

# LIVING BUDDHISM

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Living Buddhism is the monthly magazine of SGI-USA, a branch of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), the worldwide organization of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, dedicated to the development of peace, culture and education through the creation of value.



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*On The Cover: Ikuurdi Dancing Figures from Northern Cameroon, 1996, pastel on paper, by Clarence Washington.*

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## FROM THE EDITOR



by MARGIE HALL

### Challenging Changes

**M**uch happiness to everyone in this new year! In the past few weeks, since the announcement of my assignment to this magazine, especially as we were taking this debut issue of *Living Buddhism* to press, many intense conversations, private and public, have been taking place in our publications office — about change. Changes in the magazine, changes in assignment, changes in our SGI-USA organization — all, I feel, evoking an exhilarating, deepened sense of mission toward achieving world peace and confidence in the upcoming century.

On a personal note, I'm awed by the fact that we will be greeting a *new* century in only four years. It seems like only yesterday that my parents first taught me about Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (I was 9, in Okinawa), and during the college years I spent in Hawaii, I was propelled into an unstoppable rhythm of activities for kosen-rufu that has continued to the present. Meeting SGI President Ikeda as a 19-year-old young women's division member created an indelible impression on my life; his guidance further boosting me during the ensuing years of discovering and strengthening my true self.

The more than two decades I spent with the *World Tribune* whizzed by, and I find myself at present faced with a great, new challenge. Thus I deeply appreciate the warm send-off of my *World Tribune* colleagues and equally warm welcome and generous patience of the *Living Buddhism* staff — and that of all our readers. As we tackle together the invigorating process of creating a monthly publication, we hope to help deepen our readers' study and understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. We have received much feedback and anticipate even more from many of you as we make gradual improvements in the magazine. We wholeheartedly welcome your input.

So stick with us while we embark on an adventure of consensus-building journalism that suits your needs as practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. With new designs and your continual support, we will do our utmost to improve on *Living Buddhism's* usefulness to all our valued readers.

*Margie Hall*

# LIVING BUDDHISM

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## FROM OUR READERS

I read with great interest Craig DeRousse's excellent article *Past, Present, Future: A Look at Creation, Evolution and Buddhism* (October '96). I would like to add another aspect to the discussion of evolution and creation, that of "complexity theory" [which] I happened to be reading [about in] Stuart Kaufman's book *At Home in the Universe — The Search for the Laws of Self-organization and Complexity*.

To make a long story short, Mr. Kaufman argues that science in focusing excessively on Darwinian selection, has given society a distorted view of life, one that views evolving life on this planet as a mere accident. He postulates that behind the process of selection, profound laws of spontaneous order are working and that life on Earth was generated spontaneously (as in Buddhist theory) rather than being an accidental product of chemistry.

To illustrate the improbability of accidental generation of life, scientists use the example of estimating that the

chance generation of life on earth is roughly the same as the probability that a tornado sweeping through a town in Kansas will happen to assemble a 747 aircraft!

To date, Kaufman and others have simulated the conditions for spontaneous generation of life on computer models — Kaufman believes that actual "test-tube" verification of these models will occur in the not-too-distant future. Kaufman is not attempting to debunk Darwin, only to balance the focus on selection with "the rest of the story," a shift he believes would have profound benefit for society. He also mentions that it may only be natural that the Catholic Church and the Creation science movement would react negatively to the dehumanizing aspects of scientific progress. To quote:

Creation science is no accident in late twentieth-century America. Its proponents adhere to it in an ardent effort to forestall the feared moral implications of

humans as descendants of a haphazard lineage branching from some last common ancestor more remote in time than the Cambrian explosion some 500 million years ago. The science in creation science is no science at all, but is the moral anguish so foolish? Or should creationism be viewed rather more sympathetically — misguided, to be sure, but part of a broader quest to reinvent the sacred in our secular world?

As scientists like Kaufman continue to make progress in understanding the physical universe, one can see clearly that Buddhism must play a pivotal role in the "broader quest" of humanity to rediscover its "home in the Universe."

Sincerely,  
John Cary  
Chicago

## Glossary of Buddhist Terms and Persons

**Bodhisattvas of the Earth:** Those who chant and propagate Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. *Earth* indicates the enlightened nature of all people, and *bodhisattva* one who dedicates his or her life to helping others.

**Buddha:** One who perceives the true nature of all life and leads others to attain the same enlightenment. The Buddha nature exists in all beings and is characterized by the qualities of wisdom, courage, compassion and life force.

**Daimoku:** Literally, *title*, it refers to the invocation or chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the title of the Lotus Sutra.

**Gohonzon:** The embodiment of the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the life of Nichiren Daishonin in the form of a scroll, which SGI members enshrine in their homes. *Go* means *worthy of honor* and *honzon* means *object of fundamental respect*.

**Gongyo:** Literally, *assiduous practice*. In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, gongyo consists of reciting excerpts from the second and sixteenth chapters of the Lotus Sutra and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

**Karma:** Sanskrit word meaning *action*. The life tendency or destiny each individual creates through thoughts, words and deeds that exert an often unseen influence over one's future.

**Kosen-rufu:** Literally, *to widely declare and spread* (Buddhism). To secure lasting peace and happiness for all humankind through the propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

**Lotus Sutra:** The highest teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha, it reveals that all people can attain enlightenment and declares that his former teachings should be regarded as preparatory. Reciting excerpts from the Lotus Sutra is part of SGI members' daily Buddhist practice.

**Nam-myoho-renge-kyo:** The fundamental component of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, it expresses the true entity of life that allows people to directly tap their enlightened nature. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is revealed only through its practice, the literal meaning is: *Nam* (devotion), the action of practicing Buddhism; *myoho* (Mystic Law), the entity of the universe and its phenomenal manifesta-

tions; *renge* (lotus), the simultaneity of cause and effect; *kyo* (Buddha's teaching), all phenomena.

**Nichiren Daishonin (1222–82):** The founder of the Buddhism upon which the SGI bases its activities. He inscribed the true object of worship for the observation of one's mind, the Gohonzon, and established the invocation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as the universal practice to attain enlightenment.

**Shakyamuni:** Also known as Siddhartha Gautama. Born in Nepal about three thousand years ago, the first recorded Buddha and founder of Buddhism. For fifty years, he expounded various sutras (teachings) culminating in the Lotus Sutra, which he declared his ultimate teaching.

**Soka Gakkai International (SGI):** Soka Gakkai is a Japanese phrase that literally means *Society for the Creation of Value*. SGI is the worldwide organization of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, active in 128 nations, devoted to the creation of value through the development of peace, culture and education. The U.S. branch is SGI-USA.

# Dawn's Light: Toward an Age of Buddhist Renaissance

A New Year's Poem by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda

A new first morning!  
In every language of the world,  
the new year is celebrated.  
From friends in 128 countries  
benedictions can be heard.

Radiant, on the horizon of the century — the sun,  
the Buddhist Renaissance proclaims the dawn  
as did that other Renaissance  
create a new spiritual kingdom  
and augur the way to a new world.

The new world's theme —  
the human being and the humane self.

Find now the bronzed ideal for the rebirth  
of those who would create value  
in the person and in the thought  
of Soka Gakkai's first president.

Find in Tsunesaburo Makiguchi  
a great teacher for humanity,  
the light that is the human in being,  
the brilliance that is the human self.

Find in his thought education,  
not for war but for the individual and peace,

the light of his originality  
and the brilliance of his faith.

He alone did not retreat,  
did not retrace a single step.  
Standing firm against totalitarians  
— the many who would sacrifice the one —  
he eyed the multiplying armies and believed,  
believed in the advent of a human age.

Awakened to human rights, to liberty,  
never stooping to the varied uses of evil power,  
a new populism flexes unprecedented strength  
heralding an era with the people as protagonists:  
hope marches forward in a new renaissance.

My own mentor Josei Toda left his words,  
"Live your own life."  
Shakyamuni Buddha also told us to live after his death  
true to ourselves and the Law he taught us.  
"Rather one lion than a thousand sheep,"  
said Makiguchi.  
Like a lone rock, unyielding, jutting out from the sea,  
meet the turbulent vortices of the world  
and pierce them through, living as you believe,  
polishing that which is most truly you.



SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda

The spiritual victory over barbarism —  
that is renaissance.  
The power residing within revealed  
to breach the walls of oppression  
imposed from without —  
this is one's own human revolution  
and the true meaning of renaissance.

Rock-solid individuals:  
they are a bastion against the barbaric  
and a bridge from Buddhism to the mundane.  
The shadows cast by chaos  
when evil dresses itself as justice  
are deep,  
but not a thing to dread  
in the light of Emerson's words:  
"Pythagoras was misunderstood,  
and Socrates, and Jesus,  
and Luther, . . . Copernicus, . . . Galileo, . . .  
To be great is to be misunderstood."

To let one's true self shine and, for that,  
to discover one's happiness  
in the happiness of others;  
spreading the joy of the bodhisattva's way,  
let us join forces  
to shoulder the way a few steps forward  
toward the new century.

Building bridges of thought,  
to sublimate into brotherly love the differences  
among people's places and beliefs  
that this land, that region may flourish —  
throughout the world  
I too will continue this task  
and then  
the renascent century will open wide  
in ravishing splendor.

January 1, 1997

# HUMAN DIGNITY IS WHAT REALLY MATTERS

**H**appy New Year to everyone in this Year of Advancement Toward the New Century! The steady efforts of SGI-USA members for peace and happiness at home, school, work and in their respective neighborhoods have resulted in much growth on both personal and societal levels. The SGI's theme for 1997 underscores the ongoing challenge for those of us who practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to continue in such endeavors.

The world is getting smaller, and the future does not bode well for those who demand rigid definitions of national and cultural identities. In the past, the moving force of history was "hard power" in the form of military might, political authority and wealth. In recent years, however, we have witnessed a global trend toward "soft power," such as knowledge and information, culture, ideas and systems. We can inspire our friends and families if we can demonstrate to them how our practice of Buddhism enhances our respect for this trend, for various cultural and ethnic traditions and diverse human relationships.

What truly matters is to cherish human dignity, to respect others and to strive together to improve the quality of life. With these guideposts, we can hone our vision for a future that we can proudly pass on to future generations.

In these days of increasing tension and strife in many communities around the nation, we need the character and gumption

to do something about it — to change whatever needs to be changed. Otherwise, it can and probably will get worse.

The issue of diversity is continually being addressed in the media today, especially regarding the workplace. It was reported in New Orleans' *The Times-Picayune* (Nov. 22, 1996) that:

An estimated seventy percent of the largest 1,000 corporations have programs to help diversify the workforce and enable different employees to work well together. Yet most diversity work consists of training sessions that last a day, hardly enough time to change many minds, much less the corporate culture. And management often acts to satisfy laws, rather than out of a true belief in a diverse workplace.

We cannot stand still in a changing age. Under SGI President Ikeda's leadership, the SGI has put forth enormous effort worldwide to developing a climate of tolerance, generosity and forbearance; to putting belief into practice sufficient enough to restore the vitality in people's lives. When unity in diversity can be achieved and maintained, the effect is monumental. Anything can be accomplished under such humanistic conditions.

The present is the best time to soberly question ourselves: What can I do to promote respect for diversity?



GREGORY NAKASUJI

As Nichiren Daishonin says in the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings": "Cherry, plum, peach or apricot blossoms — all, just as they are, are entities possessing their own unique qualities" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 784).

He also states: "All disciples and believers of Nichiren should chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with one mind (*itai doshin*), transcending all differences among themselves to become as inseparable as fish and the water in which they swim" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 23).

On an individual level, the first step is to manifest the courage to admit that we all have our own prejudices and that problems stemming from such prejudices exist in our organization, as they do in society. In this spirit, one step that has been taken to address the concerns about differences among our membership was last year's formation of a committee on diversity. It goes without saying that one further step we can take is to pray for the people around us to live together in mutual understanding and respect, and that sincere dialogue will be followed by

sincere actions. Let's be the first to practice what we preach.

As we continue to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we come to deepen our understanding of how precious each human life is. Through the kaleidoscope of SGI-USA activities, we can summon forth the life-condition of Bodhisattva, not only with those we know and like but also with those with whom we may not have much in common. In this way, I am convinced we can help one another rid ourselves of the senseless fear and misjudgment that often arise from diversity.

With this at heart, I wish everyone the happiest of years as we embark together on this new year of change from within.

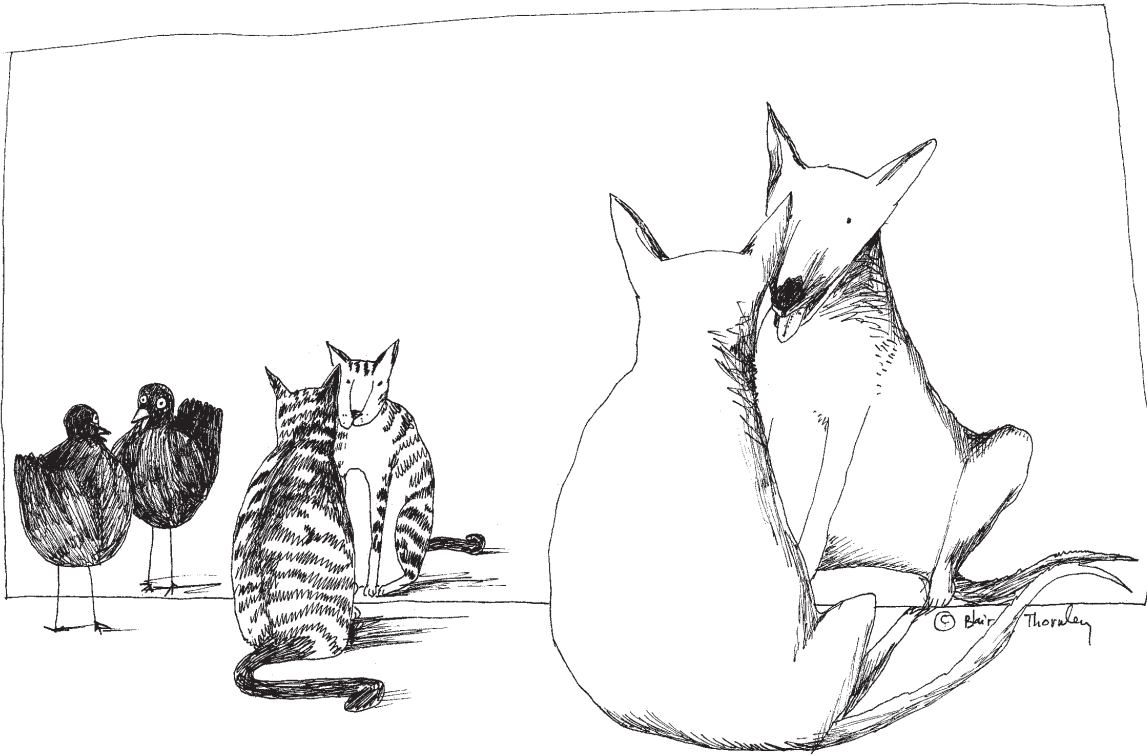
Fred M. Zaitsev  
SGI-USA General Director

# February

## THE REAL ASPECT OF THE GOHONZON

**N**ever seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life's functions. To be "endowed with the Ten Worlds" means that all the Ten Worlds without exception are contained in the one world of Buddhahood. That is why the Gohonzon is called a mandala. Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning "perfectly endowed" or "cluster of blessings." The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, "Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood."

*(The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1, p. 213) (Gosho Zenshu, p. 1244)*



To give an analogy, no matter how perfect our eyesight, we cannot see our own face. Only when we look into a mirror can we see what we look like. Similarly, being limited in wisdom, we cannot see our own Buddha nature. However, when we face the mirror of the Gohonzon, we can discover the treasure of Buddhahood (the Gohonzon) within.

## Background

Nichiren Daishonin wrote “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon” at Mount Minobu on Aug. 23, 1277, when he was 56. Its recipient, Lady Nichinyo, is thought to have been either the wife of Ikegami Munenaka, the elder of the Ikegami brothers, or the daughter of Lady Matsuno. The evidence for her identity is not clear. Judging from the two extant writings addressed to her—this one and “An Outline of the Zokurui Chapter” written the following year—she appears to have been a middle-aged woman of some culture and position, and rather well versed in Buddhist doctrines.

Almost certainly she was a devout believer, for this letter indicates that

she had received a Gohonzon, a privilege granted in those days only to believers of exceptionally strong faith. After the Tatsunokuchi Persecution on Sept. 12, 1271, Nichiren Daishonin began to inscribe the Gohonzon for a few of his most committed followers. In this letter, the Daishonin explains the significance of the Gohonzon and the importance of faith in it.

The Gohonzon is the core of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. In the first part, he mentions that no one before himself has ever inscribed it. So fully was the Daishonin enlightened to the eternal law of life that he was able to embody his enlightenment — the oneness of his life with the Mystic Law — in a concrete material form that could be

transmitted to future generations, thus providing the external cause for all other people to manifest their innate Buddha nature.

The Lotus Sutra expresses Shakyamuni’s enlightenment to the fundamental law of life symbolically as the magnificent Ceremony in the Air, an event transcending time and space in which Shakyamuni and T’aho Buddhas sat side by side in the Treasure Tower, and all Buddhas from throughout the universe as well as countless beings of the nine worlds assembled to hear the Buddha’s preaching. The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai expressed his enlightenment to the fundamental Law of life as the principle of *ichinen sanzen*, a comprehensive view of life that clarifies the inseparability of the ultimate

reality and the phenomenal world. Yet, awe-inspiring as they are, these are merely theoretical expressions of enlightenment.

Nichiren Daishonin was first to express his enlightenment to the law of life in physical form, so that all other people might attain Buddhahood as well. He did not formulate vast new systems of doctrine or theory, but brought what had hitherto been purely theoretical into the realm of actuality. He gave actual form to the fundamental Law for attaining Buddhahood. The Gohonzon, then, is not a symbol, but an actual expression of the eternal Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo and of the life of the Buddha who is enlightened to it. When we chant daimoku with faith in the Gohonzon, we manifest the Law of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo within ourselves. This is the attainment of Buddhahood as an ordinary person, in accordance with the principle taught by Nichiren Daishonin that “embracing the Gohonzon is in itself enlightenment.”

This writing is called “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon” because it contains a description of what is written on the Gohonzon. Down the center of the Gohonzon are inscribed in Chinese characters the words “Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, Nichiren.” This indicates that the Gohonzon embodies the oneness of the Law (Nam-myoho-enge-kyo — the fundamental truth of the universe), and the Person (Nichiren Daishonin). This central inscription represents the entity of the Buddha’s life. On either side of this central inscription are written the names of the Buddhas Shakyamuni and Taho, as well as those of the four leaders of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth and other bodhisattvas, shomon disciples, gods, human beings, demons and others, just as

described in the magnificent Ceremony in the Air depicted in the Lotus Sutra. These figures represent the Ten Worlds or all phenomena of the Buddha’s life. The Gohonzon, Nichiren Daishonin explains, is the ultimate meaning of the Lotus Sutra’s statement that “all phenomena reveal the true entity” (*shoho jisso*), embodying both the entity and the phenomena or workings of the Buddha’s life.

### Commentary

**Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness, the unchanging reality which reigns over all life’s functions.**

This is a very well-known and important passage. In it, the Daishonin dispels the idea that Buddhahood exists anywhere apart from our own lives and the reality we live in. Herein lies the greatness of his Buddhism, which bridges the gap between ultimate truth and the ordinary person.

The Gohonzon, as we have stated, embodies the life of Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law. However, the fundamental law of life to which Nichiren Daishonin was enlightened also exists within ourselves. Thus there is no essential difference between the Buddha’s life and the life of ordinary people. There is, however, a definite difference in terms of life-condition. The Buddha realizes that his own life is the Mystic Law, while ordinary people,

blinded by delusion, do not. As the Buddha of the Latter Day, Nichiren Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon so that we could awaken to the Mystic Law within ourselves and attain the same life-condition as Nichiren Daishonin himself. Because his aim was to awaken us to the fundamental reality of our own lives, he admonishes, “Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself.” If we thought of the Gohonzon as some external or supernatural power that we must beseech for help, that would hinder us from discovering the ultimate truth within ourselves. The Daishonin therefore cautions us against this attitude in several works. “On Attaining Buddhahood,” for example, states:

Even though you chant and believe in Myoho-enge-kyo, if you think the Law is outside yourself, you are practicing not the Mystic Law but some inferior teaching.... Therefore, when you chant the Mystic Law and recite the Lotus Sutra, you must summon up deep conviction that Myoho-enge-kyo is your life itself. (MW-1, 3-4)

To give an analogy, no matter how perfect our eyesight, we cannot see our own face. Only when we look into a mirror can we see what we look like. Similarly, being limited in wisdom, we cannot see our own Buddha nature. However, when we face the mirror of the Gohonzon, we can discover the treasure of Buddhahood (the Gohonzon) within.

Herein we find a significant point of difference between the Daishonin’s Buddhism and those religious teachings in which people are taught to depend on supernat-

ural powers outside themselves, either begging their aid or seeking to avert their wrath. Historically, this perceived gap between people and their object of worship has not only blinded them to the truth within their own lives, but opened the way for those claiming to be intermediaries of the deity to gain and exercise power over the lives of others. Nichiren Daishonin's teaching denies any essential gap between human beings and the ultimate reality. Instead, it teaches that the supreme potential lies within us, and shows us how to manifest it "within our mortal flesh" by embracing the Gohonzon.

The Gohonzon is the sole, perfect manifestation of the Mystic Law in our environment, placed there by the compassion and wisdom of Nichiren Daishonin. When we fuse our lives with the Gohonzon by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can actually witness the Buddhahood of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo emerging in our own lives, in both their internal and external dimensions. This happens by what Buddhism terms "the interaction of the four powers." The Gohonzon embodies the powers of the Buddha and the Law, which are absolute. Being the entity of the Mystic Law, we, too, possess these powers of the Buddha and the Law within our lives. However, these powers can be activated only by our own powers of faith and practice. By believing in and chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon, we can manifest the same powers in every aspect of our lives.

The fusion of our lives with the Gohonzon can be described as the tapping of the ninth consciousness. The doctrine of the nine consciousnesses represents a Buddhist analysis of the functions of mind.

Briefly, the first five consciousnesses correspond to the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The sixth consciousness, mind, integrates the impressions of the five senses into coherent images, so that one can make judgments about the outer world.

