division 15th General Meeting	District	Sep 20	08:00	District Leaders Planning Meeting	District		
Aug 17-22		All District Divisional Meeting	Member's Home	Sep 21-26		All District Divisional Meeting	Member's Home		
Aug 23	08:00	District Study Meeting	District	Sep 27	08:00	District Goshu Meeting	District		
Aug 25		Monday Fighting Daimoku	District	Sep 29		Monday Fighting Daimoku	District		
Aug 29	17:30	Introductory Meeting	NPC						
Aug 30	08:00	Divisional Meeting	NPC						

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