

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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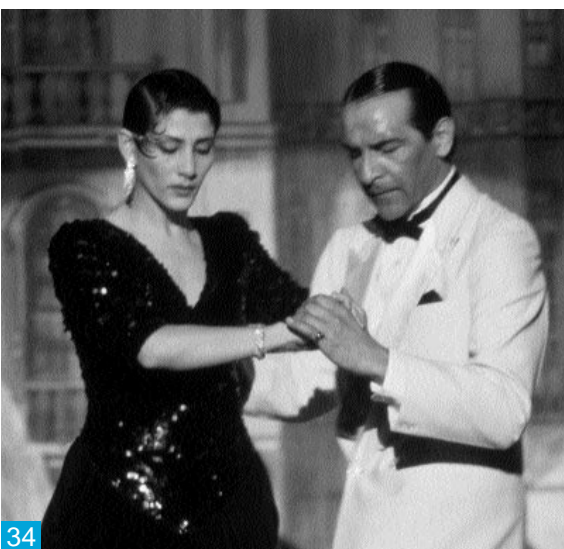
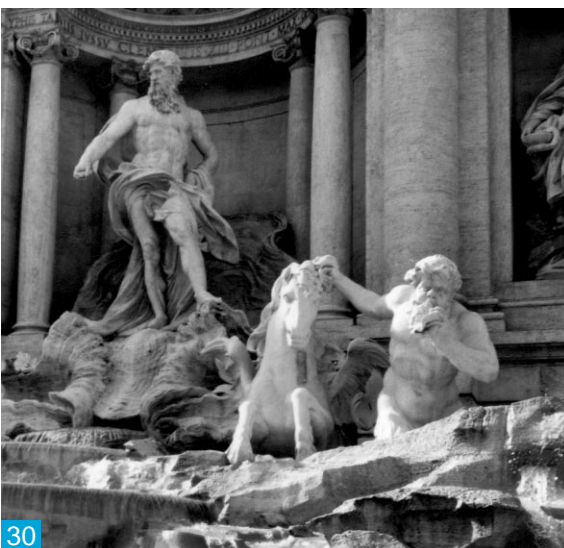
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To Our Readers: The subject for this month's "Topics for Discussion" is SGI President Ikeda's 1997 peace proposal, beginning on page six. The eighteenth installment of the series "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" will appear in the May issue.

On The Cover: *Yellow Steps*, 1996, oil on canvas, 38 x 30 in., by Sandra Eliot.

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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

Vivid Cover



I JUST want to congratulate you on your outstanding cover [*Ikuurdi Dancing Figures from North Cameroon*, by Clarence Washington] for the historic first issue of *Living Buddhism*. I think that it truly reflects what we stand for and where we are going. The cover creates an image full of zest for life with vivid colors and action through movement. The wide range of shades of color is symbolic of our determination to create unity in such diversity. The fact that the multitude of beautiful colors blend so well together definitely reminds me that if I bring out my own inner beauty with the purpose of enhancing that beauty through interacting with the beauty of others, then diversity is not a problem but something to be in awe of. What a great start!

MARY SILVA
Orlando, Fla.

P.S.: I loved the article on "The Nine Consciousnesses and Jung's Theory of the Collective Unconscious" [December 1996 *Seikyo Times*]. It was so clear and concise. It was the first time I enjoyed reading about the topic and actually understood it! I'm so glad I didn't do my typical attitude of "Oh, no, I can't read this—too long, beyond my comprehension, and maybe boring." The article was just the opposite. Thanks!

Ages Questioned

REGARDING the article "Dedicated to the Enlightenment of Humanity" on the life of Nichiren in the February issue of *Living Buddhism* (pp. 14–15), the ages given for key events in the Daishonin's life are different from the ones I previously learned throughout my practice with the SGI. Please clarify this discrepancy.

EIKO HEFFRON
Aliso Viejo, Calif.