The seventh or *mano*-consciousness is the realm of abstract thought. Spanning both conscious and unconscious realms, it also entails attachment to self extend-



ing even below the conscious level.

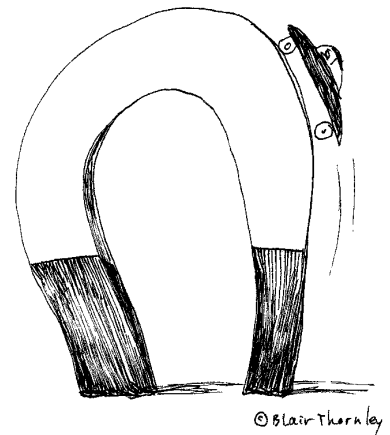
The eighth, *alaya*-consciousness is an unconscious realm where all experiences of the present and past lifetimes — karma — are stored. This consciousness undergoes change from one moment to the next as one continually performs new actions, whether positive or negative. The karmic content of the *alaya*-consciousness affects the perceptions of the first seven consciousnesses, and these perceptions in turn predispose us to our own particular karmic patterns. The *alaya*-consciousness forms the framework of individual existence, and is the subject that undergoes the cycle of birth and death.

Some earlier Buddhist tradi-

tions, such as the Consciousness-Only school, regard the *alaya*-consciousness as the basis of all life's functions. However, the T'ien-t'ai school posited a ninth consciousness, the *amala*-consciousness or "fundamental pure consciousness" lying beneath the *alaya*-consciousness. Untainted by karmic accretions, it is the imperishable, unchanging realm of the universal Buddha nature, endowed with the four virtues of true self, eternity, purity and happiness. In saying, "The body is the palace of the ninth consciousness," Nichiren Daishonin emphasizes that the potential for Buddhahood exists within us. He taught that by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, we can gain access to this ninth consciousness, the ultimate depth of life. Activated by our daimoku, its light, so to speak, floods upward to illuminate the workings of the other eight consciousnesses, so that the entire interlocking network of causes and effects forming our individual existence comes to be based on enlightenment. By tapping the Buddha nature or the ninth consciousness within, we can fundamentally change our karma for the better and establish an unshakable state of life.

**To be "endowed with the Ten Worlds" means that all the Ten Worlds without exception are contained in the one world of Buddhahood. That is why the Gohonzon is called a mandala. Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning "perfectly endowed" or "cluster of blessings." The Gohonzon is found in faith alone. As the sutra states, "Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood."**

Similarly to the way in which an ordinary piece of metal becomes magnetized through repeated contact with a magnet, as we continue to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon, our ten worlds align themselves with the ten worlds of the Buddha's life, and begin working in the most positive way to benefit both ourselves and others.



The Gohonzon is called a *mandala*, a Sanskrit word translated into Chinese by terms meaning *perfectly endowed* or *cluster of blessings*. Here the Daishonin interprets these expressions to mean that the Gohonzon is endowed with all ten worlds. As mentioned above, the various figures inscribed to the right and left of “Nam-myoho-renge-kyo — Nichiren” in the center of the Gohonzon represents the ten worlds of the Buddha's life.

Earlier in this work, the Daishonin states, “Illuminated by the five characters of the Mystic Law, they display the enlightened nature they inherently possess. This is the true object of worship” (MW-1, 212). Mandalas used as objects of worship in other sects, such as Shingon, depict only Buddhas and bodhisattvas, reflecting the incomplete view that one rids himself of the lower states when he attains enlightenment. But the Gohonzon of the Daishonin's Buddhism is endowed with all ten worlds.

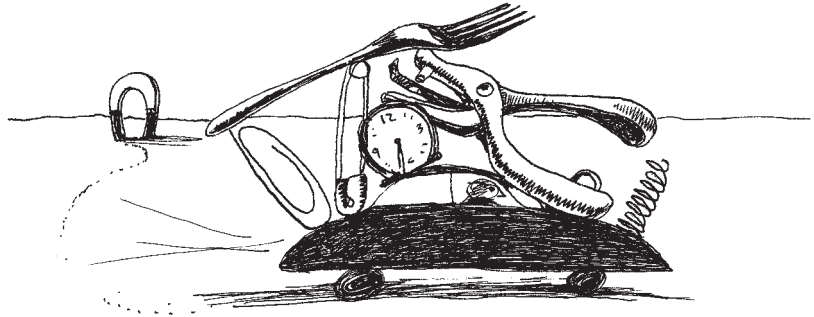
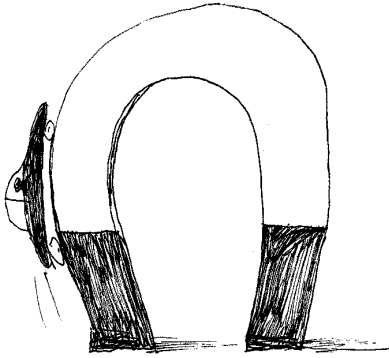
The Daishonin taught that each of the ten worlds has all ten within itself, meaning that even the so-called “evil paths” of Hell, Hunger and Animality contain the potential for enlightenment. The ten

worlds of the Buddha's life embodied in the Gohonzon are all “illuminated by the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo” and work in an enlightened way to create value and lead others to happiness.

The difference between the Daishonin and us is that, left to our own devices, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo would never be at the center of our lives. A graphic representation of our lives might show the Dragon Kings in the center, indicating Animality, or the demon Kishimojin, indicating Hunger. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo might be somewhere off in a corner, so to speak. But through the practice of gongyo and daimoku, we bring Nam-myoho-renge-kyo back to the center of our lives. Then, all our inherent states of life from Hell to Buddhahood come to be illuminated by the Mystic Law, rather than being shrouded by delusion and out of harmony with one another. Similarly to the way in which an ordinary piece of metal becomes magnetized through repeated contact with a magnet, as we continue to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to the Gohonzon, our ten worlds align themselves with the ten worlds of the Buddha's life, and begin working in the most positive way to

benefit both ourselves and others. In his commentary on “The True Object of Worship,” Nichikan, the twenty-sixth high priest of Taisekiji, writes, “If only one believes in the Gohonzon and chants the Mystic Law, then the ten worlds of one's own life will become those of the object of worship.”

The fusion with the Gohonzon that enables our innate Buddha nature to well forth is possible only through our faith. Thus the Daishonin admonishes, “This Gohonzon is found in faith alone.” Provisional sutras often stressed the development of wisdom as the key to attaining Buddhahood. However, in the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha's enlightenment is shown to be so profound that no ordinary wisdom could possibly grasp it. The opening passage of the “Expedient Means,” or second chapter, of the Lotus Sutra which we recite every morning and evening during gongyo declares: “The wisdom of the Buddhas is infinitely profound and immeasurable. The door to this wisdom is difficult to understand and difficult to enter. Not one of the voice-hearers or *pratyekabuddhas* is able to comprehend it” (LS2, 23). Therefore, the Lotus Sutra stresses faith as the key to attaining enlightenment. Even



Shariputra, one of Shakyamuni's most outstanding disciples famed as the "foremost in wisdom" is said to have attained enlightenment only when he took faith in the Buddha's teaching. The "Simile and Parable," or third, chapter states: "Even you, Shariputra, in the case of this sutra were able to gain entrance through

faith alone. How much more so, then, the other voice-hearers" (LS3, 73). Thus the Lotus Sutra emphasizes, "Only with faith can one enter Buddhahood."

Nichiren Daishonin also teaches the principle of "gaining wisdom through faith," which means that through faith, one can acquire the

Buddha wisdom and attain enlightenment. In "On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice," he states, "And because our wisdom is inadequate, he [the Buddha] teaches us to substitute faith, making this single word 'faith' the foundation . . . faith is the cause for wisdom" (MW-6, 216).□

## Additional Commentary

The Daishonin describes the Gohonzon as "a cluster of blessings," and goes on to state that "The Gohonzon is found in faith alone" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 213). Everything hinges on the strength of one's faith. If one's faith is strong, one's very life will become a cluster of blessings.

People of strong faith, therefore, never reach a deadlock. They can transform all situations into benefit, into happiness.

Naturally, in the course of our lives, we are bound to encounter various problems and suffering. But all these obstacles can be used as an impetus for growth and for elevating our state of life.

In this respect, the most basic principle for those who embrace faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is that everything serves as a source of benefit and happiness. Unhappiness is a stranger to those of strong faith.

The Gohonzon, which the Daishonin bestowed upon us, is the true object of wor-

ship that enables us to observe our minds (*kanjin no honzon*). In simpler terms, *kanjin*, to observe the mind, means "to know oneself."

The Daishonin taught us about the Gohonzon so that we may know ourselves — our true selves — to awaken us to the Buddhahood within our lives and enable us to tap the power of this supreme state of life.

Faith is the key to unlock this power within our lives, to open up and reveal the brilliance of the diamond-like state of Buddhahood. Inherent in each person's life is a store of infinite life force and a spring of unlimited wisdom. Faith allows us to tap that life force and wisdom at will.

President Toda often used to say: "What's inside you comes out. What's not there, won't."

The strong, pure state of Buddhahood and the weak and ugly life-conditions of Hell, Hunger and Animality — they all exist within our lives to become manifest

in response to the external causes in our environment.

Since life is eternal across the three existences, our past karma may also assail us in the present as some major problem or suffering. Just as the cause of suffering lies within us, so we possess the power to transform our suffering into happiness. This power emanates from the state of Buddhahood.

As President Toda asserted, ultimately human beings are the product of what lies inside them: No more, no less. Therefore, we must cultivate the great field of our lives and sink down deep roots of happiness. We must unlock the Gohonzon within us and grow into great trees that stand with unshakable composure.

By doing so, we can demonstrate our elevated life-conditions through our exemplary humanism and commendable behavior, as well as the great benefit and good fortune we receive in our daily lives.

# Catalyst for District Discussion

## The Formality of Gongyo



KIRK CONDYLES

**The “Catalyst for District Discussion” is intended to stimulate lively conversations about the practice of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism.**

*On May 4, 1993, SGI President Ikeda spoke about the formality of gongyo at a Kansai general meeting held at Soka University, Tokyo. The following are excerpts from that timeless guidance, vital to the understanding of the fundamentals of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. The full text appears in the SGI-USA booklet titled Selected Speeches on the Basics of Buddhism.*

Faith is a lifelong pursuit. It is also an eternal one, continuing over the three existences of past, present and future. Kosen-rufu, too, is a long, long journey.

How, then, on this journey toward happiness, can we stay the course to the end? How can we live so as to make each day of our precious lives valuable and exhilarating?

Doing so requires profound wis-

dom. For example, there are times when we suffer from exhaustion or feel under the weather. This is only natural since we are creatures of flesh and blood. At such times, what should we do about gongyo? What should our attitude be toward chanting daimoku? Today, in response to the members’ day-to-day concerns, I shall address these points in light of Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings. Such concrete guidance based on them is important.

### Judge Wisely According to Each Situation

Essentially, the Daishonin says that, depending on the situation, it is all right to just chant daimoku, and that we need not necessarily sit before the Gohonzon to do so.

This is how the Daishonin responded to a question from the

wife of a follower, Hiki Daigaku Saburo Yoshimoto. The wife had asked whether she should refrain from carrying out her daily Buddhist practice during her menstrual period. Since ancient times, it had been a common belief in Japan that menstruation represented a kind of pollution. It appears that the woman who put this question to the Daishonin was worried about whether it was acceptable to read and recite Buddhist scriptures at such a time.

In response, the Daishonin emphasizes that there is no cause for avoidances in connection with menstruation, and that, rather, menstruation has an important biological function. For the time in which he lived, such a view was remarkably enlightened.

“Or in another sense,” he says, “it [menstruation] might be regarded as

a kind of chronically recurring illness" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 12), and goes on to explain the type of practice that would be best suited for such times.

At present, the question of "pollution" or "impurity" in connection with menstruation is no longer an issue. Indeed, in a broader sense, we can interpret the Daishonin's words as providing a clear direction on what we should do about reciting the sutra, that is, gongyo, when ill or feeling poorly. In other words, the Daishonin here indicates the principle that gongyo is a practice that should be carried out with flexibility in accordance with various circumstances.

#### No Reference to Set Form of Gongyo

In a preceding passage, the Daishonin says:

This is a matter that concerns all women and about which they always inquire. In past times, too, we find many persons addressing themselves to this question concerning women. But because the sacred teachings put forward by the Buddha in the course of his lifetime do not touch upon this point, no one has been able to offer any clear scriptural proof upon which to base an answer. (MW-6, 11)

The Daishonin says that all who have commented on the matter, being unable to produce documentary proof based on the Buddhist scriptures, merely speak arbitrarily. By contrast, the Daishonin always made the scriptures his foundation. That is why we, too, always advance basing ourselves on the scripture of the Latter Day of the

Law.

Similarly, regarding the custom of doing five prayers during morning gongyo and three prayers during evening gongyo, nowhere in his writings is such a practice set forth. It is a form that came about at a later time.

Moreover, originally, this form of gongyo was part of the practice for priests. It would appear, however, that today it is priests who are failing to adhere to this form. That lay people, with their busy schedules, should be following such a regimen of daily practice is truly remarkable.

#### "Dispense With the Reading of the Sutra"

In conclusion, Nichiren Daishonin states: "If you feel so inclined, then dispense with the reading of the sutra and simply recite Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. Also, when making your devotions, you need not bow facing the sutra [the Gohonzon]" (MW-6, 13).

It is perfectly acceptable just to chant daimoku without reciting the sutra. Moreover, the Daishonin says that we need not necessarily do gongyo or chant daimoku in front of the Gohonzon. Here, the Daishonin also takes into account the case where a person [incapacitated by illness or other reasons] might do gongyo or chant daimoku lying down. In this way, he always showed great flexibility toward the formal aspects of practice. He always taught that "faith alone is what really matters" (MW-1, 246).

Of course, we must not take this as license to be negligent and lazy in our practice. It goes without saying that we must always diligently strive to carry out the basic practice of

doing gongyo and chanting daimoku. If you purposely use the Daishonin's writings to justify neglecting your Buddhist practice, it will only result in your own loss. It is not for anyone else, but for our own happiness that we practice faith.

The Daishonin's statement that it is all right simply to chant daimoku is based on the premise of the great benefit of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

At the beginning, he says:

In the case of the Lotus Sutra, one may recite the entire sutra of twenty-eight chapters in eight volumes every day; or one may recite only one volume, or one chapter, or one verse, or one phrase, or one word; or one may simply chant the daimoku, Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, only once a day . . . (MW-6, 3)

In other words, he says there are many possible ways of reciting the Lotus Sutra. He then continues:

Or [one may] chant it only once in the course of a lifetime; or hear someone else chant it only once in a lifetime and rejoice in the hearing; or rejoice in hearing the voice of someone else rejoice in the hearing . . . (ibid.)

The sound of daimoku can even cause others to respond with joy when they hear it. Therefore, let us always strive to chant such invigorating and refreshing daimoku that draws forth this response in others.

Through hearing our voices chanting the Mystic Law, hearing the confidence that resonates therein, it is possible to inspire joy in others and make a strong impression upon them of how wonderful and energetic the SGI members are, and

of how coming in contact with them always leaves us feeling happy and refreshed. Others, again, may simply rejoice when encountering the happy, glowing faces and the beautiful smiles of our members.

In this respect, our outward appearance is important. This accords with the principle that all phenomena manifest the true aspect of life (*shoho jisso*). Indeed, such a joyous response is truly evident among friends of the SGI. One person after another responding with joy in a chain reaction — this principle lies at the root of our movement to introduce others to the SGI.

### Benefit of Hundreds of Thousands of Times Greater Than From Other Teachings

The Daishonin continues:

And so [this chain of rejoicing continues] on to fifty removes from the original individual who first chanted the daimoku.

In such a case, of course, the spirit of faith would become weak and the feeling of rejoicing much diluted, like the vague notions that might occur to the mind of a child of two or three, or like the mentality of a cow or a horse, unable to distinguish before from after. And yet the blessings gained by such a person are a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand times greater than those gained by persons of excellent innate ability and superior wisdom who study other sutras: persons such as Shariputra, Maudgalyayana, Monju and Miroku, who had committed to memory the entire texts of the various sutras.

The Lotus Sutra itself tells us this, and the same opinion is

expressed in the sixty volumes of commentary by T'ien-t'ai and Miao-lo. (MW-6, 3-4)

So great is the benefit of chanting daimoku. Chanting Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo even once produces tremendous benefit, eternal benefit. This is the essence of our faith. We should have great confidence in this point.

Basing his remarks on a passage of the Lotus Sutra, the Daishonin states:

And yet we read that the blessings acquired by one who recites no more than a single word of the Lotus Sutra are the one thing alone [the Buddha wisdom] cannot fathom. How, then, could ordinary persons like ourselves, who have committed so many grave offenses, be capable of understanding such blessings? (MW-6, 4)

This is the great benefit of chanting Nam-myoho-rengo-kyo even once. A single arrow, shot by a great archer, will unerringly hit the mark. Similarly, a strong and deep prayer offered with unwavering *ichinen*, or concentration of mind, will, in accordance with the principle that "a single life-moment contains three thousand realms" (*ichinen sanzen*), move the entire universe.

### On Chanting for Long Periods of Time

Since such is the benefit of chanting a single daimoku, some of you might feel puffed up with pride because you managed to chant at least three daimoku today! Of course, it is important to feel such joy from practice. And it doesn't say anywhere in his writings how

many daimoku or how many hours a day a person should chant.

It goes without saying, of course, that if you chant a lot of daimoku, it is all to the good. However, ultimately each of us must decide for ourselves the amount of daimoku we chant based on our awareness and determination. The amount of daimoku we chant is certainly not a matter of obligation or formality.

For instance, from time to time I hear of people chanting eight or ten hours in a single day. I bow my head to the intensity and earnestness of faith of these members. If, however, they neglect their responsibilities and commitments and just chant away, they cannot be said to be practicing in accord with the principle "faith manifests itself in daily life." You must not allow your daily life to fall by the wayside or cause others, including members of your family, suffering and inconvenience because of your chanting many hours of daimoku. Nor should you go around boasting of the long hours of daimoku you have chanted in a day.

Carrying on in such a way can easily give rise to various misunderstandings among those around you. A person who has such an attitude may be viewed by neighbors as something of a fanatic. The result may be that the person loses others' trust and degrades the Law.

The same is true within the organization. There are instances when an organizational unit formally conducts a "ten-hour daimoku campaign" or the like. While there is nothing wrong with an activity of this kind if it is voluntarily undertaken by two or three willing people, difficulties arise when an attempt is made to impose such a rigid regimen equally on

many people. For people have different daily schedules, they have different amounts of time available to them, they have different physical stamina and so on.

Consequently, it is possible that holding such an activity might impose unreasonable demands on any number of people. It is always necessary to exercise careful consideration. Moreover, we must never attempt to make participation in such activities compulsory. You must not goad people into attending activities by making extreme statements, such as saying, "If you fail to attend, you will not be following the way of the SGI."

It is important that people derive joy, peace of mind and hope from their practice of faith. We must strictly refrain from giving guidance that oppresses people or causes them suffering. In giving guidance, leaders should always take into account the circumstances and conditions of each member.

#### **Adapting the Precepts to the Locality**

In the same writing addressed to the woman follower who sought advice on aspects of her practice, the Daishonin speaks of the principle of "adapting the practice to the locality" (*zuiho bini*), saying that people should practice Buddhism in a way that accords with the manners and customs of the country or area where we live. [The precept of

## **It is important that people derive joy, peace of mind and hope from their practice of faith.**

"adapting the practice to the locality" states that one may act in accordance with local custom or the customs of the times, provided the fundamental spirit of Buddhism is not violated.]

Further, the Daishonin strictly condemns rigid teachings that show complete disregard for people's situations or daily lives, or the realities of society. For example, in the past, some people told overseas members, who are not accustomed to sitting on the floor on their knees, that they must not sit in a chair [when doing gongyo or chanting daimoku], or they otherwise tried to impose Japanese customs or ways of doing things in Japan with complete disregard for members' circumstances. The Daishonin says that when people insist on adherence to rigid teachings, "They do injury to the faith of many believers" (MW-4, 13).

I couldn't agree more. It is impossible to lead vast numbers by

coercion and unreasonable means. Movements in which such means are used do not last long. Instead of making it possible to achieve *kosen-rufu*, such tactics only alienate people and cause them to desert the organization.

In conclusion, we should always, and in all matters, consider what will be the best way of proceeding with a view to the happiness of the country and the happiness of its people. This is the spirit of Buddhism. This is the spirit of Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin.

The light of Buddhism shines in those who possess wisdom that is flexible and that accords with common sense. Such people possess faith that is truly strong.

Praying that all of you will have a wonderful day, I conclude today's speech. Please share the spirit and atmosphere of Kansai with members throughout Japan and around the world. Thank you very much for today! □

### **Catalyst Questions**

1. Under what circumstances, if any, do you allow yourself to skip gongyo in place of daimoku?
2. How do you feel when you choose not to do gongyo? Why do you feel that way?
3. In what ways do you think it's okay to adapt the practice of Buddhism to one's own cultural background and in what ways is it not?

# Through the SGI: A Personal Odyssey (1)

By Dr. Howard Hunter



ADAM WOOLFITT/CORBIS

The Taj Mahal, as seen through the early morning mist on the Yamuna River in Agra, India.

Allow me to share a rather unique travelogue, one in which I hope to relate over the next few issues an eye-witness account of the Soka Gakkai International in action throughout the world. The record of my visits — a personal odyssey, one may say — will not be exhaustive, since I will only be covering a fraction of the 128 countries with SGI memberships. Yet it will be illuminating, a discovery of the similarities and differences within a truly global religious movement.

As a professor of religious studies at Tufts University in Massachusetts, I have for some time sought to gain a full understanding of the remarkable organization which Soka Gakkai International has become. While I am happy to acknowledge a genuine empathy with the humane and humanistic Buddhist philosophy upon which the SGI is based, as a non-member,

I have the opportunity to conduct my research objectively and independently.

As I wondered where to begin my search to discover the SGI's place in the world, Japan obviously came to mind, as did my own country. But, finding myself on sabbatical leave from my university and free to travel anywhere, I chose India as my starting point.

