

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

by Noah Brannen

The present day advance of Sōka Gakkai^a (Value Creation Society), a lay auxiliary of the Nichiren Shō Sect, has been most noteworthy in the field of politics, but its basic success has been in the field of political theory, through the development of a highly efficient organization on the one hand, and a thorough indoctrination of its followers in the teachings of the Nichiren Shō faith, on the other.

Political Philosophy

The July 1, 1962, election for the House of Councilors, the Upper House of the national Diet, brought the political face of Sōka Gakkai into full view. Nine candidates, running on independent tickets, were all elected with the backing, according to the *Sandai (Sunday) Mainichi* (July 15), of a constituency of 3,300,000 followers, each responsible for two votes. Adding to these the six incumbents, Sōka Gakkai is now the third strongest block of power in the Upper House — stronger than the Democratic Socialists whose setback in this election was no doubt directly related to the vote-pulling power of Sōka Gakkai candidates. With a political organization of its own, the Kōmei Seiji Renmei^b (The League for Clean Politics),* Sōka Gakkai presented a platform in the election not unlike that of the Democratic Socialists they superceded: anti-nuclear weapons, preservation of the democratic peace Constitution, fair elections, pure politics — whence comes the name of their political organization, and establishment of the independence of the Upper House.

a. 創価学会 b. 公明政治連盟

* After the recent election the organization was re-organized and renamed Kōmei Kai 公明会

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

The political philosophy of the Sōka Gakkai, and its fervent political activity, are not merely a part of a popular member recruitment program but are integral to the basic teachings of the Society. They have their roots deep in the teachings of Nichiren, a Buddhist priest of the 13th century who taught that the time would come when the law of the king and the Buddha Law (*dharmā*) would be one. When this time comes, he averred, a national altar would be established at the Vulture Peak, which to Nichiren^a meant Mt. Fuji, and the true doctrine would be propagated throughout the earth. This is the political philosophy that was expounded most succinctly by Jōsei Toda^b (1900—1958), second president of the Society and master mind in the creation of the Sōka Gakkai movement. In a treatise called "Essay on the Unity of the Law of the king and the Law of Buddha" (*Obutsu Myōgō-ron*^c), Toda taught that the time had come for the establishment of this national altar and for the unity of religion — their religion — and government. The startling success of the Society in the election should be a warning to any who may be inclined to mark off the political philosophy of this group as "shallow" or "inconsequential."

Organization

The Sōka Gakkai organization has been variously referred to as "militaristic," because of use of such terms as squad and troop, or "communistic," because of numerous cell-like units. The unique characteristic of its organization, however, the one which distinguishes it from its chief rival, Risshō Kōsei Kai,^d is not the verticle relationships which can be neatly charted from the president down through the trustees, area organizations, districts, squads, and finally local groups; but the person-to-person relationship between members and the persons won by them — a relationship that supersedes all

a. 日蓮 b. 戸田城聖 c. 正仏興合論 d. 立正佼成会

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

structural or geographical ties. Horizontal relationships, e.g. area ties, are strong, the strongest being the local block organization which represents a small geographical area of a certain limited number of houses. Moreover, occupational ties are especially apparent in areas, such as the Yūbari coal mines where 80% of the miners were reported to be members of Sōka Gakki in 1957.

However, stronger than area or occupational ties are the personal ties. A new member is registered with the group to which the person who won him to the faith belongs, and that person is responsible to see that he remains in the faith. It is this dual organization pattern, consisting of horizontal relations and vertical organizational relation, that accounts in no small measure for the strength of the Society.

Indoctrination

That Sōka Gakkai was inspired by a school teacher and student of the Lotus Sutra as expounded by the Nichiren Shō Sect^a is of no small significance. "Correct" teaching, handed down from above in the traditional oriental manner — authoritative pronouncement and regimented obeisance — is the supporting pillar of the Society. The emphasis is on deference to the teaching authority rather than on the enlightenment of the learner. The average follower is not expected to go too deeply into a study of doctrine.

