

**A NETWORK OF HOPE  
FOR THE NEW CENTURY**

*To celebrate the new year, SGI President Ikeda  
wrote the following poem to SGI members.*

Harbinger of the new millennium  
emerging from the folds  
of the mountain that will be thrust up  
by the new century,  
first comes light—  
the sun is rising.

For 50 years I have lived  
only to circle the globe in travel,  
to fill the skies with the light of peace,  
to erase with that light the shadows of misery  
on the face of the earth.

To you, who with me have climbed  
the mountains of this century  
to you my friends around the world  
I call again, now—  
it's time to take on the ridges and ranges  
of the new century.

Cast a network of hope over the world  
again, a thousand times again  
in and around society, around yourself.  
I call to myself as I call out to you  
again and again, wider and wider  
to cast lines of hope to the world  
and to all of you.

Going westward, traveling eastward,  
I have met the ancient civilizations  
and called upon the new cultures  
for half a century.  
I do not believe in the clash of civilizations.  
Rather, what I have found hidden in the fissures  
are gems in which multitudes have found  
that which charms them.  
If sought, revealed and illumined  
in the light of equality  
that I believe is the wisdom in Buddhist thought  
they will glow once more  
with new life's sheen  
regardless of time or the distance to be crossed.

Title: A Network of Hope for the New Century  
Subject: World Tribune 01/02/98 n.3172 p.1 WT980102p01  
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And so believing, I have traveled.

Beyond the iron curtain,  
the bamboo curtain as well,  
behind the base rock of ideology—  
if one searches one finds  
the indigenous soul,  
a universal light  
sparkling on that which is human.

In the West and in the East,  
at the crossroads where civilizations meet,  
whatever country, whatever people—  
the ground on which their culture stands  
is underlain with a sparkling gem,  
the cosmic spirit scintillating in global time.

If the “mystic” of the mystic law in which I believe  
is to revitalize,  
then to take each precious jewel  
of the multiplicity that is our world’s cultures  
and set them into a connected whole,  
that they may interact and enrich each other  
in a network of values that work  
toward the good of all—  
that must be my lifework.

Such a network of values  
is connected firmly and directly  
by the trust and friendship  
which you continue to spread around  
the world.  
In it are woven peace and  
happiness for humankind.

Linking person to person and  
thought to thought,  
plying back and forth on the  
streams of cultures,  
bridging civilizations, the past  
and the present—  
these are our joint venture.

Over the network of hope  
broadly threaded with Buddhist  
love of humanity  
is how dawn will arrive,  
to usher in the new century in

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which  
suppression will change to  
freedom,  
separation will become fusion,  
and confrontation will turn to  
coexistence.

Seeking to meet friends and fellow human beings  
I will continue to travel around the world  
because my practice of faith means to create  
the mutual understanding between human beings  
that is the fulfillment of truth and amity.

All this is ultimately the product of dialogue,  
and again dialogue.  
Therefore, let's join together  
in a last challenge to the mountains of this century,  
making our final approach to the summit a happy one,  
abundant in hope, as we continue  
to engage in fruitful and rich dialogue.

*Jan. 1, 1998*