



Living the GOSHO

And this year, on the first day of the seventh month, he [your son Tokuro Moritsuna] came again to Mount Minobu to pay respects at his father's [Abutsu-bo's] grave. Surely, there is no treasure greater than a child, no treasure greater than a child!

From "The Treasure of a Filial Child" (WND-1, 1045).

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT - *Daishonin's Words*

Nichiren Daishonin addressed these words to Sennichi, the widow of Abutsu-bo. He notes that her son Tokuro Moritsuna traveled all the way from the remote island of Sado to visit his father Abutsu-bo's grave at Minobu, as he had also done the previous year [bringing Abutsu-bo's ashes with him to inter them there]. He praises Tokuro Moritsuna for being a wonderful son and also commends Sennichi.

Conducting ourselves as exemplary sons and daughters is the behavior of genuine practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism. By chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo for our parents—and, indeed, all with whom we share a connection—we can pass on to them the benefit of our good causes. The power of the Mystic Law guarantees that, as a result, they, too, will enjoy peace and tranquility throughout the three existences of past, present, and future.

(Translated from the August 8, 2014, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper)

SGI President Ikeda's Editorial

Engaging in Joyful Dialogues with Bright Hope and Confidence

"Let's live our youth, our lives, undefeated by anything!"—this is the shared spirit of our young women's and women's division members. This spirit reflects a profound philosophy and proud conviction.

In *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, Nichiren Daishonin states: "One becomes aware of the Buddha vehicle [the Mystic Law] within oneself and enters the palace of oneself [one's Buddhahood]. Chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is what is meant by entering the palace of oneself" (OTT, 209). The palace of happiness is not found in some distant place; it resides within our own life. Our life itself is that palace.

No matter how painful or difficult our circumstances, when we chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, our lives fuse with the Mystic Law, and the strength to move forward and the courage to keep on living surge forth powerfully within us.

The Lotus Sutra teaches:

There is no safety in the threefold world;
it is like a burning house,
replete with a multitude of sufferings,
truly to be feared. (LSOC3, 105)

In the Latter Day of the Law, in particular, when the world is afflicted by all sorts of disasters, natural and man-made, "even the large-hearted become narrow, and

even those who seek the way adopt erroneous views" (WND-1, 845), as the Daishonin writes.

In such an age, the grassroots effort for dialogue that we are carrying out as SGI members is opening indestructible palaces of hope in the hearts of countless individuals. The power for that effort comes from words of encouragement arising from our prayers and sincere wishes for each person's happiness. In today's society, awash with cruel words that hurt and deceive, alienate and divide, we are engaged in a challenge to bring people together with warmth, genuineness, and overflowing goodwill.

Nichiren Daishonin states: "Joy" means that oneself and others together experience joy. . . . Both oneself and others together will take joy in their possession of wisdom and compassion" (OTT, 146). In accord with these words, our dedicated members in Japan and around the globe are engaging in joyful dialogues with bright hope and confidence as they expand our network of wisdom and compassion.

Shakyamuni Buddha states that the Lotus Sutra "will face much hostility in the world and be difficult to believe" (LSOC14, 246). True to those words, there are many cases in which, in our attempts to share with complete sincerity the correct teaching of Buddhism, we encounter closed minds and hardened hearts.

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But second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, the great leader of propagation, said: "How to spread the Mystic Law, how to enable people to become happy, how to advance our movement for kosen-rufu—there are no more wonderful problems to concern ourselves with than these concerns of the Buddha." All our efforts in such areas will, based on the principle that "earthly desires lead to enlightenment," deepen the life state of Buddhahood within us and enable us to accumulate boundless good fortune.

In the pioneering days of our movement, a women's division member in Yamagata Prefecture [in Japan's Tohoku region] struggled to overcome economic hardship, laboring late into the night on piecemeal work to supplement the family income. She worked tirelessly for kosen-rufu with her husband, traveling far and wide throughout a large geographical area. She overcame the sadness of losing two children, steadfastly encouraged friends and fellow members amid an onslaught of natural disasters, and today, at 90 years old, is still going strong in her efforts for kosen-rufu.

She declares: "By introducing others to Nichiren Buddhism, we give them the key to eternal happiness. This is something that the rich and powerful in society cannot do. When people are suffering, I want them to know that they have me as a friend and that the members of the Soka Gakkai are there for them. When I remind myself that everyone in the



depths of their lives is seeking the Mystic Law, the ability to encourage them arises naturally from within me."

The great French author Victor Hugo (1802–85) wrote: "The joy we inspire has this wonderful feature, which is that, far from dimming like any reflection, it comes back to us more radiant."

While working together to make the great joy that fills our lives shine ever brighter, let us build an invincible palace of capable individuals!

Whatever the times,
let's cheerfully open
the path to victory,
encouraging and supporting
one another.

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

Opening a New Era of Kosen-rufu Together

(14) Expanding Our State of Life by Reading Nichiren Daishonin's Writings

Youth division members in the United States are also making incredible strides in their study movement. They are blazing with the noble mission of Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

In South Korea and Taiwan, men's division and women's division members are challenging themselves alongside the youth to take study exams. Our organizations there are beautifully united in the spirit of "many in body, one in mind."

In countries and territories throughout Asia, the Americas, and Oceania, as well as Europe and Africa, members are deeply studying the philosophy of happiness, peace, and hope of Nichiren Buddhism.

Members of the young women's division Ikeda Kayo-kai around the globe are putting into practice second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's guideline that young women should make Buddhist study their foundation.

We are living in an amazing time. The admirable efforts of our members everywhere bring me great joy.

When we study the Goshō, the writings of Nichiren Daishonin, a powerful confidence that we can overcome all hardships will well forth from within us. We will be filled with dauntless courage, knowing that winter always turns to spring.

Mr. Toda often told leaders: "When you're tired, that's the very time to read the Goshō! Even just a line or two is fine. Read the Goshō and expand your life just that little bit more."

I always used to jot down quotes in my diary during my spent striving alongside my mentor to in postwar Japan. Among them were "The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra courageous in faith. Then one will be as strong as a demon armed with an iron staff" (WND-1, 412).

Although my battle with ill health continued, I still did my best to study the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin and to share them with others. Even when friends I'd arranged to meet didn't show up at the last minute or I wasn't able to bring a guest to a discussion meeting, I kept rousing my courage and challenging myself anew. This is because Buddhist practice creates genuine value in each person's life.

In accord with the Buddhist principles of "earthly desires leading to enlightenment" and "changing poison into medicine," all the problems and challenges we encounter in the course of our efforts for kosen-rufu will turn into causes for our growth and development. All fatigue will be transformed into a sense of fulfillment and joy. This is the power of the Mystic Law, the benefit of which is everlasting.

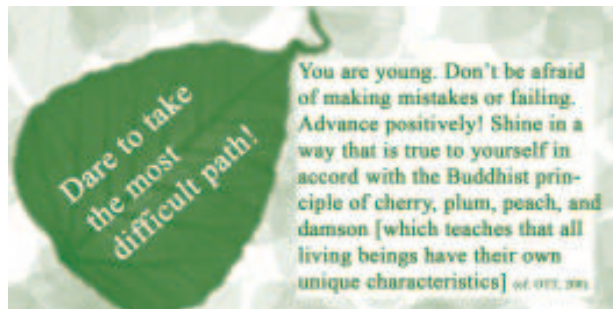
(Translated from the April 6, 2014, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper)



(15) Flowering in Your Own Unique Way

Let's offer our warm support to all our young friends who have entered new schools or started new jobs this month and are taking a fresh step forward in their lives. Some of them must be feeling very uncertain and anxious. I truly wish I could visit each one of them to offer my personal encouragement.

You are young. Don't be afraid of making mistakes or failing. Advance positively! Shine in a way that is true to yourself in accord with the Buddhist principle of cherry, plum, peach, and damson [which teaches that all living beings have their own unique characteristics] (cf. OTT, 200). There is no need to fret or be impatient. Your time of blossoming will definitely come. Resonantly chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and bring the flowers of your own unique mission to bloom.