Why India? Because, while I have enjoyed contacts with the SGI in Japan and the U.S.A. — and will undoubtedly have more in time in both countries — the reintroduction of Buddhist activity in India, the land of its origin, was particularly intriguing to me. I knew there were some Buddhist groups remaining in India but what would it mean to be a practitioner of Buddhism taught by Nichiren and promulgated today by the Soka Gakkai of Japan? How does Indian culture, moreover, affect the way in which

the SGI's message is transmitted?

This is the recurring theme of my voyages of discovery: Given that it is one thing to practice Nichiren's Buddhism in his homeland of Japan, what is it like to be a Buddhist in other cultures today, from such diverse lands as India is from Italy or the U.K. is to Mexico?

## A Bodhisattva's Story

With passport and airline ticket in hand, I made my way to visit the SGI group and individual members in New Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore. I also had conversations with SGI members on an informal basis in Bhubaneswar and Calcutta, both cities where I hope to return some day for more extensive visits. In addition to attending various group meetings, I taped interviews with individual SGI members in their homes. In mulling over the results of these discussions, it may

be that I will present them in another form at another time.

My experience with the SGI in India is still fresh in my mind. Since it was the first of several countries I hope to visit, India leaves me with impressions rather than comparisons and conclusions. Among those impressions, I will relate several which rank among the most intense.

First is the unmistakable depth of concern members of the Bharat Soka Gakkai (BSG), as their organization is referred to in India, share for the physical and spiritual welfare — the two are not separate — of their fellow members. This concern was dramatically conveyed to me in the experience of an SGI member from Bangalore.

He and the son of another member from the Bangalore group were driving to New Delhi to attend an SGI meeting. On the way, they had a serious accident in which the latter, a promising youth of 24, lost his life. His companion also suffered injuries that doctors determined were almost certain to be fatal. That was when another young man stood up without hesitation to nurse the injured member back to health, no matter what the cost to his own studies and career. The patient was able to recover through months of tireless care; without it, he would not have survived.

Today, he has regained his health, become successful in business, and is a deeply committed member of the SGI. Meanwhile, the young man who cared for him is currently in Russia, where he has been able to introduce his Buddhist faith to a dozen Russian colleagues. The example he set through his total dedication to the Bodhisattva ideal — in which one forgoes his own fulfillment to realize those of other people

— is the source of much pride and appreciation among the SGI members of Bangalore.

### For the Future

Another vivid impression I have is the BSG members' desire to extend the implications of their practice to the wider community. The goal appears to be not so much to proselytize but to demonstrate their faith and philosophy through action.

One example of this was the very successful effort — an exhibition titled "Rainbow in My Heart" which was held in a number of Indian cities, including Bangalore — to present the public with the artwork of children from the vast gamut of India's manifold cultures and religions. Considerable goodwill was generated by this and other programs — among them, a symposium held in southern India under the theme, "The Harmony of Religions" — dedicated to the larger good of the entire populace. The humanitarian outreach of the BSG, in my view, makes it a readily accessible forum for people from a bewildering array of backgrounds.

The third impression comes from my interviews with individual members of all ages. It is this: the deep personal regard they have for SGI President Daisaku Ikeda. In every discussion I had, they responded to my question about him with a heartfelt sense of appreciation for the spiritual guidance and organizational leadership they received from the person they do not hesitate to call their mentor.

It struck me that the cultural heritage of India — in particular the historic tradition of master-disciple relationships — plays a significant role in this instance. BSG members cite their trips to Japan, where they



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receive training and encouragement, and encounters with Mr. Ikeda, not only in Japan but during his visit to India, as having deep significance for the initiation and development of the SGI in their country. Repeatedly, members characterized the SGI president's contributions, not in terms of urging that they follow him, but rather that they discover the law of inner compassion — the heart of all Buddhist teachings — within themselves.

A final impression was the careful attention the BSG is paying to develop the most effective policies for the young SGI organization in India. The leadership is keenly aware of the nation's rich and complex cultural, religious and political circumstances. There is deep confidence that a Buddhist organization has much to offer for the amelioration of India's seemingly insoluble problems. By seeking cooperation over confrontation through the implementation of value-enhancing policies, they are in the midst of laying a solid foundation for the future — not only for the BSG but for all of India as well. □

# Peace, Culture and Education Activities: A Buddhist Response to the Global Ethic

By Virginia Straus, Executive Director  
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## Responding to the Global Ethic

In his preface to the Global Ethic, the “initial declaration” adopted at the 1993 Parliament of the World’s Religions, Hans Küng wrote, “Perhaps one day there may even be a United Nations Declaration on a Global Ethic to provide moral support for the Declaration on Human Rights, which is so often ignored and cruelly violated.”<sup>1</sup> Inspired by that thought, we at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century initiated a conference in October 1994 at Columbia University called “The United Nations and the World’s Religions: Prospects for a Global Ethic.”

Co-sponsored by the School of International and Public Affairs and the Department of Religion at Columbia University, the conference brought together international relations specialists interested in human rights issues and religionists seeking to evolve a global ethic for a day of stimulating discussion. After talks that included perspectives informed by Islamic, Baha’i, Christian, Buddhist and secular humanist traditions, small group discussions ensued during which

one participant stressed the importance of “giving ethical principles real life by combining documents with tangible programs of action.” This sentiment was expressed also by Princeton University professor of international law Richard Falk, who said, “Documents by themselves are useless without initiatives in civil society and grassroots empowerment that make the norms set out in the texts actual in the lives of people.”

“Tangible programs of action” to help make the norms set out in the Global Ethic — such as nonviolence, human solidarity, tolerance and equal rights — “actual in the lives of people” happens to be an apt description of the peace, culture and education movement of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), in which the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, a newly founded peace research institute, takes part. In this article, I will give an overview of the SGI’s peace, culture and education movement — its guiding philosophy, its founding spirit and the concrete actions undertaken — as one example of a Buddhist response to the Global Ethic.

## The Concept of Human Revolution

The guiding philosophy that infuses the activities of the SGI centers on the concept of *human revolution*. This process of inner reformation and its role in the creation of a peaceful world have been described by the current president of the SGI, Daisaku Ikeda, as follows: “The movement that we advocate for a human revolution does not stop at a change of personality, but extends to a change in the most basic attitudes and perceptions about the nature of life itself; it is a change of the entire human being. I know and believe as the firmest article of faith that the human revolution of a single person can change the fate of a nation, our world and all humanity.”<sup>2</sup> By undergoing the process of “human revolution,” an individual gradually expands his or her own ability to “create value” (i.e., gain, beauty and social good) from the “muck and mire” of daily life. In Buddhist terms, this capacity of value creation is also known as “changing poison into medicine”



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MARK OSTOW

or transforming negative “karma.” Richard Causton, the late general director of SGI–UK, described the effects of human revolution on society in very practical terms: “Just as human beings have tied the knot which is their current predicament, so they can untie it through developing the ‘qualities of the Buddha’: wisdom, courage, compassion and life

force. Buddhism teaches that these great qualities are latent in *everyone* and that the more ordinary people are able to develop them amid the, at times, harsh realities of their everyday lives, the greater the problems that they will be able to tackle — and eventually overcome.”<sup>3</sup> In contrast to a social revolution, which focuses on the external structures of society,

(Top) The Boston Research Center in Harvard Square. (Above, left) Olara Otunnu of the Commission for Global Governance was the featured speaker May 13, 1995, at the U.N. Renaissance Conference, the center’s first event in its new home. (Above, right) Virginia Straus, the center’s executive director.

human revolution involves an inner change in the human being, the effects of which radiate outward to transform society. A similar concept can be found in the section of Hans Küng's *Global Ethic* that reads, "Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed."<sup>4</sup>

Were the importance of the concept of human revolution or inner reformation fully realized, according to the SGI, much of the suffering and violence experienced in the world during the twentieth century could be avoided in the next century. As Daisaku Ikeda has put it, "Under the sway of the nineteenth century cult of progress, in this century we have feverishly devoted ourselves to enhancing the structures of society and the state, laboring under the delusion that this alone is the path to human happiness. But to the extent that we have skirted the fundamental issue of how to reform and revitalize individual human beings, our most conscientious efforts for peace and happiness have produced just the opposite result. This, I feel, is the central lesson of the twentieth century."<sup>5</sup> The belief, then, in this powerfully transformative concept of human revolution lies at the heart of the SGI's social engagement.

### Origins of the Soka Gakkai in Educational Reform

This same belief in the inner Buddha potential of human beings and the desire to create a supportive environment for the flourishing of this potential is mirrored in the educational philosophy of "value-creating pedagogy" that gave the Soka Gakkai its original name. Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value Creating Edu-

cation Society) was founded in 1930 by a Japanese educator named Tsunesaburo Makiguchi as an organization of like-minded educators who were attracted to the ideas in a book Makiguchi published that same year, *System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*.<sup>6</sup>

These education reformers called into question the educational practices then prevailing in Japan, which were characterized by rigid discipline, the force-feeding of information, and the inculcation of loyalty to the state and its aims. In contrast, Makiguchi's system of value-creating pedagogy taught that the responsibility for the learning process must be put in the child's hands, with the teacher acting as a guide to help bring out the innate potential of each child. According to his theory, education should support a child's pursuit of happiness — not a self-oriented, pleasure-seeking happiness but a more profound hap-

piness rooted in social consciousness (similar to the notion of Buddhahood). To be happy, he argued, a child must be skilled in the creation of value. "Human beings cannot create matter," wrote Makiguchi. "We can, however, create value. Creating value is, in fact, our very humanity."<sup>7</sup>

Makiguchi puzzled out this "philosophy of value" for himself during many years of teaching, from 1913 to 1929. Near the end of this period, before the publication of his book, Makiguchi was introduced to the practice of Nichiren Buddhism, and he thoroughly investigated its teachings, discovering a remarkable confluence between his theories and this relatively unknown form of Buddhism. The practice had been founded by a thirteenth-century Japanese priest called Nichiren Daishonin (*Dai-shonin* meaning "great sage") and handed down over the centuries.



A discussion meeting of the early Soka Gakkai in 1942 with the founder, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, seated in the center.

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First presented at the United Nations in New York and shown here in Geneva, the SGI exhibition “War and Peace: Will Humankind Survive in the 21st Century?” focused on a wide range of problems confronting humanity—such as nuclear arms, hunger, poverty, refugee issues and acid rain—and explored possible solutions.

Makiguchi and his disciple, another educator named Josei Toda, took up the practice of Nichiren Buddhism, which involves the recitation of two key chapters of the Lotus Sutra and the invocation of the sutra’s title, *Myoho-enge-kyo*, as a means of cultivating the state of Buddhahood inherent in one’s life.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1930s, Makiguchi, Toda, and their society of educators engaged in a courageous and ultimately unsuccessful struggle to gain acceptance for their educational philosophy in an increasingly militaristic Japan. By 1937, it had become clear to Makiguchi that the triumph of militarism in Japanese public life had shut off the road to educational reform. Because of this, and also because over several years of practice Makiguchi and Toda had gained confidence in Buddhism, the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai underwent a shift from an educational organization to a religious one. “With their growing conviction that Buddhism could transform society even when education could not, and even in a more fundamental way, it must have seemed the most natural thing in the world to them to refocus their organization’s energies.”<sup>9</sup>

### Soka Gakkai As a Peace Movement

After this transformation of the organization, which opened it to people from all walks of life and



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aimed its goals more broadly at social reform, Makiguchi, practically a lone voice, spoke out against the military ambitions of his government and then defied the government’s order enforcing belief in state Shintoism. For this he was disavowed by the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood, who feared government reprisals, and was arrested in 1943 by the government. In prison, he endured interrogation and torture but refused to compromise his beliefs as a Buddhist. On November 18, 1944, Makiguchi died at the age of seventy-three in the Tokyo Detention House.

Josei Toda, who had followed Makiguchi to jail, survived and, when he was released in 1945, set out to rebuild the organization, dropping *kyoiku* from its name and recreating it as a broadly populist religious movement, beginning with virtually no support in 1945 and expanding the movement’s base to encompass more than 750,000 households at the time of his death in 1958. Following in Makiguchi’s

footsteps, Toda took a firm stand against militarism, but this time on a global scale. In the midst of the cold war, Toda published his “Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb Ban Proclamation,” in which he condemned nuclear weapons as “an absolute evil that threatens the people’s right of existence” and called on youths to regard anyone who would resort to the use of nuclear weapons as “a diabolical fiend.” This passionate critique of nuclear weapons and of the destructive impulse in human nature, written in 1957 a year before his death, was Toda’s legacy to the Soka Gakkai’s young people.<sup>10</sup>

These early experiences of the founders with “social engagement” in Japan — first through educational reform and then through resistance against an authoritarian, militaristic government — ultimately shaped the internationalization of the movement. Toda’s disciple and successor as third president of the Soka Gakkai, Daisaku Ikeda, founded the Soka Gakkai International, the umbrella organization for its

In 1992, the Soka Gakkai youth division's VOICE-AID campaign collected and shipped 280,000 used radios to the people of Cambodia. The United Nations found radios to be the most viable medium for reaching and educating the people about national reconstruction efforts after years of devastating civil strife.

international membership in 1975, and expanded the organization's overseas membership to more than a million people practicing in 128 countries today. Based on the notion of "human revolution" first popularized by Toda and also on the educational reforms and pacifist stance of Makiguchi, Ikeda developed the SGI's peace, culture, and education movement so that it aimed broadly at fostering a philosophy of humanism and a spirit of human solidarity worldwide. I present below highlights of some of the specific activities that SGI has undertaken in these three arenas.<sup>11</sup>

### SGI'S Contributions to a Peaceful World

SGI's peace movement supports the founding spirit of the United Nations. Ikeda has explained that this commitment does not presume that the United Nations is ideal as currently organized. He acknowledges that, during its history, the United Nations has often diverged from the pacifist principles on which it was founded, but nevertheless "the idealism, humanism, and universalism of [its] Charter represent a crystallization of the peaceloving hopes and wisdom of a humanity that has already suffered two global wars and are therefore, the starting point to which we must all return."<sup>12</sup>

Because of the pacifist spirit of its charter, and also because the United Nations is the one organization that



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includes almost all the countries of the world, the SGI works to strengthen and support the peace-related activities of the United Nations. Registered as a nongovernmental organization with the UN Economic and Social Council since 1983, SGI's involvement with the United Nations predates this official registration. Since the 1970s, SGI has been conducting fund-raising campaigns on an almost yearly basis to support the United Nations' refugee relief activities in Asia and Africa. Based on Buddhist compassion, this effort to alleviate the intense suffering of people displaced by conflict has so far resulted in \$8 million in funds donated to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees for relief projects geared to providing medical care, food supplies, education, and other services.

Another important component of the SGI's peace program consists of citizen educational exhibitions designed to reinforce antiwar sentiment and promote a sense of global solidarity, in accordance with the Buddhist philosophy of absolute

respect for the dignity of human life. The first such exhibition, titled "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World," was shown in 1982 at United Nations headquarters in New York at the same time as the SGI leader submitted a proposal for the abolition of nuclear weapons to the Second Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly on Disarmament. In its subsequent tour, the exhibit was shown in Geneva, Beijing, and twenty-three other cities in sixteen countries, attracting a total of 1.2 million people.

SGI's next exhibition, entitled "War and Peace: Will Humankind Survive in the 21st Century?" was presented at the United Nations in New York in 1989 in cooperation with the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs and under the joint sponsorship of SGI, the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The exhibition depicted a wide range of problems confronting humanity — such as nuclear war, hunger, poverty, the plight of refugees and environ-



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The Min-On Concert Association was founded in 1963 to contribute to world peace by making the arts of dance and music accessible to all people through free-admission and discount concerts. Min-On regularly sponsors overseas performances by Japanese music and dance groups and hosts concert tours in Japan from all over the world. Examples include (clockwise from above) The Russian National Ballet, The Nigerian National Dance and Music Troupe and the Kronos Quartet.

mental degradation — and explored possible solutions. The exhibition toured five countries and ten cities, including Boston and Moscow.

Building on these two successful antiwar exhibitions, the SGI created others on related issues. An exhibit on the environment was held concurrently with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In December 1993, a human rights exhibit was held in Geneva to help commemorate the forty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations' adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In explaining the spirit behind these educational exhibitions, Ikeda states that before "a global no-war agreement" and other such aims can be achieved, not only must "pervasive reforms be made in international politics, but fundamental changes will have to take place in people's ways of thinking

and lifestyles. It will be essential to cultivate cosmopolitanism among people, and to build a consensus on a worldwide scale. To that end, education for world citizenship must be promoted with all possible speed, encouraging all members of the human race to work together to rid the world of war."<sup>13</sup>

Each year since 1983, on SGI Day, January 26, Ikeda has written what he calls a "peace proposal."<sup>14</sup> These proposals contain reflections on the current state of the world, concrete suggestions for reforming and strengthening the United Nations, ideas for fostering a grassroots peace movement, and incisive critiques of prevailing ideologies and global trends. Individually, the peace proposals have served to generate a sustained humanistic dialogue on global issues, and, taken as a whole, they form an impressive body of thought,

applying Buddhist philosophy to the practical realities of international affairs. For example, throughout all the proposals can be seen an unrelenting opposition to war and violence, trust in the wisdom and peaceful instincts of the common people, compassion for the sufferings of all beings and a courageous challenge against any force threatening to oppress people's humanity.

### Cultural Exchanges

The human-centered philosophy of the peace proposals is also evident in the SGI's cultural activities. The purpose of these activities is summed up by Ikeda in the following way: "There is a saying that a human being is a living thing that works to become human. That is precisely the meaning of culture — working to become human. The

noble people's movement of the SGI aims to strengthen this power of culture and through it bring all of humanity together."<sup>15</sup>

Among its members, the SGI promotes an appreciation of culture through holding regional culture festivals where members gather and perform music and dance expressive of their own diverse cultures. In fact, most of the regular meetings of SGI members around the world include some portion devoted to culture handmade by the members — a musical presentation, drama, poetry reading, or dance. Throughout the organization, bands, orchestras, choruses and the like are actively supported. Music especially is valued as a means of heart-to-heart communication transcending language.

Confident that widespread cultural exchange can link the hearts of people around the world and contribute to a deeper international understanding, the SGI has established and supports institutions engaged in a variety of cultural activities based on the spirit of Buddhism. For example, the independent Min-On Concert Association, to which SGI offers its support, regularly hosts concert tours in Japan by artists from all over the world and sponsors overseas performances by Japanese music and dance groups. The Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, founded by Ikeda, serves a similar exchange function in the art world. Recently, institutions have been founded outside Japan as well, such as the Taplow Court Grand Culture Centre near London (1989) and the Victor Hugo House of Literature in the suburbs of Paris (1991). These centers host exhibitions of literature and art as well as various seminars and meetings. All these

efforts to foster cultural expression and an appreciation of other cultures are based on a philosophical belief that, for the sake of human happiness, culture is even more important than such fields as science, politics and economics.

### Humanistic Education

Finally, the dreams of the Soka Gakkai's first and second presidents have blossomed with the founding by its third president of a complete kindergarten-to-university system of Soka education, based on Makiguchi's ideas for "value-creating pedagogy." Consisting of elementary, junior high, and high schools near Tokyo and Osaka as well as Soka Women's Junior College (1985) and Soka University (a liberal arts college and graduate school for seven thousand students established in 1971, located in a suburb of Tokyo), this system is affiliated with schools in other parts of the world as well. Soka kindergartens have been established in Hong Kong (1992) and Singapore (1993), and Soka University of America was opened in 1991 near Los Angeles.

These are not religious schools, but the type of education that they provide is informed by a Buddhist approach to "humanistic education," which means placing primary importance on the dignity and worth of the individual and believing in the individual's capacity for enlightenment. This translates into a system-wide focus on cultivating character, wisdom, and creativity in the students amid a spirit of equality and mutual learning with the teachers. The Soka educational approach combats the common tendency among educators to overemphasize acquisition of knowledge at

the expense of moral and ethical training. Ikeda points to this tendency as a source of human suffering on a grand scale when he states, "Imbalance between transmission of knowledge and ethical ability has resulted in a situation in which startling advances in physics, biology and nuclear physics have put horrendous means of destruction into human hands." The Soka educational philosophy, on the other hand, views the ultimate purpose of education as "the formation of the individual human being, not only by sharpening and improving one's intellectual potentials and providing one with a rich store of information, but also by inculcating ethical and moral standards."<sup>16</sup>

To foster an international outlook among its students, and as a contribution to world peace, Soka University actively promotes cultural and academic exchange with universities throughout the world. It has academic exchange agreements with more than forty universities outside Japan. An independent survey published in 1992 ranked Soka University as the third best private university in Japan in terms of student satisfaction. The quality of its faculty was ranked first.<sup>17</sup> Soka University operates five research institutes on its main campus, including the Institute for Peace Studies and the Institute for the Comparative Study of Cultures.<sup>18</sup> It is also affiliated with the Pacific Basin Research Center (PBRC), a joint research program conducted by Soka University of America and Harvard University. The PBRC awards post-doctoral fellowships to researchers studying public policy in the Pacific Rim.<sup>19</sup> The Institute of Oriental Philosophy, separately established by Ikeda in 1962, has been located on the Soka University campus in Japan since 1986. Since its founding, this



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The Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, founded in 1983, aims to make the fine arts accessible to all people. The museum currently houses over 5,000 works from around the world including paintings, prints, sculptures, engravings, pottery, weavings and various writings.

institute has pursued research in the history, literature, and concepts of Buddhism and in the comparative study of Buddhism and other religions. In 1988, its scope of research was expanded to include problems of modern society.<sup>20</sup>

#### Educational Exchange and Dialogue

The SGI, with Ikeda in the forefront, conducts an extraordinary range of educational exchanges and dialogues, all based on the conviction that lasting peace will come about only through mutual understanding and friendship among the world's diverse peoples. Convinced that the universalism of the academic world enables exchanges to take place transcending national borders and ethnic differences, Ikeda frequently visits

universities around the world for discussion with faculty and students and to deliver lectures that elucidate Buddhist philosophy. Drawing abundant parallels between Buddhist thought and the ideas of leading intellectuals in the regions of the world that he visits, Ikeda has not only forged through these lectures an international network of humanistic scholars but has also pioneered the communication of applied Buddhist philosophy in the Western world. In lectures at, for example, Moscow State University, the University of Sofia, the University of Buenos Aires, the University of the Philippines, the University of California, Los Angeles, and Harvard University, Ikeda explains in accessible language such concepts as dependent origination, the Eastern orientation toward inner-directed spiritu-

ality, human revolution, the Buddhist reverence for life based on the notion of Buddha potential, and compassionate action.

