

LIVING BUDDHISM

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Living Buddhism is the monthly journal of the SGI-USA, an American Buddhist movement that promotes peace and individual happiness based on the philosophy and practice of Nichiren Buddhism.



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LIVING BUDDHISM

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FROM OUR READERS

Due to the volume of letters we receive, not all can be printed, and all letters are subject to condensation. Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number with all correspondence. Mail to: Letters, Living Buddhism, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401 or e-mail: LivingB1@aol.com

Questions, Suggestions

I JUST received my first copy of *Living Buddhism*. I'm so excited about the look of the magazine and some of the editorial changes that have been made, for instance, the clarity and brevity of this month's selected Goshō. I even appreciate the use of English words instead of Japanese (i.e., Nichiren Daishōnin's Writings vs. Goshō). This will make the magazine more accessible to nonmembers.

There are, however, four areas about which I have questions/suggestions:

1. In addition to giving background information on the artists whose work is featured on the cover (which I hope you'll continue to do), could the "Expressions" feature also include more stories about other types of artists? For instance, I'd like to read about members who are writers and performers, etc.

2. Is it possible to make the children's and youth pages a regular feature, so that each month we'll know for sure there will be material for the youth?

3. I looked for the quote on page 17—"They do injury to the faith of many believers"—in *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishōnin*, volume 4, page 13, but I could not find it. Is there an updated volume 4 out already, or is this just a mistake?

Overall, I am glad about all the changes. I look forward to seeing where else the magazine is going.

LAVORA PERRY
East Cleveland, Ohio

Editor's reply: 1) We are planning to include the stories of people from all fields in the near future.

2) We have turned the articles geared toward children and youth over to our sister publication, the World Tribune. We felt we were duplicating our efforts. The Philadelphia correspondents and artists who produced the children's section for the magazine are now contributing to the "Friends for Peace" pullout section in the World Tribune.

3) The reference on page 17 (January issue) for the quote "They do injury to the faith of many believers," from *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishōnin*, should be volume 6, page 13. We apologize for any confusion we created. Thank you for your input.

Request for Bigger Type

I WOULD like to make some comments on the format and type size of *Living Buddhism* as changed from the *Seikyo Times*.

I enjoyed reading for pleasure, and studying articles in the *Seikyo Times*. The large type size and two-column

Living Buddhism is the monthly journal of the SGI-USA, an American Buddhist movement that promotes peace and individual happiness based on the philosophy and practice of Nichiren Buddhism. In association with the SGI, the SGI-USA works in tandem with members around the world. On an international scale, the SGI centers its activities on the human potentialities for individual happiness and global peace and prosperity. Rooted in the life-affirming philosophy of Nichiren, SGI members share a profound commitment to the values of peace, culture and education.

These values are expressed in the SGI Charter, which embodies core beliefs in the ideal of world citizenship, the spirit of tolerance and the safeguarding of fundamental human rights.

The SGI-USA applies Buddhist principles through a nationwide network of grass-roots activities centering primarily on neighborhood discussion groups. Learn more about the SGI-USA, or find a discussion group in your area by calling our national office in Santa Monica, California: (310) 451-8811. Check out our Web page at: <http://www.sgi-usa.org>

per page format were a joy. It made reading seem less like work. As I get older, my eyes have more trouble with small print. In *Living Buddhism*, the captions to pictures are also more difficult to read because of the small size of the print and the length of the line.

Would you possibly consider going back to the larger type style and two-column format?

NICHOLAS W. CARLIN
Louisville, Ky.

Editor's reply: Thank you for your comments. For now, we have adopted new type face and size that would fit a three-column format. However, we are always ready to respond to the voices of our readers. We would like hear

from many of you regarding the present format.

Alarming Photograph

GR^{EAT} first issue! We're getting there. I was quite confused at the picture you decided to run of President Makiguchi on page 22 [January issue]. We have been made to understand that taking pictures of the Gohonzon is a definite no no. Why have you published a picture with the Gohonzon in it? Please explain. This has confused the matter for me and possibly others.

LARRY TISH
Boston

Editor's reply: Several others have

expressed their concern about the photo on page 22 as well.

You are correct in saying that it is not proper to photograph the Gohonzon. It is like making a "boot-leg" reproduction of it.

The photo in question has been published numerous times in SGI publications over the years. It is one of a few rare photos of early discussion meetings held with Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president. However, the altar in the photograph is so illegible that if you were not familiar with Buddhist altars, you would not know what you were looking at. It is hardly a reproduction of the Gohonzon.

Glossary

Bodhisattvas of the Earth: Those who chant and propagate Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. *Earth* indicates the enlightened nature of all people, and *bodhisattva* is 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-rence-kyo, the title of the Lotus Sutra.

Gohonzon: It is the embodiment of the Law of Nam-myoho-rence-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, it means *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-rence-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, it means 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-rence-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-rence-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 manifestations; *rence* (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, the Gohonzon, for the observation of one's mind and established the invocation of Nam-myoho-rence-kyo as the universal practice to attain enlightenment. *Daishonin* is an honorific title that means *great sage*.

Shakyamuni: Also known as Siddhartha Gautama. Born in Nepal about three thousand years ago, he is 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): The Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a worldwide association with membership in 128 countries and territories. In the service of its members and of society at large, SGI centers its activities on human potentialities for individual happiness and for global peace and prosperity. The breadth and focus of its mission derive from the philosophy and practice of Nichiren Buddhism. Soka Gakkai means *value-creation society*. The SGI-USA is a member-organization of the SGI.

Frequently Cited Sources

For purposes of convenience, all citations from the following works will be given in the text and abbreviated as follows after the first listing:

- *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin:* MW, followed by the volume and page number.
- *Gosho Zenshu* (The Collected Writings of Nichiren Daishonin in Japanese): GZ, followed by the page number.
- *The Lotus Sutra:* LS, followed by the chapter and page number.

HUMAN SECURITY IS AN INTERNAL ISSUE

LAST month in our discussion about diversity, I inquired into the source of the analogy used by Nichiren Daishonin — cherry, plum, peach and apricot (Jp. *o, bai, to, ri*)—referred to in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings.” I am happy to inform you that we have learned from a Buddhist scholar that the phrase was indeed formulated by Nichiren Daishonin; but that the Daishonin himself might well have come across it in the “Records of a Historian,” or “Record of Ritual,” both ancient Chinese texts mentioned in a number of his writings.

I thought we might continue our discussion by examining the issue of security in our diverse society. In the sixteenth installment of his series “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra,” SGI President Ikeda says: “In an age that has lost sight of humanity, it is no easy undertaking to campaign for a restoration of humanity” (February 1997 *Living Buddhism*, p. 32). Central to a restoration of humanity is a society in which people can feel secure. But first, I think we must expand our notion of security.

Traditionally, security has been confined to such concerns as security from external aggression, or protection of national interest, or from the threat of destruction by weapons of mass destruction. And as important as those concerns were and still are, what seems to have been forgotten are the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who seek security in their daily lives. In other words, “human security.”

When the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reported on the issue of human security in 1994, they said that for ordinary people, feelings of insecurity come from worries about daily life rather than “the dread of a cataclysmic world event.” People want to know if they’ll have enough to eat; if their jobs will be secure; and will their streets and neighborhoods be safe from crime. They want to know if they’ll become a victim of violence. They ask if their ethnic origin will target them for persecution. Human security is a universal, people-centered concern.

IN looking at the issue of security, we have to examine the life-condition of the people because the issue of security is not only an external issue, but an internal one as well. It has to do with strengthening our inner resources and processes so that we replace fear and uncertainty with confidence and wisdom. With numerous secular laws, members of our society still prey upon one another. No amount of external law will reform the human heart.

Shijo Kingo, a samurai disciple of Nichiren Daishonin in the thirteenth century, became the object of bitter jealousy among his fellow samurai when he was in his late 50s. At one point he was ambushed.

In a letter to Kingo titled “The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, pp. 245–46), Nichiren Daishonin attributed Kingo’s survival to three points: prudence, courage and

faith—all internal processes that we each have at our disposal.

TO take precautions, to be prudent is common sense. It is a mistake to think that because of our faith we can be reckless in our behavior and we will be protected. Exercising precaution is itself a function of the Buddhist gods.

His second point to Kingo is courage, which will enable us to tap our reservoir of inner strength. If we succumb to fear, we cannot expect to call upon the force of the Mystic Law to protect us.

And thirdly, most important is “firm faith in the Lotus Sutra.” The Daishonin explains that “when one comes to the end of his good fortune, no strategy whatsoever will avail.” Good fortune springs from our devoted faith.

The guardian deities in Buddhism represent positive influences in the environment that protect and nurture life. When we are in tune with the cosmic rhythm of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, these forces will surround us. They respond to our faith in the Law.

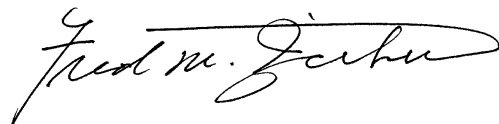
A commentary on “The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra” states:

The Daishonin then encourages Kingo to develop self-reliant faith ... no one else can tap our innate Buddha nature but us. Enlightenment or happiness is not given to us by someone else. Relying on others for our happiness will lead not only to

our disappointment but also the loss of our freedom to whomever we depend on for our happiness. Relying on someone else to pray for our happiness is like asking others to eat for us to quell our hunger. Only through our earnest faith and practice can we enjoy true happiness....” (March 1995 *Seikyo Times*, p. 9)

But we must also help one another find confidence. If we think that “Everything is okay because I’m safe,” we’re being egotistic. The imperative of the Bodhisattva, on the other hand, is to “break the shell of the lesser self” and begin to replace the thought “How can I be protected” with “How can I protect others? How can I make society safer?” When we establish the life-condition of Buddhahood within us, it will naturally be reflected in our environment.

Using the “strategy of the Lotus Sutra,” we can look forward to a bright future of good health, happiness, prosperity and security. This is what the Daishonin promises.



Fred M. Zaitso
SGI-USA General Director

“ON THE TREASURE TOWER”

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT FROM THE MAJOR WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN IS MATERIAL FOR THE SGI-USA STUDY MEETINGS IN APRIL.

IN the Latter Day of the Law, there is no Treasure Tower other than the figures of the men and women who embrace the Lotus Sutra. It follows, therefore, that those who chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, irrespective of social status, are themselves the Treasure Tower and likewise they themselves are Taho Buddha. There is no Treasure Tower other than Myoho-renge-kyo. The daimoku of the Lotus Sutra is the Treasure Tower, that is to say, the Treasure Tower is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

(The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, vol. 1. p. 30)
(Gosho Zenshu, [The Collected Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, in Japanese], p. 1304)



Background: Elderly Couple Protects Nichiren

DURING his exile to Sado, an island known for its bitter winter cold in the northern Sea of Japan, Nichiren wrote this letter, dated March 13, 1272, to his aged disciple Abutsu-bo. One account suggests that Abutsu-bo was a samurai warrior guarding the imperial palace in Kyoto when he escorted an exiled retired emperor to Sado. Another version of his life suggests he was a native of Sado.

Abutsu-bo had been a staunch believer of the Pure Land sect, which promised its followers that they could go to the Pure Land of Amida Buddha in the afterlife by reciting this Buddha's name. (In fact, Abutsu in the name of the letter's recipient is an abbreviation for Amida Buddha, suggesting his previous devotion to the Pure Land teaching.)

Upon hearing of Nichiren's arrival to the island, Abutsu-bo visited his hut to confront him in debate since it was rumored that this exiled priest was an enemy of the Pure Land sect.

Struck by Nichiren's compassion and character, however, Abutsu-bo along with his wife Sennichi-ama took faith in Nichiren's teaching. From that moment until Nichiren's pardon and return to Kamakura over two years later, the couple provided for him in the face of oppression from local officials and Pure Land sect zealots. Later Nichiren wrote to Sennichi-ama:

Whatever Heaven's design in the matter may have been, every single steward and Nembutsu believer worthy of the name kept strict watch on my hut day and night, determined to prevent anyone from communicating with me. Never in any lifetime will I forget how under those circumstances you, with Abutsu-bo, carrying a wooden container of food on his back, again and again came in the night to bring me aid. It was as though my deceased mother had suddenly been reborn in the province of Sado! (MW-6, 255)

Long after Nichiren was pardoned

"Never in any lifetime will I forget how under those circumstances you, with Abutsu-bo, carrying a wooden container of food on his back, again and again came in the night to bring me aid.

It was as though my deceased mother had suddenly been reborn in the province of Sado!"

and moved to Mount Minobu, the couple remained his staunch disciples. Despite his advanced age, Abutsu-bo visited his beloved teacher at Minobu three times before he died. This letter is Nichiren's response to Abutsu-bo's inquiry regarding the meaning of Taho Buddha and the Treasure Tower depicted in "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower," the eleventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren explains that the Treasure Tower in the Lotus Sutra signifies the Buddha nature within the lives of all people. When people take faith in the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the magnificent Treasure Tower of their Buddha nature emerges within their lives. After the death of Abutsu-bo, Nichiren wrote to his widow, Sennichi-ama: "Some may wonder where the spirit of the late Abutsu-bo may be at this moment. But by using the bright mirror of the Lotus Sutra [the Gohonzon] to reflect his image, I, Nichiren, can see him among the assembly on Eagle Peak, seated within the Treasure Tower of Taho Buddha..." (MW-6, 297).

We live in a world where a person's value is often judged in terms of money and social status. In such a materialistic world, people have difficulty realizing the treasure of their own lives.



**Commentary:
"On the Treasure Tower"**

IN the beginning of "On the Treasure Tower," Nichiren writes to Abutsu-bo: "In your letter you ask: 'What is signified by the Treasure Tower, where Taho Buddha was seated, appearing from within the earth?' The appearance of this bejeweled stupa [in the eleventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra] is of great importance..." (MW-1, 29). In his response to Abutsu-bo's question, he explains the meaning of the Treasure Tower.

In the Lotus Sutra, the appearance of the Treasure Tower is described as follows: "At that time in the Buddha's presence there was a tower adorned with the seven treasures, five hundred yojanas in height and two hundred and fifty yojanas in width and depth, that rose up out of the earth and stood suspended in the air" (LS11, 170). A yojana is a unit of measurement from ancient India, equal to the distance the royal army was thought to march in a day. Approximations vary, but, according to one account, the height of the Treasure Tower corresponds to the radius of Earth.

Seated within this giant tower

suspended in the air are Shakyamuni and Taho Buddha. From the moment of its emergence in the eleventh chapter through the twenty-second or "Entrustment" chapter of the sutra these two Buddhas conduct the so-called Ceremony in the Air. The meaning of the Treasure Tower has been interpreted from various perspectives but after briefly introducing T'ien-t'ai's explanation of the Treasure Tower, Nichiren offers a succinct conclusion: "In the Latter Day of the Law, there is no Treasure Tower other than the figures of the men and women who embrace the Lotus Sutra."

THE Lotus Sutra" in this passage indicates Nam-myoho-renge-kyo or the fundamental law of life and the universe (the Mystic Law). He states that the Treasure Tower is the lives of people who embrace the Gohonzon and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Put another way, the enormous Treasure Tower studded with the seven kinds of jewels symbolizes the magnificence and nobility of Buddhahood, which emerges within the lives of those who embrace the Mystic Law.

If we take the depiction of the Treasure Tower literally, it sounds like the product of an overactive

imagination. Of course, it is not meant to be taken as a record of historical fact. But it is not merely a fantastic tale either. As Nichiren explains in this letter, the story of the Treasure Tower is set in the Lotus Sutra in order to illustrate the magnificent potential of Buddhahood latent within the lives of all people. The Lotus Sutra depicts the Treasure Tower on a cosmic scale, like a cluster of all treasures in the universe, signifying the vastness of the cosmos.

TAHO Buddha is said to appear whenever the Lotus Sutra is preached, representing eternity. With those symbolic meanings in mind, Nichiren tells Abutsu-bo that he himself is the Treasure Tower and that he himself is Taho Buddha, urging him to realize the true nature of his life. He is telling Abutsu-bo and the practitioners of today: "Your lives are eternal, as vast as the universe itself; they are as precious as all the treasures therein." The Treasure Tower and Taho Buddha seated within it are metaphors for the dignity and eternity of human life respectively.

As Nichiren states "the figures of the men and women who embrace the Lotus Sutra" and

"chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, irrespective of social status," all people, transcending differences of gender, status and wealth, have the potential to attain Buddhahood.

Many people may understand the dignity of human life intellectually but in reality they may be disrespecting themselves and others. The concept of the Treasure Tower encourages us to break through our lack of self-worth and realize our inherent dignity. Society is now so complex and institutionalized that many people experience a sense of powerlessness and despair. "How can I make any change in the world when I am just one insignificant human being?"

We live in a world where a person's value is often judged in terms of money and social status. In such a materialistic world, people have

difficulty realizing the treasure of their own lives. If people fail to see the value of their own lives, then how can they treat others with respect? This is why Nichiren urges his followers to manifest the Treasure Tower within their lives so that they may experience the value of their lives as a concrete reality. He teaches that through the invocation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo people can come to realize the existence of Buddhahood in all humanity.

JUST thinking, "I am worthy," will not change much. To believe in our true self-worth, we need a mirror to reflect the Treasure Tower hidden in the depths of our lives. The Gohonzon is the mirror to reflect life's ultimate truth. As we continue to practice, chanting Nam-

myoho-renge-kyo with faith in our inner Treasure Tower, our lives begin to manifest it. In this letter, Nichiren emphasizes, "There is no Treasure Tower other than Myoho-renge-kyo." He teaches us not to seek the Treasure Tower outside our lives since our lives themselves are the entity of the Mystic Law and thus the Treasure Tower itself.

Nichiren's teaching does not point to some superior force outside of our lives that we should depend on. It is a teaching that develops self-reliance; it encourages a process in which we reform our daily lives to think, and act in accordance with the ultimate truth of our lives as reflected in the Gohonzon. It leads us to believe "My life is the Treasure Tower, and so are the lives of all people." □

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY

The following are excerpts from "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" in this issue.

OUR lives are dignified Treasure Towers. Yet it is a truth that eludes us. To realize that such a truth is indeed our lives is, in fact, "seeing the Treasure Tower." The ceremony that takes place in the "Treasure Tower" chapter is a mirror that reveals the true entity of our lives. The Gohonzon that Nichiren Daishonin established, based on the ceremony in the "Treasure Tower" chapter, is the "clear mirror" in which we can perceive our true selves. Buddhism is close at hand; it is concerned with the reality of our lives (pp. 21–22).