Deeply moved by a lecture on the Lotus Sutra given by my mentor, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, I wrote in my diary as a young man (on September 13, 1948): "How fortunate I am to encounter the infinitely profound and immeasurable doctrines of the Lotus Sutra! Mr. Toda is truly a teacher for all humanity. . . . At just 20 years of age, I have learned the most honorable path a youth can follow."

Nichiren Daishonin writes: "You must build your reputation on the Lotus Sutra [Nam-myoho-enge-kyo] and give yourself up to it" (WND-1, 385).

Ours is a realm of living in accord with the Mystic Law—the supreme law of truth—together with the SGI and our fellow members. It is filled with unsurpassed lasting value as well as fulfillment as boundless as the universe. There is no other realm like it anywhere.

Once, when I was embarking on a new responsibility, Mr. Toda said to me: "Dare to take the most difficult path!" Undergoing difficulties for the cause of kosen-rufu is an unsurpassed honor. Moreover, there is no difficulty that we cannot overcome, if it is for the sake of kosen-rufu. All such hardships will unfailingly be transformed into benefit and glory.

Every day, I am chanting for your happiness and watching over everything. I hope you will dance out onto the stage of your mission with confidence and pride. Please always keep striving and moving forward positively, with strong conviction and optimism, wherever you go.

Take utmost care of your health! You are all my dearest treasures. Please achieve bold and dynamic victories, like youthful cherry trees in magnificent bloom!

(Translated from the April 13, 2014, issue of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai daily newspaper)

THE WISDOM FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND PEACE
SELECTED EXCERPTS OF SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S GUIDANCE

Part 1: Happiness

Chapter 3: The Practice for Transforming Our State of Life

Introduction:

In the previous chapter, we examined the principle for transforming our lives taught in Nichiren Buddhism. In this chapter, we explore the most fundamental practice for carrying out that transformation, the practice known as gongyo.

Gongyo in Nichiren Buddhism consists of reciting portions of the “Expedient Means” (2nd) and “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” (16th) chapters of the Lotus Sutra and chanting daimoku, or Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, with faith in the Gohonzon.

The Lotus Sutra is the Buddha’s highest teaching, the quintessence of Buddhist wisdom and compassion. Nichiren Daishonin identified the essential teaching or Law implicit in the text of the Lotus Sutra as Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and embodied it in the form of the Gohonzon, the object of devotion for our faith and practice.

SGI President Ikeda explains, based on the principle of the “actual three thousand realms in a single moment of life” taught by Nichiren Daishonin, that Nam-myoho-renge-kyo

is the fundamental Law that pervades life and the universe. He describes gongyo as a ceremony in which our lives commune with the universe. When we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the Gohonzon, we align our individual lives with the rhythm of the Mystic Law of the universe, and can tap unlimited wisdom, compassion, and courage.

As Nichiren Daishonin indicates in various writings, gongyo encapsulates within it the significance of all Buddhist practices. Even

without having a deep understanding of Buddhist doctrines or engaging in austere practices that are not feasible for most, we can elevate our life state infinitely by basing ourselves on the practice of gongyo. In this way, the Daishonin’s Buddhism is a teaching for and accessible to all people.

President Ikeda further stresses that, in seeking to genuinely transform our lives, it is essential that we not only exert ourselves in the practice of gongyo, but also take courageous action to effect positive change.

3.1 Gongyo:

A Ceremony in Which Our Lives Commune with the Universe

Introduction:

In this excerpt, President Ikeda clarifies that Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the fundamental Law pervading all life and the universe. He bases his discussion on the Buddhist concept of the interconnectedness of our lives and the universe. Various Buddhist texts highlight this principle, such as Miao-lo’s Annotations on “Great Concentration and Insight,” which states: “One understands that everything that is contained within this body of ours is modeled after heaven and earth” (WND-2, 848). Through the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, President Ikeda goes on to say, we can bring forth in our lives the limitless power of the Mystic Law.

President Ikeda’s Guidance:

Adapted from the dialogue Discussions on Youth, published in Japanese in March 1999.

Gongyo—reciting portions of the Lotus Sutra and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo—is a ceremony in which our lives commune with the universe. It is an act through which, based on the Gohonzon, we can vibrantly draw forth the life force of the universe within the cosmos of our lives. We exist. We have life. The universe, too, is a giant living entity. Life is the universe and the universe is life. Each of us is a living entity, just like the universe. We are our own miniature universe.

One scholar, observing that the human body is made of the same elements produced by stars, has called human beings “children of the stars.” Our bodies are a microcosm of the universe. Not only are they made of the same matter as the universe, but they also follow the same process of generation and disintegration, the same rhythm of life and death, that pervades the cosmos. All physical laws—such as gravity and the conservation of energy—also affect and operate in the microcosm of each living entity.

The earth takes 365 days, 5 hours, and 48 minutes to complete one revolution around the sun. It, too, operates according to a rigorous order. The human body, meanwhile, is said to have more than 60 trillion individual cells. When they function each day in a well-ordered fashion, correctly carrying out their respective jobs, we enjoy good health. The complexity and precision of the human body are truly wondrous. Likewise, if the earth were to veer even slightly from its present orbit around the sun, we would be in serious trouble. Everything hangs in a delicate balance, governed by

the strict principle that life and the universe are one. The same is true of each individual life—of each microcosm.

Science has directed its attention to the investigation of real, yet invisible, natural laws. Such investigation has led to the invention of many machines and devices that apply those laws. An understanding of the principles of buoyancy, for instance, led to the development of seagoing vessels. Likewise, the discovery of the laws of aerodynamics led to the invention of aircraft, and insight into the workings of electromagnetic waves paved the way for the development of radio and television. These natural laws, however, are only partial laws of the universe.

Buddhism, on the other hand, developed out of the search for and discovery of the ultimate Law of life that is the source and foundation of all other laws and principles. This ultimate Law of life is the Mystic Law.

The Mystic Law is also invisible, yet it, too, exists without a doubt. Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that we could bring forth the power of the Mystic Law from within our own lives. That is why second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda said: “I apologize for using such a simplistic analogy, but the Gohonzon can be likened to a happiness-producing device.”

When we do gongyo—recite portions of the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo before the Gohonzon—the microcosm of our individual lives harmonizes seamlessly with the macrocosm of the universe. It is a sublime ceremony, an action through which we fully open the storehouse of treasures within. We can thereby tap into the wellspring of life force in the depths of our own beings. We can access the source of inexhaustible wisdom, compassion, and courage.

The universe, in its essence, is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo; our life is an expression of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo; and the Gohonzon is an embodiment of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Since all three are Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they are essentially one and indivisible. Therefore, when we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, our life and the universe are aligned around the Gohonzon—meshing together perfectly like cogs in a machine—and we begin to move in the direction of happiness and fulfillment.

We can be in rhythm with the universe 365 days a year—in spring, summer, autumn, and winter—and manifest the life force, wisdom, and good fortune that enables us to surmount any problem or suffering. When we rev up the powerful engine of life force that is Buddhahood, we can break through any impasse and keep moving forward, boldly steering ourselves in the direction of hope and justice.

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3.2 Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo: A Practice Accessible to All

Introduction:

The vast body of Buddhist teachings set forth many difficult methods of practice. Nichiren Daishonin, however, insists that all of these diverse Buddhist practices are encompassed in the single practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the Gohonzon. Here, President Ikeda stresses, based on the Daishonin's writings, that this simple, faith-based practice is the direct path for attaining Buddhahood.

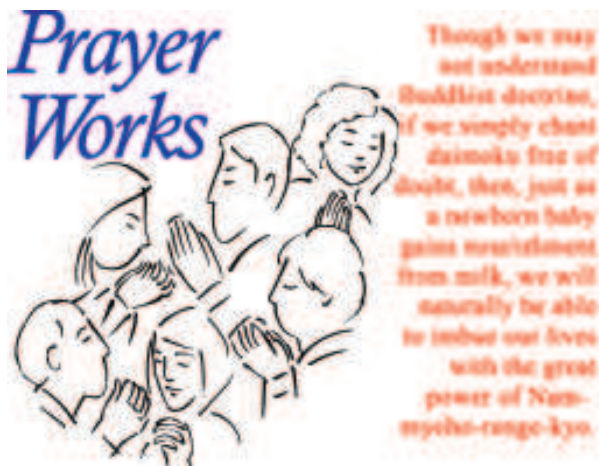
President Ikeda's Guidance:

From a speech delivered at an SGI-Italy Representatives Conference, Milan, Italy, July 2, 1992.