The SGI leader has also engaged leading Western thinkers in dialogues that have attracted a wide audience and stimulated fresh perspectives in both East and West. A number of these dialogues have been published, including those with British historian Arnold Toynbee, Oxford scholar Bryan Wilson, French author André Malraux, American author Norman Cousins, American scientist Linus Pauling, and Russian author Chingiz Aitmatov. In addition, Ikeda has engaged in wide-ranging discussions with political, cultural and intellectual leaders around the world (North and South), believing that openhearted dialogue about the essential questions of life

and death, peace, and the human being can have a profound effect.

The spirit of hope for humanity and friendship in which he conducts these dialogues builds mutual trust, a precondition for lasting peace in the world. In explaining why he engages in so many lectures, dialogues, and one-on-one meetings, Ikeda stated, "During my travels through more than forty [now fifty] nations, I have worked for cultural and educational exchanges and have lectured at the invitation of numerous universities. These experiences have convinced me that the best possible security system is the untiring cultivation of mutual acquaintance and respect among all peoples. Of course, consultation among political leaders is important; but, as history shows, peace achieved without understanding on all sides is always fragile."<sup>21</sup> Those with whom Ikeda engages in dialogue hold similar views about the importance of these contacts: "In the final analysis, it is in the minds and hearts of human beings throughout this planet that the bulwarks of the new consciousness must be built. In concluding this dialogue, therefore, may I express the hope that the ideas we have articulated will create a ripple effect that will help in forging the new globalism to which both of us are deeply committed."<sup>22</sup>

In addition, Ikeda writes in SGI publications and regularly speaks at gatherings of members about the exemplary lives of cultural, political, and intellectual leaders from different countries around the world. These "biographies" provide a continuing global education for SGI members and help members cultivate what Ikeda has called a sense of "inner universalism" and tolerance.

Probably the most important

educational movement that the SGI conducts involves its own members worldwide, who engage in concerted and continuous efforts to learn Buddhist concepts and apply them to the challenges that they face in their daily lives. The resultant advances in human revolution that the members experience contribute inestimably to the happiness and harmony of their fami-

Buddhist philosophy in an atmosphere of mutual support. Likewise, as the SGI's cultural exchanges form bonds among diverse peoples across national borders, regular home visits with one another engender the mutual understanding and close relationships needed for members to continue their practice at crucial moments and deepen their faith. As Soka educa-



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The majestic main building of the Taplow Court Grand Culture Center, Great Britain. Located 25 miles west of London, Taplow has held a strategic position for trade and defense from ancient times. Today, the historic site has a new role as a center of cultural activities for the SGI-UK. The Oriental Gallery in Taplow Court hosts exhibitions of literature and art as well as various seminars and meetings.

lies, workplaces, and communities. In fact, the essential character of the SGI's internal educational movement is as highly interactive as its many external activities. Just as the peace proposals and the dialogues serve to open up public discourse, monthly SGI discussion meetings held by members in their homes foster the openhearted sharing of personal experiences and

tion honors and cultivates the student's capacity for value creation, guidance sessions provide coaching from more experienced members to support the natural course of a member's own human revolution.

### Recent Developments

The peace, culture and education movement just described has been

affected in a positive way by the split between the Soka Gakkai lay organization and the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood that occurred in 1990-1991. In fact, the outgoing nature and global character of the international organization's activities since its founding played an important role in this schism, which eventually resulted in the excommunication of the entire lay

tion from the external world. Soka Gakkai was a movement of revitalization, adapted to modern conditions, pursuing from the outset a policy of expansive growth, and quickly acquiring an international clientele and orientation. The priesthood was characteristically authoritarian, status conscious, and hierarchic: the lay organization was populist, egalitarian, and unwilling

in Cambridge, Massachusetts, of which I am now the director. In September 1993, Ikeda founded the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century. His lecture "Mahayana Buddhism and 21st Century Civilization," delivered at Harvard University just prior to the center's opening, became the founding spirit. The power of dialogue in creating peace — especially dialogue among those with opposing views — was the central point of that lecture. In a motto that he gave to the center, Ikeda underlined the open-minded and collaborative spirit that he envisioned:

Be the heart of a network  
of global citizens,

Be a bridge for dialogue  
between civilizations,

Be a beacon lighting the  
way to a century of life.

The center's activities have been guided by the spirit of this motto. For example, we worked with the Jain Mission at the United Nations in developing the conference at Columbia University mentioned at the beginning of this article. Luncheon seminars held at the center have brought together in lively conversation scholars and practitioners of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.<sup>24</sup> We have collaborated in holding citizen education conferences about the United Nations with other Boston area groups, including the Baha'i community.

Our primary focus in 1995 was on reform of the United Nations in recognition of that organization's fiftieth anniversary and the opportunity that this occasion afforded to explore and support a "renaissance"



Surrounded by green, rolling hills stands the SGI Brazil Nature Culture Center, outside São Paulo. Local SGI centers, such as this one, where people can learn about the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin, have been built in many of the 128 countries where SGI members now live and practice Buddhism.

membership. In *A Time to Chant*, Bryan Wilson, Oxford University sociologist of religion, and Karel Dobbelaere, professor of sociology at the Catholic University of Leuven, point this out when they contrast the two groups as follows: "The priesthood was a conservative body, small, secluded, and with horizons narrowly circumscribed by the centuries of Japanese insula-

to concede the sort of status differences which were endemic in conceptions of priesthood. The history of the schism . . . illustrates precisely these underlying dispositions."<sup>23</sup>

Already, the SGI has shown signs of becoming more open in character, especially in the area of interreligious dialogue and cooperation. A case in point is the recently established peace research center



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In addition to the wide-ranging activities of the Soka Gakkai's education division, which includes more than thirty thousand educators, SGI President Ikeda has established an educational system from Soka kindergarten through Soka University. The system includes Soka Women's Junior College (shown above), which was opened in 1985, adjacent to Soka University of Tokyo. Fully equipped with the latest in high-tech facilities, the college aims to foster new generations of women who will contribute to a more humanistic world.

of the United Nations' founding spirit. Joining forces with the Commission on Global Governance in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Boston-area Coalition for a Strong U.N. (made up of more than forty groups), the center sponsored a series of conferences and forums at its headquarters, at 396 Harvard Street in downtown Cambridge. These gatherings were designed to introduce the humanistic values and vision of *Our Global Neighborhood*, the report of the Commission on Global Governance,<sup>25</sup> and help advance the people's empowerment movement

that it envisions for bringing about a more humane world order based on a shared global ethic. At the end of these discussions, the center published a "people's response" to the Commission on Global Governance.

In addition to the activities of the 21st Century Center, new collaborative initiatives are developing throughout the SGI. The SGI-USA, for example, has been sending representatives on a regular basis to the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies. On a local level, SGI-USA groups have

participated in a variety of interfaith activities. SGI members on an individual and organizational basis have supported local U.N.-50 celebrations of all kinds.

### Conclusion

At the conference "The United Nations and the World's Religions: Prospects for a Global Ethic" cited at the beginning of this article, not only was a plea made for concrete actions to give life to the Global Ethic, but also the host of the conference, Columbia University Buddhist

scholar Robert Thurman, made a moving statement expressing his conviction that religious believers everywhere should “take back the definition and analysis of the world religions from the dominant elites” and, with support from secular human rights advocates and religious scholars, return to the original teachings of their founders, which share a spirit of kindness. Then, he stated, “sensible and practical cooperation among the religions” could ensue, with each helping the other to live up to their founding impulses and to overcome oppressive tendencies. Moreover, together the reli-

gions, including secular humanism, which he defines as a religion, could evolve a consensus on common ethical beliefs, and, if they decide that they “need the protection of something like the U.N. against the abuses of power of national governments, just think of the power of their influence over the people of this planet!”<sup>26</sup>

The concrete actions for peace, culture and education of the SGI detailed in this article are aimed at cultivating this “common human religion of kindness” or, in other words, “humanism,” to which Professor Thurman refers. In addition,

the SGI’s recent split with the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood has liberated Nichiren Buddhist believers from the dogma of a “dominant elite” and has opened up opportunities for the SGI to engage in “sensible and practical cooperation” with other religious movements on issues of shared concern, including the Global Ethic and the people’s empowerment of a democratized United Nations. □

(Reprinted from *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 15, © 1996, University of Hawai’i Press)

#### Footnotes

1. Hans Küng, preface to *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions*, ed. Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel (New York: Continuum, 1993), p. 9.

2. Daisaku Ikeda, “The Human Revolution: A Prerequisite for Lasting Peace,” *McGill Journal of Education* 22, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 257.

3. Richard Causton, *The Buddha in Daily Life* (London: Rider, 1995), p. 11.

4. Küng and Kusche, eds., *A Global Ethic*, p. 36.

5. Daisaku Ikeda, “Peace and Human Security: A Buddhist Perspective for the 21st Century” (lecture presented at the East-West center, Honolulu, Hawai’i, 26 January 1995).

6. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei* (system of value-creating pedagogy) (Tokyo Fuzanbo, 1930).

7. Makiguchi, *Soka Kyoikugaku Taikei*, vol. 1, bk. 1, p. 19, cited in Dayle M. Bethel, introduction to *Education for Creative Living: Ideas and Proposals of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum, ed. Dayle M. Bethel (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), pp. 4–5.

8. For an excellent account of the meaning of *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, see Causton, *The Buddha in Daily Life*, chap. 2.

9. Rick Wilson, “The Three Presidents,” *Seikyo Times* (Los Angeles), November 1994, p. 21.

10. See *Soka Gakkai News* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai Publications Bureau, October, 1991), p. 2.

11. Unless otherwise noted, most of the activities described in the following section are detailed in the pamphlet “Peace, Culture and Education” (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai International, 1994).

12. Daisaku Ikeda, “Spreading the Brilliance of Peace toward the Century of the People,” 1987 peace proposal in *Proposals on Peace and Disarmament toward the 21st Century* (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai International, 1993), p. 64.

13. Daisaku Ikeda, “Dawn of the Century of Humanity,” 1991 peace proposal in *Proposals on Peace and Disarmament*, p. 136.

14. *Proposals on Peace and Disarmament* includes these annual peace proposals from 1985 through 1992. Subsequent peace proposals (1993–1995) have been published in separate pamphlets by SGI-Japan.

15. Daisaku Ikeda, “Culture Is a Spiritual Struggle,” *World Tribune* (Los Angeles), 10 March 1995.

16. Daisaku Ikeda in a dialogue with Josef Derbolav in *Search for a New Humanity* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1992), pp. 167, 157.

17. “University Ranking,” *Keiko and Manabu/May Special Issue — University Data for High-School Students* (Tokyo: Recruit Inc., May 5, 1993).

18. Soka University, *Soka University Bulletin* (Hachioji City, Japan: Soka University, 1992–1993), p. 100.

19. Soka University of America, *University Brochure* (Calabasas: Soka University of America, 1994), p. 4.

20. *Soka University Bulletin* (Hachioji City, Japan, 1993–1994), p. 152.

21. Daisaku Ikeda in a dialogue with Linus Pauling in *A Lifelong Quest for Peace* (Boston and London: Jones & Bardett, 1992), p. 86.

22. Karan Singh in a dialogue with Daisaku Ikeda in *Humanity at a Crossroads: An Intercultural Dialogue* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 127.

23. Bryan Wilson and Karel Dobbelaere, *A Time To Chant: The Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), p. 233.

24. The following luncheon seminar booklets have been published by the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century: *New Paradigms for Intercultural Understanding, Political and Religious Aspects of Global Cultural Conflict*; and *Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism* pts. 1 and 2.

25. Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

26. Robert Thurman, quoted from comments that he made during a panel discussion at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century conference “The U.N. and the World’s Religions: Prospects for a Global Ethic,” Columbia University, New York, October 1994.

# Glenn D. Paige — Professor Emeritus of the University of Hawaii

Daisaku Ikeda's  
Impressions of  
World Figures

**W**e have not yet attained a society in which human life is valued over all else.

We need to support each other, stresses Dr. Glenn D. Paige, professor emeritus of the University of Hawaii. If we encourage and support each other, victory will be ours. There are no heroes or heroines, he insists, in the nonviolence movement. The true "school of nonviolence" is made up of the people in towns and villages the world over who continue to encourage their friends, a smile never far from their lips. Dr. Paige voiced these sentiments on the occasion of receiving a fellowship from the Delhi School of Nonviolence in India [in November 1992].

The renowned American political scientist and educator also stated that the nonviolence movement — though perhaps not yet fully

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recognized — is a truly significant movement that reflects the tide of the times. It is also for this reason that Dr. Paige has continuously applauded the popular movement of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

The tide of the times. Yes, it is unquestionably surging with dynamic momentum from violence to nonviolence. There is no other way for the human race to survive. Mahatma Gandhi writes: “Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute.”<sup>1</sup> And, to paraphrase Tolstoy: The human race must grow up. Just as a child grows into a youth and then an adult, the human race as a whole must transform itself so that it lives in a mature way that will lead to the creation of a nonviolent society.

American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as a spokesman for Americans of African descent who were tired of the physical and verbal abuse and the violence of social oppression to which they were subjected. He waged a nonviolent struggle, declaring: “I’ve seen too much hate to want to hate, myself.”<sup>2</sup> Certainly the entire human race should feel this way after witnessing all too much death, violence and hatred this century.

The bullying that is presently of such concern in Japanese schools is another form of violence. And it is not merely a problem restricted to our children. Bullying in schools is nothing other than a reflection of the cruelty and lack of compassion found in the adult world. The sad fact, too, is that many of the media people who report on such incidents with somber faces are often the very ones who go about trampling on people’s rights.

Those who work tirelessly to foster friendship — ordinary peo-

ple who continue to support and encourage their friends, whether or not others see or recognize their efforts — are the ones who are in fact contributing to the creation of a nonviolent society. These anonymous men and women stand at the very forefront of the times.

### The Courage To Go On

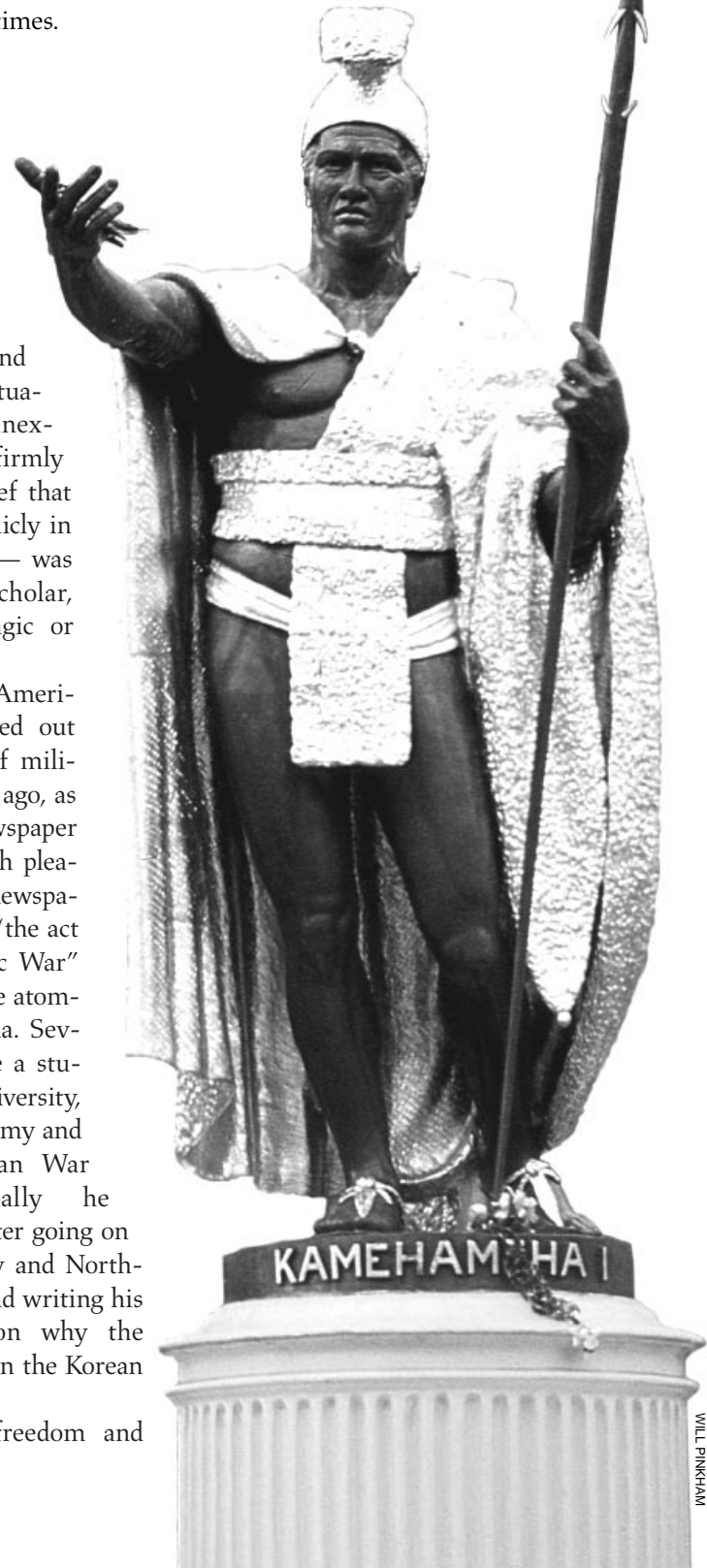
When everything we have always counted on is destroyed in an instant, what should we do?

Dr. Paige has found himself in such a situation. Slowly but inexorably, one of his firmly held beliefs — a belief that he had expressed publicly in speech and in print — was shattered. For a scholar, nothing is more tragic or painful.

Like many other Americans, Dr. Paige started out supporting the use of military force. Fifty years ago, as a sixteen-year-old newspaper boy, it gave him much pleasure to deliver the newspapers that announced “the act that ended the Pacific War” — the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Several years later, while a student at Princeton University, Dr. Paige joined the army and fought in the Korean War (1950–52). Eventually he returned to school, later going on to Harvard University and Northwestern University, and writing his Ph.D. dissertation on why the United States fought in the Korean War.

Dr. Paige loved freedom and

regarded wars against communism — an ideology that threatened individual liberty — as righteous wars. But from the 1960s, a military dictatorship ruled



WILL PINKHAM

SGI President Ikeda met with Dr. Glenn D. Paige, professor emeritus of the University of Hawaii, for the first time in Tokyo, December 1980.

South Korea, and the United States supported it. Dr. Paige protested to the U.S. government, but it did no good. Dictatorial oppression of the people and their rights continued in South Korea through the 1970s. Dr. Paige was deeply disturbed at this turn of events: For what reason, then, had so many lives been sacrificed in the Korean War?

Learning the full extent of the damage wrought on Hiroshima also forced him to radically revise his beliefs. Dr. Paige is a person of great honesty.

One day, when he was thinking deeply about these questions that tormented him, he felt a great energy suddenly arise from within. It dawned on him like a light. A new conviction erupted from the depths of his being: Human beings must not kill other human beings under any circumstances or for any reason. The light of the ancient principle of “not killing” had broken through the darkness of the twentieth century to illuminate the twenty-first.

When the very basis of one’s existence or beliefs crumbles, it is easy to despair, to seek escape, or to blame one’s misfortune on others. But Dr. Paige looked reality straight in the eye and decided to fight. With determination and courage, he began a second life. This is indeed a powerful drama of human revolution.

From the day Dr. Paige realized that the very concept of a righteous war was a contradiction in terms,



he turned his back on a political science that accepts the use of brute force and began to pursue his quest for a political science that is rooted in nonviolence. It was a completely new and unexplored area of study. Many American political scientists, for whom power politics was a given, found the concept hard to comprehend.

Dr. Paige notes that in America, citizens are permitted to own guns for their self-defense. But if we ask whether this creates a sense of security among the people, the answer is no. One of the main reasons why the large cities of the United States are so dangerous is that people carry guns. Here, Dr. Paige asserts, one can find an answer on a familiar, daily level to the larger question of whether being armed equals security.

He also observes that many scholars are equipped to give interpretations or commentaries on a given situation or problem but fail to offer concrete solutions to it.

Dr. Paige, however, is a scholar who believes in action. He has traveled around the world studying, leading seminars, engaging in dialogue, writing, pleading the cause of peace to political leaders, forging links among people and spreading the network of nonviolence.

### Respect for Human Life

Dr. Paige is a man of great moderation, gentleness and humility. But when he talks of the arrogance of leaders who do not value human life, his gaze grows fierce. He says he will never forget the words of a leader who decided to send U.S. troops to fight in the Korean War — a war in which millions of lives were lost. Dr. Paige asked this person if he, as a fellow Christian, had prayed before making his decision. The man replied in angry tones, “Hell, no!” insisting that his decision had been right, so he had just gone to sleep as usual. Does power



The University of Hawaii at Manoa is a public university founded in 1907. The university's 300-acre campus is located in Manoa Valley, a residential area near the center of metropolitan Honolulu.

paralyze the human heart so that it grows dulled to the preciousness of human life?

When Dr. Paige told me of this incident, I shared with him the story of Bodhisattva Fukyo (Never Despising), which appears in the Lotus Sutra. Enduring physical and verbal abuse, Bodhisattva Fukyo continued to believe that all people possess the Buddha nature, respectfully saluting everyone he met. To respect the life of each and every person — this is the spirit of nonviolence.

There is a saying, “You can’t shake hands with a fist.” The age of threatening people with brute force to induce them to obey one’s will is over. Dr. Paige has high expectations for Japan’s international contributions in such “soft power” spheres as culture, philosophy and humanitarianism.

When Dr. Paige suffered a heart

attack a few years ago, I was deeply concerned and offered fervent prayers for his speedy recovery. Even after this bout of illness, Dr. Paige refuses to let anything distract him from his commitment to realizing a century of nonviolence, no matter what obstacles must be overcome. He will not give up as long as he has breath in his body, he declares. With great faith in human potential, he continues to press for a revolution of human values, saying:

An analogy is provided by the contemporary achievement of placing a human being on the moon. Long considered an impossible dream, it rapidly became a reality when vision, will, skill, science, technology, human organization, training, resources, and public support were combined to make it possi-

ble. Something similar can happen in nonviolent global transformation as the historical preconditions for it begin to converge and to interact with future vision.<sup>3</sup>

Hope has the power to change all. Such faith in humanity is the very marrow of nonviolence. As long as we keep the torch of hope ablaze, the popular movement toward nonviolence cannot fail to triumph. □

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#### Footnotes

1. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1950), p. 194.
2. Martin Luther King Jr., *The Trumpet of Conscience* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 74.
3. Glenn D. Paige, *Gandhi's Contribution to Nonviolent Global Awakening* (New Delhi: Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, 1991), p. 17.