We received several inquiries regarding the article on the life of Nichiren. The ages given for different events in Nichiren's life differ by one year from previously published ages. The article published in the February issue uses the Western custom of determining one's age. In Japan, a person is considered one year old at birth, two years old after twelve months and so on.

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>

Confederate Flag

IN the twenty-nine years I have been practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I have learned that although as humans we are of different races and have different personalities and character traits, one thing we all have in common is that we are all human beings. Nichiren Daishonin makes it perfectly clear that no one human is superior to another. I believe this to be true without question.

With this in mind, I would like to refer to a recent article in the February *Living Buddhism* titled "A Cure for Racial Disharmony in Our Society";

specifically, on page 19, there is a picture of Ku Klux Klan members holding Confederate battle flags.

I'm a leader in the Sons of Confederate Veterans, a patriotic, historical, educational, benevolent, non-political, nonsectarian, non-racial organization. There are many Americans of African descent who proudly belong to the Sons of Confederate Veterans. I wish to state that the Sons of Confederate Veterans has nothing to do with the Ku Klux Klan whatsoever.

To clarify, first of all, the Confederate battle flag is not a flag of prejudice or race. The Confederate battle flag was born in July 1861 after the battle of First Manassas. General

Beauregard determined that the Confederate soldiers must have a flag so distinct from that of the enemy that no doubt should ever again endanger his cause on the field of battle.

So as you can see, the flag was designed to identify the Confederate soldier in battle—not to harass Americans of African descent.

I have four ancestors from Texas who fought honorably for the Confederacy. I'm very proud of them and my heritage. Speaking of my heritage, I'm not a white man—I'm a Scottish, English, Irish, French, Native American.

JEFFREY L. TOWERY
Los Angeles

Glossary

Bodhisattvas of the Earth: Those who chant and propagate Nam-myoho-enge-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-enge-kyo, the title of the Lotus Sutra.

Gohonzon: It is the embodiment of the Law of Nam-myoho-enge-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-enge-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-enge-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-enge-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; *enge* (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-enge-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 India (present-day southern 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.

ONE PERSON AT A TIME

IN February I traveled to Hong Kong along with representatives from many other countries where we had the pleasure to accompany SGI President Ikeda. At one of the meetings we attended, President Ikeda talked about his first trip to China in 1974. He said that after arriving in Hong Kong, he took a train and then crossed over to mainland China by foot. A young girl asked him, "Why have you come here?" Bending down to her, he said with a warm smile, "I came to see you."

When I heard that, I thought what a brilliant synthesis of the peace process. After all is said and done, doesn't world peace boil down to the actions of one person in relation to another person?

I think this is what makes SGI's movement for peace so unique; though operating globally, it begins when an idea takes root in one person's heart. The seed is then nurtured at neighborhood discussion meetings and during personal visits where we get to know one another.

The district is the ideal arena to nurture these humanistic bonds among people. We find that of the more than 400 letters written by Nichiren Daishonin that still exist, almost all were written, not to groups of people, but to individuals. He wrote to a mother whose child was suffering; to two brothers who were criticized by their father for their belief; to poor farmers threatened by the local government authorities due to their faith; to a samurai physician being ostracized by his boss and co-workers. Even the philosophical treatises he

wrote were to people like Shijo Kingo and Toki Jonin.

IS it any wonder then that President Ikeda cherishes dialogue. I have seen him make friends with some of the world's leading thinkers, not by expounding the intricacies of Buddhism, but by talking with them about life. That's how he talked with Linus Pauling and Armand Hammer. And with Norman Cousins and Nelson Mandela. He has also been having ongoing dialogue with the prominent Hong Kong writer Jin Yong, who attended the 16th SGI World Peace Youth Culture Festival, one of several activities held during the SGI leader's visit in February. Their talks are now being serialized in the Japanese magazine *Ushio* and the Hong Kong magazine *Ming Pao Monthly*. While in Hong Kong, I also witnessed heartfelt dialogue between President Ikeda and Liu Zhongshu, president of one of China's most prestigious universities, who had traveled two thousand miles to Hong Kong to award the SGI president an honorary professorship. Mr. Liu spoke of his gratitude for President Ikeda's efforts to open the way for friendly China—Japan relations and his understanding and love for Chinese culture.