Nichiren Daishonin sent many letters to his lay follower Toki Jonin. In one of them, titled "On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice," he outlines the correct Buddhist practice for people in the Latter Day of the Law, clarifying that such practice lies in "making [the] single word 'faith' the foundation" (cf. WND-1, 785).

The essence of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is not ceremony or formality. It is our heart. It is our faith. The Daishonin further states that the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the Gohonzon contains within it all other forms of practice. He explains with the following simple allegory: "The two characters that comprise the name Japan contain within them all the people and animals and wealth in the sixty-six provinces of the country, without a single omission" (WND-1, 788). Similarly, he says, the phrase "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo" contains within it the entirety of the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is itself the direct path to attaining Buddhahood. All other practices, especially those entrenched in formality, are secondary practices that, if given primary importance, can become an impediment to faith.

The Daishonin further teaches that even though we may not understand the profound meaning of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can still gain the benefit of chanting daimoku. Here, employing another allegory, he states: "When a baby drinks milk, it has no understanding of its taste, and yet its body is naturally nourished" (WND-1, 788).



Though we may not understand Buddhist doctrine, if we simply chant daimoku free of doubt, then, just as a newborn baby gains nourishment from milk, we will naturally be able to imbue our lives with the great power of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The Daishonin's Buddhism is the Buddhism of the people; it exists for and is accessible to all.

In the same writing, Nichiren Daishonin states: "The five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo do not represent the sutra [Lotus Sutra] text, nor are they its meaning. They are nothing other than the intent of the entire sutra" (WND-1, 788). Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which we chant, is the heart and essence of the Lotus Sutra. Fundamentally, it is the very spirit of Nichiren Daishonin. Accordingly, though we may not grasp its profound meaning entirely, when we chant daimoku with faith in the Gohonzon, we can come into contact with the Daishonin's spirit. We can bring forth within us the life state of the Daishonin that is one with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. How truly fortunate we are!

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3.3 Winning in Life with Daimoku

Introduction:

What should our attitude be when chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo? In this excerpt from *The New Human Revolution*, the novel's protagonist Shin'ichi Yamamoto (whose character represents President Ikeda) is speaking to members in Peru who have just started practicing Nichiren Buddhism. He offers them several pieces of advice, such as: "Firmly resolve to win and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the power of a lion's roar."

President Ikeda's Guidance:

Adapted from *The New Human Revolution*, volume 11, "Pioneering New Frontiers" chapter, published in Japanese in October 2002.

Those who challenge themselves earnestly, aligning their lives with the Mystic Law, kosen-rufu, and the SGI, lay the foundations for eternal happiness and realize ultimate victory in life.

I would like all of you to become such great victors. In that connection, allow me today to talk a little about the key requirements for victory.

The first is chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Our health, courage, wisdom, joy, desire to improve, self-discipline, and so on, could all be said to depend on our life force. Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo enables us to bring forth limitless life force. Those who base themselves on chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo are therefore never deadlocked.

The important thing is to continue chanting every day, no matter what happens. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the fundamental power of the universe. Please chant resounding daimoku morning and evening with the vibrant and energetic rhythm of majestic horses galloping through the heavens.

When we chant before the Gohonzon, we are facing the Buddha, so we should remember to have a respectful attitude. Other than that, though, we should feel free to express what's in our hearts honestly and directly to the Gohonzon.

The Gohonzon is the embodiment of the Buddha endowed with infinite compassion. We should therefore chant about our desires, our problems, and our aspirations, just as they are. When we're suffering, feeling sad, or experiencing hard times, we should take everything to the Gohonzon with an open heart, like a child who throws itself into its mother's arms and clings to her. The Gohonzon will "listen" to everything. Let's chant as if carrying on a conversation, confiding our innermost thoughts. In time, even hellish sufferings will vanish like the morning dew and seem but a dream.

If, for instance, we recognize that we have done something wrong, we should offer sincere prayers of apology and humbly reflect on our behavior. We can resolve never to repeat the same mistake again and set forth anew.

Also, when we encounter a crucial situation, we can firmly resolve to win and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the power of a lion's roar or the ferocity of an asura demon, as if to shake the entire universe.

Furthermore, in the evening, we can joyfully chant to the Gohonzon with profound appreciation for that day.

In *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, Nichiren Daishonin cites the words: "Morning after morning we rise up with the Buddha, evening after evening we lie down with the Buddha" (OTT, 83). This means that those who continue to chant in earnest are always together with the Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. This holds true not only for this lifetime but even beyond death, with the Daishonin and all heavenly deities throughout the universe extending their protection to us. We can therefore feel a deep sense of security from the depths of our being and be free of all fear. We can enjoy and live out our lives with complete confidence.

Chanting transforms suffering into joy, and joy into greater joy. That's why it is important for us to single-mindedly chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, come what may, whether we are feeling happy or sad, in good times or in bad. This is the direct path to happiness.

Also, when we encounter a crucial situation, we can firmly resolve to win and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the power of a lion's roar or the ferocity of an asura demon, as if to shake the entire universe.



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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).

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Education department chief secretary Masaru Kito was a 38-year-old educator who had joined the Soka Gakkai ten years earlier.

Born in 1937 in Magome, Tokyo, he experienced the terror of air raids as a child. He was eight years old when the

war ended. The following year his mother fell ill and died, during a time of desperate food shortages. Kito hated war, which had been the cause of so much suffering.

He studied at the prestigious Tokyo Metropolitan Hibiya High School and after graduation entered Yokohama National University, where he studied in the Faculty of Liberal Arts. Because his

family was poor, he had to work several part-time jobs in the evenings—one of which was as a security guard at an elementary school—while studying hard during the day.

In 1960, the renewal of earlier U.S.-Japan Security Treaty came up, and many students protested against it, including Kito, who was on the front lines with the demonstrators who surrounded the Diet Building. However, in spite of their protests, the treaty was signed leaving him feeling empty inside.

Kito continued to seek the way to create the path of peace, and he started to think that it is created not through demonstrations and strikes, but through education. He believed that engaging in one dialogue after another was the key to overcoming people's ignorance, apathy, and disinterest in peace. He was even given an opportunity to express his views when he appeared on a televised national speech contest "Youth Forum" organized by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation).

At about that time, a friend from university talked to him about the Soka Gakkai, saying that peace could only be achieved through each person's human

revolution, which was made possible by practicing Buddhism. The friend said she appreciated Kito's beliefs, but she wondered what concrete steps Kito was actually taking to put them into action.

Kito had no specific answers for that. He borrowed some Gakkai publications from his friend and read them. He agreed with parts of what he read, but he wasn't persuaded to join. He had no desire to live his life relying on such things as religion.

After graduating from university, Kito became a teacher at an elementary school in Kawasaki. The school was located in an industrial area, where smoke polluted the air and dust and ash filled the sky. Many of the families living in this area were struggling with poverty, but it was a warm, tightly knit community. Kito had been assigned there because he had requested to be sent to the most challenging school.

He wanted to be a teacher who would dedicate his life to his students, the Pestalozzi of Japan. Kito was truly impassioned in his dedication to education.



Humanistic Education 35

It wasn't long before Kito found himself stymied. One after another, the fifth-grade students he was in charge of started skipping classes. There was one day when out of the 25 boys in the class 15 of them were truant. When he went looking for

them, he found them hanging around a local river bank, and he also discovered that some of his students were sniffing glue.

Kito said to himself, "I have an understanding of psychology. I will do my best to turn these kids around." He threw himself avidly into his teaching.

As a researcher for the city's

municipal education research center, he engaged in educational counseling and studied psychotherapy.