Upon seeing my collection of books on their teachings, one member of the society remarked, "How were you able to get hold of these books? I have already reached the second stage in my preparation to be a lecturer and still haven't been given some of them." Toda in a question-answer period after one of his public lectures in 1957, told a man who asked for an explanation of the Buddhist concept of void, "You couldn't be expected to understand it; you haven't faith enough or learning enough." A woman complained to Toda

a. 日蓮正宗

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

because she hadn't been able to win anyone to the faith. She had gone to a local leader and had been told that first of all she should attain the mind of Buddha. This elated her, but on returning home she realized that she didn't know what the mind of Buddha was. Consequently she asked Toda to explain it; but he only told her that when she reached that state she would be in a class above Prime Minister Kishi! Yet, even if he did control the doses of the ordinary follower, Toda himself knew the importance of grasping the teaching. He was an educator and an organizer. It was his calling as an educator which attracted him to his revered master, Tsunesaburō Makiguchi^a (1870—1944), the founder of Sōka Gakkai, but it was his talent as an organizer which attracted Makiguchi to him.

Another educator behind the movement is Yoshihei Kodaira.^b While never within the aural field that surrounds Makiguchi and Toda, Kodaira has been in the background as the one most responsible for the organization's powerful propaganda literature.* Formerly an employee of the Labor Ministry, Kodaira now is a member of the Upper House of the Diet, having been elected in 1959 from the national constituency along with four other Sōka Gakkai-backed candidates, and head of the Society's Education Department. Within the confines of the Society's own concentrated purpose and stipulated goals the individual follower is thoroughly indoctrinated and trained with the material prepared under Kodaira's direction.

A convert begins by attending block lecture meetings where he is introduced to *The Scriptures* and the *Manual on Forced Conversion*. He subscribes to the weekly and monthly periodicals, and he

a. 牧口常三郎 b. 小平芳平

* The following are some of the more important periodicals of the Society and its subsidiary organizations.

Seikyō Shinbun	(Holy Teaching Newspaper), a tri-weekly.
Seikyō Gurafu	(Holy Teaching Graphic), a weekly.
Dai San Bunmei	(Third Civilization) -- a monthly.
Ushio	(The Tide) — a monthly.

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

attends monthly or bi-monthly area lecture meetings. Later he is introduced to Toda's commentaries on the Lotus Sutra. Beyond this few are expected to go. About once a year examinations are given and eligible students awarded with the four successive ranks of associate lecturer, lecturer, associate teacher, or teacher.

What, then, are the teachings that every follower of this society must know? They can be described under four headings: a shibboleth, a set of patent doctrines, the worship-object, and a simplified way.

The Shibboleth : Any man can achieve happiness now

Each element of this statement has significance. Together they constitute a proclamation which is not only aimed to appeal to the masses living in the spiritual vacuum of postwar Japan, but is also cleverly aligned with the pragmatic philosophy of Makiguchi's *Theory of Value (Kachi-ron^a)* and with the writings Nichiren.

a. *Happiness* — This is the key word. It has universal appeal. Also it has some spiritual content. But as used by the members it is the worldly connotation that is central. The average follower is not so much taught to re-define the word "happiness," as he is led to believe that he has within his reach a tool to help him realize the happiness (defined by his own unaltered worldly standard) which had previously eluded him. The reward of first belief, the cumulative merit resulting from the forced conversion of others, the efficacious merit of incanting for self and others the invocation "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus" (*Namu Myōhō-ryōkyō^b*): all of these promises are held out as means for escaping specific misfortunes such as sickness, failure in business, and loneliness. The cause of misfortune is false belief — either on the part of the individual in his present existence or through the cause-effect

a. 価値論 b. 南無妙法蓮華經

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

relationship inherited from some previous existence. To break the evil curse one simple incantation of the invocation, "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra," is sufficient. Successive incantations bring successive release, cumulative merit, and happiness.

b. *Achievement* — That it is possible for man himself to achieve or create happiness is a central teaching which is best explained in Makiguchi's *Theory of Value*, but it is made more palatable to the average follower by the paraphrase in Chapter 4 of the *Manual on Forced Conversion*. Man can create values. In this lies man's greatness. All values are relative to their appropriated benefit to man. The goal of life is to achieve personal happiness. But, in order to realize the goal of human life, man must choose the correct path. This path is the Nichiren Shō faith. For, as Nichiren explained in *On Opening the Eyes (Kaimoku shō)*, the root of all unhappiness is false belief. To achieve happiness and break the curse of false belief, man must turn to the truth in the Lotus Sutra, the meaning of which is believed to have been fully discovered and preached by Nichiren alone. This truth can be summed up in the one simple prayer of praise, "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra." Thus man can achieve happiness.

c. *Any man* — Every man is the target of the Sōka Gakkai advance. Though a good case could be made that the movement has strong nationalistic characteristics, Sōka Gakkai itself has openly announced its own self-appointed mission to win the world to the "true" faith. It claims to have missionaries in many foreign countries, and Daisaku Ikeda,^a the young, new president, announced as he visited India, the birthplace of Buddhism, that the "true" faith had newly arisen in Japan and (in Sōka Gakkai) was beginning to make its way back to the land of its origin.