WHEN we chant the Mystic Law and practice for our

own happiness as well as that of others, our lives become the Treasure Tower. Put another way, the Treasure Tower emerges in our lives. The Law that we chant is Myoho-renge-kyo. And Myoho-renge-kyo is also the entity of our lives (p. 28).

NICHIREN Daishonin says, "The Treasure Tower is none other than all living beings, and all living beings are none other than the complete entity of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo" (GZ, 797). This is the perspective of "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower" chapter. We perceive the Treasure Tower in our own lives, and we perceive the Treasure Tower in the lives of others. And we are working to sanctify the places where we live and the entire world with forests of Treasure Towers. Let us

construct "Treasure Towers of kosen-rufu" in our communities. Let us each leave behind an eternal golden monument of personal achievement. Let us adorn our lives by challenging ourselves with the spirit, "This is where I will build my Treasure Tower" (p. 36).

ON the level of life there are no differences of gender, skin color or ethnicity. There is no discrimination on the basis of wealth or social status. Everyone is equal. Basing oneself on the Treasure Tower, therefore, could be thought of as establishing a view of the sanctity of life of absolute equality. It is true humanism.... Those who discriminate against others violate the sanctity of their own lives. On the other hand, when we treasure the lives of others, the Treasure Tower within us shines (p. 36). □

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE PARROT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ED LEE

The following story was related by Laura Huxley in an interview with the Soka Gakkai newspaper, Seikyo Shimbun. Mrs. Huxley is an American social activist and the widow of renowned British author Aldous Huxley.

IN a former incarnation, the Buddha was a parrot, a very happy parrot. And she was living in a forest and loving all the animals in the forest very deeply. She was a very generous and kind parrot.

ting all wet, flew back to the fire and sprinkled a few tiny drops of water, like jewels, over the flames. Of course this did not achieve anything because the fire was raging out of control.

Meanwhile, from high above, the gods were watching all this bemused. "What a silly little bird," they thought. But one of the gods became puzzled by this and decided to take the form of an eagle and fly down to investigate. He looked at the parrot and said, "Why don't you give up and fly where there is no fire and forget these animals crying in pain and anguish?" The parrot thought, "Just what I need, advice!" She continued her desperate flight, sprinkling little drops of water, again with no result.

Then, this god, in the shape of an eagle, became extraordinarily moved by this little bird and her good will. He became so moved that tears fell from his eyes and became a golden torrent of rain that put out the fire and fertilized the earth. New sprouts and new grass blossomed again. All the animals were astonished. And as they looked around, they saw the little parrot flying happily and freely in the sky. □

This "Topics for Discussion" series is intended to stimulate lively conversations about Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

One sad day, lightning struck a dead tree and caused a fire. Soon the fire became immense and many animals were trapped, crying in terror and pain. The little parrot didn't know what to do, so she flew to a nearby river, plunged in get-

Desperately, with all her might, she continued to fly back and forth between the river and the fire. Her hope was that she could save even one of her friends. Her eyes were red, her lungs full of smoke and she was tired. But still she flew.



Points for Discussion

THE strong determination of the parrot was such that it moved the heavens and saved the animals in the forest. Even though the task seemed impossible, the parrot exerted all its might for the sake of the forest creatures. It was not discouraged by the impossible task nor by the gods.

In society, at work or in our homes, we are sometimes faced with unpleasant situations where we might feel discouraged—a situation that may seem impossible to change. This is the crucial moment when our own behavior can be a turning point. To do nothing is to condone the unpleasantness around us. Nichiren Daishonin writes that when a crisis appears, “the wise will rejoice and the foolish will retreat (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 288). This is because when we put forth our best effort based on the Mystic Law, we can accomplish the impossible.

When we encounter a difficult problem for which there seems no

solution, we must first pray to the Gohonzon with the determination “I will overcome this problem” or “I will resolve this situation” before focusing on specific methods or tactics. This is “the strategy of the Lotus Sutra.” This is faith.

From the wisdom and courage we derive from our prayer, we will devise the best plan for victory and unleash the life force to put it into action. Another result of our prayers is that people and things in our environment will come to our aid; this is the meaning of what Buddhism calls the “protection of the Buddhist gods.” As a result, we can make the impossible come to pass.

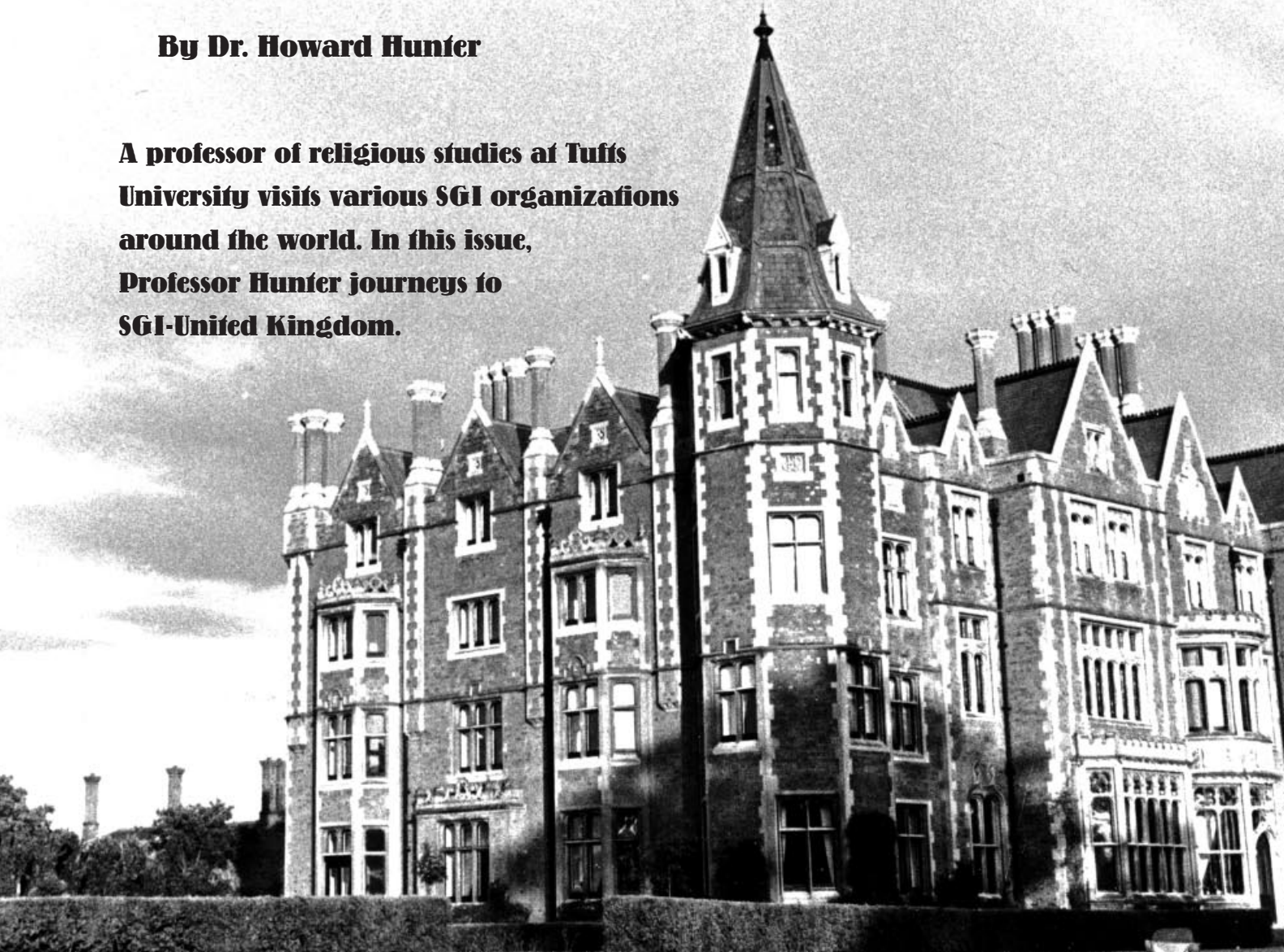
Sometimes we may feel that our efforts for kosen-rufu are meaningless or ineffective in the world at large. Nevertheless, Buddhism teaches that nothing in the world of faith is without consequence. No action is wasted. We must continue with the confidence that “I will make a difference.” Those who develop themselves by working hard even though no one notices will triumph in the end. □



Through the SGI: A Personal Odyssey (3)

By Dr. Howard Hunter

A professor of religious studies at Tufts University visits various SGI organizations around the world. In this issue, Professor Hunter journeys to SGI-United Kingdom.



Taplow Court, an SGI-UK facility a few miles outside London.

As some readers may know, I have had the privilege of paying visits during the last several months to individual members of Soka Gakkai International as well as various culture centers of SGI in India, Italy, England and Mexico. This is the third brief article to appear in *Living Buddhism* giving some

impressions based on my experiences in these very different countries. My purpose was to learn how the various cultural conditions affect the teachings and practices of SGI.

The most frequent question I have received regarding my research has been this: "What differences have you discovered among the sev-

eral SGI groups you have visited?" To this I have responded that while some notable differences do exist with regard to somewhat secondary matters pertaining to local circumstances, the central teachings and practices are essentially the same. What has been also quite obvious — and sometimes amusingly so — is



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spoke very little of intimate personal matters. Mexican and Italian members, equally hospitable but even more celebratory, were far more likely to discuss their emotional lives and their relationships, their affairs of the heart. In short, the stereotype of the passionate Latin spirit was often confirmed. Serious intellectual concerns did not overcome a desire for convivial occasions accompanying nearly every meeting. What of the English? This is the subject of the present report.

VISITING individual members and several of the organizations, groups and cultural centers in Greater London leaves one with a lasting impression of a vital and lively movement blessed with excellent facilities and an enthusiastic membership. The facilities include a prominently situated center in suburban London on Richmond Green that not only has meeting rooms but also a shop in which books and other materials relating to the work of SGI can be purchased. A large but tasteful sign is imprinted on one side of the building bearing the words "SGI-UK: Buddhist Society for the Creation of Value."

Another facility is a truly outstanding castle-like stately home called Taplow Court, which is situated a few miles outside London and not far from Oxford. This center is a place that can host conferences and retreats as well as public events like exhibitions and concerts. It is available to individual members and groups, and scholars find its well-appointed library a rich resource of books dealing with SGI in particular as well as more general books dealing with Asian reli-

gions and philosophies. SGI young people volunteer to take care of the many duties connected with maintaining in perfect condition a large country residence and grounds. The headquarters of SGI-UK are also located at Taplow Court.

It was there that the librarian of the Oriental Collections, a graduate student in Buddhist studies at London University, gave a touching response to a question I had asked regarding his view of authority in Buddhism and his perception of the role of President Ikeda in this regard. After acknowledging deep appreciation for President Ikeda's teaching and leadership, he said simply, "In the final analysis, the authority for me is the Law." The assurance with which he said this was impressive. I could not help thinking that this was a response with which President Ikeda would be pleased. So, of course, Shakyamuni Buddha insisted that his followers be lamps unto themselves rather than worship him.

I was able during a short visit to conduct interviews and hold conversations with quite a wide variety of SGI members — professional and business people, artists and media people, students and workers from varying levels of economic status. What emerged from my discussions with them was a sense that their involvement with SGI reflected a deep desire on their part to find and to express a coherent and rational approach to the problems that the contemporary metropolis of London presented to them. Several individuals, especially the professional and artistic members, spoke of personal crises in their lives that led them to search unsuccessfully for understanding and guidance from tradi-

the way in which stereotypes of the several cultures prove accurate.

These stereotypes must be rooted in reality since, as one would anticipate, the Indian members were profoundly hospitable, attentive to the courtesies due visitors and clearly at home with matters philosophical and spiritual. They



tional religions and social groups. They gave heartfelt tribute to the benefits they obtained through the study and practice of SGI.

One interview conveys some characteristic aspects of the cultural situation in Britain that affects the effort to practice Buddhism there.

A leader told me of her remarkable spiritual journey from a strict Roman Catholic upbringing with a very devout mother and a brother who was a priest. She moved away from home and married outside her Christian faith. After this marriage proved unsuccessful, she explored the avenues of spiritual practice available to her but found none satisfactory. After encountering the SGI, she was intrigued by its teachings but found its focus on a worship object and the use of prayer beads discouragingly reminiscent of the practices of the faith she had rejected.

Still, her fascination with Buddhism persisted as she studied the

works of Nichiren Daishonin and the writings of President Ikeda. One day she decided that she would try to chant but certainly not in public. She retired to her home and even there closeted herself in the privacy of her bathroom. She began to chant but even then, entirely alone, she blushed! She laughed merrily at herself as she told this story. I told her that I had heard before of “closet Buddhists” who were shy about revealing their Buddhist practice, but that she was the first “water closet Buddhist” I had encountered.

VISITING individuals in their homes was especially rewarding, for members could and did discuss the deepest concerns that motivated their adoption of Buddhism. Repeatedly members told me of their dissatisfaction with domestic relations, their spiritual life and of their sense of frustration due to their inability to find ways to cope with the negative aspects of

their lives. Attendance and participation in the established church did not appear to be a live option for them and they perceived themselves to be living in a culture which had lost its traditional values and its roots.

Their interviews with me confirmed what Professors Bryan Wilson and Karel Dobbelaere analyzed in their thorough study of Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain. In their book, *A Time to Chant*, the professors offer extensive documentation of the fact that SGI offers the type of practical direction and purpose for life that many find lacking in Britain.

While I was in London, I was presented copies of SGI-UK publications. They are well-edited and make a significant contribution to the members' practice. One periodical, the UK Express, is directed not only toward the SGI membership but to the larger public. It is presented as “The magazine of SGI-

During a visit to his third country to meet SGI members, Dr. Howard Hunter talked with youth of the United Kingdom. He writes: "Visiting individual members and several of the organizations, groups and cultural centers in Greater London leaves one with a lasting impression of a vital and lively movement blessed with excellent facilities and an enthusiastic membership."



PHILIP PINCHIN / SGI-UK ARCHIVES

UK, the Buddhist Society for the Creation of Value through Peace, Education and Culture." Its subtitle states, "Trust through Friendship, Peace through Trust." The issue, current at the time of my visit, offered articles on SGI practice and a lengthy special feature on "Sex, Sexuality and Gender."

I had the opportunity to discuss this special section with Win Hunter (no relation) who was co-author of the lead article of this special section. She noted that the subject of sexuality in SGI-UK was provoking more response than usual from readers, some of whom felt that the subject and manner of presentations were inappropriate. Win Hunter's view was that so important a subject clearly deserved thorough consideration from the Buddhist perspective and that there was no reason to ignore or to deny its centrality in human affairs.

Whatever one's opinion might be regarding the appropriateness of

rather sensational pictures accompanied by quotations from such "authorities" as Woody Allen, Mae West, Cole Porter and Oscar Wilde, there is no question about the willingness of SGI-UK to tackle an often controversial and provocative subject openly and thoroughly. I found the issue of *UK Express* one of the most helpful and stimulating discussions I have ever seen on the subject of Buddhist perspectives on sexuality.

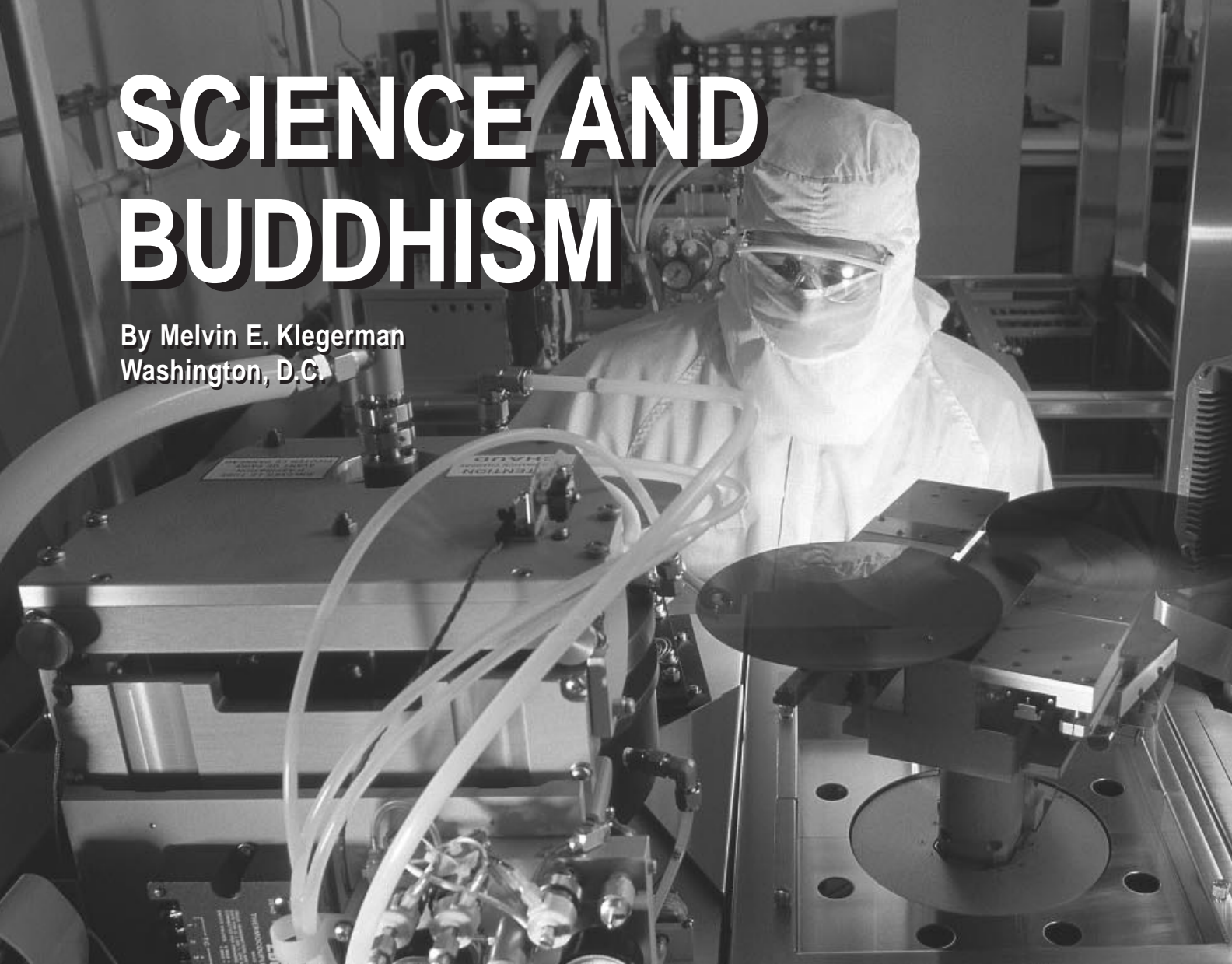
ONE highlight of my experience in London was attending a meeting of young SGI members and of prospective members in a working class neighborhood in suburban London. Gathered in a row house were some twenty-five young people from all walks of life. Students, laborers, office workers, artists, professional people and some unemployed, some single, some married, some straight, some gay...here was a cross section of London youth unit-

ed in a common enterprise of studying and discussing Buddhist thought, testifying to its relevance and chanting with enthusiasm. The honesty, openness and the happiness at being together in common dedication to the values of the bodhisattva ideal and commitment to the effort to realize this altruistic ideal in contemporary London remain with me as an especially meaningful memory.