He volunteered to take other teachers' night patrol shifts and sometimes remained at school for days at a time, working in the night shift room.

One night he heard a big crash and found that someone had thrown pieces of concrete and rocks through a school window, breaking it and showering the area with glass in a disturbing act of vandalism.

Some students were shoplifting because they were unbearably hungry from not having enough to eat. Kito would go to the police station to pick up the boys, and sometimes because of difficult family situations, he would even let them stay with him for a while.

His fierce struggle continued day after day. He was exhausted, both physically and mentally, and was at his wit's end.

One day one of his girl students said to him: "Many of us feel like we can always talk to you about anything, and you seem to care more than any other teacher at school, but no one likes you because you have a look that seems to say, 'I'm

busy! Don't bother me!'"

Kito lost all confidence in his abilities as a teacher.

"I haven't been able to realize my ideals," he thought.

He remembered how a friend at university who was a Soka Gakkai member had said to him, "Buddhism enables you to tap your infinite potential, and the only way to change others in your life is to succeed in your own human revolution."

Coincidentally, that friend contacted him around that time, and he met with her and decided to join the Soka Gakkai.

It had taken five years for the friend's initial conversation with Kito to produce a result.

If you plant the seeds of Buddhism, eventually they will bear fruit. That's why it's important to speak about Buddhism to others, even if they don't show an interest at the time. As the Great Teacher Miao-lo (711–782) says, hearing the Law is the "seed," while arousing faith is the "sprouting of the seed."





learn about this new practice. Ine was a seemingly ordinary housewife. She had overcome illness on several occasions, and had become a much more positive and cheerful person through her practice, and she was filled with conviction about Buddhism's effectiveness.

Ine thoroughly taught Kito the basics of Nichiren Buddhism.

Because of his work, Kito couldn't attend meetings, but when he returned home late at night, he would often find notes of encouragement attached to his apartment door. "I'm worried about you. You have a great mission. Please do your best, without giving up, whatever you may be facing."

When Ine was able to get together with Kito, she listened carefully to what he had to say. When he was successful in helping his students, she sincerely shared his joy. She was very observant, and noticed every change in him, telling him things like, "You seem to have become more cheerful lately."

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Ine, the mother of the friend who had introduced Kito to Nichiren Buddhism, looked after him and helped him



dramatically transformed.

While Shin'ichi Yamamoto was in the Man'yo (Myriad Leaves) House on the Soka University campus, he said to Kito: "I've received a full report on all of the education department's activities. I've heard that many of the younger members have grown, too. The education department has accomplished a lot this year."

Kito replied: "Thank you, President Yamamoto. In the second half of August, education department members will visit the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet Ministry of Education. We will do our best to continue solidifying the path of educational exchange that you've

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opened." Having learned the true spirit of education from Ine, Masaru Kito chanted earnestly every day, thinking about the students in his class. Over time, he began to reach them, and they stopped skipping school. The class

interconnected the world is. "I'm counting on you," said Shin'ichi. "I'll also keep working hard to promote international educational exchange, for the sake of Japan and the world as a whole. We need to ensure that our children, who will grow up to shoulder the next generation, recognize how

When Kito met Ine he always felt deeply reassured and reenergized.

Why, he wondered? "It must be because Ine has complete faith in me and is always encouraging me with her entire being. I can see her sincere wish is only for my genuine happiness and growth. This must be why I always feel so reassured and energized whenever I meet with her," he thought.

Kito also realized that this was just what he'd been lacking as a teacher.

"I've tried very hard to be a good teacher, but have I really believed that all of the children I come into contact with have a noble mission? Have I really been determined to see all of them attain happiness? I was just trying to become a good teacher without thinking about my students' feelings. It was just my ego trip."

The essential spirit of education must be the desire for the happiness of the students.

interconnected the world is.

"I want education department members to make the path I've opened into a great movement for world peace. Without successors, the path one has wholeheartedly strived to open will become overgrown with weeds and disappear. It's vital to ensure that everything you do will continue to grow and develop in the future.

"My wife and I are earnestly praying that none of the education department members visiting the Soviet Union will fall ill and that it will be a positive and meaningful experience for everyone."

Tears welled up in Kito's eyes when Shin'ichi expressed these wishes for the health of the education department members at a time when he himself was obviously not in the best of health. Sincerity is expressed through our words of concerns for others.

Their discussion soon came to an end.

Kito had wanted to ask Shin'ichi to attend the education department summer training course that was to be held on August 12, the following day. But seeing how utterly exhausted Shin'ichi was, he couldn't bring himself to ask.

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On August 12, Shin'ichi was sitting on the platform at the Soka University Central Gymnasium. He was attending the main session for the education department summer training course.

After remarks by culture department leader Yasuo Takigawa, Shin'ichi rose to speak.

Some 2,000 representative members from the education department had gathered from such faraway places as Hokkaido and eastern Japan for the training course.

he had prepared, Shin'ichi spoke energetically: "First, I'd like to propose that we establish August 12 as 'Educational Revolution Day' and make it into a day that we commemorate in various ways every year. What do you think?"

By "educational revolution" Shin'ichi meant actualizing a humanistic education movement that upholds the dignity of life with the aim of enabling children to become happy. This revolution begins with the human revolution of each teacher themselves, as they deepen their spirits and polish their characters.

The education department members, lamenting the present state of Japanese education and burning with determination to be pioneers of humanistic education, greeted Shin'ichi's suggestion with enthusiastic applause.

When the applause had died down, Shin'ichi continued: "Looking back at the three decades since the end of World War II, while struggling with our country's devastation and material privation right after the war, we were motivated by a vibrant drive to realize democratic ideals. But as our economic recovery has progressed and we've acquired greater material prosperity, it seems to me that that original spirit has weakened and is becoming lost. "This, I believe, has also become apparent in the world of education."



"I would like to express my appreciation to each one of you for attending the training course despite this hot weather."

Shin'ichi began by thanking the members for their efforts and praising their strong seeking spirit.

Watching Shin'ichi stand in front of him on the stage, Kito couldn't stop wiping tears from his eyes. "Sensei looked so exhausted yesterday that I couldn't even think of asking him to participate in today's meeting. Yet, he must've sensed our feelings and decided to attend!"

Looking at the remarks



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Shin'ichi pointed out that while human beings should be the highest priority, Japan's top priority before and throughout World War II was military strength, and after the war the top priority became economic growth.

Education, the process of fostering human potential, is the only way to make a breakthrough in reordering these distorted priorities.

He explained that education is how to respond to the needs of the future, and that he has made education his final undertaking in life. This was the reason why Shin'ichi was visiting universities around the world, engaging in dialogues, and seeking the best ways to expand the vision of education.

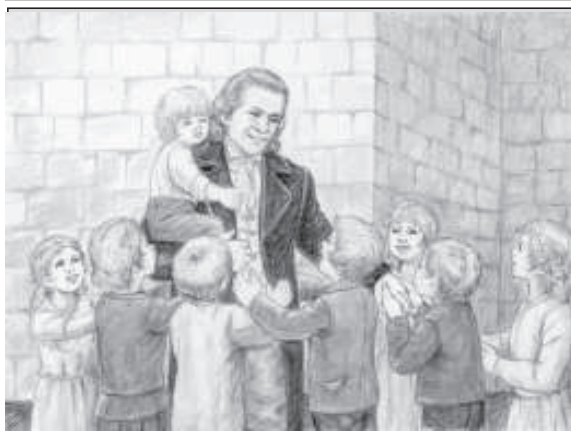
Shin'ichi shared with the audience that when he visited Alphonse Dupront (1905–90), the president of Paris-Sorbonne University (Paris IV), the French educator had told Shin'ichi that learning to listen carefully is essential for education. To Shin'ichi, Dupront's words carried greater weight, since the Sorbonne had been the starting point of the 1968 May Revolution that shook the government of French president Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970).

Shin'ichi continued: "By 'carefully listening,' President Dupront meant drawing out what's inside

students—listening carefully to the innermost thoughts and feelings that they convey behind their words. This is what is most needed in education today."