This reminds me of another anecdote President Ikeda shared while we were in Hong Kong that illustrates the Buddhist spirit of one-on-one dialogue. A farmer apparently arrived late for a banquet that Shakyamuni was attending. It seems that one of his cows couldn't be



Hong Kong Soka Kindergarten pupils perform for dignitaries in February 1997.

accounted for. By the time the farmer found his cow, made sure it was safe and got to the banquet, dinner was over. When the farmer arrived, Shakyamuni stopped his discourse in mid-sentence and insisted that the farmer be served immediately. The Buddha then very kindly waited until the farmer had thoroughly enjoyed his meal before continuing his talk.

LISTENING to these anecdotes and watching President Ikeda's behavior in Hong Kong, I rekindled my own determination to focus even more in the area where real peace begins, the heart of a single human.

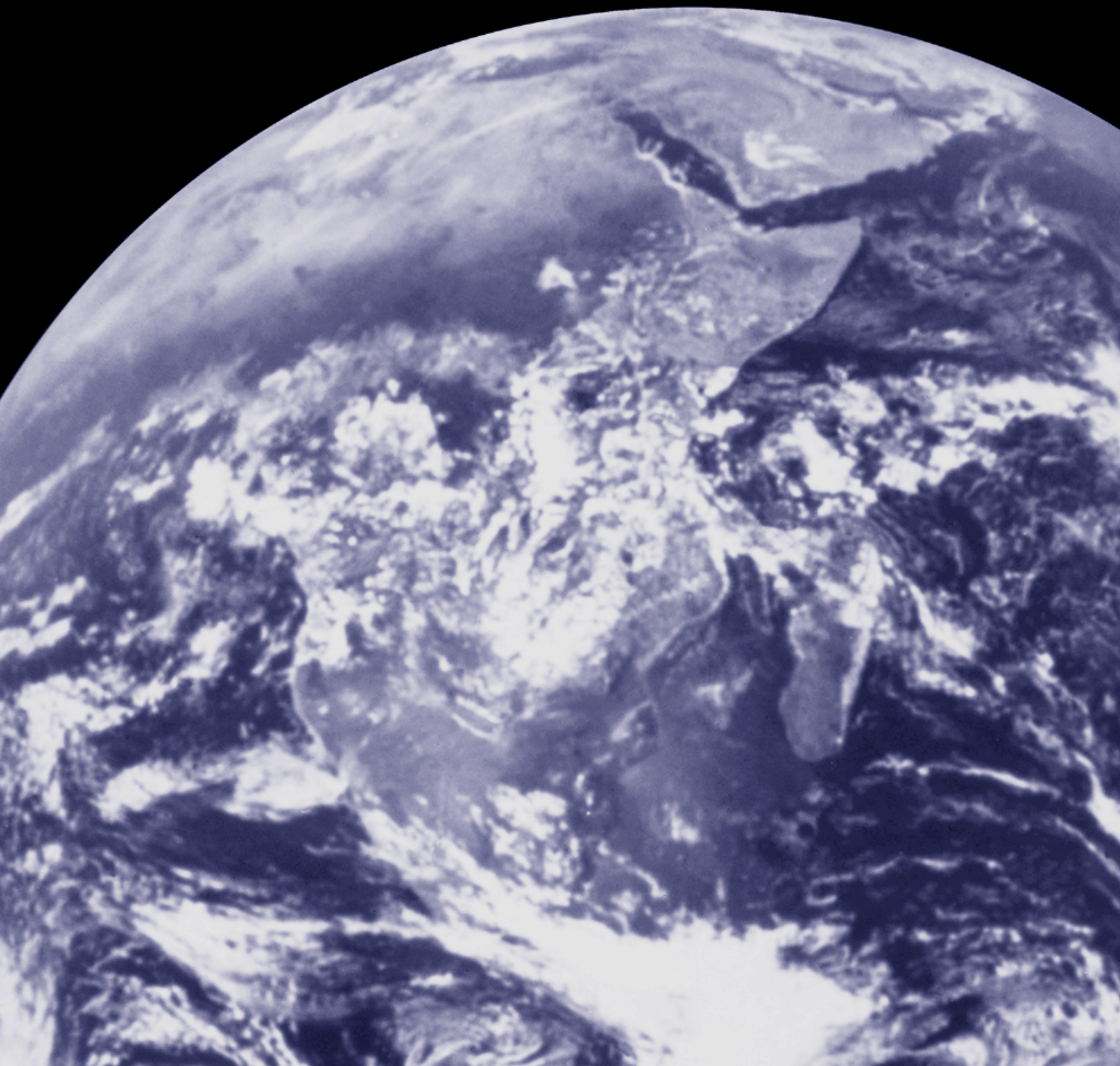
In our discussion meetings, we come to understand peace by studying and talking with one another. We discover the unlimited value of a single human life. It is, in a way, the monthly "school" we attend where we study the great philosophy of peace and cultivate our heart-to-heart bonds. It is not something we find in mass