While the formal beauty and excellent facilities of Taplow Court are great assets to the SGI-UK, it is in the hearts and minds of such young people that the future of the organization is located. The excellent publications and well-structured organization are aspects of great importance to the SGI-UK, but again the unpretentious sharing of the joy of Buddhist teaching among these young people speaks eloquently of the joyful benefits they are achieving through their practice. □

SCIENCE AND BUDDHISM

By Melvin E. Klegerman
Washington, D.C.



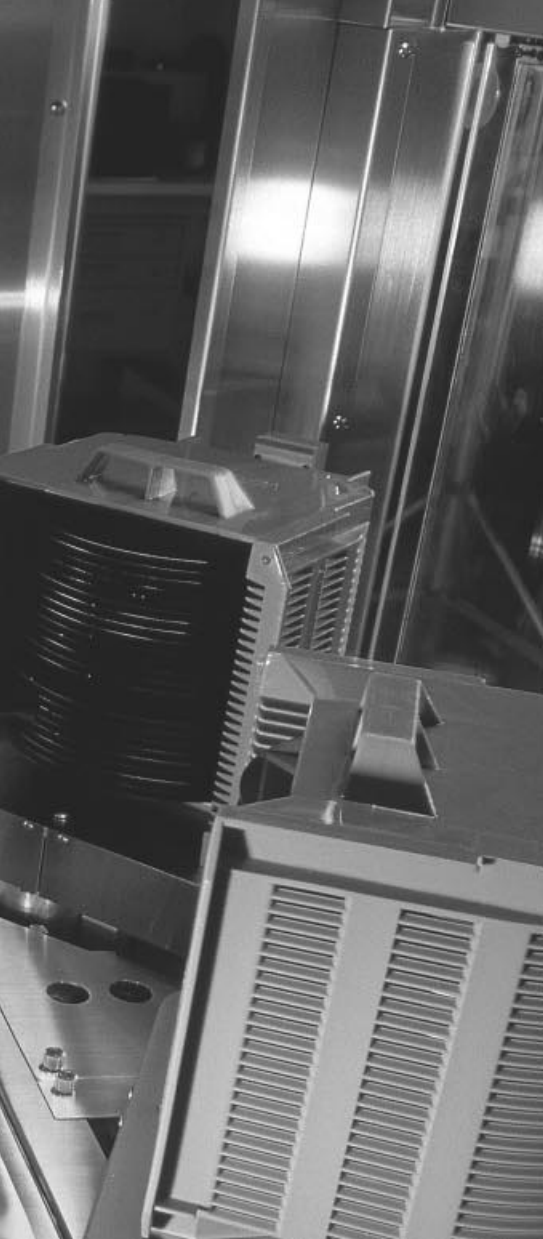
The following article is based on a presentation made on August 2, 1996, at the 1996 Conference of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies at DePaul University in Chicago. The presentation was part of a symposium that featured five SGI-USA speakers under the theme, "The Practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in Modern Society: The Soka Gakkai Approach to the Twenty-first Century."

A CONCEPT that has caught the imaginations of many people in various disciplines now is that of paradigms. Briefly defined, a paradigm is a world-view or a unifying, overarching picture of reality governing an aspect of existence. In science, paradigms are often considered to be universal laws, such as Newton's laws of motion or the Second Law

of Thermodynamics. They are even referred to as theories, such as Einstein's Theory of General Relativity or Darwin's Theory of Evolution Through Natural Selection, although they are generally accepted as the best descriptions of phenomena within their purview at this time.

What determines whether a paradigm is accepted as a powerful, useful description of reality? First, it

must have explanatory power. Darwin's Theory of Evolution Through Natural Selection provides a plausible basis for the emergence of life's diversity from the laws of chemistry and physics. Second, it must have predictive power. Newton's laws of motion enable one to predict the locations of planets in the distant future, to the advantage of astrophysicists and astrologers, alike. The history of paradigms in science has been a progression toward greater explanatory and predictive power, indicating a convergence with what can be considered to be absolute reality. Science, by its own admission, however, can never



RICHARD MONTZIGORIS

but instead are revealed and are, therefore, absolute. Viewed scientifically, absolute paradigms only permit deductive reasoning. Since religious paradigms generally govern life experiences, attitudes and conduct, testing them would lead one to conclude that religions tend to be paradigms in crisis. The philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn defined a paradigm in crisis as one that has suffered too many failed tests or anomalies that cannot be resolved without making implausible adjustments to the paradigm. This, then, is the problem of engaged religion in a scientific age: Why does religion appear to be incompatible with practical reason?

BOTH theological and secular scholars, such as the mythologist Joseph Campbell, have argued that mythic elements in religions constitute a set of metaphors that instruct the spiritual and cultural development of human beings, but an absolute paradigm must include phenomenal, as well as spiritual, reality. I will argue that two Buddhist concepts exemplify how religious philosophy can serve as an absolute paradigm governing both the objective and subjective aspects of life.

The Buddhist concept of the oneness of life and its environment refers to the belief that all life and the environment in which it exists are inseparable, or simply two aspects of the same entity. Furthermore, the environment reflects the life-conditions of the people that inhabit it and the three poisons of greed, anger and stupidity inherent in people's lives manifest the calamities of famine, warfare and pestilence. The most immediate evidence for the truth of this concept is that humans increasingly exert a direct influence on the

environment. For instance, preoccupation with profit has led to such effects as deforestation, the greenhouse effect and erosion of the atmospheric ozone layer, all of which threaten to affect climate and agricultural production disastrously.

Our age has witnessed a proliferation of wars, both international and civil, in which intense hatreds have spawned nearly inconceivably brutal atrocities; Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia immediately come to mind, not to mention the enduring lessons of World War II. AIDS has signaled the reemergence of epidemic infectious diseases after a brief generation-long hiatus in the West. Stupidities such as failure of governments and populations to teach and observe safe sex practices, unleashing of deadly viruses by shortsighted environmental disruptions, disregard of continuing epidemics in the Third World, and viewing the need to refine antibiotic development as unprofitable have all led to pestilence.

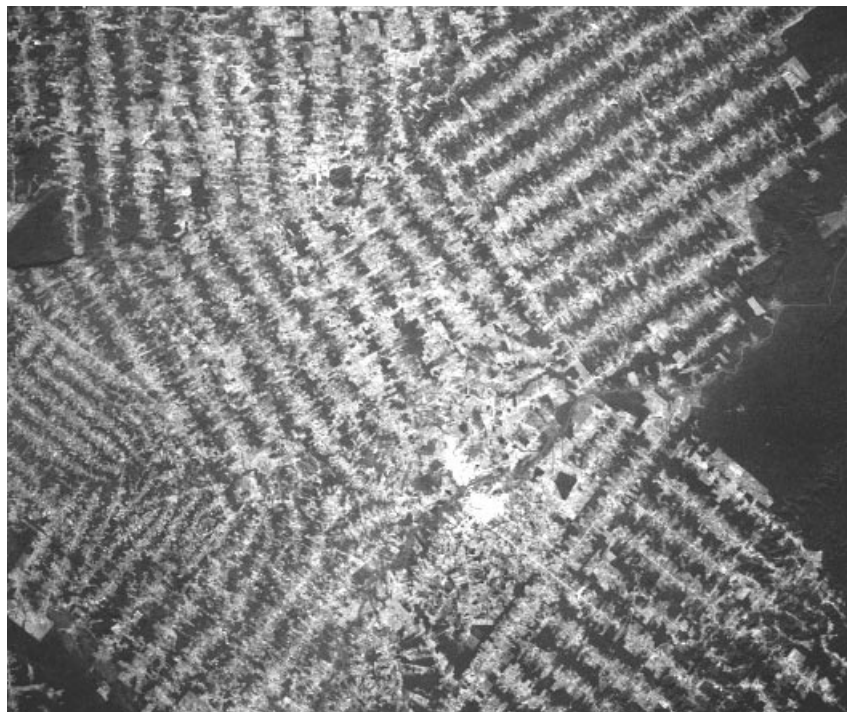
The whole world is discovering a deeper basis for the view that life and its environment are one, what Buddhism has long known as dependent origination, the elaborate interconnectedness of everything, so that every action somehow perturbs the larger web of life that radiates throughout the entire universe. An example often used to support chaos theory is that a butterfly fluttering its wings over West Africa can initiate a cascade of events ultimately producing a hurricane in the Western Hemisphere.

At the very frontiers of modern science is the field of quantum physics, which offers the startling realization that even an objective observation made with instruments is conditioned by the observer. For instance, light will appear to be made up of waves or particles, depending

achieve complete convergence with absolute reality, since it utilizes inductive reasoning from individual cases to generalities. The prevailing paradigm is tested by scientists using deductive reasoning to predict the outcome of artificially created cases, or experiments, based on the paradigm. Because the universe is infinite, all cases can never be examined and, therefore, the paradigm cannot be proven with absolute certainty.

On the other hand, the systems of beliefs and practices central to a philosophy of life, which can be considered religious paradigms, are not inferred from individual cases,

View from the space shuttle Atlantis, of the Polonoroeste Project, an effort by the Brazilian government to populate and deforest a large area of the Amazon Basin. Farms and ranches have replaced most of the forests in this region.



DIGITAL IMAGE © 1996

on what you use to observe it. Likewise, Buddhism teaches that life will appear to be the inner reaches of the human mind or a barren mountain, depending upon how you look at it. The oneness of life and environment is also appreciated in the biological and behavioral sciences, since it has been learned that animals, including humans, structure the environment they perceive to enhance their ability to adapt to it. We sense only a small portion of the sound and light spectrums, apparently because that best suited our survival in the environment in which humans arose—the Pleistocene Epoch of two million years ago.

ULTIMATELY, this oneness of life and environment concept depends upon a second Buddhist concept, that of the inseparability of body and mind. This concept is now being actively elucidated by the emerging science of psychoneuroimmunology, which has provided Deepak Chopra with much of the basis for his system of mind-body medicine. A deeper, more profound meaning of this term, however, is the oneness of the spiritual and material aspects of life or the fundamental equality of the objective and subjective realms. According to Buddhism, therefore, the subjective aspects of life are dimensions just like the four objective dimensions of space-time. The three realms expounded by the Chinese Buddhist sage Chih-i, or

Chih-che, indicate that these number six: form, perception, volition, cognition, consciousness and aggregates of living beings, for a total of ten dimensions. Interestingly, the most recent attempts to unify all phenomena in one principle, such as Superstring Theory, require ten dimensions to make the mathematics come out right.

Here, religious philosophy can act as a true paradigm, leading and explaining scientific inquiry. One of the most mind-boggling aspects of quantum physics derives from the fact that light cannot behave as both a particle and a wave at the same time. If light is shined through two slits in an opaque plate, it will project a wave pattern on a screen behind it; but, if the experiment is rigged to provide information about which slit each light particle, or photon, traveled through, the wave pattern will disappear. One explanation for this finding would be that the photons somehow become separated in another dimension that keeps them from interfering

with each other to produce the characteristic wave pattern. According to the Buddhist concepts of the inseparability of body and mind and the three realms, these photons entered the dimension of cognition when the observer became aware of their exact paths, separating them and preventing their interference. Needless to say, this possibility gives rise to exciting experimental prospects.

THE concept of religion as universal paradigm means that each person becomes a scientist experimenting with his or her own life, over which he or she has total control. Practice of such a religion would link a positive inner human reformation with the healing and flourishing of the environment. The phenomenon of transforming the land through an inner reformation of life is explained in a thesis by Nichiren titled “On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism.” In keeping with this spirit, the Soka

Gakkai International (SGI) is dedicated to the promotion of peace, culture and education throughout the world, based on the influence of Nichiren's teachings, both individually and collectively.

SCIENCE and technology, certainly, are central to the achievement of all three goals. The devastation of two Japanese cities in 1945 by nuclear bombs developed by the scientific enterprise known as the Manhattan Project is an enduring stain on the integrity of science and all scientists. The second and third presidents of the Soka Gakkai, Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda, tirelessly excoriated the maintenance of nuclear arsenals by nations and repeatedly identified this as the major threat to our planet. This threat remains even now in the post-Soviet age and has acquired an ominous cast in light of national destabilizations and the steady increase of terrorist activities worldwide.

Added to the nuclear legacy of misguided science are the dangers of chemical and biological warfare. The former is being appreciated in the aftermath of the Gulf War and the latter is particularly chilling when considering that students from all over the world are learning the relatively cheap and accessible, but extremely powerful, recombinant DNA technology in Western universities, while viral epidemic diseases of unprecedented virulence are emerging in the Developing Nations. The potential threats of these developments are compellingly described by Laurie Garrett in her book, *The Coming Plague*. The familiar retreat of scientists into the guiltless and guileless world of pure science that has permitted dark technological appli-

cations to emerge should become a badge of shame in future years.

Science and the philosophy of modern rationalism that underlies it have had an indescribably profound impact on the course of Western culture and now all cultures. The deleterious impact of this development on the human psyche and cultural values have been described by detractors ranging from Pascal and Rousseau to Nietzsche and a host of contemporary commentators, including Anthony Burgess and Jeremy Rifkin. Now, the rise of popularized participatory cybernetics known as the computer age and the Internet is likely to make even more pervasive the two-dimensionality of the television age that has contributed so much to the dehumanization of modern society.

The potential benefits of these technologies, however, are undeniable and can greatly enhance the quality of life if efforts are made to emphasize the supremacy of penetrating life-to-life dialogue among people of diverse backgrounds. The Soka Gakkai has done much to promote such dialogue in its own activities and forums such as this one.

SGI President Ikeda has stated unequivocally that education is the most important endeavor of the present age. To this end, he has established the Soka school and university system in Japan and the United States, which is based on the value-creating educational philosophy of the Soka Gakkai's first president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. Science instruction especially can benefit from this approach. Youth today increasingly shun science and mathematics, believing them to be cold, sterile and dehumanizing. In fact, science, which often requires mathematics to be understood and prac-

ticed, is a philosophy that was created by human beings for the benefit of other human beings. It is an indispensable tool for teaching people how to think and function capably as modern world citizens. Not least, it is interesting and a wonderful means for expressing human creativity when taught properly. I look forward to the realization of science's pedagogical role in a humanistic educational setting.

On a personal note, I can say that, as a scientist who practices this Buddhism and as a member of the SGI, I have become impressed with the importance of fortune in science, which is so important to the discovery process. Conducting research science is a good way to monitor the ability of a religion to generate good fortune, from the behavior of temperamental instrumentation to the progress of the research process and, most important, contribution to the well-being of people. I can attest that actual proof can proceed from documentary and theoretical foundations in religion, as it does in science, provided the underlying paradigm is sound and robust. □

Melvin Klegerman received his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Loyola University of Chicago in 1984. At the time of this presentation, he was associate director of the Institute for Tuberculosis Research at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he continues to serve as adjunct assistant professor in the College of Pharmacy. He is now involved in starting a contract research organization, the Mid-Atlantic Biomedical Research Laboratories, in the Washington, D.C. area. His current activities focus on the development of anti-cancer drugs that stimulate the immune system.

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

In this installment, they discuss the appearance of the Treasure Tower in the "Emergence of the Treasure Tower" (eleventh) chapter, the Ceremony in the Air and its relation to the Gohonzon, the two principles of reality and wisdom, the significance of the seven treasures that adorn the Treasure Tower, and Buddhism's concordance with the spirit of democracy.

Saito: Thank you, President Ikeda, for inviting us to sit in on your discussion the other day (April 24, 1996, Tokyo) with Dr. David W. Chappell.¹

Just as in your meeting with Dr. Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya (of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences), the discussion brimmed with rich jewels of insight for studying the wisdom of the Lotus Sutra.

Suda: Moreover, because the dialogue was filled with such brilliant

DIALOGUE ON THE LOTUS SUTRA



humor, the three-and-a-half hours seemed to pass in an instant. Though I imagine that keeping up a discussion for such a long time must have been rather exhausting for you both.

Endo: From the moment you welcomed Dr. Chappell at the Seikyo Shimbun building, I felt an indescribable warmth between the two of you.

A picture accompanying the article in the *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper shows you relieving Dr.

Chappell of the bag he was carrying. That bag had in fact contained a photo album about Hawaii and other books that Dr. Chappell had brought as gifts for you. When he later presented them to you, he remarked, "I'm sorry they're so heavy." Thanking him, you replied: "I know. I was carrying them around earlier."

Ikeda: You've quite a memory for detail. But it seems to me we must have talked about other things that were more important.

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



For instance, Dr. Chappell suggested that dialogue based on the spirit of the Lotus Sutra—on a sense of respect and appreciation for the infinite worth of each person's life—would hold the key to the future of humankind. Such respect for life is in fact the message of the Lotus Sutra and of "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower" chapter. The rich soil of such mutual respect can sustain fruitful dialogue and friendship, and the flourishing of peace. He also expressed the belief that military

force is no match for the strength of human friendship.

Saito: As you suggest, the Lotus Sutra—Buddhism—is certainly not remote or far removed from our daily lives. For it to have any real meaning, it has to become manifest in our immediate actions.