As the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno stated: "The reason why we have two ears and only one mouth is that we may listen the more and talk the less."

"An educator needs to have the capacity to hear in order to be a good listener. That's only possible when one has a sense of compassion as deep as the ocean. We need teachers of shining and strong character who have the effortless capacity to absorb and lead, who like a strong battery can provide an empowering charge. Being a good listener means that you have the capacity to support others. To do that, it is essential to understand your student's perspective and be there to help them."



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Shin'ichi then shared a passage by the Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), who wrote of his experience teaching orphaned children: "I cried

with the children and laughed with them." Pestalozzi was always together with the young orphans, eating the same food, caring for them when they were ill, and sleeping in the same room with them.

Shin'ichi said: "To me, Pestalozzi's approach embodies the essential character of education. Naturally, in today's educational environment teachers don't live with their students day and night, but still they mustn't lose the sense of dedication to their pupils epitomized by Pestalozzi."

Educational methods evolve, of course, with the changing times and society, but the solidarity with and love for one's students, as well as the determination to look out for them and protect them, must never change. Herein lies the starting point of a humanistic approach to education.

Shin'ichi went on to discuss the aims of such a

humanistic education: "The goal of humanistic education is to promote balance and harmony among one's intellect, emotions, and will by fully developing these three aspects of the human spirit."

Intellect or intelligence—in general, the ability to learn—can be seen as encompassing reasoning and comprehension. Moreover, with the constant flood of information inundating us in modern times, it also includes the cognitive ability to analyze and process that information—in other words, the ability to think logically and critically.

Emotions range from such primal sensations as pleasure and discomfort to complex feelings, sentiments, and passions—in other words, the affective aspect of our inner lives.

Our will is not simply such natural impulses as desire or instinct, but is our personal initiative and inner motivation, a springboard that spurs us to actively pursue our chosen goals.



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What do we need to develop the full potential of our intellect, emotions, and will? Shin'ichi Yamamoto began

to address the core of the matter. "The individual's drive for self-improvement and self-realization, and the spirit of compassion for others—these supporting factors are the two sources that enable us to employ our intellect, emotion, and will to shape our individual lives and our social environment."

These two themes of self-realization and compassion for others, however, have long been considered, even in Buddhism, as contradictory. The pursuit of self-realization can lead to selfishness, while exercising compassion for others can lead to self-sacrifice or self-deception.

Many religions of the world have confronted this apparent dilemma.

Shin'ichi spoke emphatically: "The philosophy of the Lotus Sutra and the teachings of Nichiren

Daishonin, however, are the way to reconcile these two themes. When you base your life on the Mystic Law, the fundamental Law of the universe, the bodhisattva practice of compassion for others is simultaneously the path to self-realization.

"*The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings* states, "'Joy' means that oneself and others together experience joy" (OTT, 146); and 'Both oneself and others together will take joy in their possession of wisdom and compassion' (OTT, 146). This principle of mutual benefit for oneself and others alike can be seen throughout the Daishonin's writings.

"This represents the foundation for a humanistic education that develops the fullest potential of the intellect, emotions, and will and contributes alike to personal happiness and a flourishing society. As educators, you are upholding the Mystic Law and putting this philosophy into practice in your daily lives. Your mission is indeed profound.

"A fresh force is needed to establish an innovative paradigm for a new age. Nothing is more challenging than fostering the abilities of youth to open an age of the triumph of humanity; sometimes it can seem as impossible as trying to touch a star with a pole. But, that is precisely why I entrust you, our young educators to undertake this task."



the members of the education department will burn with a powerful passion for an educational revolution and create a rich stream of humanistic education that will nourish our society's future."

The educators applauded vigorously, expressing their determination and the pledge to do just that.

August 12 (1975) became the Soka Gakkai's education department day, and in 2002, with the fresh start of the newly reorganized education department, this day became a prime point for the education department members to refresh their vow to advance the Soka movement for humanistic education.

After the summer training course, young educators who were profoundly inspired by Shin'ichi's hopes for youth became the flag bearers in the movement for humanistic education and fully exercised their fresh vigor.

The activities of these young educators attracted particular attention at the 10th General Meeting held on January 6, 1976. The previous year, the education department had conducted a survey to evaluate the conditions of children in the areas that had experienced

sudden population growth, and the survey's results were announced at the meeting. The young educators were the driving force for this project.

At the time, many large housing complexes were being built in the areas surrounding big cities, contributing to a sudden, sharp rise in population density in certain areas. In May of the previous year surveys had been conducted in such regions as the Tama area outside Tokyo and the Kasugai area in Aichi Prefecture with the aim of gathering information about children's lives that could be of use in considering their educational needs.

Following this project, the education department conducted surveys concerning the behavioral problems of junior high school students, and junior high school seniors' thoughts on war and peace in various parts of Japan.

Soka Gakkai founding president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi had always taught that one shouldn't draw any conclusion without first knowing the facts. The young teachers were earnestly committed to fully understanding the facts and realities of children's daily lives so they could open a path for a new kind of education.

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Faith in the youth is faith in the future, and fostering the youth is fostering the future—this was why Shin'ichi wholeheartedly devoted himself to believing in and supporting the youth.

Gazing out at all the young educators in the gymnasium, he concluded his talk: "I sincerely hope that



for education, and this took the form of reaching out to share their thoughts with other educators as well as inviting guests to their meetings.

They also published a collection of teaching experiences by representative members of the education department to commemorate the general meeting, entitled *Stories of Dedicated Teachers*. They presented the very first copy of their book to Shin'ichi. After placing the book before the Buddhist altar and chanting, Shin'ichi opened it and read it from cover to cover, without stopping.

It contained many experiences. One told the story of Yoshimasa Hagino, a teacher of 20 sixth-graders in a central Tokyo elementary school, who was able to transform the destructive attitudes of his alienated students through their sports training and award-winning achievements. This experience then motivated several of his students to succeed in their private junior high school entrance examinations.

Another recounted the story of a high school teacher in Hiroshima who made a serious effort to help eight of his students who were involved in various kinds

of delinquent behavior, such as smoking, sniffing glue, shoplifting, bullying and running away from home, and bring them around so that they could all triumphantly graduate.

Yet another recounted the efforts of a female teacher in Saitama Prefecture who made daily visits to the home of a fifth-grade girl who refused to go to school and wouldn't leave her room. Through her efforts she was able to befriend the student enabling her to return to school.

Shin'ichi said to his wife Mineko: "These teachers have published a wonderful book recounting their relentless all-out struggles. I know there must have been countless times when they felt they had failed to get through to their students, lost their confidence, and thought they had reached an impasse. Yet, they rallied their spirits based on their belief that every child has a mission and kept pressing onward with earnest dedication.

"In the end, what counts are perseverance, determination, guts, and courage. These are the keys to success not just in education, but in every endeavor. I am overjoyed to see such determined teachers emerging one after another in the Soka Gakkai."

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The young educators hoped to spread awareness of their humanistic education movement by inviting many guests in the field of education to their 10th General Meeting. As they promoted their educational endeavors, they noticed that their students were invigorated and began to achieve remarkable growth. The young educators were filled with self-confidence and pride that their movement could open a sure path to a bright future



proposed that education department members pledge themselves to an education revolution, a meeting to commemorate Educational Revolution Day was held at the Tachikawa Civic Hall in Tokyo.

One of the reasons behind holding this meeting was to provide the opportunity to share real-life accounts of teachers' experiences in promoting this humanistic education movement in a way other than the printed word. Five teachers spoke at the meeting. The stories that they each told of their tireless dedication to education were moving and inspiring. One story in particular was very well-received—that of Takami Kitagawa, a female high school teacher from Okayama Prefecture.

A girl named Kazuko was in Kitagawa's class of high school seniors. Kazuko didn't live with her family and stayed in a boarding house. She was out of control, often fighting with her fellow students, threatening others she passed in the hall, ignoring school rules, and violating the dress code. According to other students,

she drank and smoked, and also sniffed glue.

Kazuko had a birth defect—her index and middle finger were much shorter than normal. When she was younger others made fun of her for this, and this experience had severely affected her attitude.