demonstrations. Nor is it the jurisdiction of any leader.

Peace is about appreciating the dignity of a single human life. Peace finds expression in our prayer for human happiness and a peaceful world. Peace shows its results in our communities, our schools, our places of work, at the grassroots level—one life at a time. When you think about it, that is a perspective about life that is much richer than just a world without war.

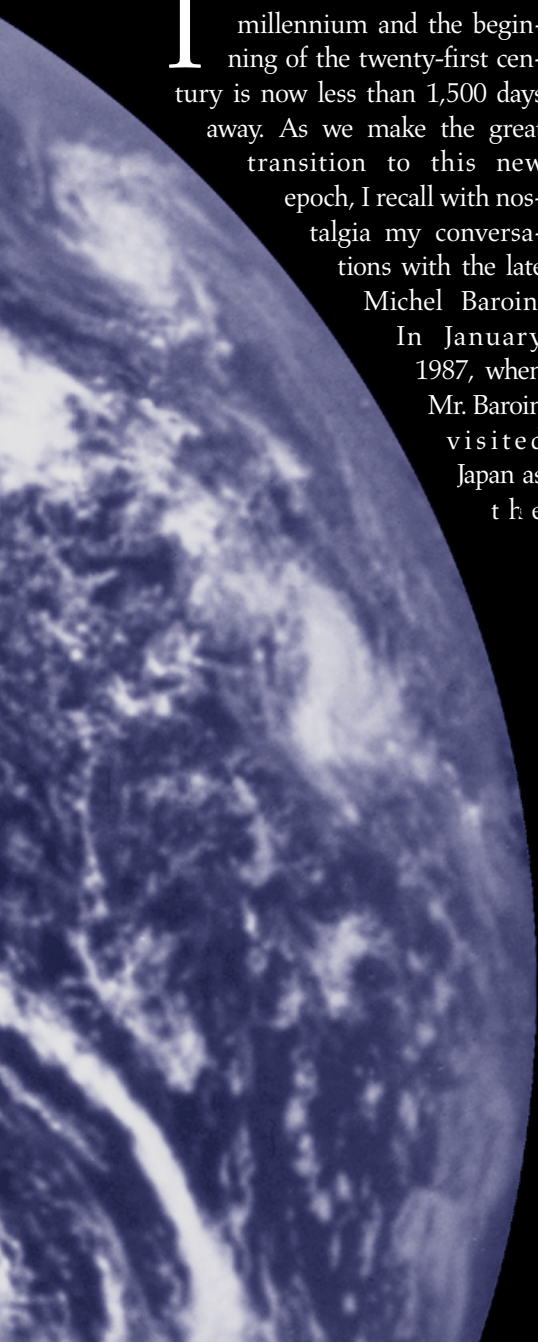
Fred M. Zaitzu
SGI-USA General Director

New Horizons of a



Global Civilization

By Daisaku Ikeda
President of Soka Gakkai International



THE DAWN OF A NEW millennium and the beginning of the twenty-first century is now less than 1,500 days away. As we make the great transition to this new epoch, I recall with nostalgia my conversations with the late Michel Baroin. In January 1987, when Mr. Baroin visited Japan as the

President of the Commission for Commemoration of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution and Declaration of the Rights of Man, we shared our thoughts about the future of humankind from the perspective of the "thirtieth century," one millennium ahead of us.

Baroin expressed his determination, as the responsibility of one individual toward humanity, to make the celebrations a fitting open-

Seventeenth Peace Proposal Commemorating January 26, SGI Day

ing for the thirtieth century. For myself, I reflected that although Buddhism speaks of the "latter day of the law," the perspective of the thirtieth century is a very important one. And I spoke to him of my conviction that now is the time to build a new age that shines with the glory of humanity and culture by focusing again on the sanctity of life.

Ten years have passed since then and today humankind is faced on every side by inescapable dilemmas: the threat of nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction, the intensification of ethnic discord,

damage to the Earth's environment from the effects of global warming and destruction to the Earth's ozone layer, the widening of the economic gap between North and South, the spread of psychopathological phenomena and brutal crimes. The gravity of the crisis, which casts its dark shadow over the path before us, is multilayered, affecting not only individuals and societies, but ethnic groups and nations, as well as the ecosystem and even the survival of the Earth itself. There is no longer any doubt that this shadow is a symptom of the deadlock that grips contemporary civilization.