Endo: The American mythologist Joseph Campbell writes, "I think of compassion as the fundamental religious experience and, unless that is there, you have nothing."²

Suda: Now you, President Ikeda, are always showing us this through your actions. Still, I find myself hard pressed to do more than just marvel at your example.

Ikeda: Buddhism lies close at hand, in the here and now. It exists in daily life, in human existence, in society. To present Buddhism as belonging to some realm removed from life and reality is a deception.

Saito: Priests of later times often shrouded Buddhism in mystical terms in order to appropriate authority for themselves. So in the minds of many, Buddhism has an aura of the esoteric hanging over it.

Endo: They've taken what the Buddha went to great lengths to explain as clearly and simply as possible, and added layers of obfuscation and obscurity.

Ikeda: Since ancient times, a great many interpretations have been given to the chapter we are to begin studying this time, "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower." In some cases, such interpretations meant a great deal to the people to whom they were articulated. However, Nichiren Daishonin points to its ultimate significance when he plainly says that the teaching of the Treasure Tower "refers to our individual bodies" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 740). In the same vein, comparing the appearance of the Treasure Tower to one's emergence in birth, he says, "The Treasure Purity world is the mother's womb" (GZ, 740); and, "the process of emerging from this womb is called 'coming forth and appearing'" (GZ, 797).

Our lives are dignified Treasure Towers. Yet it is a truth that eludes us. To realize that such a truth is

Priests of later times often shrouded Buddhism in mystical terms in order to appropriate authority for themselves. So in the minds of many, Buddhism has an aura of the esoteric hanging over it.



indeed our lives is, in fact, “seeing the Treasure Tower.” The ceremony that takes place in the “Treasure Tower” chapter is a mirror that reveals the true entity of our lives. The Gohonzon that Nichiren Daishonin established, based on the ceremony in the “Treasure Tower” chapter, is the “clear mirror” in which we can perceive our true selves.

Buddhism is concerned with the reality of our lives. This should be our basic stance as we try to come to terms with the teachings of the Lotus Sutra.

The Appearance of the Treasure Tower

At that time in the Buddha’s presence, there was a tower adorned with the seven treasures, five hundred *yojanas* in height and two hundred and fifty *yojanas* in width and depth, that rose up out of the earth and stood suspended in the air. Various kinds of precious objects adorned it. It had five thousand railings, a thousand, ten thousand rooms, and numberless streamers and banners decorated

it. Festoons of jewels hung down and ten thousand million jeweled bells were suspended from it. All four sides emitted a fragrance of tamalapatra and sandalwood that pervaded the whole world. Its banners and canopies were made of the seven treasures, namely, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, seashell, agate, pearl, and carnelian, and it was so high it reached to the heavenly palaces of the Four Heavenly Kings. (*The Lotus Sutra*, ch. 11, pp. 170–71)

Endo: This chapter opens with the appearance of the Treasure Tower, an enormous tower that suddenly emerges from the earth and comes to a rest suspended in mid-air. Then, quite without warning a great voice is heard issuing from within the tower:

“Excellent, excellent! Shakyamuni, World-Honored One, that you can take ... the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, and preach it for the sake of the great assembly! It is as you say, as you say. Shakyamuni, World-Honored One, all

that you have expounded is the truth!” (LS11, 171)

Hearing such words of praise left those in the assembly with great doubt. Someone asks: “World-Honored One, for what reason has this Treasure Tower risen up out of the earth? And why does this voice issue from its midst?” (LS11, 171)

Shakyamuni explains that in the Treasure Tower there is a Buddha named Many Treasures (Jp. Taho), and that this Buddha once made the following great vow:

“If, after I have become a Buddha and entered extinction, in the lands in the ten directions there is any place where the Lotus Sutra is preached, then my funerary tower . . . will come forth and appear in that spot to testify to the sutra and praise its excellence.” (LS11, 171)

Suda: The bodhisattva questioning Shakyamuni persists: “World-Honored One, we wish to see the body of this Buddha” (LS11, 172).

Endo: But there is a condition. In order for Many Treasures Buddha to show himself, Shakyamuni must first gather together all of the Buddhas who, as his emanations, are expounding the Law in the ten directions of the universe. To cause these Buddhas to gather, Shakyamuni purifies the *saha* world three times, enlarges it by the addition of many other worlds, and combines all of these worlds into one magnificent Buddha land. This is what is known as the “three transformations of the land.”

When Shakyamuni opens the Treasure Tower after all the Buddhas have gathered, Many Treasures Buddha is seen solemnly seated within.

Suda: Reading the description in the sutra, you can almost hear the people catch their breath at the incredible sight before them.

Endo: Many Treasures Buddha then reiterates his praise for Shakyamuni’s preaching of the Lotus Sutra, saying, “Excellent, Excellent, Shakyamuni Buddha!” (LS11, 175). He then moves over and invites Shakyamuni to join him on his seat.

Suda: Shakyamuni and Many Treasures Buddha thus seated together within the Treasure Tower is the origin of the term *the two Buddhas seated side by side*.

Endo: Now the people are gazing up at the Buddhas in the tower high above them. It was at this point that Shakyamuni lifted the entire assembly of beings into the air. That is the beginning of the Ceremony in the Air.

Shakyamuni then calls to them: “Who is capable of broadly preaching the Lotus Sutra of the Wonder-

ful Law in this *saha* world? Now is the time to do so, for before long the Thus Come One will enter nirvana. The Buddha wishes to entrust this Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law to someone so that it may be preserved” (LS11, 176). Next he explains that the tower of Many Treasures Buddha has appeared and the Buddhas from the ten directions have gathered in this place, at this time, in order “to make certain the Law will long endure” (LS11, 177).

Suda: In other words, this is the vow they make to ensure that the Law will never perish.

Endo: Shakyamuni then explains (through describing the “six difficult and nine easy acts” [see box p. 24]) just how difficult it will be to embrace and spread the Lotus Sutra in the world after his passing, compared to the difficulty of embracing and spreading other sutras. He urges those in the assembly to arouse a strong desire and vow to accomplish this very difficult task, saying that those who do will attain the unsurpassed Way of the Buddha. That’s the basic outline of the “Treasure Tower” chapter.

Saito: I guess the high point would be the appearance of the magnificent and grand Treasure Tower, beautifully adorned with the seven treasures, which include gold, silver, lapis lazuli and agate.

Ikeda: The appearance of the great tower dramatically marks the beginning of the Ceremony in the Air. The Daishonin quite appropriately says that what then takes place is “no ordinary ceremony” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 57).

Endo: It certainly was by no means ordinary. The appearance of the Treasure Tower, the testimony of Many Treasures Buddha, the three transformations of the land, the gathering of Shakyamuni’s emanations from throughout the universe, the two Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures sitting side by side — here we have a succession of extraordinary and entirely unprecedented events.

Suda: The extraordinary size of the Treasure Tower is itself remarkable. Measuring five hundred *yojanas* in height and two hundred-fifty *yojanas* in width and depth, it is absolutely enormous.

A *yojana* was a unit of measure used in ancient India. It indicated the distance that the royal army could travel in a day. According to one explanation, it corresponds to forty Chinese *ri*.³ There are a number of other definitions, but even calculated conservatively five hundred *yojanas* would be equal to one-third the diameter of the earth. It was a distance so great as to have been all but incomprehensible to the people of the day.

Ikeda: They’re not the only ones who would have difficulty imagining something that enormous. We cannot fathom a tower of such dimensions without thinking in astronomical terms. The fact that it is adorned with seven kinds of treasures is also extraordinary.

Endo: Several points are hard to visualize. For example, the sutra says that Many Treasures Buddha is within the Treasure Tower, but where would he have been within such an enormous edifice? Shakyamuni opens the Treasure Tower

with his right hand and sits down alongside Many Treasures, but was the door large or small? And where in the body of the Treasure Tower is the door located?

Ikeda: That's why there is nothing surprising about Abutsu-bo⁴ asking Nichiren Daishonin to explain the meaning of the Treasure Tower .

Saito: The shape of the Treasure Tower isn't clearly explained either. We are told that it is "high," but is it rectangular? Is it cylindrical? Is it

shaped like a cone or a pyramid? Is it dome shaped? None of this is clear.

Ikeda: Maybe the people of India at the time had a certain image of its shape. But it seems to me that the question of what a tower symbolized to them is more important than what its precise shape was.

Suda: Well, *tower* (Jp. *to*) is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term *stupa*. Indian stupas are said to have had extraordinarily rich symbolism. Incidentally, the Japa-

nese words *sotoba* and *toba* are transliterations of *stupa*.

The term *stupa* appears in ancient Vedic (i.e., Hindu) texts. Its meanings include "axis connecting heaven and earth" and "top of the fulcrum." Certain Vedic texts say that the entire universe is like a tree; the crown, or top-most portion, of this tree is called the *stupa*. It seems this portion was also taken to symbolize the entire universe.

Ikeda: Given that cultural background, it may be that the sutra's

THE SIX DIFFICULT AND NINE EASY ACTS

SHAKYAMUNI used the parable of the six difficult acts and the nine easy acts in "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower" chapter of the Lotus Sutra to show just how difficult it would be to propagate the Lotus Sutra (the Gohonzon) after his death. Shakyamuni asked the people in the assembly where he preached the Lotus Sutra three times who would be courageous enough to vow to propagate the Lotus Sutra in the future. After he asked the third time, he cited the six difficult and nine easy acts to show what attitude would be required. The nine easy acts are:

1. It is easier to teach the innumerable sutras (as many as the sands of the Ganges River) other than to teach the Lotus Sutra.
2. It is easier to take Mount Sumeru and hurl it across the universe over countless Buddha lands than to teach the Lotus Sutra.
3. It is easier to kick a major world system into another quarter with one's toe (i.e., from one galaxy across into another galaxy) than to teach the Lotus Sutra.
4. It is easier to stand in the highest heaven and preach innumerable sutras other than the Lotus Sutra than to teach the Lotus Sutra.
5. It is easier to grasp the sky with one's hand and travel around with it than to teach the Lotus Sutra.
6. It is easier to place the Earth on one's toenail and ascend to the Brahman Heaven than to teach the Lotus Sutra.

7. It is easier to walk across a burning prairie carrying a bundle of hay on one's back without being burned than to teach the Lotus Sutra.

8. It is easier to preach eighty-four thousand teachings and enable one's listeners to obtain the six supernatural powers than to teach the Lotus Sutra.

9. It is easier to enable innumerable people to reach the stage of *arhat* (one who has attained the highest degree of practice in Hinayana Buddhism) and acquire the six supernatural powers than to teach the Lotus Sutra.

The nine easy acts above may seem impossible. However, feats even more difficult than these are:

1. It is difficult to propagate the Lotus Sutra widely.
2. It is difficult to copy it or cause someone else to copy it.
3. It is difficult to recite it even for a short while.
4. It is difficult to teach it to even one person.
5. It is difficult to accept the Lotus Sutra and inquire about its meaning.
6. It is difficult to maintain faith in it.

These comparisons show how difficult it will be to expound and spread the Lotus Sutra after the passing of the Buddha. They also serve to encourage people who have stood up in faith, realizing their mission to spread the Lotus Sutra. The difficulties of propagation can be attributed to the profundity of the Law and its property of being the agent of change in both society and human life.



The Himalayas, which I saw when I visited Nepal, are certainly a majestic sight. They struck me as having the imposing dignity of a Treasure Tower connecting heaven and earth.

description of the Treasure Tower conjured up an image of some cosmic entity in the minds of the ancient Indians.

Endo: It's interesting that both *toba* and the Treasure Tower are stupas. To make money, corrupt priests will make a fuss urging people to make *toba* offerings [i.e., pay a fee to have a memorial tablet inscribed for a deceased person]. But they never bother trying to erect the Treasure Tower in their own lives.

Suda: Originally, stupas were often in the shape of a dome, and these were called "eggs" (Skt. *anda*). Not only did they resemble eggs in their shape, but there was a connection with a golden egg that is mentioned in a Vedic creation myth. The egg, it seems,

symbolized the universal creative power or principle.

Endo: In terms of ancient Indian cosmology, there also appears to be a connection with Mount Sumeru, which was supposed to stand at the center of the world. The people of India seem to have regarded the lofty peaks of the Himalayas and other mountains as a kind of ideal land. These mountains seem to have held great meaning for them, perhaps because they were the source of water something very important for a land as arid as India.

Stupas often contained symbols of various kinds representing Mount Sumeru as an ideal land. Also in Buddhist texts, there are many statements suggesting that stupas were identified with Mount Sumeru.

Ikeda: The Himalayas, which I saw when I visited Nepal, are certainly a majestic sight. They struck me as having the imposing dignity of a Treasure Tower connecting heaven and earth.

It seems to me that a common thread in everything that has been said so far is that stupas symbolize the center of the world and of the universe. I think that the Treasure Tower in the Lotus Sutra, which is astronomically large, also carries this significance.

In the "Treasure Tower" chapter, Shakyamuni purifies the world three times to cause the Buddhas throughout the universe who are his emanations to gather together, and he unifies a vast number of lands—the figure given is four hundred ten thousand million *nayutas*⁵ of lands—into one Buddha land.

Countless Buddhas, emitting enough brilliance to illuminate the darkness of night, assemble. The lapis lazuli ground is covered with countless jewels and flowers. Jeweled trees grow lush. It is a scene of dizzying golden brilliance. And at the center of everything stands the Treasure Tower.

The Treasure Tower stands at the center of the universe. In brilliance

represents *kyo*, and heaven represents *myoho*" (GZ, 742).

In other words, the Treasure Tower floating in mid-air between heaven and earth indicates that heaven, air and earth are in their entirety Myoho-rence-kyo.

The universe in its entirety, as signified by heaven and earth, is Myoho-rence-kyo. Our lives are Myoho-rence-kyo. And the Treas-

conception, volition and consciousness). This is what the truth of temporary existence means.

The "Ongi Kuden" (Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings) says regarding the chapter's title, "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower":

"Treasure" stands for the five components of life. "Tower" stands for their harmonious



Plants, for instance, bloom in response to the external causes or stimuli of sunlight and water. Similarly, the Treasure Tower appears in response to the Lotus Sutra being expounded.

it is like a gathering of all the jewels in the universe. Its magnificence metaphorically indicates that the life of each person is a cluster of jewels. Its immense size illustrates the truth that each person's life is as vast as the universe.

Saito: Because the Treasure Tower floats in the air, it would indeed have the appearance of an axis connecting heaven and earth.

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin says, "[In terms of Myoho-rence-kyo] the air represents *rence*, earth

ure Tower is also Myoho-rence-kyo. This points to the grand truth that our lives and the universe are one.

In terms of the doctrine of the three truths [see box p. 27], the identification of the universe with the entity of the Mystic Law is the truth of nonsubstantiality. And the identification of one's body with the Mystic Law is the truth of temporary existence.

Saito: Each living entity is the temporary unification of the five components (i.e., form, perception,

functioning. The five components functioning in harmony is designated the Treasure Tower. The harmonious functioning of the five components emerges, or is seen, in the five characters myoho-rence-kyo. This is the meaning of to "emerge" or "be seen." (GZ, 739)

In other words, when we perceive that our lives are Myoho-rence-kyo, we are seeing the Treasure Tower. This is the truth of temporary existence.

Ikeda: You've explained the truth of nonsubstantiality and the truth of temporary existence. The Treasure Tower's emergence, then, must correspond to Myoho-enge-kyo, which is the truth of the Middle Way.

In the mirror of the Treasure Tower (i.e., the Gohonzon) we see the Treasure Tower within ourselves. We perceive that we ourselves are the Treasure Tower.

Saito: The Treasure Tower, in other words, is none other than the lives of people who believe in the Mystic Law and chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo. This is what Nichiren Daishonin repeatedly emphasizes.

Endo: In one place, for example, the Daishonin says, "The Emergence of

the Treasure Tower" chapter exists within the body of Lady Nichimyo" (MW-5, 273-74). He also says:

In the Latter Day of the Law, there is no Treasure Tower other than the figures of the men and women who embrace the Lotus Sutra. It follows, therefore, that those who chant Nam-myoho-enge-kyo, irrespective of social status, are themselves the Treasure Tower and likewise they themselves are Taho Buddha. ... Now the entire body of Abutsu Shonin is composed of the five universal elements of earth, water, fire, wind and *ku*. These five elements are also the five characters of the daimoku.

Therefore, Abutsu-bo is the Treasure Tower itself, and the Treasure Tower is Abutsu-bo himself. No other knowledge is purposeful. (MW-1, 30)

Ikeda: Abutsu-bo wanted to learn the significance of the Treasure Tower. The Daishonin explained to him quite simply: The Treasure Tower is none other than you yourself. And, adding, "no other knowledge is purposeful," he indicates that this is the main point to grasp. In other words, there is nothing to be gained from trying to understand other theories or doctrines.

Once we understand that we who worship the Gohonzon are ourselves the tower of many treasures, what need do we have of fur-

THE THREE TRUTHS

THREE integral aspects of the truth formulated by the Chinese teacher T'ien-t'ai (538-597): the truth of non-substantiality, the truth of temporary existence and the truth of the Middle Way.

The truth of non-substantiality means that phenomena have no absolute or fixed existence of their own. Their true nature is *ku*, which is variously translated as emptiness, void, latency, relativity, etc. It means that phenomena arise and continue to exist only by virtue of their relationship with other phenomena and have no fixed substance. Their true nature is *ku*, a potential state that cannot be defined as either existence or nonexistence. This is a view of the unchangeable aspect of phenomena.

The truth of temporary existence means that while all things are non-substantial (*ku*) in nature, they nevertheless possess a provisional or temporary reality that is in constant flux. All existence are temporarily formed of elements through the bonding of cause and effect. It is the recognition of the visible, surface aspects of phenomena. As all phenomena are perceived as temporarily being formed by cause and effect, all things disappear as cause and

effect change. This is the view that all phenomena are transient and changeable and that nothing stays the same.

The truth of the Middle Way is that all phenomena are characterized by both non-substantiality and temporary existence. The Middle Way is the insight that enables us to perceive phenomena through the unchangeable existence of things that display the characteristics of non-substantiality while exhibiting the qualities of temporary existence. President Ikeda explains this phenomena as "the self of one's life."