All the teachers in the school had given up on her. It hurt Kitagawa to observe that. She knew that if Kazuko continued to violate the school rules she'd eventually be expelled, and she understood that her birth defect must have already caused her a great deal of pain and suffering in the brief 17 years of her life; but if she persisted in this self-destructive pattern of behavior, she would only create more misery for herself. Kitagawa wanted Kazuko to become so happy that it outweighed all her previous suffering. She wanted to do something for this girl.

Kitagawa's challenge began. She chanted intensely for Kazuko's happiness.

Positive and determined actions based on prayer will open the way to a better future.

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On August 12, 1976, one year after the education department summer training course at which Shin'ichi

Dialogue in Buddhism

"The practice of dialogue expresses a central tenet of Buddhism—faith in human beings, in their limitless dignity and potential as possessors and embodiments of universal truth. In the Buddhist tradition, dialogue—open and respect-based human interaction—has played a central part in the quest to discover and identify common or universal values that would allow human beings to live in the best, most humane and empowering ways."

We are clearly living in a period of profound historical transition. As many point out, more positive forms of human interaction and dialogue must be developed if we are to bring out the creative possibilities of this era. What can Buddhism contribute to building a new culture of dialogue?

The word dialogue comes from the Greek *dia-through-logos*, a word that includes the meanings of language, principle, rationality, law, etc. Dialogue in Buddhism is not merely a vehicle or means for communicating its message. Rather, the practice of dialogue expresses a central tenet of Buddhism—faith in human beings, in their limitless dignity and potential as possessors and embodiments of universal truth. In the Buddhist tradition, dialogue—open and respect-based human interaction—has played a central part in the quest to discover and identify common or universal values that would allow human beings to live in the best, most humane and empowering ways.

Today the idea of "universal values" is often viewed with suspicion, if not open hostility, as code and cover for one culture imposing itself on another. But a belief in the existence of common human

values need not contradict belief in a particular cultural and religious perspective.

If we examine the lives of all of humanity's great religious and philosophical teachers, we find that they have all been masters of the art of dialogue. At the same time, they are without exception people of firm, seemingly unshakable faith. This suggests that strongly-held convictions are not necessarily an impediment to dialogue; rather, they may be the critical condition for its success.

The sutras, which record the teachings of the Buddha, reveal Shakyamuni as a teacher who spent his adult life traveling from one place to another, interacting with people, striving to offer the means of living with confidence and hope in the face of life's inevitable sufferings. The people he encountered were diverse in terms of their level of education, their social and economic backgrounds, and their capacity to grasp the full implications of his teachings. Thus, he engaged in a fluid and organically unfolding style of dialogue through which he sought to awaken people to the dharma—the enduring and universal truth within. And he sought to share with others his profound confidence in their ability to embody and act on that truth in

order to realize lives of genuine happiness.

Nichiren, the 13th-century Japanese Buddhist reformer whose teachings inspire the SGI, was himself a master of dialogue. Many of his important works, including those in which he remonstrated with the government, are written in dialogue form. Perhaps his most important treatise, "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" (Rissho ankoku ron), unfolds as a dialogue between two individuals, the host and the guest, whose views are quite at odds, but who find a common ground in their shared concern for the plight of a society wracked by warfare and natural disaster. The host tells the guest, "I have been brooding alone upon this matter, indignant in my heart, but now that you have come, we can lament together. Let us discuss the question at length." The dialogue develops as the two exchange views on the causes and possible responses to the dire situation confronting society; it concludes with the two vowing to work together toward a common goal.

Dialogue has been central to the SGI since its inception. From the earliest years in the 1930s in Japan, small group discussions have been the key venue for study and

practice. One-on-one dialogue and encouragement rooted in a sense of mutual respect and human equality have also played a central role.

As SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has stated: "The conquest of our own prejudicial thinking, our own attachment to difference, is the guiding principle of open dialogue, the essential condition for the establishment of peace and universal respect for human rights."

Humanism is a key concept within the SGI, which often describes its philosophical basis as "Buddhist humanism." Dialogue is a process through which we uncover and reveal our human grandeur. Dialogue withers when our hearts are closed to the infinite possibilities of the other and we assume we already know all we need to know about them. Dialogue flourishes when it is conducted in an open-minded spirit of discovery based on compassion, on the desire to build on what we have in common and transform our differences into rich sources of value.

[Courtesy January 2007 SGI Quarterly]

.. Continued from Page 4 (Happiness)

3.4 The Significance of the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters

Introduction:

The liturgy of gongyo consists of reciting passages from the "Expedient Means" (2nd) and "Life Span" (16th) chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Here, President Ikeda discusses the significance of the "Expedient Means" chapter, which teaches that all beings are Buddhas, and the "Life Span" chapter, which describes the philosophy of the eternity of life.

President Ikeda's Guidance:

From a speech delivered at a World Peace Commemorative Gongyo Meeting, Soka Culture Center, Shinanomachi, Tokyo, September 8, 2002.

I once composed the following poem:

*Morning and evening,
joyously attune your lives
to the melody of the universe,
as you recite the "Expedient Means"
and "Life Span" chapters!*

What wonderful efforts we are making toward the creation of peace and happiness when we recite these important chapters that comprise the heart of the Lotus Sutra, the highest of all the Buddhist sutras, and vibrantly chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the supreme teaching of Buddhism and ultimate Law of the universe!

The Lotus Sutra was expounded to enable all living beings to attain enlightenment. When read in terms of its implicit meaning—namely, from the doctrinal standpoint of Nichiren Buddhism—the Lotus Sutra takes on profound significance as an "explanation" of the object of devotion (Gohonzon) of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the fundamental Law that opens the way for the enlightenment of all living beings throughout the entire world into the eternal future of the Latter Day of the Law.

The essence of this sutra is contained in the "Expedient Means" chapter, which expounds the "true aspect of all phenomena," and in the "Life Span" chapter, which reveals the Buddha's "attainment of Buddhahood in the remote past."

From the standpoint of Nichiren Buddhism, the "Expedient Means" chapter praises the wisdom of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (the Mystic Law) as infinitely profound and immeasurable, and elucidates the principle that all living beings are Buddhas. In particular, the section that clarifies the "true aspect of all phenomena" and the "ten factors of life" (the portion that we recite three times during gongyo) indicates that all the ever-changing forms and states of life (all phenomena) are without exception

From the standpoint of Nichiren Buddhism, the "Expedient Means" chapter praises the wisdom of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (the Mystic Law) as infinitely profound and immeasurable, and elucidates the principle that all living beings are Buddhas.

manifestations of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (the true aspect). The Daishonin writes: “All beings and environments in the Ten Worlds . . . are without exception manifestations of Myoho-renge-kyo” (WND-1, 383). All living beings are inherently entities of the Mystic Law. Therefore, all those who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and work for kosen-rufu are assured of attaining the life state of Buddhahood just as they are.

We don’t need to go to some faraway place to attain Buddhahood. We don’t need to become someone special. We can commune dynamically with the universe as and where we are, and fully reveal the brilliance of our own innate “true aspect”—that is, our true self as an entity of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. That is the purpose of gongyo and the realm of faith. We can bring forth from within us the wisdom, courage, and compassion of the Mystic Law. We therefore have absolutely nothing to fear.

The term “life span” of “The Life Span of the Thus Come One” chapter contains the meaning of measuring the life span and benefits of the Buddha. Read from the perspective of the meaning implicit in its text, this chapter offers a detailed description of the eternal life span and the benefits of the “Thus Come One Nam-myoho-renge-kyo” (OTT, 123) extending from the infinite past. Here, the eternal nature of life is revealed, along with the fact that this constitutes the true nature of all living beings. Also revealed in this chapter is the mission of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to spread this great Law and lead all living beings to enlightenment.

The verse section of the “Life Span” chapter, in particular, is a grand paean to the infinitely great, noble, and eternal life force we all possess.

