

Similarities Between Buddhism, Psychiatry Noted
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SGI President Ikeda's dialogue with Dr. Linus Pauling Jr. focuses on people's spiritual development.

Buddhism and psychiatry have much in common when it comes to nurturing people's spiritual development. This was one of the topics today when SGI President Ikeda talked with the eldest son of the late Nobel laureate Linus Pauling. The four means of salvation used by a bodhisattva are very similar to the approach used by psychiatrists, agreed Linus Pauling Jr., a noted psychiatrist and chairperson of the board of trustees of the Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine in Palo Alto, Calif.

A smiling Dr. Pauling greeted Mr. Ikeda, exclaiming that were his father alive, he would have been overjoyed to meet the SGI leader in Japan. Mr. Ikeda said he would forever cherish the memory of Linus Pauling's friendship, remembering how touched he was that the scientist had once driven a long way to meet him at the Soka University of America campus on the outskirts of Los Angeles.

Dr. Pauling said that he first became acquainted with the SGI leader after seeing several volumes of *A Lifelong Quest for Peace—A Dialogue: Linus Pauling and Daisaku Ikeda* in his father's office.

His father explained, he said, that he kept them on hand to give copies to distinguished guests he received.

The two first discussed today the four means by which bodhisattvas lead living beings to enlightenment, with President Ikeda suggesting these can be considered guidelines for fostering good human relations based on a fundamental respect.

The first means, he explained, is selfless giving, which can be divided into three categories: 1) giving wealth (supplying that which provides material sustenance); 2) giving principles (supplying that which provides philosophical and spiritual sustenance); and 3) giving freedom from fear (removing anxiety and offering encouragement).

The second means is loving speech, in other words, engaging others in conversation and bestowing upon them kind, compassionate words. The third is the general practice of benefiting others, and the fourth is becoming one with others, that is, sharing others' problems as one's own and helping them overcome those problems.

Dr. Pauling, whose ongoing professional interest is in the education of children and youth, said that the four means Mr. Ikeda outlined are very important and have many similarities with approaches used in psychiatry. Treating each patient with respect as an individual, for instance, is crucial in psychiatric treatment, he said.

Taking the four means one by one, Dr. Pauling said that selfless giving — specifically in terms of relieving the patient's anxiety and teaching him or her how to deal with life — is an especially vital element of psychiatry. Dr. Pauling clarified, however, that in psychiatry the emphasis is very much on independence, on enabling patients to find the way themselves. Care needs to be taken by mental health specialists, he said, not to force a predetermined set of values on their patients but to instead guide them through various processes to develop their own sound set of values.

The SGI leader concurred, adding that self-reliance and personal responsibility are also fundamental tenets of Buddhism.

Dr. Pauling explained that when doctor and patient discuss and share their values and views on life, it can lead the patient to recognize what existing attitudes or values are

hindering his or her growth and what alternative approaches or values might be adopted. In this process, he said, the second means of loving speech mentioned by Mr. Ikeda is indispensable. Dialogue has to be conducted with concern and compassion, free of criticism or negative comments, he maintained.

The third means, the practice of benefiting others, Dr. Pauling said, resonates with the aims of psychiatric treatment. The fourth means, becoming one with others, might correspond to something like group therapy where people with similar problems share their experiences and means of coping, he observed. President Ikeda shared that the SGI has a long tradition of members gathering to frankly discuss all manner of concerns.

Buddhism urges us to find good friends, or people who can have a positive influence on our lives, the SGI leader said. These are friends who share our joys and sufferings, who sympathize with us and support us unstintingly, he said. They help us erase fears and worries when they arise, save us from self-indulgence, and offer us sincere words of caution.

Mr. Ikeda stressed that children need to have such good friends and that parents and teachers should fulfill this role. This kind of nurturing environment enhances the child's potential for self-realization, he asserted.

Dr. Pauling suggested that the breakdown in communication between adults and children is one of the most serious problems of the modern age. As a result of the crumbling of traditional values, he said, parents are unsure how to deal with children who have different values from them. Because of poor communication, children are left to fend for themselves and make decisions on their own when problems arise. With no one to help them, he stated, they are filled with insecurity. And when they do make a decision, unfortunately it is often the wrong one.

Mr. Ikeda agreed that values have grown confused in today's society. Though we have access to more and more information and knowledge, he said, many people are still at a loss as to what to base their lives on.

End of part 1.

In part 2, Dr. Pauling and Mr. Ikeda discuss the late Linus Pauling's social activism.