The three truths are not separate and independent of one another. They are all effective means to understand accurately the phenomena of the world. This means that the truths of non-substantiality, temporary existence and the Middle Way each possesses all three truths within themselves. This is called the unification of the three truths. The real existence of a thing can be distorted when considered in light of only one of the three. The true meaning of the unification of the three truths lies in accurately grasping the entirety of a single existence from the viewpoint of the unity of the three truths.

ther doctrinal understanding? We are studying the Lotus Sutra in this manner to confirm our understanding of its essential meaning and to deepen our faith, and be able to talk about the Lotus Sutra with others. Knowledge that strays from this fundamental objective is of no value for the purpose of attaining Buddhahood.

Based on that, why don't we draw out the main points about the Treasure Tower as it is described in the Lotus Sutra?

The Treasure Tower Is None Other Than Myoho-renge-kyo

Saito: The "Treasure Tower" chapter explains the origins of the Treasure Tower. Based on both the Sanskrit text and Kumarajiva's Chinese translation, we know the following:

(1) In the past, Many Treasures Buddha, living in a world called Treasure Purity in the eastern part of the universe, heard the doctrine of Myoho-renge (termed "White Lotus" in the Sanskrit text) and attained Buddhahood. (2) When he was about to enter extinction, Many Treasures entrusted people with the task of building an immense Treasure Tower for the enshrinement of the "body of the Thus Come One." (3) Because of the strength of his vow (referred to earlier), this Treasure Tower appears wherever the doctrine of Myoho-renge is being taught, and will rest in the air while the doctrine of Myoho-renge is being expounded. (4) The reason for the Treasure Tower's appearance is to hear the doctrine of Myoho-renge being expounded, and to testify to its truth. (5) In order for the Treasure Tower to be opened and the "body of the Thus Come One" to be revealed, the Buddha, expound-

ing the doctrine of Myoho-renge, must gather together all of his emanations from the worlds in the ten directions.

What stands out in these descriptions is the frequent reference to the "doctrine of Myoho-renge." In Kumarajiva's Chinese translation, this is rendered variously as "the Lotus Sutra" or "this sutra," though it is not repeated as many times, making it less conspicuous. But in the Sanskrit text, the expression *doctrine of the White Lotus* is stressed repeatedly. Also, in the Lotus Sutra taken as a whole, this term appears most frequently in the "Treasure Tower" chapter.

Ikeda: The Treasure Tower bears a close relationship to the five characters of Myoho-renge-kyo. Or, more precisely, as the Daishonin said, the Treasure Tower is itself Myoho-renge-kyo.

Saito: It is particularly important to note that the Treasure Tower is meant to appear wherever the "doctrine of Myoho-renge" is being expounded. This is highly suggestive in light of the relationship between the Treasure Tower and Myoho-renge-kyo.

Plants, for instance, bloom in response to the external causes or stimuli of sunlight and water. Similarly, the Treasure Tower appears in response to the Lotus Sutra being expounded.

Perhaps the Treasure Tower in its entirety is the manifestation of the Law of Myoho-renge-kyo, which is its essence.

Suda: In the sutra, the Treasure Tower certainly does appear in response to the preaching of the Lotus Sutra, just as a lotus flower blossoms when struck by the rays

of the sun. I can imagine that's how it must have seemed to those gathered in the assembly.

Ikeda: The Treasure Tower of Myoho-renge-kyo does indeed appear in response to the preaching of Myoho-renge-kyo. When we chant the Mystic Law and practice for our own happiness as well as that of others, our lives become the Treasure Tower. Put another way, the Treasure Tower emerges in our lives. The Law that we chant is Myoho-renge-kyo. And Myoho-renge-kyo is also the entity of our lives.

Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, remarked:

I once asked a scholar who had become a priest: "The Lotus Sutra says that the Treasure Tower appears where the Lotus Sutra is being expounded. But Nichiren Daishonin expounded the Lotus Sutra and no Treasure Tower appeared. Why is this?" The man looked very perplexed.

When Abutsu-bo asked the Daishonin about the Treasure Tower, the Daishonin told him, "Abutsu-bo is the Treasure Tower itself, and the Treasure Tower is Abutsu-bo himself." Your body is itself the Treasure Tower. Within that Treasure Tower, within your own life, are seated the two Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures. And they have called forth Bodhisattva Superior Practices (Jp. Jogyo).⁶

Suda: This is a real pitfall for scholars who tend to understand Buddhism strictly in terms of theory. They think of the Treasure Tower as existing some place far away.

Ikeda: President Toda also said:



That's right. In fact, President Toda often said, "If being a grocer is your 'reality,' then to really work hard to make your business prosper is manifesting the 'fusion of reality and wisdom.'"

The mystic life of the world of Buddhahood is an intrinsic part of our own lives. The power and condition of this life of Buddhahood exceeds the reach of one's imagination and defies description in words. But we can concretely manifest it in the entity of our own lives. The ceremony in the "Treasure Tower" chapter explains that we can in fact manifest in our lives the inherent world of Buddhahood. In the ceremony of the "Treasure Tower" chapter, Shakyamuni reveals the principles of the mutual possession of the ten worlds and *ichinen sanzen* (three thousand realms in a single moment of life) within his own life.⁷

The ceremony in the "Treasure Tower" chapter explains in specific terms the sanctity of the world of Buddhahood, which all beings inherently possess. Why, then, does Myoho-renge-kyo need to be expressed in concrete form (as the Treasure Tower)? Because this is the teaching "for the age after the Buddha's passing"; it's to "ensure that the Law will long endure."

Up to this point, it has been explained that those who hear the Lotus Sutra and believe in and understand it, can definitely attain Buddhahood. I think the appearance of the Treasure Tower is actual proof of the Lotus Sutra's power.

From the "Treasure Tower" chapter on, Shakyamuni teaches in terms of actual life in this world what he had only explained theoretically in the preceding chapters. This, in other words, is the essential teaching. The preparatory section⁸ of the essential teaching (or latter half of the Lotus Sutra) begins with the "Treasure Tower" chapter.

The testimony of Many Treasures Buddha goes beyond his utterances of "Excellent, Excellent!" made from within the Treasure Tower attesting to the veracity of the Lotus Sutra. Rather, the appearance of Many Treasures Buddha and of the Treasure Tower, each in their own way, serves as actual proof of the truth of Myoho-renge-kyo.

The title of the chapter, "The Emergence of the Treasure Tower," means perceiving Myoho-renge-kyo through the appearance of the

Treasure Tower. Its appearance could be thought of as the "direct experience" of Myoho-renge-kyo. In other words, the Treasure Tower teaches that our lives are Myoho-renge-kyo. In that sense, the Daishonin calls the "Treasure Tower" chapter a "bright mirror."

Endo: He says: "Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they see and understand all phenomena as though these were reflected in a bright mirror. This bright mirror is the Lotus Sutra; and, specifically, it is the 'Treasure Tower' chapter" (GZ, 763). He also says, "The five limbs, the five elements that make up the bodies of living beings such as we, are reflections of Myoho-renge-kyo, and therefore we should learn to use this 'Treasure Tower' chapter as our mirror" (GZ, 724).

Ikeda: The "tower adorned with the seven treasures" is the grand and dignified original form of our lives. The Treasure Tower expounded in the Lotus Sutra is indeed an accurate response to Socrates' philosophical dictum "Know thyself."



Our bodies, which amount to barely a speck in the larger scheme of things, are adorned with the seven treasures, and our state of life limitlessly expands approaching the vastness of the universe. Nothing is more wondrous than this transformation of our lives.

The Treasure Tower that those in the assembly see when lifted up in the air must be the entity of their own lives. They no doubt saw an unshakable self, solemn and towering. That's why it's called a "bright mirror."

Meaning is also connected to the fact that the Treasure Tower emerges from within the earth. Here the earth symbolizes the reality of the nine worlds, of people's lives. The Treasure Tower is more than a mere expression of the life of the world of Buddhahood; its emergence from within the earth indicates that people can choose to construct the Treasure Tower within their own lives. The nine worlds themselves contain the world of Buddhahood. That's why the Treasure Tower emerges from the earth.

The Fusion of Reality and Wisdom

Saito: Nichiren Daishonin says that the two Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures indicate the two principles of reality and wisdom, and that the two Buddhas seated side by side therefore signifies the fusion of reality and wisdom. Many Treasures represents reality, and Shakyamuni, the wisdom to correctly perceive it. How should we understand this?

Ikeda: President Toda said that "reality" means the objective world, and "wisdom" the subjective world. He was not using these terms in a Western, dualistic sense. Rather, his comment was premised on the assumption of an essential

unity of the subjective and objective realms.

Suda: Nichiren Daishonin says, "Reality means the entity of all phenomena in the universe, and wisdom means the perfect manifestation of this entity in the individual's life" (MW-1, 163).

Ikeda: That's right. In fact, President Toda often said, "If being a grocer is your 'reality,' then to really work hard to make your business prosper is manifesting the 'fusion of reality and wisdom.'" "

Of course whatever our occupation — whether fishmonger or company employee — we each have a mission to fulfill and a path in life. That mission or path is the person's "reality." It is the light of

“wisdom” that causes this reality to shine. Effecting the perfect fusion of reality and wisdom in our own lives means becoming indispensable wherever we are.

This is not limited to human beings. Cherry trees sense the changing of the seasons, and when spring comes they all at once burst into bloom. Which also illustrates the fusion of reality and wisdom. It could be said that the wisdom of cherry trees lies in their innately sensing the arrival of spring.

Suda: It would indeed be quite astonishing if they were to bloom in summer.

Ikeda: In essence, everyone is a Buddha. That is our “reality.” It is the light of wisdom that causes the world of Buddhahood in our lives to shine. Our Buddhahood starts shining when we have the wisdom to realize we are Buddhas. This is the fusion of reality and wisdom.

From our standpoint, according to the Buddhist principle of “substituting faith for wisdom,” the “wisdom,” component in the fusion of reality and wisdom, means “faith.” That we possess the world of Buddhahood is the objective truth, the “reality,” of our lives. Faith causes this reality to shine in actuality.

Shakyamuni and Many Treasures represent ordinary people who cause the original world of Buddhahood in their lives — usually covered over by the soot of earthly desires — to shine. The Thus Come One is an ordinary person, a human being. Nichiren Daishonin says, “Shakyamuni, Taho [Many Treasures], and all the other Buddhas in the ten directions represent the world of Buddhahood within ourselves” (MW-1, 64).

Again, Many Treasures corresponds to “reality” because he always appears where the Lotus Sutra is being expounded. In other words, he represents eternal truth. And Shakyamuni causes this eternal truth to manifest “here and now.”

Put another way, something eternal manifests in the here and now as a result of the two Buddhas sitting side by side, that is, through the fusion of reality and wisdom. In fact, it is only in the here and now that something eternal can appear. Anything else is just an illusion.

Shakyamuni represents “wisdom,” or the subjective entity. The Mystic Law manifests in our lives only when we wage a great struggle on our own initiative. We experience the fusion of reality and wisdom when we work to carry out our mission burning with the conviction, “I am a Bodhisattva of the Earth! I am a Buddha!”

Saito: And Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the expression of this fusion of reality and wisdom.

Ikeda: That’s right. “Reality” means the reality of the Mystic Law, and “wisdom,” the wisdom of the Mystic Law. This is what the Daishonin teaches when he says, “What then are these two elements of reality and wisdom? They are simply Nam-myoho-renge-kyo” (MW-1, 164).

Reality and wisdom are not separate; they are a single entity. Reality gives rise to wisdom, and wisdom illuminates reality. That is their relation.

Thinking about this in terms of the sun may make it easier to grasp. The substance of the sun is its “reality.” Just as the sun emits light, and thereby illuminates and

causes itself to appear, reality produces wisdom.

Suda: The two Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures are functions of the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Shakyamuni and Many Treasures express the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo embodying the oneness of reality and wisdom.

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin says, “The two Buddhas, Shakyamuni and Taho, are merely functions of the true Buddha, while Myoho-renge-kyo actually is the true Buddha” (MW-1, 90).

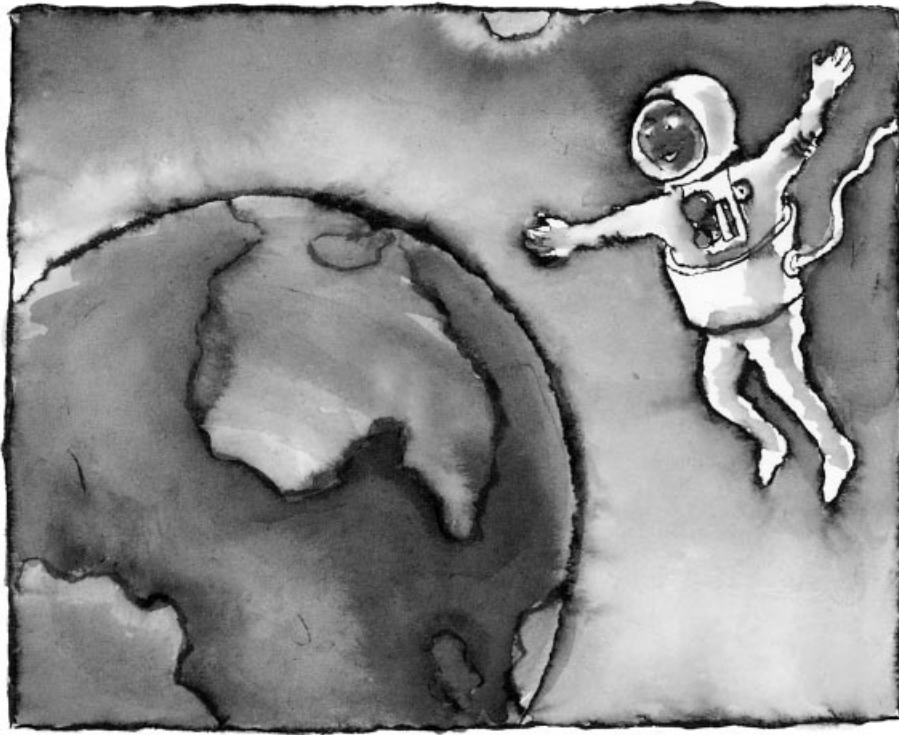
The Gohonzon and the Ceremony in the Air

Endo: In terms of the appearance of the Gohonzon inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin, this passage clarifies why the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo appears prominently down the center and Shakyamuni and Many Treasures are positioned on either side.

Saito: The two Buddhas seated side by side also express the principle of the true entity of all phenomena; Many Treasures represents all phenomena, and Shakyamuni the true entity. They also express the oneness of life and death; Many Treasures represents death, and Shakyamuni life.

Suda: The Daishonin inscribed the Gohonzon based on the ceremony that takes place in the “Treasure Tower” chapter, incorporating such elements as the two Buddhas seated side by side [see box p. 33].

The Daishonin says that only he is “qualified to inscribe the object of worship which physically mani-



In that sense, our daily practice of gongyo and chanting daimoku is a "journey of life" of an even grander scale than that of an astronaut looking down on Earth from outer space.

festes the ceremony of the two Buddhas seated together in the Treasure Tower" (MW-1, 90).

He also declares: "This mandala is in no way Nichiren's invention. It is the object of worship which perfectly depicts Lord Shakyamuni in the Treasure Tower and all the other Buddhas who were present, as accurately as the print matches the woodblock" (MW-1, 212).

Ikeda: In explaining the significance of the "Treasure Tower" chapter to Abutsu-bo, the Daishonin prefaced his remarks by saying that this matter "is of great importance" (MW-1, 29). That is because the Ceremony in the Air is a fundamental issue relating to the Gohonzon.

Saito: In a letter to Shijo Kingo, as well, he says [regarding the significance of Shakyamuni and Many Treasures in the Treasure Tower as

representing reality and wisdom], "These teachings are of prime importance" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 200).

Ikeda: The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai of China explains that the appearance of the Treasure Tower has two distinct functions: one is to lend credence to the preceding chapters and the other is to pave the way for the revelation to come.

Suda: That's mentioned in the Hokke Mongu.⁹ That the Treasure Tower "lends credence" to the preceding chapters means that it certifies the truth of Shakyamuni's preaching in the earlier chapters. Thus the great voice of Many Treasures Buddha issues from within the Treasure Tower asserting that Shakyamuni's words are true.

Ikeda: By his voice and his appearance, Many Treasures testifies to

the truth of the Mystic Law. This is the function of Many Treasures Buddha. In the Soka Gakkai today, this is in a sense the function of the members of the Taho-kai (Many Treasures group).

Endo: I now see the significance of your forming the Many Treasures group as a way of honoring longtime members who have such rich experiences in life and in faith.

Ikeda: These are people who have dedicated their lives to the noble mission of proving the truth of the Mystic Law. Each one of them is literally a treasure of the Soka Gakkai, of kosen-rufu, and of society.

I hope all members will live long lives. The longer we live, the greater the victory of kosen-rufu. Also, I hope members who are advanced in years, as "Many Treasures Buddhas of kosen-rufu," will

always be ready to warmly praise their juniors with a sense of “Excellent, excellent!”

Endo: By lending credence to the preceding chapters, the “Treasure Tower” also “paves the way for the revelation to come”; that is, it sets the stage for the teaching that follows. Shakyamuni’s gathering together of the Buddhas of the ten directions becomes the starting point for his expounding the “Life Span of the Thus Come One” (sixteenth) chapter. That’s because the fact that he has so many emanations suggests that Shakyamuni has been instructing others as a Buddha for an extremely long time.

Ikeda: From a literal standpoint, “preceding chapters” (in “lend credence to the preceding chapters”) refers to the teaching in the first half of the Lotus Sutra (or theoretical teaching). And “the revelation to come” means the teaching in the Lotus Sutra’s second half (or essential teaching). The emergence of the Treasure Tower is the starting point for the preaching of the essential teaching that follows.

In terms of the Daishonin’s Buddhism, however, the Treasure Tower’s appearance paves the way for Nichiren Daishonin’s essential teaching. The preaching in the “Treasure Tower” chapter becomes the starting point for the Daishonin’s establishment of the Gohonzon. From this standpoint, “the revelation to come” means the Daishonin’s revelation of the object of worship for the Latter Day of the Law. That’s why Nichiren Daishonin calls the object of worship he has inscribed the Treasure Tower.