No man is lost. Christians, they say, "preach about a god of love,

a. 池田大作

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

but hold that some men will be damned." According to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, as interpreted by Nichiren, every man can attain buddhahood, that is, "the mind of Buddha." This is the truth "beneath the letter" of the Lotus Sutra. Until the giving of this sutra all belonging to "the world of those who hear the teaching" (*shōmon kai^a*) and "the world of those conscious of the external element (*en^b*) which is capable of developing the dormant seed (*in^c*) of the Buddha mind within them" (*engaku kai^d*): all these people were considered to be lost because they were already self-satisfied and felt no need of salvation. But with the giving of the Lotus Sutra it was made clear that these people too could attain buddhahood.

There is no reason why any man should be unhappy. This is the recurrent argument of the teams that go out to force others to convert to their faith. If you argue that you are already happy, they point out the insecurity of human existence, the uncertainty of the future, the possible calamities that may be just around the corner. If you say that you must be faithful to the religion of your parents, the strongest emotional religious tie for the ordinary Japanese, they point out that anyone should know that one's parents and ancestors above everything else want their children to be happy. If a person achieves the greatest happiness by converting to the Nichiren Shō faith, they argue, surely the parents and ancestors, no matter what their religion may have been, will look down upon them from the other world and smile because they are glad their children have found true happiness.

d. *Now* — Sōka Gakkai places great emphasis on the importance of the *now*. According to the teaching of Nichiren Buddhism, the spread of the Buddhist Law takes place in three stages: the period of the Upright Law (*Shōhō^e*), which extended for a thousand years after the manifestation of the incarnate Buddha Sakyamuni; the

a. 声聞界 b. 緣 c. 因 d. 緣覺界 e. 正法

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

period of the Simulated Law (*Zōhō^a*), which extended for the next thousand years and was characterized by the accommodated teaching, and the period of the Latter Law (*Mappō^b*) which began 1052 A.D. and will extend for 10,000 years.* This period of the Latter Law is marked by the appearance of the true follower of the Lotus Sutra predicted in the sutra and indentified as Bodhisattva Visistacaritra (Jōgyō Bosatsu^c) whose incarnation, according to Sōka Gakkai and some others, Nichiren claimed to be. This period of the Latter Law is a period when false religions are said to be widespread and the True Law has been forgotten. It is in this time that the prophet of true Buddhism, as it is revealed in the Lotus Sutra, arises to call men back to the right path.

The current aggressive movement to propagate the faith gets its impetus from this emphasis on the importance of the *now*. According to the teachings of Sōka Gakkai, Nikkō,^d who claimed to be the "true" successor to Nichiren, left a tooth of his master to which a piece of growing flesh still adhered. Nikkō predicted that, when the flesh had completed the circumference of the tooth, the time for world propagation of the faith would have come. This tooth, which has been enshrined all these years in the Head Temple Taisekiji,^e is only on display on the occasion of the installation of a new abbot of temple. When this took place in November, 1959, it was reported that the growth was complete. Thus the time for world propagation of the faith had arrived. *Now* is the time to win the world to Nichiren, the Real Buddha for this age.

A set of patent doctrines

The teachings of the Nichiren Shō faith can become very complex for the initiated, if they probe into such traditional Mahayana con-

a. 像法 b. 末法 c. 上行菩薩 d. 日興 e. 大石寺

* This may be interpreted as meaning an indefinite period,

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

cepts as T'ien-t'ai's^a "3,000 worlds exist in a single thought" (ichi-nen-sanzen^b), and the three bodies of Buddha; but for the members of Sōka Gakkai three basic doctrines found in Nichiren's writings and supplemented by six other derivative doctrines, are regarded as sufficient. The three basic doctrines are set forth in two of Nichiren's most significant writings already briefly mentioned: The *On the Opening of the Eyes* (*Kaimoku-shō*^c) and *On the Adoration of the True Object of Worship* (*Kanjin Honzon-shō*^d), which were written during the period of his second exile, (1271—1274). In the Nichiren Shō faith these teachings are referred to as (1) "The Five Sets of Comparisons," (2) "The Five Sets of Three Steps," and (3) "The Four Fates."

