

PERSPECTIVE: A Letter to the Future
By SAM HARRIS
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Dear children and grandchildren and great grandchildren and on and on:

I wonder in what year this letter will find you. Perhaps 2047 or 2097 or, well, who knows? I have just left 1997 behind, entering 1998. Although Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is being practiced in 128 countries today, the world is still in bad shape. Terrorist activity is widespread, both here and abroad. Nuclear holocaust is a real possibility that could destroy civilization at any time. The fact that you are reading this letter means that our civilization has survived.

Today, there are no cures for cancer, AIDS or other viruses. Ethnic and racial conflicts exist throughout the world. There are many islands of poverty existing in the oceans of wealth.

It seems to me that our technology has outpaced our spiritual development. Society has dubbed this period the Information Age. Pentium and P-6 chips are state of the art in computers. These must seem like antiques to you.

We have unmanned crafts exploring space, and we've even reached the surface of Mars. These are marvels to me. Perhaps you marvel at colonies of people living in space or on some other planet. Or maybe you've made contact with intelligent life forms from other parts of the universe. I can only imagine.

Last year, 1997, marked the 50th year since SGI President Ikeda began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. His constant day-to-day efforts for kosen-rufu over the past 50 years are also a marvel to me. He has met with dignitaries and government officials the world over, as well as common people, always igniting an exchange of people, culture and education. He has offered several peace proposals to the United Nations. He has also received countless awards and honorary degrees from around the world, always accepting them on behalf of the SGI members.

But, then, you probably know all this, unlike the majority of people on this planet today who do not. Even those of us who do know of him today often do not realize his profound significance. It may take until your time before his efforts manifest into what society can call the greatest transformation in human history. I am confident that this is becoming a reality in your time period.

So I thought you might like to know just a little about what it's like to practice Buddhism with President Ikeda. I'd have to say that what I feel most is appreciation. Of all the centuries that this Buddhism has been around, I feel fortunate to be practicing now, just before the turn of the millennium, at the same time with President Ikeda.

Although I am seldom even in the same room with him, he's with me every day. He is, after all, my mentor, the one who's taken responsibility to show me how to construct a mighty foundation of peace and happiness for my sake and yours.

The fact that this is a turning point in our organization — the time when, with President Ikeda's leadership, we have freed ourselves from the limitations and corruption of the priesthood — proves the significance of practicing at this time.

What a marvel.

As you know, the Mystic Law transcends the boundaries of space and time. In a way, I can sense the prayers you offer for your deceased relatives. Thank you very much. I am sending daimoku to you every day as well.

Happy New Year. Happy new life. Happy new world.

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