The Gohonzon is the Daishonin’s very life, the life of the Buddha inherently endowed with three enlight-

ened properties. It is the Treasure Tower of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

As was mentioned before, the two Buddhas Shakyamuni and Many Treasures indeed represent the two principles of reality and wisdom. In terms of the Buddha’s three enlightened properties,

Many Treasures Buddha, representing reality, signifies the property of the Law. Shakyamuni, representing wisdom, signifies the property of wisdom. And the Buddhas of the ten directions, representing the compassion that arises through the fusion of reality and wisdom, signify the property of action. The appearance of these three Buddhas—Shakyamuni, Many Treasures and the Buddhas of the ten directions—expresses the state of life inherently endowed with the

three enlightened properties that the Daishonin himself attained.

Let us discuss the three enlightened properties in detail on another occasion. The important point here is that the Daishonin opened a path whereby all people of the Latter Day can themselves actualize these three enlightened properties. And that is the path of believing in and upholding the Gohonzon.

Saito: This is what is meant by “The inherently endowed three properties ... are attained through a single word. And that word is ‘faith’” (GZ, 753).

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin says that those who believe in the Lotus Sutra “can enter the Treasure Tower of the Gohonzon” (MW-1,

THE TWO BUDDHAS SEATED SIDE BY SIDE

THE great Chinese teacher T’ien-t’ai (538–597) interprets Taho and Shakyamuni seated side by side in the Treasure Tower as the fusion of reality and wisdom, with Taho representing the objective truth or ultimate reality, and Shakyamuni, the subjective wisdom to realize it. Moreover, Taho Buddha represents the property of the Law; Shakyamuni Buddha the property of wisdom, and the Buddhas from throughout the universe, the property of action; together they represent the three properties.

The three properties (also known as three bodies or three enlightened properties) are the property of the Law, or the essential property of the Buddha’s life which is the truth to which the Buddha is enlightened. The property of wisdom, or the spiritual property of the Buddha’s life, which enables the Buddha to perceive the truth. And the property of action, which is the Buddha’s body with which he or she carries out compassionate actions to save people.

Nichiren uses the interpretations of T’ien-t’ai and further states in his writing “Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life” that Shakyamuni and Taho represent, respectively, life and death, the two phases that the entity of life undergoes. They appear on the Gohonzon at the top, Shakyamuni to the left of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo (down the center), and Taho to the right.



I recall Walt Whitman (1819–92), the great poet of democracy, expressing the view that “at the core of democracy, finally, is the religious element.”

214), indicating that they can construct a Treasure Tower within their own lives.

Because of the principle of the oneness of life and its environment, when we open up the Treasure Tower in our lives, the world in which we live also becomes the Treasure Tower; and so we “enter the Treasure Tower.” Then, while dwelling in the world of the original Buddha, we can freely take action. Our bodies, which amount to barely a speck in the larger scheme of things, are adorned with the seven treasures, and our state of life limitlessly expands approaching the vastness of the universe. Nothing is more wondrous than this transformation of our lives.

While in prison (during World War II for his refusal to compromise his religious beliefs), President Toda made an in-depth study of the Lotus Sutra. And he realized that its essence is to be found in the Gohonzon Nichiren Daishonin inscribed. He understood, in other words, that there is not the slightest deviation between

the words and phrases of the Lotus Sutra and the teaching of the Daishonin. And at this realization he shed tears of joy.

Saito: You describe that scene in the first volume of your novel, *The Human Revolution*. You wrote that right after his release from prison, Mr. Toda examined the Gohonzon in his home, scrutinizing every character. And then he says:

“It was just like this. No mistake. Exactly, just as I saw it”
Murmuring silently, he satisfied himself that the solemn and mysterious Ceremony in the Air which he had witnessed in his cell was indeed inscribed on the Gohonzon. Profound delight surged through him and tears streamed down his face. (Volume 1, “Dawn”)

Endo: Today we can only imagine the joy he must have felt. At that point, he became all the more confident of the truth of what he had

realized while in prison.

Ikeda: Because of President Toda’s conviction in this, faith in the Gohonzon became firmly established in the Soka Gakkai. This is the prime point of the Soka Gakkai’s great development.

President Toda saw everything with perfect clarity. It was impossible to put something over on him. The only way to approach him was with complete honesty and forthrightness. And to people who approached him in that way, he responded in kind without fail. Over time, I have come to appreciate even more keenly President Toda’s greatness. It’s something I feel with my entire being.

An example that comes to mind has to do with the practice of making pilgrimages to holy sites. Many religions revere places associated with their founders as special. Sites with strong connections to Nichiren Daishonin include the Izu Peninsula and Sado Island, where the Daishonin was sent into

exile; Tatsunokuchi and Komatsubara, where he encountered severe persecution; Kamakura, where he was active for many years; his birthplace, Kominato; Mount Minobu, where he spent his final years; and Ikegami, where he passed away.

But President Toda did not treat these places as “holy sites.” Rather, he taught that we should always base ourselves on the Gohonzon. In this we can see his profound insight.

When we worship the Gohonzon with strong faith, then that place, wherever it may be, becomes the holiest of lands. For it becomes the site of the Ceremony in the Air. It becomes Eagle Peak. There, the Treasure Tower emerges.

Suda: I understand that many of the world’s religions designate specific sites as being particularly relevant. In most cases their members have the choice to visit them or not. But to require adherents to visit such sites, in my view, limits a religion’s universality and can certainly diminish the scope of its appeal.

Iked: You’re quite right. We, on the other hand, can attend the eternal Ceremony in the Air here and now. We can cause the Treasure Tower to shine in our lives, our daily existence, our homes. That is the greatness of faith in the Gohonzon. It is always close at hand and always reflected in our immediate reality.

The Ceremony in the Air, in contrast to the ceremonies at Eagle Peak that precede and follow it, takes place in a realm that transcends time and space. It does not occur in a specific historical time or place. For precisely this reason, we can attend the Ceremony in the Air at any time and in any place.

When we pray to the Gohonzon, which depicts the Ceremony in the Air, in the present moment, we become one with the eternal and universal life; and, right where we are, we manifest the vast state of life to be able to survey the entire universe.

In that sense, our daily practice of gongyo and chanting daimoku is a “journey of life” of an even grander scale than that of an astronaut looking down on Earth from outer space.

The Seven Treasures Adorn the Self

Endo: Then the “seven treasures” that adorn the Treasure Tower must exist within our own lives.

Iked: Yes. They exist nowhere but within our lives.

Saito: Nichiren Daishonin reveals to Abutsu-bo that the seven treasures indicate “listening to the true teaching, believing it, keeping the precept, attaining peace of mind, practicing assiduously, unselfishly devoting oneself, and forever seeking self-improvement” (MW-1, 30).

Iked: These are treasures within our lives. In contrast to what people commonly regard as treasures, the gold, silver and other treasures adorning the Treasure Tower indicate treasures in the realm of faith; they are the treasures, for example, of “listening to the teaching” and “believing it.” They are the only treasures we can take with us after our death. They are eternal wealth.

Endo: These seven treasures, also referred to as the “seven riches of the Law,” are indispensable elements of Buddhist practice.

Suda: President Ikeda, I recall an explanation you once gave of the concept of the seven treasures. “Listening to the true teaching,” you explained, means a seeking spirit to hear about Buddhism. You said Buddhist practice begins with “listening.” “Believing it” means the power of belief. According to the principle of “substituting faith for wisdom,” wisdom arises from faith.

You also said, it is the power of faith that forges bonds between people. “Keeping the precept,” which originally carried the meaning of “stemming injustice and eradicating evil,” indicates advancing straight ahead along the correct path of Buddhism.

This could also be termed a spirit of self-regulation or deep sense of justice. “Attaining peace of mind” means meditation; pacifying the mind, banishing rambling thoughts, and entering a state of calm and stability. “Peace of mind” could be thought of as a quiet and unwavering spirit or conviction. “Practicing assiduously” means to exercise tireless diligence. It refers to the spirit to advance toward attaining Buddhahood in this lifetime and realizing kosen-rufu. “Unselfishly devoting oneself” means discarding attachments. This implies having the courage to break free of the lesser self or ego, and the spirit to realize great ideals. “Forever seeking self-improvement” means having the humility to reflect on oneself.

Iked: All of these are encompassed in the word *faith*. They are all included in SGI activities. We work with the sun during the daytime and reflect on ourselves in the light of the moon at night, and ever seek to advance — all based on the Mystic Law. When we practice with this spirit of “faith manifesting

itself in daily life," our lives are adorned with the seven treasures. This is the way to accumulate true and eternal wealth.

Saito: Not only do these treasures apply to faith, they are conditions of humanity that are prized universally.

Ikeda: Practicing faith means to lead the most correct life. Acquiring wisdom means attaining the most profound understanding of human nature.

The Treasure Tower exists in human life. To understand it in

tus," as the Daishonin says to Abutsu-bo, means that all beings alike are infinitely worthy of respect.

Ikeda: Those who discriminate against others violate the sanctity of their own lives. On the other hand, when we treasure the lives of others, the Treasure Tower within us shines.

Suda: That's the spirit of the "oneness of self and others."

Saito: It sounds like we're approaching the theme of the "Bodhisattva Never Disparaging" (twentieth) chapter.

tury religion will, of necessity, play an increasingly important role in people's lives.

Suda: I have also read Whitman's description of democracy. He writes that he assumes democracy "to be at present in its embryonic condition, and that the only large and satisfactory justification of it resides in the future, mainly through the copious production of perfect characters among the people, and through the advent of a sane and pervading religiousness."¹¹

Saito: The other day (April 26), a lecture on the theme of democracy and religion was held at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century. The speaker, Professor Vincent Harding of the University of Denver,¹² a close friend of the late Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–68), argued that American democracy is still highly imperfect.

Touching on the achievements of Dr. King, he emphasized that to make democracy live up to its promise, there is a great need for leaders with roots in religion who can truly sympathize with the people.

Ikeda: Respect for the individual is the very soul of democracy. Democracy's success hinges on whether people can recognize the lives of all as equally sacred. Everything depends on this.

Suda: Many Japanese think our nation has fully achieved democracy. But it seems to me that Whitman's comment, made 130 years ago, that democracy was still in an embryonic stage, and Dr. Harding's insight are all the more true today.

Ikeda: That's because, ultimately,

Respect for the individual is the very
soul of democracy. Democracy's success
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Everything depends on this.

these terms is to see beyond our apparent differences and perceive the sanctity of life itself. The reason for this is that on the most essential level of life, there is no such thing as superior and inferior. Everyone alike possesses life. On the level of life there are no differences of gender, skin color or ethnicity. There is no discrimination on the basis of wealth or social status. Everyone is equal.

Basing oneself on the Treasure Tower, therefore, could be thought of as establishing a view of the sanctity of life of absolute equality. It is true humanism.

Endo: "Irrespective of social sta-

Endo: Let's not get too far ahead.

Ikeda: This is in fact an important theme that runs generally through the entire Lotus Sutra. I expect we'll have the chance to discuss it in detail on another occasion.

True Democracy

Endo: Isn't respecting other people as "treasures" in fact the spirit of democracy? I recall Walt Whitman (1819–92), the great poet of democracy, expressing the view that "at the core of democracy, finally, is the religious element."¹⁰ Dr. Chappell, similarly, has suggested that in the twenty-first cen-

democracy is a manner of living. In the words of Tomas Masaryk (1850–1937), the founding father of Czechoslovakia, “Democracy is not only a form of government, it is not only what is written in constitutions; democracy is a view of life, rests on faith in men, in humanity and in human nature.”¹³

Democracy, in other words, means trusting people as noble and eternal entities in and of themselves, not viewing them as a means to some end. When we believe in ourselves and trust others in this way, then, according to Masaryk, it will not be possible for one person, whose life is eternal and infinite, to regard another person, whose life is equally eternal and infinite, with indifference: “The eternal to the eternal cannot be indifferent, the eternal cannot misuse the eternal, it cannot exploit and violate it.”¹⁴ In other words, it is impossible for someone who is aware of the eternal nature of his being to maliciously exploit or violently repress another person whose being he recognizes as equally eternal.

Nichiren Daishonin says, “The Treasure Tower is none other than

all living beings, and all living beings are none other than the complete entity of Nam-myohorenge-kyo” (GZ, 797). This is the perspective of “The Emergence of the Treasure Tower” chapter.

We perceive the Treasure Tower in our own lives, and we perceive the Treasure Tower in the lives of others. And we are working to sanctify the places where we live and the entire world with forests of Treasure Towers. Let us construct “Treasure Towers of kosen-rufu” in our communities. Let us each leave behind an eternal golden monument of personal achievement. Let us adorn our lives by challenging ourselves with the spirit, “This is where I will build my Treasure Tower.”

Shakyamuni expounded the Lotus Sutra as the crowning achievement of his life of great struggle. And the Treasure Tower first appeared in response to Shakyamuni’s tireless efforts to widely propagate the Mystic Law. Many Treasures Buddha appeared to support him and Shakyamuni’s emanations, the Buddhas in the ten directions of the universe, gathered around him. Behind all of this were

Shakyamuni’s tireless efforts and deep determination for kosen-rufu.

When we take action for kosen-rufu, the Treasure Tower appears. This is not a matter of theory; it comes down to a hands-on struggle with reality, an earnest win-or-lose effort to overcome great difficulties. Through waging such a struggle, our lives shine with the seven treasures of “listening to the true teaching, believing it, keeping the precept, attaining peace of mind, practicing assiduously, unselfishly devoting oneself, and forever seeking self-improvement.” Nichiren Daishonin, likewise, amid great difficulties, established the Treasure Tower of the Gohonzon.

From that standpoint, it is no coincidence that the “Treasure Tower” chapter uses the principle of the “six difficult and nine easy acts” to explain the difficulty of propagating the Mystic Law in the Latter Day. Let’s take up this concept next time. □

Illustrations by Larry Ashton

(To be continued)

1. Dr. Chappell was formerly director of the Center for Buddhist Studies of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and is currently director of the school’s East-West Religions Project. He is a member of the International Association of Buddhist Studies and the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions.
2. Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, ed. Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 212.
3. *saha* world: This world, which is full of sufferings. The Sanskrit word *sha* means endurance. According to the Hike Sutra, the *saha* world is so called because people in this world must endure many sufferings stemming from the three poisons and other earthly desires.
3. *ri*: About 0.5 km or one-third of a mile

according to classical Chinese sources.
4. Abutsu-bo: A follower of the Daishonin on Sado Island.
5. *nayuta*: An Indian numerical unit corresponding to 100,000,000,000.
6. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Works of Josei Toda), vol. 7, p. 455–56.
7. *Toda Josei Zenshu*, vol. 6, p. 275.
8. Preparatory Section: The first of the three divisions of a sutra (preparation, revelation and transmission), a format often used in interpreting sutras thought to have been formulated by the Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai of China. Preparation indicates the introductory section, revelation contains the main teaching, and transmission is the concluding part. In the case of the Lotus Sutra, in addition to the entire sutra

having these divisions, each half may be further analyzed into three sections.
9. *Hokke Mongu* (Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra), vol. 8.
10. Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas and Other Papers* (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., LTD, 1888; reprint, Michigan: Scholarly Press, 1970), p. 27.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
12. Dr. Harding is professor of Religion and Social Transformation at the Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver.
13. Karel Capek, *Masaryk on Thought and Life: Conversations with Karel Capek*, trans. M. & R. Weatherall (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 191.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Daisaku Ikeda's Recollections of World Figures



Ricardo Díez-
Hochleitner —
President of
The Club of Rome,
Gathering of World
Intellectuals

TIME is life. There's never a moment wasted in Dr. Ricardo Díez-Hochleitner's day. He is always on the move. As the third president of The Club of Rome, he constantly travels the globe. Viewing his role as building bridges, he has created a network for peace.

Jet lag never seems to bother him, and each time I see him I tell him to take care of his health as he races around discharging his heavy workload. Once he said to me that tomorrow is too late; we must act today. He is motivated by a sense of crisis. The problems that humanity faces are altogether too large and too

SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Ikeda first met The Club of Rome president, Ricardo Díez-Hochleitner, at the opening of the Victor Hugo House of Literature (left) in the suburbs of Paris, France, June 1991. The following year in Tokyo (above), they exchanged views on the inner awakening necessary for humankind in the current age.

grave, requiring urgent action, he says, and his own contribution, too small. He always feels that he must do more for the sake of humanity, and that is what drives him.

A sense of responsibility—for me, that sums up what is great about human beings. Responsibility is not a passive sense of duty. Responsibility means deciding for ourselves what we should be doing now. It is a matter of self-awareness, of our commitment and our state of life. A slave has no responsibility, it is said. A person who has been robbed of liberty and forced to do someone else's bidding cannot be made to take responsibility for those actions. Only a free person

can feel a sense of responsibility. And the depth and breadth of a person's sense of responsibility are measures of how free they are inside.

The Club of Rome itself was born from the sense of responsibility for the future on the part of Aurelio Peccei (1908–84), one of the club's pivotal founders. No one asked him to found such an association. Dr. Peccei stood up alone because of an urgent sense that the human race was heading for destruction if the single-minded worship of materialism continued.

President Díez-Hochleitner declares himself a disciple of Dr. Peccei, and voiced his desire to

carry on the friendship that began between his mentor and myself. Clearly he holds the Club's founder in high esteem and always bears his founding spirit in mind.

A dialogue between myself and Dr. Peccei has been published under the title *Before It Is Too Late*—a title that was chosen by The Club of Rome founding president himself. Dr. Peccei asserts:

Only the human revolution can unearth our inner potential and make us feel fully what we really are and behave accordingly; only it can show us how to utilize our computers and satellites, our

engines and instruments, and our nuclear reactors and electronic gadgetry to commune better with our fellow humans and our entire Universe. It is this revolution alone that can make us see how important it is to survive in order to have a life worth living both for its own sake and as a means to prepare responsibly and compassionately a way of life for the generations of those who will follow us.¹

Learning Is Limitless

THE publication of a report titled "The Limits to Growth" made The Club of Rome instantly famous [in 1972]. It warned of the limited nature of the Earth and sounded the alarm on such issues as the population explosion, depletion of natural resources and environmental problems. The report concluded that the basic solution to this group of complex problems was to change the selfish behavior patterns of human beings, and it proposed a new humanism and a human revolution.

Dr. Peccei stressed: Growth is limited, but learning is not; our external resources are limited, but our inner human resources are unlimited. He advocated the development of wisdom in order to make the best use of available knowledge.