*This is the fifteenth installment in a series of discussions on the Lotus Sutra between SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai Study Department Chief Katsuji Saito and Vice Chiefs Takanori Endo and Haruo Suda. It first appeared in the April 1996 issue of the Daibyakurenge, the Soka Gakkai study journal.*

*In this installment, they discuss the vital importance of the teaching of the Lotus Sutra for the twenty-first century, touching on the principle of the replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle; the predictions of enlightenment for Purua, Ananda, Rahula and other voice-hearer disciples; the "unification of the practitioners" and "unification of the teachings," the parable of the gem in the robe; and other matters explained in "Prophecy of Enlightenment for Five Hundred Disciples" and "Prophecies Conferred on Learners and Adepts," the eighth and ninth chapters of the Lotus Sutra.*

**Saito:** I had the opportunity to sit in on your meeting [February 16, 1996], President Ikeda, with Dr. Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, who has done a great deal of research on the Lotus Sutra. I found the discussion profoundly moving.

Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya lost her husband at a young age and had to raise her son alone. Undeterred by the difficulties of her situation, for four decades she has tirelessly pursued her research on the Lotus Sutra. Adding to the challenge, for most of

that time her country was governed by a totalitarian regime. Her study of Buddhism cannot by any stretch of the imagination have been easy.

Your discussion with the Russian scholar seemed to confirm the universality of the Lotus Sutra, which has transcended national boundaries to capture the hearts of truly enormous numbers of people living under widely varying circumstances.

**Ikeda:** Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya is a person of tremendous character. She possesses genuine humility and profound humanity.

Perhaps it is for this reason that she has grasped the outstanding merits of the Lotus Sutra. From speaking with her, I could see that she has a deep understanding of the sutra.

How can one grasp the essence of the paean to humankind that pulses in the Lotus Sutra? The truth of the Lotus Sutra can be found only within the human heart; it definitely cannot be comprehended with the intellect alone. Therein lies the fascination of studying the Lotus Sutra; and also the difficulty. Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya has done research on the

# DIALOGUE ON THE LOTUS SUTRA



THE WISDOM OF THE LOTUS SUTRA—  
A DISCUSSION ON RELIGION IN THE  
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY



Lotus Sutra that indeed touches on this essence, on the human heart.

**Suda:** Her answer to why the Lotus Sutra has been embraced by so many people and spread so widely was very clear. The Lotus Sutra, she explained, engendered a completely new way of thinking. She characterized this as the understanding that people are fundamentally free, and can themselves change the course of their own destiny. This perspective of the Lotus Sutra inwardly liberates people; and it is this, she said, that has held such a powerful attraction.

**Saito:** In the course of our dialogue, we have discussed this aspect of the Lotus Sutra from a variety of angles.

**Endo:** Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya's remarks on the important role that the Lotus Sutra may play in the twenty-first century were also impressive.

The Lotus Sutra, she said, prompts each person to reflect on the purpose for their actions, their ultimate goals in life, and the direction in which the human race is heading. She suggested that the

Lotus Sutra's function lies in getting people to think along these lines.

This is in fact the view of the Lotus Sutra that you, President Ikeda, mentioned in our first discussion, which was on the theme, "Surmounting the absence of philosophy in our age."

**Saito:** Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya at one point credited you and the SGI with breathing new life into her research. She also said that she hoped her work would be of service to humankind. Hearing these words, pervaded with her sense of mission to dedicate herself to the good of others, was most refreshing.

**Ikeda:** To work for the sake of others — that is the spirit of a true scholar. Whatever the field, without this spirit one cannot accomplish anything great. In the present age, this spirit seems to have been all but forgotten.

**Suda:** There are some who even go so far as to proclaim that other people's happiness is their misfortune, and that other people's misfortunes are a cause for their happiness.

**Saito:** Such people are the sad victims of the competitive society we live in, their lives rendered dark and perverse.

**Ikeda:** The truth is that devoting ourselves to others' happiness is a necessary condition for becoming genuinely happy ourselves.

**Endo:** From studies in the area of depth psychology, Carl Jung (1875–1961) and other psychologists have described the "ideal life" as something like this: In infancy, to have a sense of security in being embraced in the love of parents and others;



SGI President Ikeda meets with Dr. Margarita Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Studies at the Seikyo Shimbun Building, Tokyo, Feb. 16, 1996.

during youth, to make tenacious efforts to seek something higher, something sacred or divine; in middle age, to serve others; and in old age, to live with hope, wisdom and a sense of absolute confidence in the value of the life that one has led.

**Ikeda:** Working tenaciously to seek something lofty, serving others, and leading a long and fulfilled existence — this is very similar to the way of life of a bodhisattva. Restoring such a way of life will be a fundamental concern of the twenty-first century.

### The Struggles of the Citizens of Leningrad

**Suda:** The siege of Leningrad (present-day St. Petersburg), which came up in your discussion with Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, produced many instances of human drama, of people acting with the spirit of bodhisattvas.

**Ikeda:** As many as a million citizens are said to have perished while the Nazis blockaded the city for almost nine hundred days. The majority of these died of starvation.

A poet put the body of her deceased husband on a child's sled and pulled it to Piskarevsky Cemetery on the city's outskirts. It was painful for her to have to place her husband's body along with the many other corpses piled there. Whenever she walked along the road, exhausted and hungry, having to frequently stop to rest, she would pass women similarly pulling sleds bearing corpses similarly wrapped in sheets or blankets. She wrote, "Really will there be a victory for me? What comfort will I find in it? Let me be. Let me be forgotten. I will live alone. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

**Endo:** I understand that you once visited Piskarevsky Cemetery.

**Ikeda:** I laid a wreath of flowers and offered heartfelt prayers for the eternal happiness of those buried there. One headstone in the cemetery bears the inscription, "Let no one forget; let nothing be forgotten!"<sup>2</sup>

The history of Leningrad calls out to us with the weight of a million lives, each of them unique and irreplaceable: "Peace! Realize peace, no matter what it takes!" "Such a tragedy must never again be repeated!" To bring this unvoiced cry to all

people, I will continue to travel the world, meet with people and conduct dialogue.

**Saito:** What sustained the citizens of Leningrad amid such hardship?

**Ikeda:** Various explanations have been given, but radio broadcasts seem to have been an important factor.

**Endo:** All transmissions were by wired radio. Possession of ordinary radio receivers was reportedly made a capital offense [at the outset of the war, the aim being to prevent citizens from listening to foreign broadcasts].

**Ikeda:** That's right. Without any food and holed up in cold rooms with nothing to do, people looked forward to the poetry readings and musical performances that came to them over the radio.

But if just staying alive was an ordeal for those listening, those making the transmissions were also hanging on for dear life. There was a poet who, after finishing a reading for a broadcast, collapsed in the studio from hunger and died several days later. In another instance, a singer who performed was so frail he had to support himself with a cane. He died that very night.

In the studio, there was a rake-like wooden device in the shape of the letter "T." This was to support performers if they were too weak to stand.

The director of the studio encouraged the performers with all his being: "In thousands of apartments they are awaiting your voice."<sup>3</sup>

When the radio transmissions were discontinued because of the power shortage, citizens eagerly offered to have their rations cut in order for the transmissions to be resumed.<sup>4</sup>

The desperate spirit of those involved in the broadcasts to somehow give hope and inspiration ignited the flame of courage in the people's frozen hearts. There were interruptions in the supply of food, heat and light. And when hope itself had been lost, it was the voices and words calling out to their spirits that sustained people's lives. Not only the stomach grows hungry; the spirit, too, requires nourishment.

**Saito:** This really makes one contemplate just how important culture is.

**Ikeda:** It is said that thousands of sailors in the Russian navy whiled away their time at sea by reading Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.<sup>5</sup>

There was an episode of particular note. Some writers in Leningrad had the idea of preserving the experience of life under the state of siege in a book. But the authorities would not give them permission. A good deal later the approval did come through, but by that time many of the writers had died, and those who survived were too weak and emaciated to work. Ultimately, the project came to

nought. Journalist Harrison Salisbury describes the situation in these terms: ". . . people held themselves together by the consciousness of being needed. They began to die when they had nothing to do. Nothing-to-do was more terrible than a bombing raid."<sup>6</sup>

The reason for the delay in permission being granted was that no one among the authorities wanted to take responsibility for approving the project. Bureaucratism robbed the writers of their hope, and with it their lives. It's a fearful thing when those in positions of authority do not understand the people's hearts. This is a point that leaders in the SGI need to grasp from the depth of their own being.

At any rate, it was the spirit and determination "to hang on for others," "to sing to the best of my ability for the sake of all," and "to write for the sake of posterity" that sustained these individuals and enabled them to support one another. Our true selves shine and the underlying strength of our lives wells forth when we exert ourselves for others. This is human nature. And this is the way of

life the Lotus Sutra teaches.

This time, let's discuss "Prophecy of Enlightenment for Five Hundred Disciples" and "Prophecies Conferred on Learners and Adepts,"<sup>7</sup> the eighth and ninth chapters of the Lotus Sutra. These chapters conclude the teaching of the replacement of the three vehicles of the voice-hearers, *pratyekabuddhas* and bodhisattvas (Learning, Realization and Bodhisattva) with the one vehicle of Buddhahood, which is the main theme of the Lotus Sutra's first half (or theoretical teaching).

**From "People Who Are Saved" to "People Who Save Others"**

The way followed by the sons of the Buddha,  
because they are well learned in expedient means,  
is wonderful beyond conception. They know how most beings delight in a little Law and are fearful of great wisdom. Therefore the bodhisattvas pose as voice-hearers or *pratyekabuddhas*, employing countless expedient



The Troitskiy Bridge across the Neva River in St. Petersburg, Russia.

STEVE RAMER/CORBIS

means  
to convert the different kinds of  
living beings.  
They proclaim themselves to be  
voice-hearers  
and say they are far removed  
from the Buddha way,  
and so bring emancipation to  
immeasurable multitudes,  
allowing them all to achieve  
success.  
Limited in aspiration, lazy and  
indolent though the  
multitudes are,  
bit by bit they are led to the  
attainment of Buddhahood.  
Inwardly, in secret, the sons act  
as bodhisattvas,  
but outwardly they show them-  
selves as voice-hearers.  
They seem to be lessening  
desires out of hatred for birth  
and death,  
but in truth they are purifying  
the Buddha lands.  
Before the multitude they seem  
possessed of the three poisons  
or manifest the signs of heretical  
views.  
My disciples in this manner  
use expedient means to save  
living beings.  
(*The Lotus Sutra*, ch. 8, pp.  
146–47)

**Saito:** As is clear from the titles, the main theme of these two chapters is the bestowal of prophecy. They contain the culmination of the Buddha’s predictions of enlightenment for the voice-hearers.

The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai of China designates the eight chapters from the “Expedient Means,” the second chapter, through the “Learners and Adepts,” the ninth chapter, as the “revelation”<sup>8</sup> section of the theoretical teaching. From a doctrinal standpoint, these eight chapters explain the replace-

ment of the three vehicles with the one vehicle. In terms of narrative drama, however, the central element is probably the bestowal of prophecies of enlightenment upon the voice-hearers.

**Ikeda:** It is the drama of the voice-hearers opening their eyes. Without understanding the significance

Buddha, understanding their minds, first expounded the Hinayana teachings to them as a path to gain release from suffering.

**Endo:** Their mistake lay in their becoming attached to these teachings.

**Suda:** In the fourth chapter, “Belief and Understanding,” the voice-

**Those who hear the Lotus Sutra and stand up with the “wish shared by the mentor and disciple as one” — that is, with the desire to lead people to enlightenment as the Buddha does — are the bodhisattvas of the Lotus Sutra.**

of this drama, one cannot grasp the true meaning of the doctrine of the replacement of the three vehicles with the one vehicle.

What is the awakening of the voice-hearers? In conclusion, it has to do with their changing from “people who are saved” to “people who save others.” They awaken, in other words, to the “great vow” to unflinchingly lead others to happiness.

The voice-hearers had sought the Buddha’s teaching out of the desire to escape — to be “saved” from — the sufferings of this impure world. The

hearers confess, “in the midst of birth and death we undergo burning anxieties, delusions, and ignorance, delighting in and clinging to lesser doctrines” (LS4, 86).

**Ikeda:** “Lesser doctrines” means the Hinayana teachings. But the Buddha’s true intention was not contained in the Hinayana. The Buddha did not want his disciples to wind up being merely people who seek to be led to salvation, and so he expounded the Lotus Sutra, which clarifies his true intention.

What you should seek, he tells the voice-hearers, is not the enlightenment of the Hinayana but the wisdom of the Buddha. He is saying in effect: "I want to enable all people to gain the Buddha's wisdom and raise their state of life so that they can freely lead others to happiness just as the Buddha does." This is the Buddha's true intention.

**Saito:** The expression, "just as the Buddha does," points to the oneness of mentor and disciple.

**Ikeda:** Exactly. Those who hear the Lotus Sutra and stand up with the "wish shared by the mentor and disciple as one" — that is, with the desire to lead people to enlightenment as the Buddha does — are the bodhisattvas of the Lotus Sutra. This wish or vow is at the same time the "awareness of the Buddha's children" — the realization: "I am a child of the Buddha, and therefore I can inherit in its entirety the wisdom that is the Buddha's legacy."

A little earlier, we talked about the bodhisattva-like activities of the people responsible for radio transmissions during the siege of Leningrad. It can also be said that Shakyamuni's voice-hearer disciples change from being merely voice-hearers who "hear the Buddha's voice" into voice-hearers who, as bodhisattvas, "enable others to hear the Buddha's voice."

The eight chapters comprising the revelation section of the theoretical teaching depict the drama of the voice-hearers carrying out their human revolution along precisely these lines. The chapters we have discussed up to this point show Shariputra and the four great voice-hearer disciples<sup>9</sup> enacting this drama of awakening. But in "Five Hundred Disciples" and "Learners and

Adepts," we finally see all of the voice-hearers becoming involved.

### The Prediction of Enlightenment for All Voice-hearers

**Suda:** I'd like to start by discussing the general flow of these two chapters. At the outset of "Five Hundred Disciples," Shakyamuni bestows a prophecy of enlightenment on Purna, who had delighted upon hearing the Buddha's preaching in the "Parable of the Phantom City," the seventh chapter. Among Shakyamuni's disciples, Purna was known as foremost in preaching the Law and also as foremost in eloquence.

**Endo:** At one time, Purna undertook a journey to spread Shakyamuni's teaching among the people in another land. A Buddhist text records an episode that occurred prior to his departure. Some have argued that this episode is actually about a different person with the same name. Still, I would like to share it because, scholarly disagreements notwithstanding, it seems to shed light on the character of Purna as the disciple foremost in preaching the Law.

When Purna tells the Buddha he is going to embark on a journey of propagation, Shakyamuni says to him: "Purna, the people of that land are known to be rough-tempered. Without understanding the reason of things, they constantly speak ill of others. They will very likely deride and abuse you. When that happens, what will you do?"

Purna replies, "If that is the case, I will say to myself, 'Because they do not strike me with their fists, the inhabitants of this land are good people.'"

"Then what will you do," the Buddha continued, "if they strike you?"

"I will say to myself," said Purna, "'Because they do not beat me with staves, the inhabitants of this country are good people.'"

"If they beat you with staves, what will you do?"

"I will say to myself, 'Because they do not lash me with whips, they are good people.'"

"What if they lash you with whips?"

"I will say to myself, 'Because they do not injure me with swords, they are good people.'"

"What if they injure you with swords?"

"I will say to myself, 'Because they do not kill me, they are good people.'"

"What, then, will you do, Purna, if you are killed by the people of that country?"

The disciple answered without hesitation: "There are some who seek death. Because in being killed I would, without seeking death, be able to discard this poor, impure body for the sake of the Buddhist Law, it would bring me the greatest joy."

Shakyamuni's mind was put at ease. "Very well, then, Purna," he said. "If you have such determination, you will be all right. Go then."<sup>10</sup>

Purna, it is related, then went to that land and converted many people to the Buddha's teaching.

**Ikeda:** He realized his wish. Purna's name is variously translated into Chinese as "Wishes Fulfilled" and "Fulfillment." True to his name, I'm sure his life was indeed one of great fulfillment.

**Suda:** From the fact that he was known as foremost in preaching the Law and foremost in eloquence, we can see him as someone who was skilled at discourse and who possessed a refreshing eloquence.

The Sanskrit text of the “Five Hundred Disciples” chapter says, “Purna reveals the Law to the four kinds of believers, teaches them, praises and encourages them, and causes them to feel delight, and he never tires of expounding the Law.” As this suggests, it was not that he possessed superficial technique, that he was a skillful conversationalist. For that matter, when it comes to speaking skill alone, probably no one can match the glibness of a con artist.

**Ikeda:** Kumarajiva’s translation of the sutra speaks of Purna’s “ability in teaching, benefiting and delighting the four kinds of believers” (LS8, 144). He caused people to feel joy by preaching the Law to them. That is where Purna placed his emphasis. When someone truly feels delight from the bottom of his or her heart, those around the person change.

What was the source of Purna’s powers of eloquence? One factor was probably his passion for spreading and sharing with others the teaching of his mentor. No matter how skilled at speaking people may be, if they lack burning passion, they will not be able to move the hearts of others. And the source of passion is conviction. Also, I think it was Purna’s honesty and integrity. He was a “person of sincerity,” as it were. No doubt many were touched by his warmheartedness and thoughtfulness.

**Saito:** In “Five Hundred Disciples,” Purna receives a specific prophecy that in the future he will become a Buddha called Law Bright Thus Come One. I think the meaning is that he will illuminate people’s lives with the brilliant light of the Law.

**Ikeda:** SGI members who exert

themselves for kosen-rufu similarly illuminate the lives of many others.

**Endo:** When they hear the specific prophecy for Purna, the twelve hundred arhats rejoice. Shakyamuni says that he will bestow prophecies on them, too, and predicts enlightenment for five hundred. This is where “five hundred disciples” in the chapter’s title comes from. These five hundred are represented by Kaundinya (Ajanta Kaundinya), who was Shakyamuni’s very first disciple.

*Arhats* are voice-hearers of the highest rank who have attained the enlightenment of the Hinayana teachings. It may be that the five hundred *arhats* were disciples who played a central role in the Buddhist order from its early days. In other texts, there are accounts of Shakyamuni taking five hundred disciples with him on journeys to preach the Law. This may also be why, in his prophecy of enlightenment for them, Shakyamuni gives all five hundred the same name — Universal Brightness Thus Come One.

As for the remaining seven hundred disciples, no specific prophecy of enlightenment is made for them in the sutra. However, at the outset of the “Teacher of the Law,” the tenth chapter, Shakyamuni predicts enlightenment for all those gathered in the assembly where the Lotus Sutra is being expounded. We may surmise that these seven hundred disciples are among the recipients of that prophecy.

**Suda:** At the beginning of “Learners and Adepts,” prophecies of enlightenment are bestowed first on Ananda and Rahula. Among Shakyamuni’s disciples, Ananda was said to be foremost in hearing the Buddha’s teachings — that is, he listened to

Shakyamuni expound the Law more than any other disciple — and after Shakyamuni’s death he played a key role in efforts to compile his teachings as sutras. Rahula was Shakyamuni’s son from before he renounced the world. Among the Buddha’s disciples, he was known as foremost in inconspicuous practice.

Shakyamuni also makes predictions of enlightenment for two thousand learners and adepts. These are voice-hearers who have not yet reached the stage of arhat. A “learner” means someone still engaged in the process of learning; an “adept” is someone whose studies are complete.

**Ikeda:** It is interesting to note that the original term for “adept” is composed of two characters meaning “no learning” (Jp. *mugaku*), the implication in a Buddhist context being that the person has completed their learning and has no further need of study. In modern Japanese usage, this term has exactly the opposite meaning — that of “lack of learning,” “uneducated,” or “ignorant.” At first glance, therefore, when one is unaware of this distinction, it would seem to suggest that those with “no learning” are above those with learning!

**Suda:** Yet, despite the distinction between learners and adepts, they are all voice-hearers who have not yet attained the enlightenment of arhats.

**Saito:** In short, in these two chapters, prophecies of enlightenment are bestowed on all voice-hearers irrespective of their degree of attainment in practice. The specific predictions concerning the titles of the Buddhas they will become, and the names of the *kalpas* when, and the lands where, they will be active, are as follows.

Shakyamuni predicts that Purna, in an age called Treasure Bright and a land called Good and Pure, will become a Buddha named Law Bright Thus Come One. He predicts that the five hundred arhats will become Buddhas called Universal Brightness Thus Come One. He predicts that Ananda, in an age called Wonderful Sound Filling Everywhere and a land called Ever-Standing Victory Banner, will become a Buddha called Mountain Sea Wisdom Unrestricted Power King Thus Come One. Rahula, he predicts, will become a Buddha called Stepping on Seven Treasure Flowers Thus Come One. And he predicts that the two thousand learners and adepts will become Buddhas called Jewel Sign Thus Come One.

Later, in the “Encouraging Devotion,” the thirteenth chapter, Shakyamuni says, “I earlier made a general statement saying that all the voice-hearers had received such a prophecy” (LS13, 191).

**Ikeda:** As I have mentioned before, the spirit of the bestowal of prophecy upon the voice-hearers is that of a bestowal of prophecy upon all people. The promise of enlightenment does not apply only to the voice-hearers; all people can attain Buddhahood. All people can inherit the Buddha’s wisdom and become capable of leading others to happiness. This idea is indicated in the prophecy of enlightenment upon all voice-hearers, in which no distinction is made between arhats, learners and adepts.

Nichiren Daishonin says, “T’ien-t’ai establishes that the attainment of Buddhahood by those in the two realms of Learning [voice-hearers] and Realization [*pratyekabuddhas*] is proof that all persons without exception can become Buddhas” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Dai-*

*shonin*, vol. 5, p. 25). In the provisional teachings that preceded the Lotus Sutra, all voice-hearers were deemed to be incapable of ever attaining Buddhahood. But in the Lotus Sutra, they are revealed to be capable of attaining Buddhahood. This clarifies that, not only the people of the two vehicles, but all beings in the ten worlds can attain Buddhahood.