The Daishonin notes that when we combine the Chinese character *ji* (self) of the opening line of the verse section—“*ji ga toku burrai*” (Since I attained Buddhahood) (LSOC16, 270)—and the final Chinese character *shin* (body) of the closing line—“*sokujoju bussain*” (quickly acquire the body of a Buddha) (LSOC16, 273), this forms the word *jishin*, meaning “oneself” (cf. OTT, 140). From beginning to end, the verse section praises the “self” and the “life” of the Buddha, and, as such, it is also a paean to the state of eternal and absolute freedom inherent in our lives.

The verse section offers direct answers to the ultimate questions that form the basis of all thought, philosophy, and religion—in other words, the timeless questions of life, such as “What is the meaning of our existence?” “What is the true essence of our being?” “Where have we come from and where are we going?” and “What are life and death?” The verse section comprises a teaching of hope and joy with the power to illuminate all humanity and all life for eternity.

In the verse section, we find the lines: “*Ga shi do annon. Tennin jo juman.*” (This, my land, remains safe and tranquil, / constantly filled with heavenly and human beings) [LSOC16, 272].

There is still immense suffering in the world today—suffering as painful as being “consumed in a great fire” (LSOC16, 272). Our noble movement for kosen-rufu, upholding the philosophy of the eternity of life, is firmly committed to creating a world where people live together in happiness and peace—an ideal society that humanity has always longed for. This is the way to secure the right to lead a happy, fulfilled existence for all people in the 21st century, an aspiration shared by countless philosophers, religious leaders, and peace scholars.

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The verse section comprises a teaching of hope and joy with the power to illuminate all humanity and all life for eternity.

This is similar to a tarnished mirror that will shine like a jewel when polished. A mind now clouded by the illusions of the innate darkness of life is like a tarnished mirror; but when polished, it is sure to become like a clear mirror; reflecting the essential nature of phenomena [Dharma nature] and the true aspect of reality. Arouse deep faith, and diligently polish your mirror day and night. How should you polish it? Only by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. (WND-1, 4)

Our society today is rife with negative influences. People’s lives are easily clouded and sullied. That is why we need this fundamental method for polishing and purifying our lives.

A life that has been thoroughly polished [by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] shines with wisdom, and this wisdom serves as a beacon guiding the way to victory in life. In “The Benefits of the Teacher of the Law” (19th) chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the wisdom of those who uphold the Mystic Law is likened to “a pure bright mirror / in which forms and shapes are all reflected” (LSOC19, 303). Just as a bright, clear mirror reflects every object as it is, a life that has been well polished [by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo] can discern the true reality of all things in the world.

In *The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings*, Nichiren Daishonin comments on this passage:

The sutra passage is saying that persons whose six sense organs are pure will be like lapis lazuli or like bright mirrors in which one sees the major world system (or the thousand-millionfold world). Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they see and understand the ten thousand phenomena [i.e., all phenomena], as though these were reflected in a bright mirror. (OTT, 149)

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Lapis lazuli is one of the seven kinds of treasures. The purification of the six sense organs is one of the benefits achieved by practitioners of the Mystic Law that is outlined in the “Benefits of the Teacher of the Law” chapter. In other words, through Buddhist practice, we purify and enhance our mental and perceptual faculties as represented by our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind—that is, our life in its entirety.

The “bright mirror” of a well-forged and polished life fully reflects the universe, society, and human life. The “bright mirror,” fundamentally, is the Gohonzon—in other words, the life of Nichiren Daishonin. In a broader sense, it is the “bright mirror of the single mind [of faith]” (cf. OTT, 149) of all those who believe in the Gohonzon as disciples of the Daishonin.

This is the profound significance of faith in the Mystic Law. Through strong faith, we can elevate and transform our lives—spiritually and physically—to their purest and strongest possible state. The purification of our lives through faith is the driving force for our victory as human beings. That is why it is vital for us to persevere in faith until the very end of our lives.

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3.5 Gongyo Purifies Our Lives

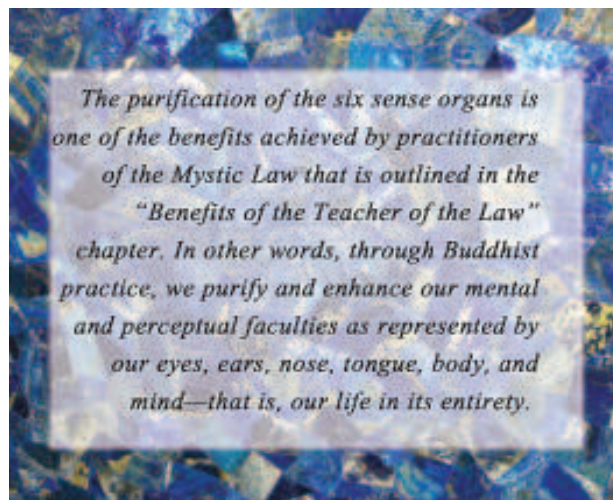
Introduction:

In this excerpt, President Ikeda discusses gongyo as the fundamental method for polishing our lives. Through the practice of gongyo, we purify the functions of the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind)—our mental and perceptual faculties—and, in so doing, purify our lives.

President Ikeda’s Guidance:

From a speech delivered at an Arts Division General Meeting, Soka Culture Center, Shinanomachi, Tokyo, May 10, 1987.

The Mystic Law is the key to polishing our lives. In “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime,” Nichiren Daishonin writes:





SGI Supports Events Promoting Human Rights Education at UN Human Rights Council

Parallel to the 27th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, which took place from September 8 to 26 at the UN Office at Geneva, SGI's representatives to the UN in Geneva, together with other NGOs, participated in and supported two public side events promoting human rights education: the launch of a new web resource on September 10 and a workshop for media professionals and journalists on September 16.

The September 16 workshop, titled Human Rights Education: Media Professionals and Journalists Make a Difference!, brought together some 70 representatives from NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations with media professionals to explore ways of implementing the Third Phase (2015-2019) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which has as its focus "media professionals and journalists."

Kazunari Fujii, SGI representative to the UN in Geneva, who chairs the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Edu-



The Sep 16 media workshop, a side event at the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva

cation and Learning in Geneva, organizers of the workshop, stressed the importance of raising awareness of human rights education among the media. He mentioned as good practice the programs created by the BBC every year to mark December 10, Human Rights Day.

The Platform for Human Rights Education, comprising the governments of Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia and Switzerland, co-sponsored the event.

In her keynote presentation, Anne Bennet, executive director of Hironelle USA, a non-profit organization advancing the right to information through journalism, underlined the key role played by the media. She said, "Journalism makes human rights relevant to the population, transforming abstract norms into real life situations for the listener or audience. And where the rule of law is fragile or non-existent we've seen how the media, in particular radio, can serve as a catalyst to propagate basic human rights and to put pressure on governments to respect these rights."

During the open discussion that followed, participants exchanged views on topics such as how to engage the media in promoting human rights education and the challenge for reporters of safeguarding human rights in conflicts where they are working embedded with military forces.

The September 10 side event, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, saw the launch of the new web resource "The Right to Human Rights Education" which outlines all the existing commitments made by UN Member States and at the regional level to undertake and promote human rights education.

The resource, three years in the making, is the outcome of a partnership of numerous groups including the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning and HR2020: Global Coalition for Human Rights Education, both of which SGI is part of. It is intended to serve as a guide and advocacy tool for governments, national human rights institutions, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

[Adapted from a report from the SGI's UN Liaison Office in Geneva; photo courtesy of Soka Gakkai International Office of Public Information (SGI-OP)]

SGI in UK and Spain Hold Peace Events Marking Toda's Declaration

On September 6 and 20 respectively, SGI-UK and SGI-Spain marked the anniversary of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda's September 8, 1957, Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

Held at its Taplow Court Grand Culture Center in Berkshire, SGI-UK's annual Hiroshima Peace Day had the theme "Opening a New Era of Human Dignity--A World Free Of Nuclear Weapons." More than 250 people attended.