(1) "The Five Sets of Comparisons" is a good example of Nichiren's methodical study and comparison of the Buddhist sutras throughout Buddhist history. Beginning his search for the true doctrine at the age of twelve, Nichiren studied at various temples throughout Japan, including those at Kamakura, Mt. Hiei, Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara. Finally, he decided that the teachings of T'ien-tai's pointed to the real truth, but he also came to the conclusion that these teachings had been perverted by Japanese Buddhist scholars, especially by Hōnen^e, founder of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan.

In comparing religious faiths Nichiren proceeded from broad to minute distinctions, showing first that Buddhism is superior to Hinayana, the "true" doctrine of the Lotus Sutra to the accommodated doctrine of all other sutras, the last half of the Lotus Sutra to the first half, and finally that the hidden truth beneath the written letter of the Lotus Sutra, that is, the truth that the Buddha existed from eternity, is superior to the literal teaching of the Sutra.

(2) "The Five Sets of Three Steps" shows that Nichiren in-

a. 天台 b. 一念三千 c. 開目抄 d. 觀心本尊抄 e. 法然

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

herited T'ien-t'ai's skill in the classification of the sutras. T'ien-t'ai's purpose was to construct a kind of harmony of the scriptures so that obvious contradictions would be resolved and none of the sutras would have to be discarded. Nichiren, however, perverted this original purpose and carried T'ien-t'ai's classification through to a climax in the Lotus Sutra, not as the most important sutra, as T'ien-t'ai taught, but as the only sutra of relevance to man living in the period the Latter Law. Then from this sutra Nichiren further focused attention on the invocation, "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra," which he claimed contained the heart of the true doctrine, adequate in itself alone to bring salvation to all mankind.

Nichiren, following T'ien-t'ai, considered all extant sutras to have been given by the historical Buddha himself. The first period of the "Five Sets of Three Steps," therefore, was the period of the lifetime of Sakyamuni in which all of the sutras were given. Then, in spite of obvious contradictions and inconsistencies, these numerous sutras were said to represent one teaching in three stages or steps. The "text" of this teaching is to be found in the Lotus Sutra, enlarged to include the *Sutra on the Meaning of Infinity* (*Muryōgi-kyō^a*), and the *Sutra on the View of Fugen's Practice* (*Kan Fugen-kyō^b*). The "conclusion" is the *Nirvana Sutra* (*Nehan-gyō^c*). All other sutras make up the "introduction."

Thus, the first set of "three steps" is the first period of the giving of the sutras divided into the three steps of "introduction," "text," and "conclusion." The second, third, fourth, and fifth periods are likewise broken down into three steps each, under the headings "introduction," "text," and "conclusion." In each new period the one teaching is narrowed down more until the "text" of the final period is stated simply as "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra," which, as has been said, is the kernel of Buddha's teaching.

a. 無量義經 b. 觀普賢經 c. 涅槃經

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

(3) "The Four Fates" in *On the Adoration of the True Object of Worship* describes the "rise and fall," that is, the fate of all teachings, and shows how Nichiren's own teaching had arisen to surpass all others. Thus, (a) Buddhism arises to replace all former alien religions, which fall into disuse; (b) the doctrine of the Lotus Sutra then rises and all other Buddhist doctrines fade away; next, (c) the hidden teaching of the Lotus Sutra concerning the primordial Buddha arises to displace all other interpretations of the Lotus Sutra; and, finally, (d) the teaching of Nichiren himself in the *On the Adoration of the True Object of Worship* arises as the final, supreme faith.

In addition to these three basic doctrines, the Nichiren Shō Sect has officially subscribed to six others, making a total of nine fundamental doctrines. These six are (1) Five Points of Religion, (2) the Third Doctrine, (3) the Five Profundities, (4) the Three Great Hidden Laws, (5) the Three Teachings of the Altar, the Worship-Object, and the Invocation, and (6) the Three Bodies of Buddha. These additional doctrines serve primarily to clarify the teachings outlined above but they also point up the significance of the incantation of the invocation.

The essence of these doctrines, however, is that the time has now come for the realization of the truth revealed by Nichiren that: every man can attain buddhahood in his present life, Japan is the place, and the simple incantation of "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra" is the means for achieving buddhahood.