That is because the life of one voice-hearer is endowed with all ten worlds. So the bestowal of a prophecy of enlightenment upon one voice-hearer indicates that all ten worlds of life can manifest the world of Buddhahood. The fact that the ten worlds can manifest the world of Buddhahood means that living beings in any world can attain Buddhahood.

On the other hand, if the voice-hearers (i.e., those in the world of Learning) could not become Buddhas, it would mean that the world of Learning in the lives of bodhisattvas, as well as the world of Learning in the life of the Buddha, could not manifest the world of Buddhahood.

**Endo:** If neither bodhisattvas nor Buddhas could attain Buddhahood, Buddhism would not exist.

**Ikeda:** The enlightenment of the voice-hearers and *pratyekabuddhas* (the people of the two vehicles), therefore, is the very cornerstone of Buddhism.

Now, the voice-hearers comprised people who were closest to Shakyamuni, people constantly at the Buddha’s side. If Shakyamuni could not enable them to attain Buddhahood, then we would have to wonder about the purpose of Buddhism.

The voice-hearers and *pratyekabuddhas* were held to have “scorched the seeds” of Buddhahood in their lives. Shakyamuni’s enabling them to become Buddhas reveals the

power of the Lotus Sutra to enable all people to attain Buddhahood. The sutra in effect proclaims to all people: “You, too, can develop the same state of life as the Buddha.” This is the spirit of the bestowal of prophecy.

**Suda:** Nichiren Daishonin expresses the same spirit with his own words. In the “Ongi Kuden” (Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings), it says:

Now, when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they are bestowing on both learners and adepts a prophecy that, as Shakyamuni Buddha said, “all persons [will be] equal to me, without any distinction between us,” are they not? . . . On all of them, wise and ignorant alike, we bestow the prophecy of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, “forcing them to listen, though it angers them.” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 735)

**Ikeda:** That is the spirit of kosen-rufu — to expound the Mystic Law to people whether they are wise or ignorant, whether they believe or disbelieve. Those who reject the teaching will be led to enlightenment through a “poison-drum” relationship,<sup>11</sup> that is, through the benefit of a reverse relationship. This is the true bestowal of prophecy. The members of the SGI have put this teaching into practice. The spirit of the Lotus Sutra is alive and well within the SGI.

### The “Unification of the Practitioners” and “Unification of the Teachings”

**Saito:** As we have discussed previously, starting in the “Simile and Parable,” the third chapter, one after another the voice-hearers,

beginning with Shariputra, receive predictions of future enlightenment. This signifies their transformation from “people who are saved” into “people who save others.” The voice-hearers, in other words, become bodhisattvas.

**Endo:** In “Expedient Means,” Shakyamuni says, “I employ only the single vehicle way / to teach and convert the bodhisattvas, / I have no voice-hearer disciples” (LS2, 45). This is the “unification of the practitioners” (i.e., the unification of the persons practicing the three vehicles within the one vehicle); and we should note that it is confirmed already in “Expedient Means.” This means that all who are instructed through the path of the one vehicle (i.e., the Lotus Sutra) are bodhisattvas.

**Saito:** Unification, here, means amalgamating things usually thought of as distinct or separate, by viewing them from a higher perspective. In terms of the teaching, unification means that the Buddha expounds only the one Buddha vehicle, and that there are no separate teachings of the three vehicles (of voice-hearers, *pratyekabuddhas* and bodhisattvas). When we view the three vehicles as distinct teachings, we view them from the standpoint of the people who receive these teachings. From the Buddha’s perspective, they are unified; he is expounding only one path to attaining Buddhahood, and that is the one Buddha vehicle.

In terms of the practitioners, the Buddha teaches only bodhisattvas who cherish the aspiration to attain Buddhahood; there are no distinctions of voice-hearer, *pratyekabuddha* and bodhisattva among the disciples whom he instructs. From the standpoint of the “unification of the practitioners,” the Buddha discerns

that all people in the depths of their lives aspire to become Buddhas and have a seeking spirit for the Buddha’s wisdom. From that perspective, all people alike are unified as bodhisattvas.

At the outset of “Five Hundred Disciples,” Purna, having in the preceding chapter, “Phantom City,” heard Shakyamuni expound the causes and conditions uniting the disciples with the mentor since the remote past of *sanzen-jintengo*, realizes “the wish that we have had deep in our hearts from the start” (LS8, 144). In other words, he indicates that, since the distant past, he has yearned to attain Buddhahood, and has carried out bodhisattva practice together with his mentor, Shakyamuni. Before becoming a voice-hearer, he was a bodhisattva; and this, he realizes, is his true identity.

The “unification of the practitioners” of the Lotus Sutra clarifies that “deep in their hearts” all people are originally bodhisattvas. From this perspective, all people are equal, not in terms of appearance or abilities, but on the level of life itself; they are a single unified entity.

**Ikeda:** This most egalitarian understanding of life is substantiated by the principles of the mutual possession of the ten worlds and three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

**Suda:** In “Learners and Adepts,” it is clarified that Ananda is “foremost in hearing the Buddha’s teachings,” not in his practice as a voice-hearer, but based on his “original wish” as a bodhisattva. This is because, through hearing the Law continuously as the Buddha’s attendant and relaying it to others, he can guide others to attain Buddhahood.

**Endo:** The same is true of Rahula’s virtue of being foremost in inconspicuous practice. Rahula was born as the son of Shakyamuni. In becoming Shakyamuni’s disciple after the latter attained enlightenment, it is explained, Rahula did not become a voice-hearer but carried out inconspicuous practice with the single-minded hope of attaining Buddhahood. His practice, of which others were unaware (hence, called “inconspicuous”), was bodhisattva practice. The same is true of the voice-hearers at the levels of learner and adept.

**Ikeda:** The “Five Hundred Disciples” and “Learners and Adepts” chapters reveal that all voice-hearers are originally bodhisattvas. We can view the revelation of the true identity of the voice-hearers as the theme of these two chapters.

Of course, from a more profound perspective, even the view that they are “originally bodhisattvas” or that they have “secured their attainment of Buddhahood” is from the standpoint of the theoretical teaching, or the Lotus Sutra’s first half. From the standpoint of the essential teaching, or the latter half of the sutra (i.e., in terms of the implicit meaning), it is the revelation that “our life has from the beginning been a Buddha” (GZ, 788).

The standpoint of the theoretical teaching is that a person carries out bodhisattva practice and then becomes a Buddha; in other words, that one proceeds from the cause to the effect, from the nine worlds to the world of Buddhahood. By contrast, the essential teaching takes the position that a Buddha enlightened from the remote past carries out bodhisattva practice; in other words, that one proceeds from the effect to the cause,

from the world of Buddhahood to the nine worlds. From this standpoint, the life of a bodhisattva is in fact none other than the life of the Buddha.

Also, their recollecting “the wish that we have had deep in our hearts from the start” means that they base themselves on their awareness of the Buddha’s having sown the seed of enlightenment in their lives in the remote past.

To put it another way, in supposing that they were earnestly making

effect to the cause.) This Buddha carries out this activity, without interruption or change, eternally — over past, present and future.

When the voice-hearers look at themselves, they realize that, as common mortals of *kuon ganjo*, they have all along been in a relation of oneness with the Buddha. At one with the mentor, they are carrying out bodhisattva practice toward the goal of *kosen-rufu*. The essential teaching reveals to the beings in the

the doors of the communist world were closed tight, as though frozen over with ice or barred by iron. But there was no reason why, differences notwithstanding, exchange could not take place based on the recognition of a common humanity. That was my conviction.

**Saito:** When you went to the former Soviet Union, many people criticized you, asking, for example, why a religious leader was traveling to an atheist nation. But your reply to these attacks was perfectly clear: “Because there are people there.” I recall being moved by your actions, thinking that this was truly an example of the “unification of the practitioners” in the present age.

**Endo:** In concrete terms, exchange on a human level means exchange in the realms of culture and education. To cultivate such exchange is truly to carry out the practice of the Lotus Sutra.

**Ikeda:** Russia has produced many great writers, including Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, who urged people to transcend differences among themselves and “return to the human being.”

**Suda:** Dostoevsky, like Dr. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, was born in what is today St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad).

**Ikeda:** That’s right. In the late nineteenth century, Russian intellectuals were divided into two camps: “Westernists,” who were enamored with the thought and tradition of Western Europe, and nationalistic “Slavophiles.” Dostoevsky characterized the members of both of these groups as “unhappy wanderers”

**Broadly speaking, the unification of the practitioners means transcending all differences among people by viewing things from a deeper level, and perceiving that all are equally worthy of respect.**

efforts to become Buddhas, the voice-hearers were proceeding from cause to effect (i.e., practicing from the standpoint of theoretical teaching). But once they ascend the mountain of the Lotus Sutra and look around, the world at once opens up and they behold the vast panorama of the universe. At that point, they understand that the Buddha enlightened since the remote past has been ceaselessly carrying out bodhisattva practice to guide the beings of the ten worlds. (This is the standpoint of the essential teaching, of proceeding from the

assembly this profound aspect of their lives.

I hope we can discuss this matter in more detail on some occasion.

#### Return to the Prime Point of the Human Being

**Ikeda:** Broadly speaking, the unification of the practitioners means transcending all differences among people by viewing things from a deeper level, and perceiving that all are equally worthy of respect.

During the Cold War, for example,

An engraving of the great Russian writer Dostoevsky (1821–81), who urged people to transcend differences among themselves and “return to the human being.”

who had become alienated from the people. He cried:

Oh, all this Slavophilism and this Westernism is a great, although historically inevitable, misunderstanding. . . . Yes, the Russian’s destiny is incontestably all-European and universal. To become a genuine and all-round Russian means, perhaps (and this you should remember), to become brother of all men.<sup>12</sup>

“Become a human being!” he cried, in other words. “By doing so, you will become the friend of all people.”

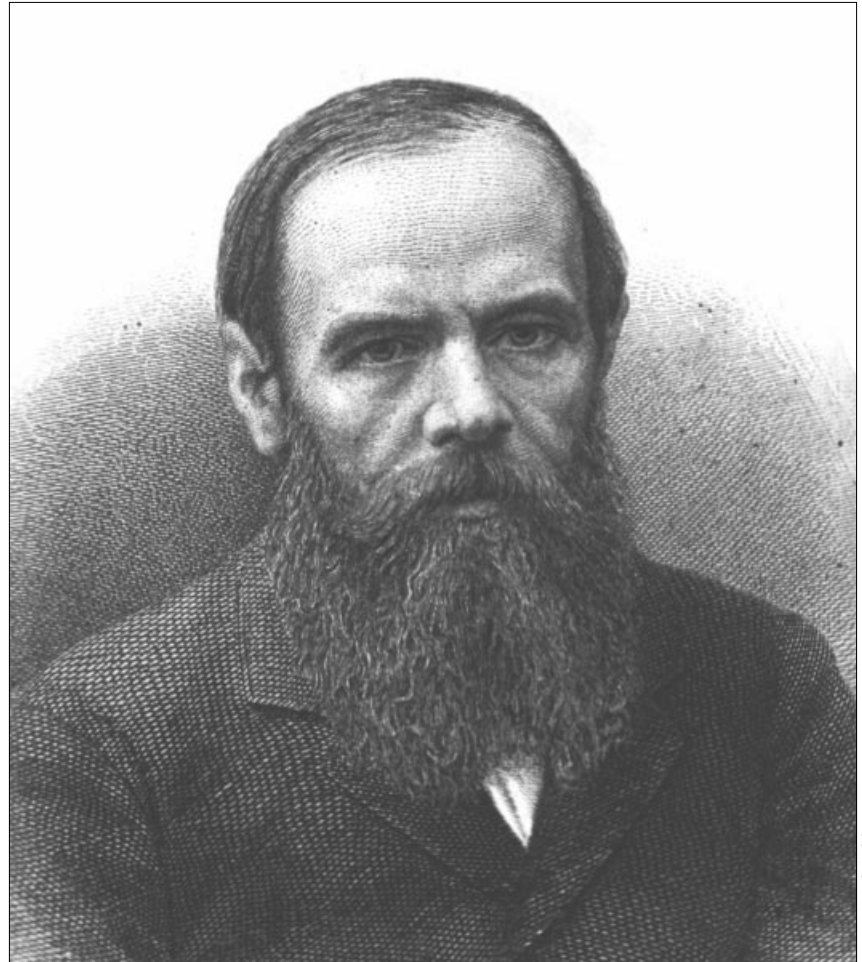
**Endo:** I am reminded of your account of your impressions on visiting the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.

You wrote:

In the distant future, after countless generations of our grandchildren’s grandchildren, when people sift through the past, they will be struck only by the brilliance of human life itself, which far transcends the realm of social systems such as socialism and capitalism. That brilliance is the source of all humanistic and creative culture.<sup>13</sup>

That was more than twenty years ago. Humanity, it seems, is increasingly approaching this realization.

**Saito:** I cannot help but feel that there are strong similarities between Dostoevsky’s thought and the current of humanism and global citi-



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zenship that you have been working to develop, President Ikeda.

**Ikeda:** Russia is a great country. It has produced some of the world’s finest literature and music. And, having concluded its grandiose experiment with socialism, it is now struggling to open a new phase in human history.

The people of Russia are pioneers of humankind. It seems to me they are taking the lead in dealing with problems that the rest of humanity will have to face in the future. Therefore, their worries are great, and their mission is likewise immense.

Dostoevsky writes of “becoming brother of all men.” What a wonderful sense of mission this is! We have a great deal still to learn from the

lofty spirit of Russia.

Incidentally, in connection with the “Five Hundred Disciples” chapter, we cannot omit discussion of the parable of the gem in the robe.

### The Parable of the Gem in the Robe

**Endo:** Yes. After receiving a prophecy of enlightenment from Shakyamuni, the five hundred disciples relate the parable of the gem in the robe as “evidence” of their joy.

Forgetting themselves in their elation, the five hundred arhats kneel down in veneration at Shakyamuni’s feet. They regret their mistake in having been satisfied with the small wisdom of arhats and not seeking the wisdom of the Thus

Come One, and reproach themselves. Describing themselves in their earlier foolishness as having been like a “poor wanderer,” they relate the parable of the gem in the robe. It goes as follows.<sup>14</sup>

A poor man visits the house of a dear friend. There he feasts and drinks heartily, and falls asleep in a drunken stupor. At that time, the friend suddenly has to go off on urgent official business. Before leaving, the friend sews a “priceless jewel” into the lining of the man’s robe. Because the poor man is asleep drunk, he is completely unaware of this. And he remains ignorant of the jewel later as he goes wandering from one country to another. Over the years, he becomes completely destitute and his life is filled with suffering. He works to clothe and feed himself, but his suffering continues. And whenever he gets a little money, he feels fully content.

**Saito:** He was living a hand-to-mouth existence.

**Ikeda:** There are many people today who, spiritually, are in similarly precarious positions.

**Suda:** At length, the friend encounters the man again. Seeing his ragged appearance, he tells him:

How absurd, old fellow! Why should you have to do all this for the sake of food and clothing? In the past I wanted to make certain you would be able to live in ease . . . and so . . . I took a priceless jewel and sewed it in the lining of your robe. It must still be there now. But you did not know about it, and fretted and wore yourself out trying to provide a living for yourself. What nonsense! (LS8, 151)

The poor man then sees the gem of which his friend has told him and greatly rejoices.

**Saito:** What is the “priceless jewel”? The sutra describes it as the “determination to seek comprehensive wisdom” and the “desire for comprehensive wisdom” (LS8, 151). “Comprehensive wisdom” is the wisdom of the Buddha. In other words, the priceless jewel is the spirit to seek the Buddha’s wisdom, the spirit of yearning to attain Buddhahood.

As explained in the “Phantom City” chapter, this determination was formed in their lives in the remote past of *sanzen-jintengo* when they heard the Lotus Sutra from Shakyamuni, who was then a bodhisattva. In the parable, this is represented by the gem that had been sewn into the lining of the man’s robe by his good friend. The “good friend,” needless to say, is Shakyamuni.

**Endo:** The man’s wandering in poverty and his contentment with his precarious existence represents the state of life of the voice-hearers, who had studied the Hinayana teachings, felt satisfied with the enlightenment of arhats, and did not seek the wisdom of the Buddha.

The man’s re-encounter with the good friend and finding out about the priceless jewel corresponds to the voice-hearers now hearing the Lotus Sutra. That is, through hearing the Lotus Sutra in the present, they recall the “original wish” to attain Buddhahood they had conceived in the remote past of *sanzen-jintengo*.

**Ikeda:** They return to their “true selves.” This is the “awakening of the voice-hearers.” They wake up from the “drunken stupor of darkness” (that is, ignorance about the

true nature of their lives).

A key word, here, is “recollect.” They return to their own prime point. They perceive the Law that is the well-spring of their own lives. It is a matter of “returning to the self.” It was the stupor of “darkness” that had caused them to forget this. T’ien-t’ai says that this stupor may be either heavy or light.<sup>15</sup>

**Saito:** There is “heavy drunkenness” and “light drunkenness.” “Heavy drunkenness” is the state where one completely has no recollection. This is comparable to being dead drunk. “Light drunkenness” is like the state of someone who is only slightly inebriated at the time but who afterwards forgets everything.

**Ikeda:** While there are differences in degree of “drunkenness,” in either case the person fails to remember. That is what “darkness” means. Because their hearts are shrouded in darkness, they cannot understand the wonder of their own lives.

**Suda:** People who are drunk have a hard time accepting that they are drunk.

**Saito:** And, for that matter, trying to wake someone who has passed out from drink is next to impossible.

**Ikeda:** It seems that for most of us it’s only after receiving a lot of strict encouragement from our seniors in Buddhist practice that we finally wake up in faith.

**Suda:** In the “Ongi Kuden,” the Daishonin says, “Now, when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, they are in effect sobering up from the wine of ignorance” (GZ, 735). The sense of exhilaration we feel when chanting

daimoku is the joy of awakening from the stupor of darkness.

**Endo:** The sutra says, “When the poor man saw the jewel / his heart was filled with great joy” (LS8, 152). The “Ongi Kuden” states regarding this passage:

This passage refers to the great joy we experience when we understand for the first time that our life has from the beginning been a Buddha. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the greatest of all joys. (GZ, 788)

**Ikeda:** We each have “from the beginning been a Buddha.” The “Five Hundred Disciples” chapter speaks of the “wish that we [the Buddha’s disciples] have had deep in our hearts from the start.” In a nutshell, this is the great wish to lead all people to enlightenment. It is this great wish that the voice-hearers have recollected.

Nichiren Daishonin says, “‘Great wish’ refers to the propagation of the Lotus Sutra” (GZ, 736). When we base ourselves on this great wish, we discover the “priceless jewel hidden in the robe.”

**Endo:** I have an image of the “priceless jewel” as something like an inexhaustible wellspring of benefit that enables us to get whatever we desire.

**Ikeda:** When we base ourselves on the great wish for kosen-rufu, all our desires will be realized.

Once at a meeting, after listening with delight to members relate experiences of benefit in faith, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda remarked: “Benefit of the kind mentioned in the experiences given earlier hardly counts as benefit. Supposing the benefit I have

**In a life dedicated to the great wish for kosen-rufu, there is no need for such small-mindedness. It’s a matter of discarding the narrow concerns of the lesser self, allowing them to fall away like “a speck of dust returning to the earth.”**

received is comparable in size to this auditorium, then their benefit is only the size of a finger.”<sup>16</sup> I remember the scene clearly because I attended the meeting and had spoken as a youth division representative.

President Toda had experienced the great and profound benefit of the Mystic Law with his entire being. And he sincerely wanted every Soka Gakkai member without exception to equally gain this great benefit. In these words I could keenly sense his immense mercy.

So he called out, urging us to base our lives on the great wish for kosen-rufu. He told us he wanted to enable us to receive great benefit through working for kosen-rufu. Ultimately, it is we ourselves, not others, who benefit the most from our efforts for kosen-rufu.

**Endo:** Profound significance then attaches to SGI members’ activities.

### Changing Destiny Into Mission

**Ikeda:** When we base ourselves on the great wish for kosen-rufu, then everything, every situation, takes on value for our lives. Nothing around us is without meaning; no effort is wasted.

The Daishonin cries, “All my disciples must cherish the great desire. . . . Since death is the same in either case, you should be willing to offer your life for the Lotus Sutra. Think of this offering as a drop of dew rejoining the ocean or a speck of dust returning to the earth” (MW-1, 250-51).

There are also the golden words, “Like dew entering the ocean, or dirt being added to the earth, your good fortune will neither be lost in lifetime after lifetime, nor decay in world after world” (GZ, 968).

Life, he says, is as evanescent as “dew.” In the greater scheme of things, our bodies in and of them-



selves may seem as insignificant as “dust.” But through manifesting and acting upon the “great wish” of faith, our lives become eternal. Our lives, together with the ocean of the Lotus Sutra and the great earth of the Mystic Law, will never for all eternity disappear or decay. We will be forever connected with the great state of life of the Buddha. This is the Daishonin’s promise. This is the dynamic drama we are enacting.

**Suda:** Speaking of enacting a drama, in “Five Hundred Disciples” there is a passage:

Inwardly, in secret, the sons act as bodhisattvas,  
but outwardly they show themselves as voice-hearers.  
They seem to be lessening desires out of hatred for birth and death,  
but in truth they are purifying the Buddha lands. (LS8, 146)

In other words, outwardly they display the appearance of voice-hearers trying to escape the cycle of birth and death but, in truth, they carry out the practice of bodhisattvas who work to purify the Buddha lands.

**Saito:** Next, Shakyamuni says:

Before the multitude they seem possessed of the three poisons or manifest the signs of heretical views.

My disciples in this manner use expedient means to save living beings. (LS8, 146–47)

In other words, the voice-hearers’ seeming defilement by the three poisons — greed, anger and stupidity — and attachment to erroneous views are just expedient means they employ to lead all people to enlightenment.

**Ikeda:** From our standpoint, we have been born in this world to ful-

fill the “great wish” we have cherished since the remote past. When we have this conviction, we realize that all our sufferings and illusions in this life are expedient means for us to help others become happy.