Following a speech by Robert Samuels, executive advisor of SGI-UK, in which he highlighted that there are estimated to be more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in existence, the video testimony of A-bomb survivor (hibakusha) Toyomi Hashimoto was screened. In the film she describes the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and the devastating impact it had on her 3 year-old son and the children she was to bear after the war. Messages from Soka Gakkai members in Hiroshima were read out, encouraging participants to use the peace day as an opportunity to renew their determination to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world.

A panel discussion on ways forward in the abolition of nuclear weapons featured Jehangir Sarosh, executive director of Religions for Peace UK, Jason Hart, senior lecturer in International Development at the University of Bath, and Kyoko Gibson, a second generation hibakusha and SGI-UK member. Small group discussions were also held as well as choral performances.

Some 180 people came to the SGI-Spain Culture Center in Rivas-Vaciamadrid for a lecture on the continued threat of nuclear weapons and their humanitarian effects by keynote speaker Aurora Bilbao Soto. Dr.

Bilbao is coordinator of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in Spain and a professor at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU).

SGI-Spain General Director Enrique Caputo welcomed the participants, and a summary of SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's 2014 Peace Proposal was given by Pablo Juarez, youth leader of SGI-Spain.

In her lecture, Dr. Bilbao defined peace as harmony not only between people but also between human beings and the environment. She stressed that war, weapons and violence which hinder humanity's right to life are the antithesis of harmony. Dr. Bilbao introduced the history of the de-



Dialogue for nuclear abolition among Hiroshima Peace Day participants in the UK

velopment of nuclear weapons, their use in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the history of nuclear weapon testing. She encouraged the youth present to continue to actively work toward a world without nuclear weapons.

[Adapted from an article in the September 17, 2014, issue of the SGI-UK Online News Bulletin and a report from SGI-Spain; photos courtesy of Simon Addinsell and SGI-Spain]

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 Hearing of Shih K'uang



Josei Toda, my late lifelong teacher, was an excellent leader of discussion meetings (Jp *zadankaz*). He spoke with passion and insight; his words penetrated and touched the heart of each of those present. He never spoke dogmatically, but flexibly and open-heartedly in a totally unrestricted manner, sensitive to the changing and fluctuating minds of the people, so that his words always enveloped them.

Nevertheless, his words were very convincing as they were interspersed with rational arguments, and humour and laughter throughout. It is an indisputable fact that anyone who ever listened to these warm and penetrating words, touched with humanism, really felt revived and full of life.

In any event, since ancient times laughter has contributed to the calming of the minds of people, smoothing the course of human relations just like "lubricating oil". Laughter sometimes becomes derisive and deplorable, revealing the vicious and inhumane life-tendency, but I do not think that the essence of laughter exists in such humour. I think it is an exquisite expression of man's spiritual richness and is also his good companion, enabling one to have flexibility of mind on any occasion. There is a great deal of meaning inherent in the long-established adages such as "Good fortune comes to the door of people who laugh" or "Laughter is the medicine of man."

In one of my earlier essay, I mentioned *Haifu yanagidaru*, an anthology of *senryu*, the short satirical Japanese poetry of the early modern period, and I referred to the healthy sense of humour and the spirit of satire which have long remained intact among the ordinary people of our country. Along with *senryu*, *manzai*³ or comic dialogues, and *rakugo*⁴ or comic stories, have also lent themselves to the same effect.

We should not be so shallow as to say that this type of culture among ordinary people was something which diverted their attention from the problems of their contemporary society, such as poverty, class distinction and oppression. In a much deeper sense, the people must have felt that without laughter today, they could not welcome the bright hopes of tomorrow. This is

the result of the hard-earned wisdom of the ordinary people during feudal days.

But I sense something very different in the recent boom in *manzai*. I have not had many opportunities to watch the *manzai* programs on television, but as far as what I myself have observed and heard from other people, I cannot help but feel that the *manzai* of late include not only healthy laughter and satire but other elements as well.

I hear that some humorous *tête-à-têtes* find their prey in old people and the physically handicapped — they tease and mock people who are weak. Their verbal harassment is, on many occasions, directed against the physical appearances and occupations of certain people, and so the term "sadistic *manzai*" is now often used. Far from the time-honoured healthy satirical spirit which spontaneously invites people's laughter, the recent *manzai* and *rakugo* seem to me too devoid of feeling and repugnant to be of any value.

What I am worried about most, however, in addition to this negative tendency, is the almost total lack of a sense of humour or satire towards the hierarchy, ruling classes or the government. Personally, I am afraid that this tendency reflects the political indifference and sense of helplessness prevailing, particularly, among the younger people.

The following story is set in ancient China during the Spring and Autumn Period

between 770 BCE and 403 BCE of the Chou dynasty. Duke Ling of Wei, on his way to Chin, heard music of a mystical quality which he had never encountered before. Completely enchanted by the music, the duke had his accompanying musician learn to play it by heart and proudly perform it in the presence of Duke P'ing of Chin when he arrived there.

At that time there was a renowned musician named Shih K'uang who lived in the state of Chin. He was such an excellent musician that whenever and wherever he performed, he was able to make cranes dance and white clouds gather. Accompanied by Duke P'ing, Shih K'uang was listening to the music Duke Ling greatly admired, but he was astonished and said: "Excuse me, please. How can you dare say that this is great music? This is the very music that leads a country to ruin."

Shih K'uang began to explain the reason to the two dukes,

who were surprised and puzzled:

Once there was a well-known musician called Shih Yen; he served King Chou of Yin. He created music that was immoral and presented it to the king, who came to love it and enjoyed listening to it. Nothing good could be expected of a king who loved such music. He was vicious and diabolical and was finally destroyed by King Wu of Chou. Shih Yen, who was deprived of his master, escaped eastwards with his musical instruments and committed suicide in the P'u River. That is why people hear this music whenever they go there.

Referring to this legend, Nichiren Daishonin states in one of his writings: "Listen with the ears of Shih K'uang and observe with the eyes of Li Lou."⁵ Just as Shih K'uang had extraordinary hearing, Li Lou had extraordinary vision and he is said to have been able to see the tip of a hair at

a distance of a hundred steps. In any event, Nichiren Daishonin encourages us to develop our hearing, vision and insight in such a way that enables us to see not only what a true religion is, but also the signs of the rise and fall of society at large.

I have no intention whatsoever of regarding the recent *manzai* boom as an omen of national ruin. Rather, I am saying that the sign of national ruin shows itself in the political tendency towards conservatism and extreme rightwing movements which have begun to appear in various sectors of society. The amount of "butter" has been cut back to prepare for "armaments". It is a revealing sign that, for the first time after the war, he defence budget increase has become larger than that of the welfare budget. There are various arguments for revising the Japanese "peace" constitution. I think it is important for us to develop the hearing of Shih K'uang so that we can detect "the sound of imminent national ruin" despite all kinds of justifications which are now being noisily made.

However, any rule, regardless of how oppressive it may be, cannot be executed successfully without the support of the majority of the people. This is the valuable lesson we learned from the last war, and we must never forget it. Therefore, the direction along which the minds of the people are going is the most important of all. Even the smile of a person very precisely reflects the present condition of his mind. The minds of the people are always fluctuating, and it is indispensable for us to be able to see clearly whether at any given time they are in a healthy state or not. I think that Shih K'uang's sharp hearing always exemplifies this vital point.

OCTOBER				NSGI Monthly Meeting Schedule				NOVEMBER			
Date	Time	Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Meeting	Venue				
Oct 16	08:30	Poetry Symposium	Lotusbari	Nov 1	08:00	Himchuli Kosenrufu Meeting	NPC				
Oct 17	04:00	NSGI 20 AGM & Culture Festival	NSS	Nov 7	17:30	All Leaders Meeting/FPP	NPC				
Oct 18	10:00	Peace Symposium	NPC	Nov 8	08:00	New Era District Zadankai Meeting	District				
Oct 27		Monday Fighting Daimoku	District	Nov 15	11:00	Leaders Training	NPC				
Oct 31	17:30	Introductory Meeting	NPC	Nov 16-21		All District Divisional Meeting	Member's Home				
				Nov 22	08:00	Study Meeting	District				
				Nov 29	08:00	Division Meeting	NPC				

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