In his "Agenda for the End of the Century," which he continued dictating up until about twelve hours before his death in 1984, The Club of Rome founding president concludes by saying:

Another reason why human development is so imperative is that, to get out of its predicament, humankind must realize where it is at present, where it is going and where it could go instead.²

Where is humanity today? Where is it going? Unless we observe the drama of tremendous change unfolding on Earth from a macroscopic view, he maintains, we won't know where to start. This represents true wisdom.

President Díez-Hochleitner shares his predecessor's conviction. First, he insists, we must know where we came from and where we are going. He also notes that though we say the Earth is sick, the real problem lies in the fact that human beings are sick.

A Statement on Human Responsibility

DR. Díez-Hochleitner was inaugurated as the third president of The Club of Rome in January 1991, succeeding the second president, Dr. Alexander King.

That same month, I joined with five internationally respected intellectuals in sending an emergency appeal for peace to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein at the height of the Persian Gulf crisis. President Díez-Hochleitner was one of those intellectuals.

At its annual meeting in November of that year, The Club of Rome issued its "Statement of Human Responsibility." It identified the lack of a sense of responsibility as a source of many of the world's problems — corruption, destruction, terrorism, drugs, state exploitation, human rights' violations, military intervention and environmental degradation. The statement's content was truly on the mark.

Leaders who sacrifice the people solely for personal gain and self-preservation; wasteful societies that sacrifice the future for the present — all these things can be summed up by the word *irresponsible*.

Learning Is the Foundation of Leaders

DR. Díez-Hochleitner was born in Spain in 1928, the same year as I was. Both of his parents were educators. When he started elementary school, his father was the principal. In junior high school, his mother was one of his teachers. When he went to high school, both his parents had become teachers there. And when he obtained a professorship at a university in Colombia, his parents also took teaching positions in the South American country.

His family was very studious. His father was fluent in fourteen languages and his mother, seven; while he himself has mastered six. From his parents he learned to think about what he could do for others, how he could serve.

Once when Dr. Díez-Hochleitner was eight, his father scolded him. On a walk with his father, he found a coin in his pocket, and without thinking, he tossed it away. His father, who had caught sight of this, looked at him with great sadness and lightly slapped his face. Dr. Díez-Hochleitner confided that he has still not forgotten his father's expression at that time. I have the impression that his father taught him a solid sense of values and the basics of right and wrong.

During his long, distinguished career, Dr. Díez-Hochleitner has served in a number of important posts both in his native Spain and internationally. These include serving as senior advisor in educational planning and administration to the Organization of American States (OAS); the first head of investments in the education sector at the World Bank; Spanish state secretary for Education and Science; member of the UNESCO Executive

Board; and first president of the National Education Research Center in Madrid.

In his twenties, he was supervising others in their forties and fifties. He has admitted that often in those days he wished he looked older than he did. The spirit to keep on learning lies at the heart of his philosophy of leadership.

He says that he would rather be thought of as a servant working for the people than a boss. He is happier in that role. He describes his colleagues in The Club of Rome as brilliant intellects, and he says he thinks of himself as no more than their disciple. He finds the meaning of life in the motto: "Always learning."

This humility is undoubtedly the secret of Dr. Díez-Hochleitner's energy.

We live in rapidly changing times. If we stop learning, we will soon be left behind. Failing or refusing to learn is a form of irresponsibility.

In the introduction to the report titled "The First Global Revolution," published by the Club the year he became president, Dr. Díez-Hochleitner writes:

The human being both creates the problematique and suffers its consequences.... [W]e shall, no doubt, be accused as before of being harbingers of doom and gloom. This may well be our role and our glory. Doomsaying is, however, by no means our sole or even central role and intention. It is but a necessary prelude to "doombreaking."³

Buddhism teaches: A wise person, while dwelling in security, anticipates danger; a foolish person, while dwelling amid danger,

takes security for granted. We can see that the members of The Club of Rome have the sense of responsibility of the wise. Everything will depend on the degree to which the leaders and ordinary people of the world can manifest such wisdom.

Vision, Capacity for Innovation, and Ethical Perception

THE First Global Revolution" offers a list of qualities for the new leaders of a new world:

- a strategic vision and a global approach to the priority elements of the problematique;
- a capacity for innovation and adjustment to change;
- an ethical perspective, making no concessions to expediency;
- effectiveness in taking [sic] decisions after due dialogue with colleagues and advisers, in ensuring the implementation of the decisions and, in due time, in assessing the results;
- capacity to learn and to encourage others to learn;
- courage to change his or her mind as perceptions of situations and problems deepen;
- ability to inform the public clearly of the general direction of policy in a way which encourages them to identify;
- capacity to relegate strategy and tactics to their proper place as means and not as ends;
- willingness to set up systems

through which one can listen in to the needs of the citizens, their fears, demands and suggestions.⁴

The Club of Rome president is himself a perfect example of this type of leader, the type of person needed in the twenty-first century.

Time Will Not Wait

I FIRST met Dr. Díez-Hochleitner at the opening of the Victor Hugo House of Literature in France [in June 1991]. He kindly traveled all the way from Spain especially for the occasion.

The French literary giant Victor Hugo (1802–85) asserted that the successive revolutions in France were not merely revolutions of a local or regional nature but were in fact "human revolutions."

In that sense, there could have been no more fitting place for Dr. Díez-Hochleitner and I to meet, both of us being staunch believers in human revolution as a necessary requirement for the success of a "global revolution."

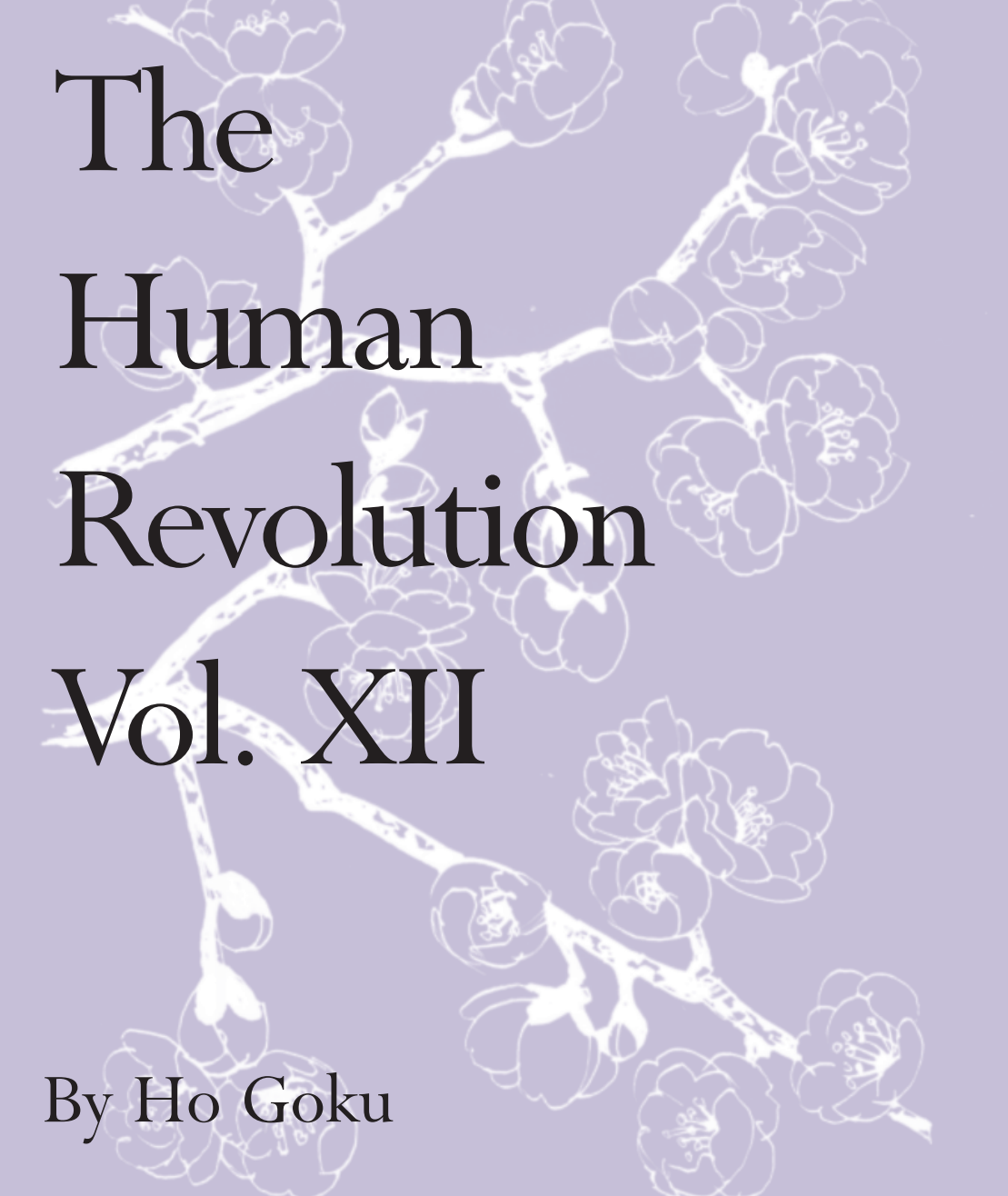
There are just some 2,200 days [from December 1994] until the year 2001. Time will not wait for us. Determining what kind of century the twenty-first century will be is a race between ourselves and time. □

1. Aurelio Peccei and Daisaku Ikeda, *Before It Is Too Late* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984), p. 129.

2. Aurelio Peccei, "The Club of Rome: Agenda for the End of the Century" (March 1992), p. 42. A pamphlet published to commemorate the holding of The Club of Rome's Fukuoka Conference in Japan in May 1992.

3. Alexander King and Bertrand Schneider, "The First Global Revolution: A Report by the Council of The Club of Rome" (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991), p. xiii.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 205.



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 the "New Dawn" chapter, volume twelve.

Once when Toda and Konishi were alone together, Toda had told him: "Shin'ichi is a man of enormous caliber, Mr. Konishi. We have nothing to worry about with regard to the Gakkai's future."



New Dawn 5

THE era yearned for new leaders. The Soka Gakkai was like a great wheel rolling across the vast uncharted plains of kosen-rufu, and just as a wheel needs a solid axle on which to turn, the Gakkai needed a strong and reliable leader.

Takeo Konishi, who had served as general director during Josei Toda's presidency, had been pushing himself desperately to exercise leadership as a unifying force for the membership since Toda's death. Nevertheless, he couldn't help sensing his own limitations. Now that the Gakkai had a membership exceeding 800,000 households, the weight of its social responsibility had also grown dramatically compared to its early days. As a result, a vastly different set of qualifications and abilities were now required of the central leadership figure. In demand were not only absolute conviction in faith, but an ability to stay apace with the times; vision to develop detailed and far-reaching plans for the future; leadership that could win the members' heartfelt support; and a capacity for

bold, dynamic action. These qualities were essential if a new phase of development in the realm of kosen-rufu were to be achieved.

But Konishi was all too well aware that he personally lacked such qualities and capabilities. Toda had often remarked that the next president of the Soka Gakkai would come not from among Mr. Makiguchi's direct disciples, but from among his, Toda's, disciples. And, in reality, Konishi had never received the training necessary to fulfill that responsibility. The person Toda had poured his entire life and being into developing and shaping for this role was none other than Shin'ichi Yamamoto. Toda had been twice as strict and demanding with Shin'ichi than with anyone else. However excellent or noteworthy Shin'ichi's achievements may have been, Toda had almost never praised him. He had treated Shin'ichi with the attitude that however difficult the assignment or problem that was given him, it was only natural that he should turn it into a success.

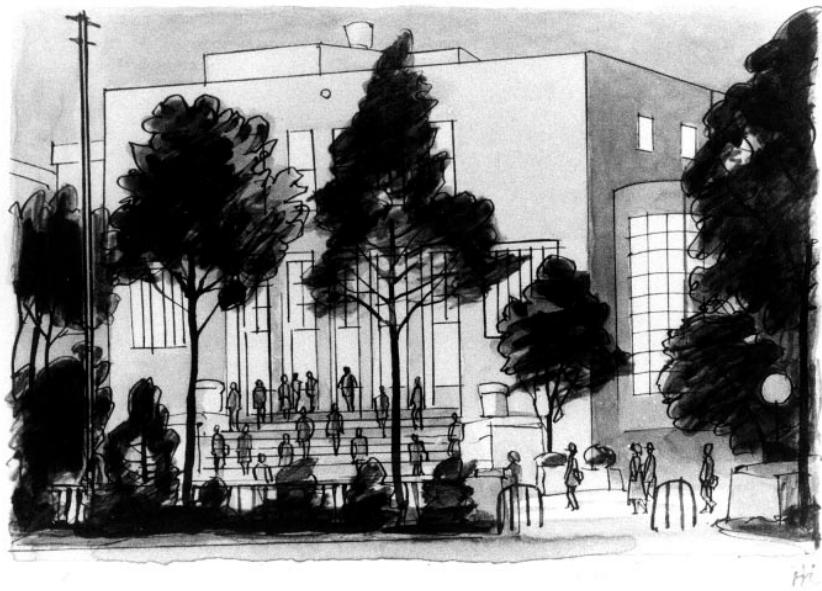
As Konishi witnessed the severe reprimands and scolding Shin'ichi

received almost daily from Toda, he sometimes even pitied the young man. But he also knew that this treatment arose from Toda's stern love for his disciple, so that he could entrust the Gakkai's entire future to him. Once when Toda and Konishi were alone together, Toda had told him: "Shin'ichi is a man of enormous caliber, Mr. Konishi. We have nothing to worry about with regard to the Gakkai's future."

Konishi himself clearly recognized Shin'ichi's abilities. Konishi had been chief of Kamata Chapter in Tokyo when Shin'ichi was assigned there as chapter staff to lead its propagation campaign in February 1952. Immediately, he had completely transformed the atmosphere within the chapter, paving the way to accomplishing an unprecedented 201 new households by a single chapter in just one month. There could be no doubt that this provided the impetus that eventually led to fulfilling Toda's dream of a membership of 750,000 households.

Later, after being installed as acting chief of Tokyo's Bunkyo Chapter, Shin'ichi had developed

On June 30, the Headquarters leaders meeting for that month was held at the Toshima Civic Center. There, Shin'ichi's appointment as general administrator was announced—a position he would hold concurrently with his position of youth division chief of staff.



that organization in a short time from one of the last-ranked chapters in the Soka Gakkai to one of the first. And in 1956 in Osaka, he had led the members there to the unprecedented conversion of 11,111 new households in a single month. He also had helped propel Seiichiro Haruki, the Soka Gakkai candidate from that area, to victory in the House of Councillors (Upper House) election, while the Gakkai-backed candidate from Tokyo had suffered defeat.

New Dawn 6

WHEREVER Shin'ichi went, the banner of victory would assuredly unfurl and a new momentum toward kosen-rufu would arise. Yet he was never overbearing or coercive. Members who until the day before had been disheartened would suddenly come to life. Like new people, they would embark with undaunted courage on an intense and decisive struggle, filled with joy, confidence and pride.

Takeo Konishi was truly awed by this transforming power. Witnessing the brilliant achievements

Shin'ichi had recorded in the annals of kosen-rufu, he sensed the young man's inestimable capacity for leadership. Konishi hoped and prayed that the day would soon come when Shin'ichi could assume the presidency and bear full responsibility for the Gakkai. Given that Shin'ichi was still a youth of only 30, however, they would have to wait until the time was ripe for him to do so.

Nevertheless, for the Gakkai to move ahead in its spread of the Daishonin's teachings, it needed Shin'ichi's ability above all. Konishi knew this better than anyone. Although he himself was now standing at the front of the organization as its general director, when he considered kosen-rufu's future development in practical terms, he felt there was no other way but to entrust the Gakkai's leadership to Shin'ichi. With this in mind, he conferred with the board of directors about creating the position of general administrator, which would oversee the actual running and administration of the entire Soka Gakkai, and assigning Shin'ichi to that office.

On June 30, the Headquarters

leaders meeting for that month was held at the Toshima Civic Center. There, Shin'ichi's appointment as general administrator was announced—a position he would hold concurrently with his position of youth division chief of staff. Now, full responsibility for the planning and management of all the Gakkai's affairs and activities rested squarely on Shin'ichi's shoulders.

News of Shin'ichi's appointment brought fresh hope and courage to the members. At that time, the Gakkai was embroiled in what became known as the "cemetery issue," which caused great distress and suffering to many members.

In those days, only a very small number of Nichiren Shoshu temples had cemeteries, and the majority of Gakkai members had little choice but to inter the ashes of their deceased family members at cemeteries run by temples of the previous Buddhist denominations to which they or their families had belonged.

However, temples of these other established Buddhist schools were now denying Gakkai members the right to use their cemetery facili-

ties, and in many areas, there had been incidents of members being forced to remove their deceased family members' ashes. In some cases, Gakkai members' family tombs had been sold without any notice or permission. Naturally, there was nothing in the law or anywhere else to support the idea that those converting to the Soka Gakkai forfeited their right to possess or use cemetery plots they had owned until that time. Such actions were clearly illegal, and could best be described as harassment by religious leaders who were afraid of the Gakkai's propagation activities and concerned about losing their parishioners. Exploiting people's sincere wish to honor their deceased relatives and ancestors, they were using private grave sites where the ashes of Gakkai members' loved ones were interred, as weapons to attack and undermine the Soka Gakkai. It was a lowly ploy perpetrated by religious charlatans attempting to brandish clerical authority to protect their own interests.

Shin'ichi was determined to overturn this injustice.

New Dawn 7

INCIDENTS of cemeteries administered by other Buddhist schools denying Gakkai members the right to inter family members' remains on their grounds had begun to occur several years earlier. But with Josei Toda's death, the frequency of such incidents increased dramatically throughout the country.

Behind this was the plotting of the established Buddhist schools to try to impede the Gakkai's development. Afraid of losing more followers to the Gakkai's energetic propagation activities, they had decided that the Gakkai's loss of Toda provided an excellent opportunity to launch a counterattack.

Buddhist associations in each prefecture advocated making converts to the Gakkai remove their family members' remains from non-Nichiren Shoshu cemeteries, and spearheaded efforts to revise cemetery bylaws to make this mandatory. Accordingly, their temples implemented new regulations for the use of their cemetery facilities, and with these regulations as a pretext, began to coerce Gakkai members to move their family tombs elsewhere. It was a desperate strategy, aimed at guarding against the loss of adherents and at weakening the Gakkai's position.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto fought with undaunted fury against these unfair and unjust actions. He did not retreat a single step. While consulting with legal experts to map out a counterstrategy, he personally traveled around the country to deal with the problem in each area.