Were we to appear before others blessed with every good fortune and completely free of suffering, then no one could understand the greatness of the Mystic Law. Furthermore, it is unlikely that we could understand people’s hearts. All our karmic sufferings we ourselves “dared to choose” so that we might overcome them and show proof of victory. We need to be confident of this. Since these are sufferings that we ourselves created in order to triumph over, our victory is certain. We cannot possibly be defeated.

When we awaken to the “great wish” for kosen-rufu, that is, when we realize “from the beginning I have been a Buddha,” then even harsh destiny changes into mission. We are born with sufferings just like everyone else. By always practicing together with the people, we construct lives of ultimate happiness. This is the drama of mission that we enact.

### The SGI Is a Body of People Who Base Themselves on the “Great Wish”

**Saito:** Speaking of turning everything into a source of benefit and value, there is truly a great diversity of people in the SGI. This is because the SGI bases itself not on a narrow, biased “small wish,” but on the “great wish” for the happiness of all humankind.

**Suda:** There are leaders who are highly intelligent or enjoy very favorable circumstances, or who have prestigious academic degrees.

**Once they ascend the mountain of the Lotus Sutra and look around, the world at once opens up and they behold the vast panorama of the universe.**



Again, there are leaders who, while not having degrees or titles, have had to struggle hard in life and who understand people's hearts more than anybody else. I think that each has their mission and role to play.

**Ikeda:** That's exactly right. But we mustn't forget that it definitely wasn't intellectuals who worked desperately to rebuild the Soka Gakkai when Japan stood in ruins at the end of the war. The Gakkai was built by down-to-earth, ordinary people. Though widely derided as a "gathering of sick and poor," it was they who constructed the great movement of people united for peace, culture and education that today spans the world.

Intellectuals have certain strengths and they also have weaknesses. Japanese intellectuals, in particular, rather than trying to protect the

people, exhibit a strong inclination to try to protect themselves and their own interests. In a life dedicated to the great wish for kosen-rufu, there is no need for such small-mindedness. It's a matter of discarding the narrow concerns of the lesser self, allowing them to fall away like "a speck of dust returning to the earth" (MW-1, 251).

Young people in particular should struggle hard to overcome difficulties with the determination that the greater their struggles, the better they will be able to understand people's hearts, and the greater will be their mission.

At any rate, the Lotus Sutra calls out to the voice-hearers and pratyekabuddhas: "Return to the well-spring of life!" "Recollect your great wish!" In terms of concrete action, this means living and work-

ing among the people. Above all, the Lotus Sutra urges them: "Learn from the people!"

Dostoevsky advises intellectuals, "Let us stand there and let us learn the people's humility, their business-like reasoning, the concreteness of their minds."<sup>17</sup> And he warns them, "Society cannot be animated because you do not rely upon the people; spiritually, the people are not with you, and they are alien to you."<sup>18</sup>

**Endo:** This was his conviction as someone who lived together with the people during his long exile.

**Ikeda:** Of particular note, Dostoevsky, who had once discarded his religious beliefs in favor of "European liberalism," recouped his spirituality thanks to his experience of living among the people.<sup>19</sup>



For Dostoevsky, the people were the “great earth” that taught him faith in his roots as a human being. It is interesting that, on the day

Dostoevsky died, he had his wife read their children the parable of the prodigal son from the Bible.<sup>20</sup>

**Endo:** The parable of the prodigal son essentially tells the story of a young man, who leaves home and squanders his fortune in dissolute living in a distant land, and who, upon realizing the error of his ways, repents and returns to his father’s fold, where all is forgiven.

**Suda:** Because of the similarities with the Lotus Sutra’s parable of the wealthy man and his poor son (in the “Belief and Understanding” chapter), there are scholars who view this as evidence of the Lotus Sutra’s influence.

**Ikeda:** Through religious faith, Dostoevsky hoped to bring an end to his spiritual wandering. At the same time, he wanted to bring other wanderers along back with him. He wanted to help them return to the “great earth” of the people, where faith pulses so vibrantly. “Wanderers” correspond to the poor son in the parable of the

wealthy man and his poor son, as well as also to the poor man in the parable of the gem in the robe.

In a sense, it could be said that humankind is today in the position of the prodigal son or the poor man. We in the SGI are calling out to humankind, which wanders lost through life: “Here is the great earth of life to which you may return!” “In your heart, you hold the key to bring your wandering to an end!” Such are the lives we are leading. Such actions constitute the true path whereby we may free ourselves from a life of “poverty.”

Amid the storm of persecution, Nichiren Daishonin declared: “I, Nichiren, am the richest man in all of present-day Japan. I have dedicated my life to the Lotus Sutra, and my name will be handed down in ages to come” (MW–2 [2nd ed.], 151). Let us follow the original Buddha in maintaining this confidence and pride.

*(To be continued)*

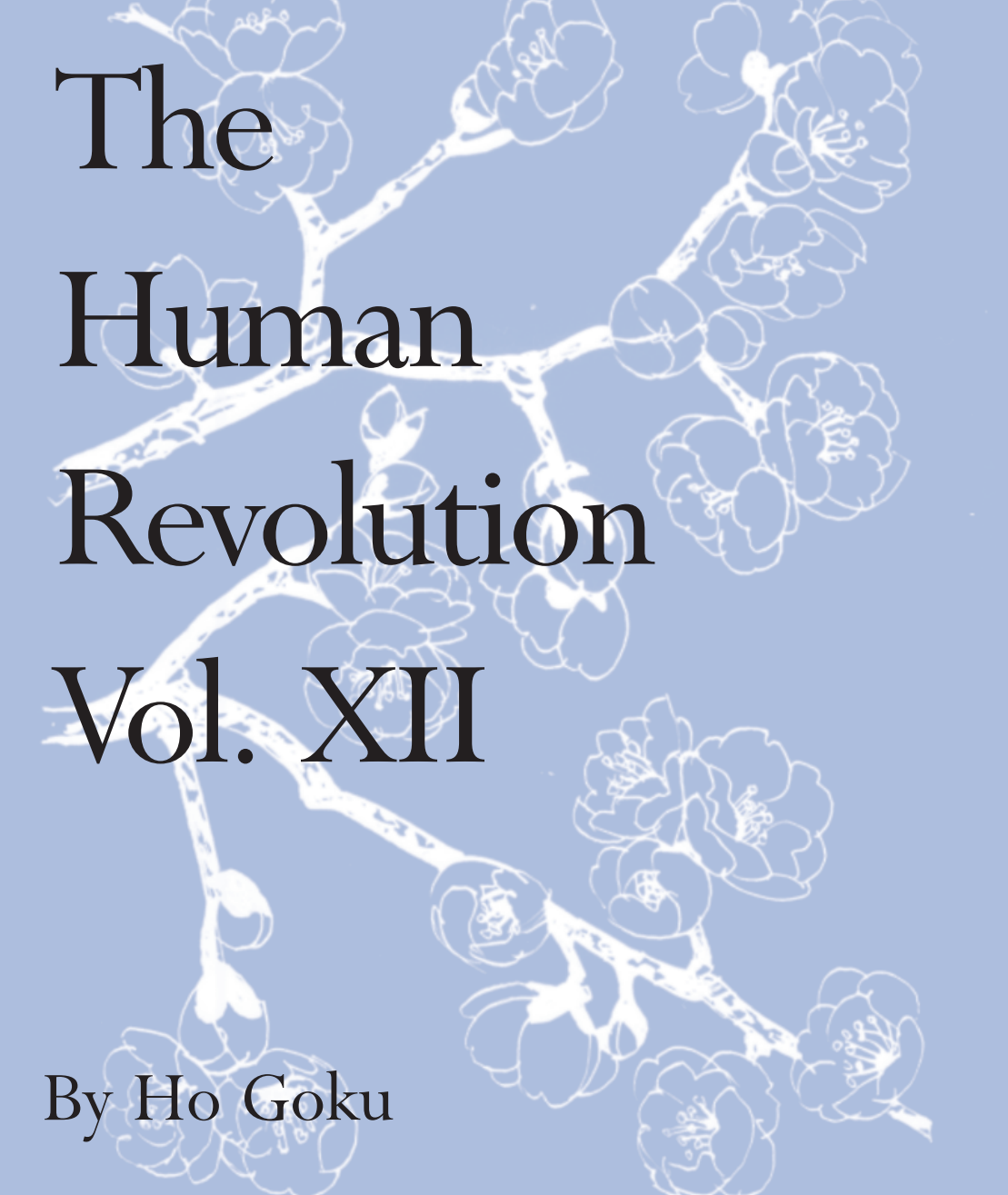
*Illustrations by Larry Ashton*

Footnotes

1. Harrison E. Salisbury, *The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 468.  
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 518.  
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 460.  
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 461.  
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 462.  
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 463.  
 7. Hereinafter “Five Hundred Disciples” and “Learners and Adepts,” respectively.  
 8. Revelation: The second of the three divisions of a sutra (preparation, revelation and transmission), a format often used in interpreting sutras thought to have been formulated by T’ien-t’ai. Preparation indicates the introductory section, revelation the part containing the main teaching, and transmission the concluding part. In the case of the Lotus Sutra, in addition to the entire sutra having these divisions, each half may be further ana-

lyzed into three sections.  
 9. Four great voice-hearer disciples: Maudgalyayana, Mahakashyapa, Katyayana and Subhuti.  
 10. Translated from Japanese. *Nanden Daizokyo*, ed. Junjiro Takakusu (Tokyo: Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo Kanko-kai, 1971), vol. 15, pp. 99–102. cf. *The Book of Kindred Sayings (Sanyutta-Nikaya)*, Part IV, The Salayatana Book, trans. Mrs. Rhys Davids (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1993), pp. 35–36.  
 11. Poison-drum relationship: Another term for reverse relationship, i.e., a bond formed with the Lotus Sutra by opposing or slandering it. The expression “poison drum” comes from the Nirvana Sutra, vol. 9, which states, “Once the poison drum is beaten, all the people who hear it will die, regardless of whether or not they have a mind to listen to it.” Similarly, when one preaches the Lotus Sutra, both those who

embrace it and those who oppose it will equally receive the seed of Buddhahood.  
 12. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, trans. Boris Brasol (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1949), p. 979.  
 13. Translated from Japanese. Daisaku Ikeda, *Watashino Sobieto Kiko* (My Soviet Travels) (Tokyo: Ushio Shuppansha, 1975), p. 133.  
 14. Cf. LS8, 150–51.  
 15. *Hokke Mongu* (Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra), vol. 8.  
 16. At a general meeting of Kamata Chapter at the auditorium of Hoshi University, in Tokyo, June 1953.  
 17. *The Diary of a Writer*, p. 1034.  
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 1028.  
 19. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 984.  
 20. Aimée Dostoevsky, *Dosutoefushukiden* (Life of Dostoevsky, Japanese edition) (Tokyo: Akagi Shobo, 1946), p. 244.

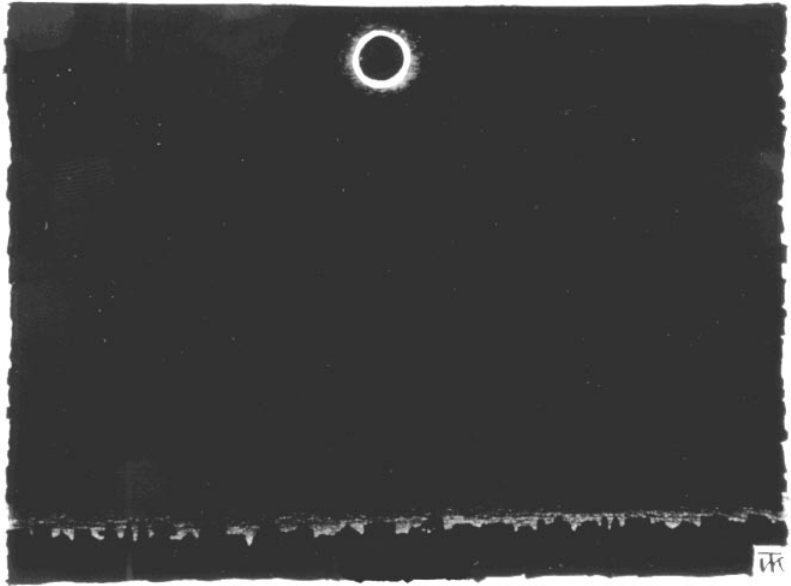


# The Human Revolution Vol. XII

By Ho Goku

*The Human Revolution is a novel based on fact, written by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda under the pen name Ho Goku. It recounts the early days of the Soka Gakkai in Japan under the second president, Josei Toda, President Ikeda's mentor. The character of Shin'ichi Yamamoto represents Daisaku Ikeda. The theme of the novel is summed up in the foreword, as the author writes, "A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind." The following is an excerpt from volume twelve.*

The cause was an annular eclipse of the sun — the moon eventually obscuring the sun's face except for a narrow outer ring. It was an event that somehow seemed to signal Toda's final passing from this world.



### Tranquil Light 25

The Soka Gakkai continued to advance without respite toward its goal — *kosen-rufu*.

On April 10, there was a young men's division leaders meeting and, on the thirteenth, some 2,600 candidates nationwide took written promotional exams to become study department assistant teachers and teachers. Then, on the seventeenth, the interviews for those who had passed the written entrance exam were held in Tokyo and in Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama prefectures.

The day of the Soka Gakkai funeral service for Josei Toda, April 20, was fast approaching. On the night immediately before, a final vigil for the late president was to be conducted at the Gakkai Headquarters.

From about 11:00 a.m. on the nineteenth, the skies over Tokyo gradually began to darken, as if evening were already upon them. The cause was an annular eclipse of the sun — the moon eventually obscuring the sun's face except for a narrow outer ring. It was an event that somehow

seemed to signal Toda's final passing from this world.

The vigil got under way at 7:00 p.m. with representative youth division leaders attending. Nichiren Shoshu General Administrator Hosoi led the service. Before reciting the sutra, he read an official notice of appointment from High Priest Nichijun: "Soka Gakkai President Josei Toda, appointed chief lay representative to Nichiren Shoshu — March 30, the 33rd year of the Showa era (1958)."

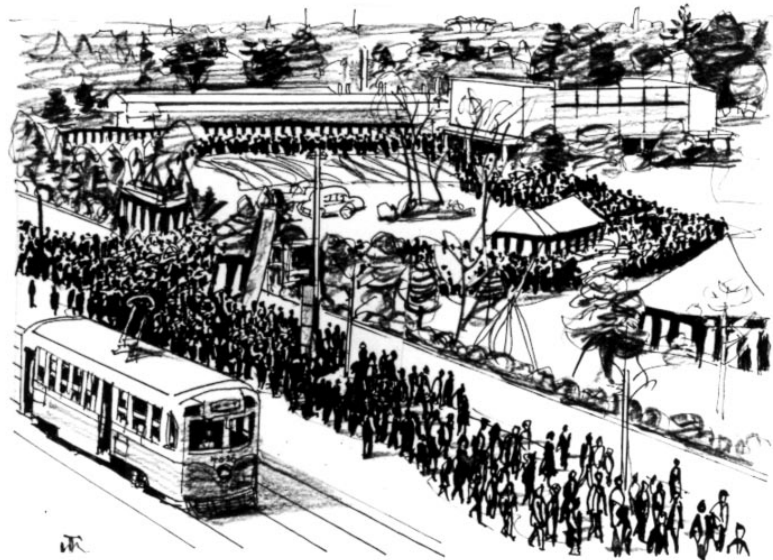
There were already a number of senior lay representatives in Nichiren Shoshu, a title Toda also had held. But on March 30, a few days before his death, Toda was appointed to a position even higher than that — that of chief lay representative — making him effectively the leading representative of all Nichiren Shoshu lay believers. In addition, the posthumous title bestowed on him by the high priest immediately after his passing, "Lay Practitioner Nichijo,<sup>1</sup> Great Propagator and Protector of the Law," was now elevated to a higher title "Great Lay Practitioner."

Toda had once answered a question from a member about posthumous Buddhist names in the following way:

"Originally, such names were given to individuals who had embraced the precepts and were ordained as priests; they were not bestowed upon people after their death. Though we may receive a posthumous Buddhist name, if people actually used it to refer to us, even we wouldn't know who they were talking about. Today, the custom of seeking a posthumous name for the deceased is just a means for the priests to make money. If you really want a posthumous name, you can give yourself one. I'm not saying that posthumous Buddhist names should never be given. It's just that, in my case, I don't believe I need one. The name Josei Toda is good enough."

Toda had the greatest distaste for titles, worldly honors and formality. But the posthumous bestowal of the title "Chief Lay Representative" and the appellation "Great Lay Practitioner" was an expression of High Priest Nichijun's heartfelt praise and appreciation for Toda. The late president's

**As the sun rose, the number of mourners increased, until their ranks stretched from the funeral hall through the public cemetery, in which the hall was located, and all the way to the Outer Garden of the Meiji Shrine.**



disciples were overjoyed at this sincere gesture. General Director Takeo Konishi humbly accepted the official notice on behalf of the late president.

After the vigil at the Headquarters, the youth division leaders immediately set about organizing things for the next day's Soka Gakkai funeral service. All of the leaders in charge were prepared to work through the night.

There were some 800,000 Gakkai families nationwide who had cherished and devotedly followed Toda. Of course, the obstacles of time and cost would prevent many from traveling long distances, so most of those attending would probably be from Tokyo and surrounding areas. But even taking these factors into consideration, they estimated that around 200,000 people would turn out for the funeral. If such a huge number of people were to offer incense in the space of several hours, things would have to be managed with meticulous care and precision; otherwise mass confusion could prevail at the ceremony site.

To avoid such an eventuality, the youth worked through the night finalizing preparations for the event.

### **Tranquil Light 26**

Before dawn on April 20, at around 5:00 a.m., the youth serving as coordinators and staff for the Soka Gakkai funeral service began to gather at the Aoyama Funeral Hall. Wrapping up the final briefings for each function a little after 6:00, they dispersed to their assigned areas. Apparent on each face was a determination to bring that day's grand funeral service to a successful close without a single accident or mishap.

As the sun rose, the number of mourners increased, until their ranks stretched from the funeral hall through the public cemetery, in which the hall was located, and all the way to the Outer Garden of the Meiji Shrine. The line of people eventually exceeded some two-and-a-half miles in length.

In the tent that housed the coordination center, Shin'ichi Yamamoto had been listening to reports that were coming in moment by moment. But to get a clearer picture of how the members were actually doing, he decided to go out and have a look around.

The sky was clear and beautiful,

and the cherry trees that lined the streets around the funeral hall had already shed their blossoms and were sporting fresh leaves. Looking at the new foliage, Shin'ichi was reminded of the song, "The Green Leaves of Sakurai," more popularly known as "The Great Hero Kusunoki." This song, which had been a special favorite of Toda's, sang of the parting of a father and his son — the 14th-century Japanese general Kusunoki Masashige and his son Masatsura. In 1336, the third year of the Kenji era, Masashige prepared to march off to fight in the Battle of Minatogawa,<sup>2</sup> to defend the imperial court in Kyoto against the invading forces of Ashikaga Takauji, the imperial archenemy. Before his departure, he summoned Masatsura to his lodging in the lush green surroundings of Sakurai.<sup>3</sup> Facing almost certain defeat in the face of Takauji's overwhelming numbers, Masashige told his young son that he was prepared to die on the battlefield, and ordered him to return home.

Masatsura was only eleven at the time, but he declared that he would stay to fight and die by his father's side and refused to leave. Masashige

then explained that if both father and son should die together, then there would be no one to stop Takauji from seizing control of the entire land. He urged Masatsura, therefore, to live and grow quickly into a person who could dedicate his life to his country. With this, Masashige sent his son home.

In this song, Toda found deep parallels to the spirit of mentor and disciple that was the foundation of their struggles to accomplish kosen-rufu. He often encouraged Shin'ichi and the youth division members to sing it.

In particular, he would ask each person present to sing again and again the part that expressed Masatsura's determination, the part that began, "Father, no matter what you say . . ." Then, looking with a fiery gaze into the eyes of each youth, he would say: "Your spirit is nothing like Masatsura's! With such an expression in your eyes, you can't fight for kosen-rufu. Look at my eyes!"

Recalling the keen brilliance of Toda's eyes and his strict yet compassionate guidance, Shin'ichi realized that today marked his final

parting with this man who was like a father to him. Renewing for himself the father-son pledge they had made to realize kosen-rufu, he hurried along the tree-lined street, the fresh spring greenery glistening brightly in the sunlight.

Just before noon, the brass band and fife and drum corps began a resounding performance of the tune "A Star Falls in the Autumn Wind on Wuchang Plain"<sup>4</sup> and the funeral procession departed from the Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Shinanomachi for the funeral hall. The brass band and fife and drum corps led the way, and at the center of the procession, surrounded by the flags of the various youth division corps and Soka Gakkai chapters, rode the car — a convertible with its top down — that carried Soka Gakkai General Director Konishi and members of the Toda family. Konishi held a large framed photo of Toda on his lap; Toda's son, Kyoichi, clasped the ceremonially boxed urn containing his father's ashes; and Toda's wife, Ikue, held in her hands the tablet inscribed with Toda's posthumous name.

Members packed the pavements

along the route that began at the Gakkai Headquarters, extending on to the Outer Garden of the Meiji Shrine and ending at the Aoyama Funeral Hall.

## Tranquil Light 27

The procession advanced with solemn dignity along the green tree-lined streets to the tune of "Wuchang Plain," the Soka Gakkai flag fluttering in the spring breeze. It was a magnificent spectacle. As the funeral procession approached where they were standing, the members' daimoku at each location along the route would grow in volume and intensity. As they paid their last respects to their mentor, many had to fight to keep powerful emotions in check and stifle their desire to call Toda's name out loud.

Many of them had never met Toda in person, but had been encouraged and inspired by his speeches and lectures that were carried in the Gakkai's newspaper, *Seikyo Shim-bun*. These had served as spiritual nourishment for them, enabling many to overcome the problems that

**At the center of the procession, surrounded by the flags of the various youth division corps and Soka Gakkai chapters, rode the car that carried Soka Gakkai General Director Konishi and members of the Toda family.**



had been plaguing their lives. In a sense, they had been living with Toda's image etched clearly and vividly in their hearts and minds.

The procession advanced solemnly, finally arriving at the Aoyama Funeral Hall, the ceremony site. Services began at 1:00 p.m. with Shin'ichi Yamamoto serving as master of ceremonies. High Priest Nichi-jun led the recitation of the "Expedient Means" chapter and the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, after which eulogies were read. First, a representative of Hokkeko lay believers rose to speak.