The Worship-object the Mandala

Jigaku Mizutani,^a priest and business manager of Taiseikiji, stated in an interview that above all else the Nichiren Shō faith centers in "the great true object of worship of the altar of the basic doctrine

a. 水谷慈嶽

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

of the Great Holy One, Nichiren." In other words, the quintessence of the faith is to be found in a black lacquered camphor wood plaque, 144 x 65cm in size, on which Nichiren himself is said to have written the epitome of his insight into Buddhist truth. It is the culmination of all that he taught.

This mandala, as it is called, is a symbolic representation by means of writing in Chinese characters the names of those who participated in the scene in the Lotus Sutra where a great stupa containing Prabhuta-ratna, a former Buddha, descends from heaven and invites Sakyamuni to enter as a reward for his wonderful teaching of the truth of the Lotus Sutra. The invocation, "Hail to the Wonderful Law of the Lotus Sutra," occupies a commanding central position and takes up most of the plaque. The names, Sakyamuni and Prabhuta-ratna, on either side of the invocation are surrounded by the names of various bodhisattvas and spirits and demons that witnessed the event. According to Nichiren such *maṇḍala* contain the essence of the meaning of the Buddhist Law, the key to salvation.

Nichiren wrote many such mandala and copies are easily available for examination; but not many people have been permitted to see the one enshrined by the Nichiren Shō Sect in the Worship Hall (Hōan Den)^a at the Head Temple Taisekiji. However, from a rather poor picture scholars have concluded that it cannot have been written by Nichiren. Nevertheless the Nichiren Shō Sect teaches that this was made by Nichiren in 1275 and that it has been given to the entire world as "The Great Object of Worship." In this wooden *maṇḍala* is enshrined the spirit of Nichiren, the Real Buddha, who alone has the saving power for all those that live in this period of the Latter Law. It symbolizes, therefore, the believer's faith in Nichiren, the Great Holy One, his faith in the sacred scriptures, the Lotus Sutra, and the salvation which acceptance

a. 奉安殿

of this worship-object has vouchsafed to him as a worshipper.

The Simplified way

For the common followers of Sōka Gakkai there is a simplified way which is to be found in the practice of daily devotions and the acceptance of some distilled "teachings," which may be grouped under the general concept of "Rewards and Punishments." The average believer's faith is most often a composite of a few patent answers given by the leaders to answer his personal life-questions.

At morning and evening worship before a replica of "the Mandala," the sacred worship-object which is given to each new convert for use at home, the believer intones selections from the Lotus Sutra which seem to come mainly from chapters 2 and 16 of the sutra. It is doubtful, however, whether more than a handful of those who daily mumble so easily the "nyoze-sō,^a nyoze-shō,^b nyoze-tai,^c nyoze-riki,^d nyoze-sa,^e nyoze-in,^f nyoze-cn,^g nyoze-ka,^h nyoze-hō,ⁱ nyoze-honma-tsu-kukyō,^j" of Chapter 2 have the slightest inkling of the Buddhist concept of "suchness" which these words indicate. The ordinary follower is quite content with selected Buddhist concepts as they are introduced in the *Manual on Forced Conversion*. Only a few eager students read the Lotus Sutra and the writings of Nichiren, with reading aids (*furigana*), and a commentary by Toda.

1) *Sickness*. If you enter Sōka Gakkai and really believe, physical illness, whatever it may be, will be healed. The Great Holy One, Nichiren, in his reply to a priest, Ōta, listed six kinds of sickness. Of these, some, such as those caused from over-eating or over-drinking, he said, could be healed by a physician or medicine; but some could only be healed by the worship-object. The members of Sōka Gakkai are encouraged to use doctors, or any reasonable remedies, while at the same time relying on faith in the worship-object. If a believer

a. 如是相 b. 如是性 c. 如是体 d. 如是力 e. 如是作
f. 如是因 g. 如是緣 h. 如是果 i. 如是報 j. 如是本末究竟

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

prays to the worship-object while undergoing medical treatment, the cure will be more rapid and more complete. But to be saved from sickness caused by one's evil karma, only faith in the magical power of the worship-object is efficacious.