He had taken it as his foremost mission to safeguard the Gakkai members—the precious children of the Buddha—on President Toda's behalf. But within the organization, he had begun to notice leaders who were gradually succumbing to laziness and arrogance. In order to aggrandize their authority, such leaders often trumpeted their personal acquaintance with Toda. Yet without communicating Toda's spirit or putting his guidance into practice, they simply went about doing what they pleased, lacking any sense of responsibility for others. It truly hurt Shin'ichi to see such behavior.

If this continued, Shin'ichi thought, President Toda's spirit would die. Those who had been fortunate enough to receive training directly from Mr. Toda had a duty to transmit his spirit and guidance to their juniors in faith.

For that reason, Shin'ichi had begun to compile and organize Toda's guidance, and to collect those

articles and possessions of Toda that best communicated his spirit, with the intention of preserving them as treasures of the Soka Gakkai. He also proceeded with the production of phonograph recordings of Toda's lectures and question-and-answer sessions.

But above all, he endeavored to manifest Toda's spirit in his own life. Engaging in a bold and selfless struggle, he strove to demonstrate that spirit through his actions. This was because the true Gakkai spirit could be transmitted only through action, through coming into contact with the members and inspiring them through actual example.

Shin'ichi's dauntless struggle became a motivating force for fresh advancement. In 1959, out of the 287 candidates the Gakkai had sponsored in nationwide local elections, 261 were elected to office. And in the fifth House of Councillors (Upper House) election in June of that same year—in which the Gakkai sponsored Katsu Kiyohara as a candidate for the Tokyo metropolitan constituency and five other candidates, including Koichi Harayama and Hiroshi Yamagiwa, for the national constituency—all had won election. The members in the Tokyo area, having tasted defeat in the Upper House election of 1956, were particularly overjoyed at this victory.

Recalling how deeply concerned Toda had been by Tokyo's poor showing on that occasion, Shin'ichi now felt that he had discharged part of his duty as a disciple in being able to report such a decisive victory to his departed mentor.

Illustrations by Teikichi Miyoshi

(To be continued)

Jill Slaymaker: The Art of Infinite Connections

By Leslie Wines
New York



LEO HAUG

“It would be strange if a single ear of corn grew in a large plain or there were only one world in the infinite.”

— *Metrodorus of Chios, philosopher of ancient Greece*

BEFORE Manhattan artist Jill Slaymaker began her early 1990s series of vinyl and oil paintings contrasting scientific and artistic views of nature, she regarded science with a form of distrust common among artists, suspecting it lacked aesthetics and a social conscience. At that time it seemed to her that art and science sprang from irreconcilably different ways of perceiving life and worked at cross purposes. But she has since found common ground.

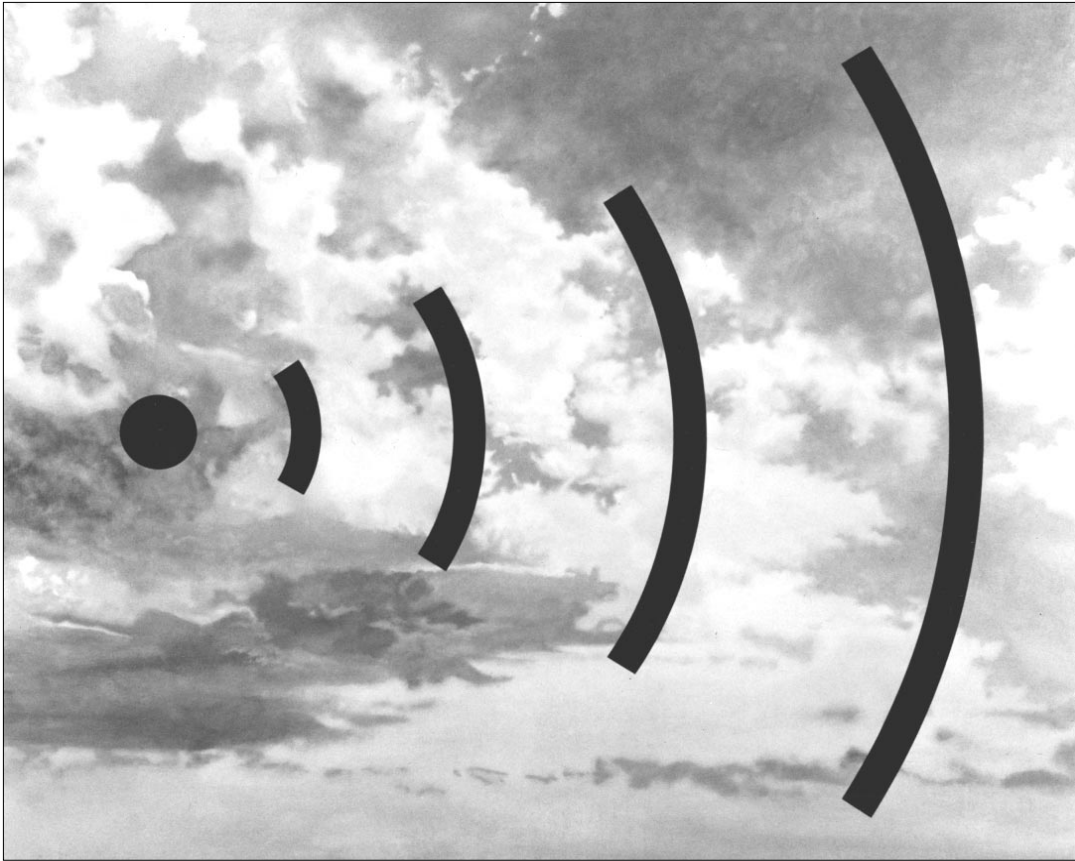
“When I first started these paintings, I researched different views of nature,” she said. “The

early humans were so interesting. They saw nature as a wondrous, inexplicable, awesome presence, something to be worshipped. But in more recent times, it seems that Western man has wanted to control nature; to diagram, categorize and classify it. It seems as if the idea was to reduce nature into a new little package that could be understood and controlled. I was repelled by that approach.”

“But,” she continued, “as I continued to read, I encountered many interesting Western scientific ideas. I came across chaos theory, sixteenth-century Italian drawings

of the body and the Renaissance concept of alchemy. I realized that many Western scientists also respected nature.

“I’ve now come to think that there is a strong relationship between scientists and artists as people, because both use materials in an experimental way without knowing what the outcome will be. Scientists and artists both have great curiosity and both want to explore the mysteries of the universe. And, of course, Buddhism becomes very important here because it places a great emphasis on the interconnectedness of life



*Waves of
Kosen-Rufu,*
1994, oil and
vinyl on canvas,
54 x 66 in.

and the many connections that exist in the universe.”

The Buddhist emphasis on integration or the interconnectedness of all things comes up often in Jill’s conversation and has profoundly influenced her paintings. Like many other Buddhists, she began her practice at a point when the world appeared to her to be broken into parts that could not be easily reassembled into a reassuring whole; as if scientists and artists might forever remain destructively polarized. However, over the course of her practice, she has come to understand how ideas and people that seem to be opposed are, in fact, linked. This confidence in the world’s wholeness informs many of her paintings with a strong sense of tranquillity.

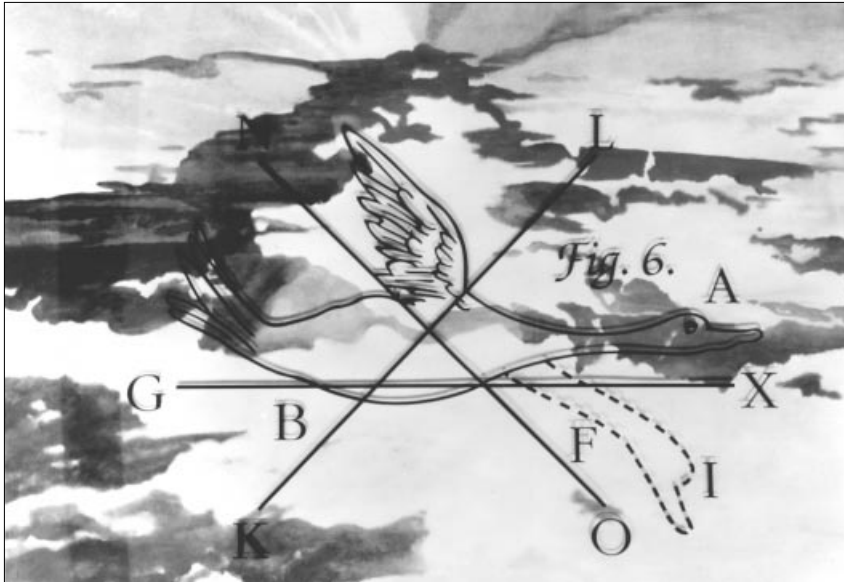
“I’ve now come to think that there is a strong relationship between scientists and artists as people, because both use materials in an experimental way without knowing what the outcome will be.”

IN addition, Buddhism’s reverence for nature has enabled Jill to rediscover her own joy in nature, another important source of inspiration in her work. The sky and other sweeping expanses of natural space are often depicted in her recent paintings. Although she grew up in Indiana, in close proximity to woods, Jill, after a long spell of urban living, found that she had become alienated from nature. “I always loved nature, particularly the sky,” she added. “I went to graduate school in Texas, where the skies are just incredible. Buddhism put me back in touch

with how important nature is to me.”

Jill sometimes incorporates Buddhist terms and imagery into her work. “Waves of Kosen-rufu,” depicting a giant sound wave, was inspired by the idea that the peace of the entire world can emanate from within one person. “Cause and Effect” features a large and mysterious circle set against a dark but somehow luminous night sky, and also hints at the myriad connections within the universe.

Jill describes “Cause and Effect” as her “transitional painting,” which links the pre- and post-Buddhist



In Search Of, 1993,
oil on paper and vinyl on plexiglas,
36 x 42.5 in.

eras of her work, noting that although it contains a certain darkness and heaviness, it also foreshadows the lighter quality of her newer paintings.

I appear in the world
like a great cloud
that showers moisture upon
all the dry and withered living
beings,
so that all are able to escape
suffering,

gain the joy of peace and security,
the joys of this world and the
joys of Nirvana
(*The Lotus Sutra*, "The Parable
of the Medicinal Herbs" chapter,
p. 102)

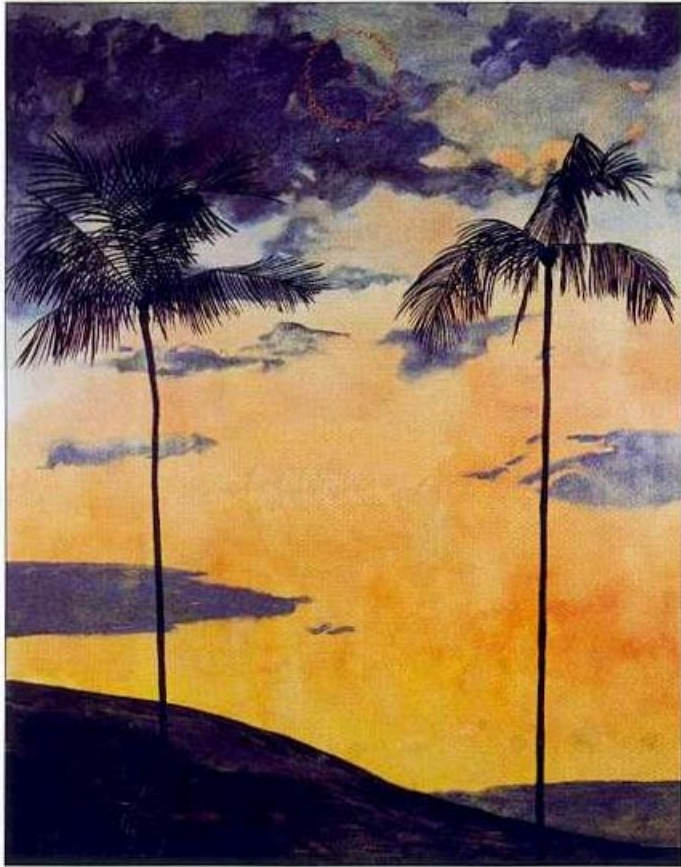
BEFORE I chanted my paintings had a dark, surreal nightmarish quality," Jill recalls. "At times my work was even grotesque, although always with some little saving touch of humor. These

paintings mirrored the condition of my mind, which was generally very depressed, even suicidal at times."

In Jill's view, Buddhism has given her much more than an interesting set of concepts for viewing life or developing her art. It has provided her with the tools to literally remake her own consciousness and route out serious and deeply rooted mental sufferings. □

Veil of Tears,
oil and parafin on canvas,
54 x 66 in.





above left, *Tropical Island with Circular Saw Blade*, 1991, oil and copper leaf on canvas, 68 x 56 in.

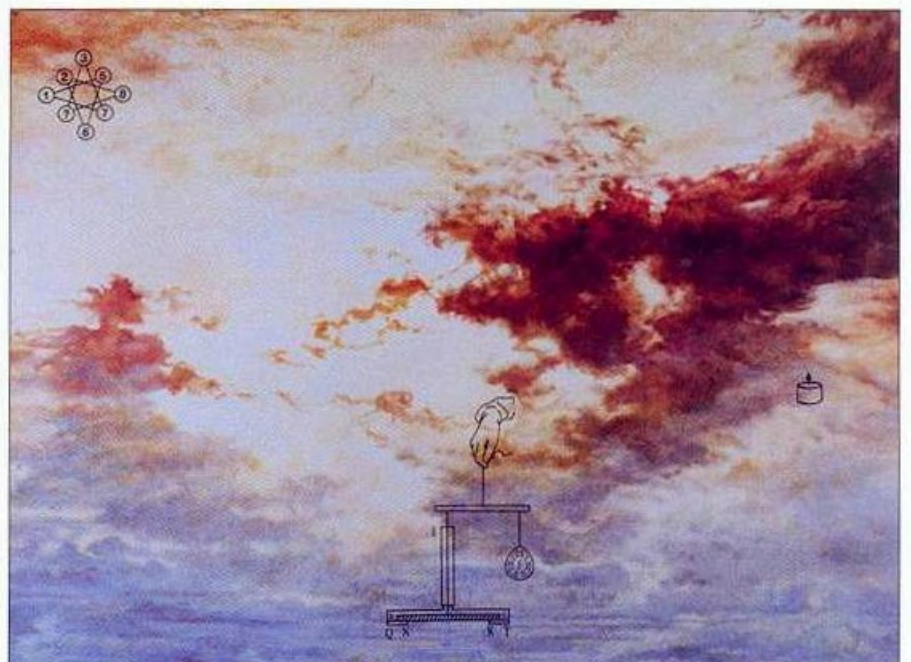
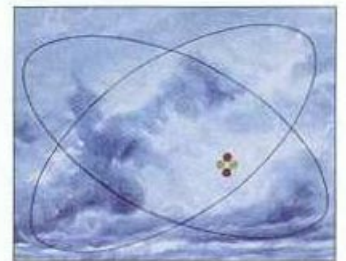
above right, *Forcing the Issue*, 1992, oil and vinyl on paper, 36 x 25 in.

right, *Irish Sky with Atom*, 1991, oil on paper, 23 x 29.5 in.



below left, *Landscape with Riflescope*, 1993, oil on jute, 72 x 40 in.

below right, *Journey to Enlightenment*, 1994, oil, vinyl and copper leaf on paper, 38 x 50 in.





Vanishing Landscape, 1990,
oil on canvas, 72 x 72 in.
by Jill Slaymaker

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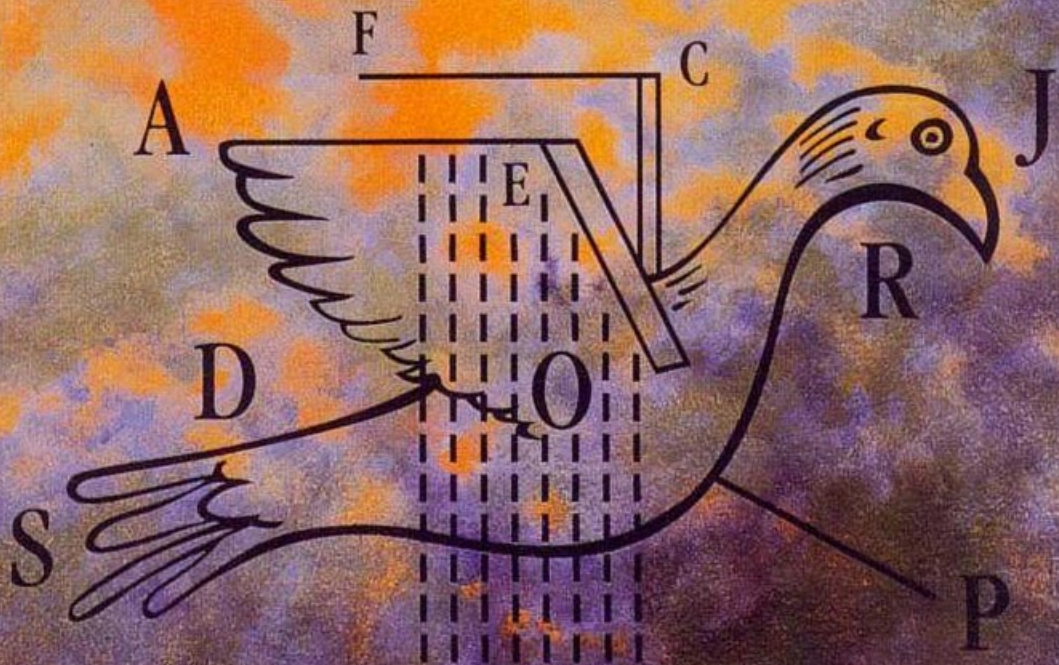
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The European Center



THE European Center, which opened in June 1990 in Trets, southern France, is a focal point in promoting peace and culture on the European continent.

SGI members from all over Europe visit the center throughout the year for leaders training sessions and study seminars on Nichiren's teachings.

The ferroconcrete building, with one story above and one below ground, has conference rooms, reception rooms and a hall that accommodates 800 people. Its library contains more than 1,000 works of French literature. The center, with Mount Sainte Victoire in the background, stands out for its light green roof and white walls bathed in sunlight.