**When viewed in light of the Daishonin's teachings and from the true perspective of faith, no one could help but accord Josei Toda's monumental achievements the highest praise and adulation.**

Toda's death, he said, "was not only a great loss for Nichiren Shoshu and the Soka Gakkai, but a tragedy for Japan and the people of all Asia." Declaring that Toda, who had devoted all of his energies to kosen-rufu and the prosperity of Nichiren Shoshu, should serve as a model for all believers, he concluded, "I am confident that when believers of Nichiren Shoshu, beginning with the Soka Gakkai members who are carrying on Mr. Toda's legacy, unite single-

mindedly in their service of Buddhism, then they can accomplish even the gargantuan task of kosen-rufu, which the Daishonin has entrusted us to fulfill."

This praise of Toda — an individual who had courageously resisted wartime oppression, emerged to protect the true teachings of Buddhism and brought kosen-rufu into the realm of reality — most certainly expressed the honest feeling of someone who sincerely believed in the Mystic Law. When viewed in light of the Daishonin's teachings and from the true perspective of faith, no one

and instruction from Toda. As she began to speak, a flood of emotions — arising from her love and admiration for her departed mentor — welled up inside her, but she struggled desperately to keep them in check:

"The opportunities that we members of the young women's division have had to receive guidance from you, President Toda, are too numerous to mention. Among these, in particular, we will never forget your declaration last September calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which represents



could help but accord Josei Toda's monumental achievements the highest praise and adulation.

Following this, representing Toda's friends, Kunizo Minato, a writer and the author of a book titled Nichiren Daishonin, read a tribute he had written to the late president.

Next to come forward was Tokie Tani, representing the young women's division. Over many long years, Tani had been fortunate enough to receive personal training

your foremost legacy to us. In addition, you always strongly encouraged us to live and practice so that each and every member of the YWD would definitely become happy. You taught us again and again to advance with resolute dignity along the path of kosen-rufu, the highest path of human existence, and that this is the way to achieve true and unsurpassed happiness. As a result, we will absolutely never betray the pledge

we have made to you, and will dedicate our lives to advancing steadfastly toward the goal of kosen-rufu. From your vantage point in the Treasure Land of Eternally Tranquil Light, please watch over the future development of the young women's division."

Youth Division Chief Eisuke Akizuki then rose speak. Before he began, he bowed solemnly to Toda's picture.

### Tranquil Light 28

Akizuki spoke with deliberation, infusing each word with heartfelt emotion:

"Today, I have been reflecting on each of the many opportunities we have had to receive guidance and training from you, President Toda over the years. I remember the time, during the May youth division pilgrimage in 1954, when you stood out in the pouring rain without an umbrella watching over us as we made our way through the temple grounds.

"And how, on the second floor of the old Soka Gakkai Headquarters in Nishi-Kanda, you taught us the principles for achieving kosen-rufu, constantly admonishing us to 'Remember this!' In particular, at a meeting of the young men's division training group Suiko-kai held at the Nishi-Kanda Headquarters, you once said, 'The students of Yoshida Shoin<sup>5</sup> who attended his private school, Shoka Sonjuku — which began in a single eight-tatami-mat<sup>6</sup> room — were instrumental in accomplishing the Meiji Restoration.<sup>7</sup> With the great numbers of youth we have, we can accomplish kosen-rufu without fail.' I will never forget these words as long as I live. I feel as though I can now hear your voice proclaim-

ing, 'I have taught the youth division everything I know!'

"Sensei, you showered us with your boundless love and affection. You helped an endless stream of young people who were lost, without hope and without direction, back on their feet again. You gave them a sense of pride in being your disciples and helped them develop into people of truly outstanding caliber. Words cannot express the great debt of gratitude we owe you. But each of us, filled with pride at being known as your disciple, vow never to bring disgrace to that honor.

"We of the youth division will always take your spirit as our own. In society, we will never slacken in our efforts to advance kosen-rufu — pressing forward with the same serenity and strength as majestic whales gliding through stormy seas. In the organization, meanwhile, we will strive to become solid and reliable pillars of the entire Soka Gakkai, and in line with the hope you expressed in your essay "Youth, Be Patriotic!" we will definitely bring together 100,000 young 'patriots' and work to make kosen-rufu a reality. We are also determined to fight with the spirit of 'selflessly devoting our lives to the Gohonzon' that you set forth in your "Precepts for Youth." And beginning again tomorrow, we will energetically strive with this spirit in all endeavors, looking forward to the day when we can stand by your side and proudly report what we have accomplished."

Only half a month had passed since Toda's death, but a fresh determination to achieve kosen-rufu was already evident in the Soka Gakkai youth. Since the day Toda died, Shin'ichi had continually encouraged the youth he encountered, calling on them with all his might to stand up as 'children of the lion king.' It was as if

Shin'ichi's image was already becoming superimposed upon that of Toda's in the youth division members' hearts and minds. Shin'ichi's fervent appeal transformed their grief into hope, sentimentality into determination, and disappointment into joy, stirring in them the vibrant dynamism of youth.

Next to eulogize Toda was Soka Gakkai Chief Secretary Tame Izumida. Having spent many years by Toda's side, her eyes now grew moist as she tried to voice her boundless regard and respect for her mentor:

"In 1943, President Makiguchi was arrested in Izu where he had gone to conduct propagation activities. I shall never forget the words he said to me on that occasion — simply: "Ask Toda to look after things in my place."

### Tranquil Light 29

Tame Izumida continued speaking, her voice at times becoming choked with emotion:

"I hurried back to try to relay Mr. Makiguchi's words, but by the time I arrived, Mr. Toda had been arrested as well. At that moment, I was utterly dumbfounded. I felt absolutely helpless.

"And last fall, Ms. Kiyohara and I were with President Toda in his office when his expression suddenly turned serious and he said, 'I'm going to have to leave you very soon.' However, I didn't understand his intent at the time. I took it for granted that President Toda would live for a very long time.

"To have worked side by side with you, President Toda, serving you over these last fourteen years, has been my greatest joy and happiness. And now to have lost you is my greatest sadness. But please don't worry, Sensei. Following what you have taught

me day in and day out and in keeping with your spirit, I now pledge, as your disciple, to work wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu. With this promise, I bid you farewell."

Izumida's tribute stirred many memories of Toda among those present.

Last to eulogize Toda was Soka Gakkai Director Koichi Harayama. He, too, began to speak as if he was addressing Toda directly:

"Sensei! Thank you for all you have done for us over these many years! Now, the time has come for us to bid you a final farewell. Here today are members from throughout Japan — from as far as Hokkaido in the north and Kyushu in the south. In addition, the youth, whom you have always loved so dearly, have been here since early this morning to be with you.

"In the ten-odd years since you inherited President Makiguchi's legacy and took on the task of saving postwar Japan, some 2 million members have appeared. They have sincerely followed you in spite of the constant abuse society has heaped upon you. Sensei, I recall a poem you once wrote:

With the roar of the lion  
king,  
A life dedicated,  
Over seven years,  
To saving the masses —  
How wondrous!<sup>8</sup>

"In so short a time, you have shown the way to happiness to so many who had been shedding bitter tears over their miserable fate.

"Sensei, you often wept when you heard the song 'Wuchang Plain.' I'm sure that is because it made you recall the spirit of the legendary Chinese hero Chuko K'ung-ming who, leaving his

refuge in the wilderness in Nanyang,<sup>9</sup> went on to sacrifice his life in supporting the forces of the kingdom of Shu.<sup>10</sup>

"It may be impossible for us to truly apprehend the depth of commitment with which you stood up amid an age rampant with evil to lead those who were suffering to happiness. But when I consider what you must have been feeling, my heart fills with emotion.

"At a time when we were lost and confused as to our organization's future following President Makiguchi's death, you emerged from prison and took leadership for kosen-rufu on our behalf. We have continued to rely on you in this way until today. As disciples, we are truly unworthy. You often said that it was tough being president. But now we are deeply awed and moved by the degree of hardship and pain you took upon yourself."

### Tranquil Light 30

Koichi Harayama conveyed the disciples' resolve:

"Though we may be unworthy disciples, we stand firm in the conviction that we have each inherited a portion of your spiritual legacy and we will unite resolutely to accomplish kosen-rufu.

"Sensei, when we heard of your passing, we were overcome with shock and grief. But now we realize that you have fulfilled your purpose in this life, completely securing the foundations for kosen-rufu in Japan, and that now you have left it to us to carry on your work. We are single-mindedly committed to striving together courageously to advance kosen-rufu. Please watch over us always."

This concluded the eulogies from six representatives. The disci-

ples' words overflowed with their love and respect for Toda. They also brimmed with a passionate spirit to realize his wish that they thoroughly protect the Gakkai and realize kosen-rufu without fail.

Presently, the high priest began to recite the sutra once again. When he entered the *jigage*, the verse portion, of the liturgy, the mourners began offering incense at the funeral altar. Among them were Japan's Prime Minister Naosuke Mine, Education Minister Hiroshi Matsui, former Construction Minister Toshio Saijo and Tokyo Prefectural Governor Shin'ichiro Takai.

It must have been with mixed emotions that Prime Minister Mine stood before Toda's portrait to pay his last respects, with the knowledge that he had failed to keep his promise to his old friend to visit the head temple that March 16. After offering incense, Mr. Mine stood for a while and politely greeted General Director Takeo Konishi, Toda's son, Kyoichi, and Toda's widow, Ikue, before departing.

The chanting of daimoku ended at 2:30 p.m., at which time High Priest Nichijun read, in a clear and resonant voice, a message praising Josei Toda's superb accomplishments and contributions to kosen-rufu.

Afterward, Toda's son, Kyoichi, got up to express his appreciation on behalf of the entire Toda family. His words were simple and direct, but they moved the members deeply:

"I wish to sincerely thank all who have gathered here today to participate in this Soka Gakkai funeral service for my father, Josei Toda. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to all the members of the Soka Gakkai who, after my father's death, have united solidly in continuing to dedicate themselves to his sincerest wish —

Afterward, Toda's son, Kyoichi, got up to express his appreciation on behalf of the entire Toda family. His words were simple and direct, but they moved the members deeply.



that of achieving kosen-rufu.

"My father often told me, 'I cannot leave you any money; all I can leave you is trustworthiness as a human being.' I regret that I have neither the capacity nor ability to inherit all of my father's character. I deeply apologize for this. But I am convinced that the members of the Soka Gakkai will unite to carry on his great dream, bringing it even more beautifully into fruition. Thank you all very much for everything today."

Kyoichi's words were eloquent and moving.

*Illustrations by Teikichi Miyoshi*

#### Footnotes

1. Nichijo: This name is written with the two Chinese characters for *nichi* (of Nichiren, signifying "the sun") and *jo* (of Josei Toda, meaning "castle").

2. Battle of Minatogawa: A battle fought in

an area near the river Minatogawa near present-day Kobe. Before the battle began, Kusunoki Masashige knew victory was impossible and death certain. When the general Ashikaga Takauji's forces overwhelmed the loyalist warriors, Masashige committed suicide. In his selfless sacrifice, Masashige remains a symbol of loyalty in Japanese folk tradition.

3. Sakurai: An area located in present-day Osaka Prefecture.

4. "A Star Falls in the Autumn Wind on Wuchang Plain": (Abbr. "Wuchang Plain"). A song about the death of the great Chinese minister and general Chuko K'ung-ming, the hero of the epic saga, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

5. Yoshida Shoin (1830–59): Japanese scholar, teacher and writer of the late Edo period (1600–1868).

6. Eight tatami-mat room: Approximately 15 square yards.

7. Meiji Restoration: A political revolution that in 1868 brought down the Tokugawa shogunate and returned control of the country to direct imperial rule under Emperor Meiji. It led to Japan's opening to the West following its long self-imposed seclusion and developing into a modern nation-state.

8. This poem was written by Josei Toda for New Year's 1958, a few short months before he passed away. It rejoices the achievement at the end of the previous year of his goal of a membership of 750,000 households and the upcoming seventh anniversary of his inauguration as Soka Gakkai president.

9. Nanyang: A city in southwestern Henan Province, China.

10. Kingdom of Shu: One of a trio of warring states in the period following the demise of the Han dynasty that came to be known as the Three Kingdoms period (B.C.E 220–280) of Chinese history.



# Clarence Washington: Giving the Inner Rainbow Outer Freedom

By William Routhier  
Boston Correspondent

Clarence Washington's artistic career has been noteworthy from the start. In 1955, his senior year of high school, the prestigious Museum of Fine Arts School in Boston chose Clarence for a scholarship as one of only eleven students out of 33,000 eligible students nationwide. The Museum School subsequently granted Clarence a traveling fellowship to study in Europe.

Studying with the Belgian surrealist painter Jan Cox led Clarence to develop his taste for what he calls the "spicy complexity of the mystical" in his work. He credits his study with another painter, Jason Berger, for bringing the influence of Matisse and Picasso as well as the romance and exaggerated palette of the Fauvists to his painting.

Clarence worked to combine and fuse the directions set down by these two mentors of his, often employing improvisational methods. The culmination of this effort came to him in his travels to Greece, where he felt that he reached a new level of maturity in his work.

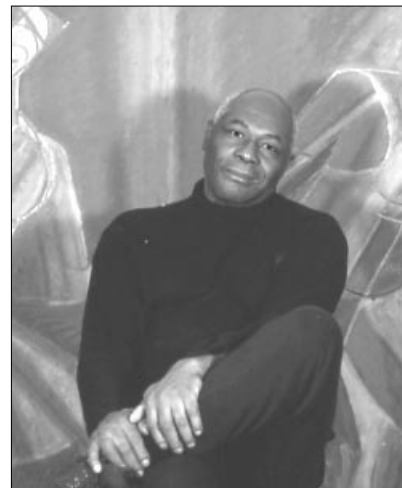
Washington returned to America to continue painting and to teach. Over three decades many universities and galleries showed his work, including Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Nevertheless, in 1991, with

the end of a stint as the featured artist and consultant/organizer for the Black Cultural Exhibition in Boston, Clarence hit a period of emotional fatigue. The rigors of his schedule as well as personal troubles left him unable to work.

It was during this period of struggle, which went on for three years, that he remembered a woman he had worked with on the Black Cultural Exhibition whose vibrancy and confidence had moved and impressed him. He also remembered that she was a Buddhist of some sort, so he phoned her to ask about her Buddhism.

Clarence was soon chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, and his life began to improve immediately. "As I continued chanting, I witnessed my health and painting begin to recuperate simultaneously. I was able to land a position teaching again at a small art college in the evenings, and I was finally able to settle in and confront my task as a painter. I could decide what message I really aspired to tell. I was at a new beginning."

Clarence received the Gohonzon in March of 1995 and his continuing practice strongly influenced the direction of his art. He says of this fresh start: "As I was casting off the obstacles I faced, I felt a great



PHOTOS BY B.R. SPIEGEL

desire to express the inner energy I was discovering. I knew whatever I did, it would involve strong color."

About his present work, a series of paintings of African dancers, Clarence says: "I wanted to show light coming from both within and without. I saw this reflecting my own discovery of my Buddha nature, what I'd call my internal prismatic light. I wanted to stimulate the internal prismatic light in others as well. With the figures I try to suggest the spiritual vibrancy as well as the monumental classicism of the African dancer."

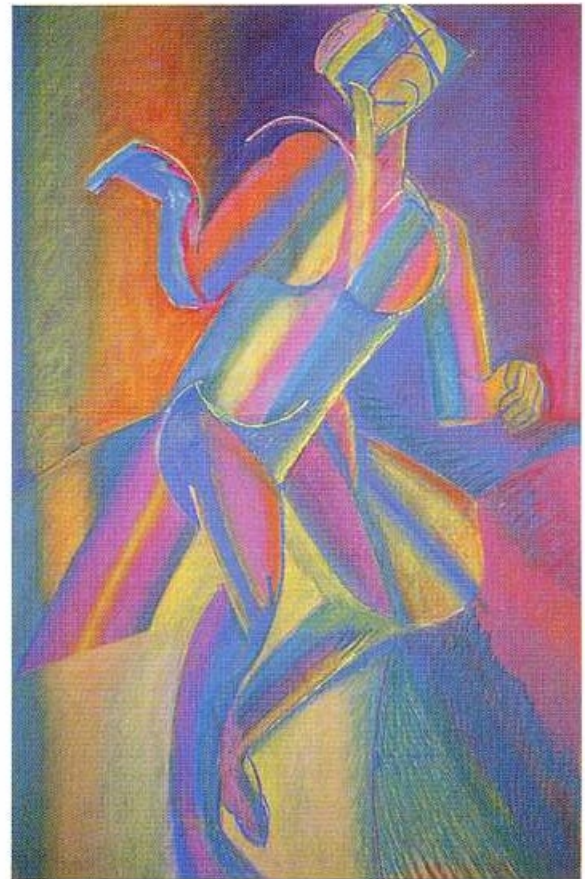
Clarence based the series of large pastel paintings on pictures of African dancers from the mountain area of Northern Cameroon, who perform a harvest dance, symbolic of both ending and beginning.

"These figures reflect outer light as well as the kinetic energy of movement that brings the inner rainbow forth, displayed in a festive form."

Of his next projects, Clarence says: "I don't know exactly what my future work will be like. I'll just keep chanting to keep an open avenue to my true self. I am confident that I'll be able to show more peace and harmony in my art. The art develops more easily these days. It has a brighter quality." □



*Ikuurdi dancing figures from Northern Cameroon, 1996*  
Pastel on paper, 48 x 42 in.





*Head, 1984*  
Charcoal on paper, 18 x 24 in.  
by Clarence Washington

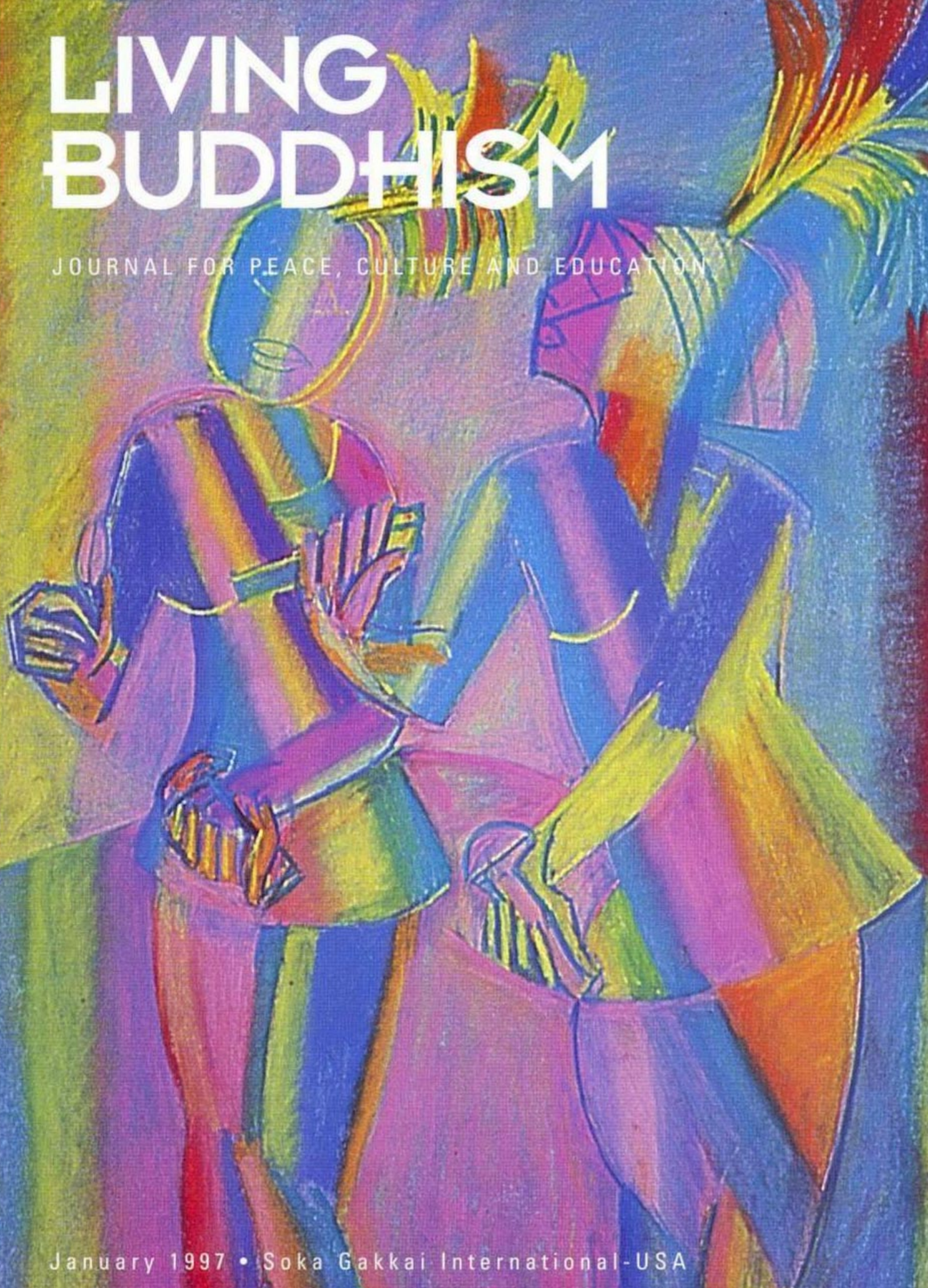
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The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon • A Buddhist Response to the Global Ethic

## Hawaii Culture Center



The Boys and Girls Group of Hawaii #1 Joint Territory held a celebration at the Hawaii Culture Center, December 15, 1996.

Two years ago, during the weekend of March 19–20, 1994, the Hawaii Culture Center celebrated its grand opening with 3,000 representatives from throughout the Hawaiian Islands and Guam. Located at 2729 Pali Highway in Honolulu, the center adds a distinctive quality to the residential Nuuanu Valley community. It was the site of the 19th SGI General Meeting and the 13th World Peace Youth Culture Festival in January 1995.

The culture center was built at the site of the old Hawaii Community Center. The magnificent structure of imported Finnish balmoral granite stands three stories high, with an additional two levels of underground parking. The building is environmentally sensitive, with energy efficient features such as insulated glass windows, individually controlled air-conditioning units in major rooms and a skylight over the lobby for natural lighting.