b) *Death*. All men must die; but for one who puts his faith in the worship-object the day of death can be postponed for weeks or months, — even years. The day of death can be postponed until the believer has had time to accumulate merit through the forced conversion of others, until he has had time to win his family and friends to the true faith, to settle his financial accounts, or to attain the mind of Buddha so that in death he will attain the likeness of a Buddha. Proof that one has died in the state of buddhahood is seen in the condition of the corpse. If the face is peaceful and the body does not stiffen with rigor mortis, then the deceased is believed to have been a true believer who has realized the state of buddhahood.

c) *Karma*. As in other forms of Buddhism belief in karma is held by followers of the Nichiren Shō faith. One's condition in this present existence is believed to be directly related to his deeds in a former existence, and this chain of cause and effect is believed to continue in an endless cycle. However, Nichiren taught that the cycle could be cut and man could break loose from his karma in order to attain the state of buddhahood through a realization of the truth of the Lotus Sutra.

d) *Suffering*. Human misery is the direct result of false belief. This false belief may be of the present or of some past existence, but through the law of cause and effect it is made to bear on the present. Human suffering can be alleviated only by right belief — belief in the worship-object of the Nichiren Shō faith. But there is meaning in suffering itself. Suffering is the mark of a human being. If there were no suffering there would be no belief, for suffering produces the attitude of belief.

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

e) *The Goal of Human Life.* Man is born into this world to find happiness. Human life is the search for happiness. This happiness is interpreted in terms of the things which give individual, personal satisfaction: wealth, security, friends, family, health. Man is frustrated in his search for happiness by false belief. If he believes in the worship-object he will begin to see proofs of the efficacy of this faith in terms of personal happiness. If the proofs are not soon forthcoming it is only because he does not truly believe!

For the believer who grasps the meaning of attaining the mind of Buddha there is no expectation of personal immortality or of the continuation of the soul after the grave. To attain buddhahood is to realize the goal of no-self. For many, however, superstitious misunderstandings of the law of karma threaten them with fear of rebirth in the realm of beasts as punishment for actions committed in the present existence. The unfortunate and the poor expect rebirth in more fortunate circumstances, as a reward for their belief in the worship-object and the faithful recitation of the invocation.

f) *Buddhahood.* Toda interpreted the concept of becoming buddha in terms of man's temporal life. A cheerful happy home, a secure, vigorous spirit, a business and home life bubbling over with joy: this, taught Toda, is the state of buddhahood. This he believed to be in keeping with Nichiren's teaching that any man can become buddha in his present life.

Conclusion

It is significant that this lay movement in Nichiren Shō Buddhism has assumed the right to interpret its traditional teachings in such liberal and temporal terms. It is not the priests of the Sect but laymen who have made these modern adaptations. Toda himself was a layman, though the title, "Chief of all Preachers of the Lotus Sutra," was conferred upon him posthumously by the Sect.

Sōka Gakkai laymen are allowed to interpret the faith in terms of

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

what it has meant to them in their personal experience. Much emphasis is placed on individual testimonies which account for three-fourths of the time spent in the bi-weekly testimony-discussion meetings and a great deal of space is given to them in current publications. Over a period of two years 5,500 column inches in *The Seikyō Shinbun* were devoted to the personal testimonies of converts. The same is true of other periodicals. For example, an Osaka businessman (age 39) reported in the *Seikyō Graphic* the following:

"I took up my father's business to become second in line. I've been managing the business for the past ten years. In 1956, after I had been a believer for two years, just as the business was beginning to get along, I lost both factory and home by fire. Not only that, but the insurance on them had expired. That was enough to give a man a headache. But Toda Sensei scolded me saying, 'The fate which you inherited to be poor is being broken. If you can't stand up now, it means that you haven't much faith.' Then I lost a child, and at last my eyes were opened and I was spurred to action! I turned everything over to the worship-object. In half a year, not only had the factory been rebuilt, but in addition a new factory was put up in Nagoya. In the process of making plastic products we became the special factory for a top electric machine manufacturer, and also acquired a concession to export a pure-water-bacteria-exterminating machine. Just the other day I returned from a business trip to Taiwan, and at present we are thinking of building new factories. I guess I have a middle- or small-business man's disposition, but I never thought any bigger than having enough to eat and a little spending money. But now I've changed my way of thinking until I've decided that both my employees and I must prosper. My gastric ulcers and sciatica have been cured. My weight has increased from about 100 to 139 pounds, until friends call me the "little tank." All of my family are now believers. In whatever I do I give it all I've got and doors open."

THE TEACHINGS OF SOKA GAKKAI

Thus they testify, and thus they claim that any man can achieve happiness now.

— 終 —