It is precisely because of this deadlock, I believe, that a thorough reappraisal of the history of humankind, viewed from a very broad perspective, is indispensable. We need to review the whole history of modern civilization as it has unfolded over the past few centuries, and take a bold new look, one millennium at a time, through a macroscopic, bird's-eye view of human history.

What is the nature of the tasks we currently face? How should we envisage the character, systems and order of the "global civilization" that will inevitably shape the world

of the twenty-first century? Many and diverse approaches are being taken to these questions, each resonating against those around it as they build a crescendo leading into the coming century.

Each and every approach leads to a specific and important statement, yet none seems to be based on a firm grasp of what the coming century will be, so that all in all we have not moved beyond the stage of groping in the darkness.

This is perhaps only to be expected. For the murk of uncertainty and unpredictability of our fin-de-siecle is that dark, and the scale and quality of the aporia that bear down upon us are that utterly new. They are dilemmas as never experienced or heard of in the history of humankind. To describe them with such a positive adjective as new, however, could be misleading, for they are the source of foreboding signs that tell us in no uncertain terms that failure to find real solutions could mean the end of human history.

"New" reminds me of my encounters last year with the concept of the "new middle ages" (see box p. 9) advocated by philosopher Alain Minc and University of Tokyo professor Akihiko Tanaka. Their observations of the forces propelling international society gave me a palpable feeling for the changes in our times. It is now more than fifty years ago that self-exiled Russian philosopher Nicolas A. Berdyaev sought the advent of a "new middle ages in which multiple agents of change would operate, under an over-arching principle," sounding the alarm for the future of contemporary civilization as the forces of secularization gained momentum. As I recall, I found myself in strong sympathy with his sense of crisis.

Toward a New Millennium of Hope

BERDYAEV'S WARNING WAS aimed at the trend toward secularization in modern times from the viewpoint of Christian existentialism. It was an inductive, metaphysical conclusion he reached:

Self-realization is a process of permanent auto-creation, an elaboration of the new man at the expense of the old. When we speak of the emergence of the "new man," we do not imply subservience to the temporal or the repudiation of man's eternal content, but we invoke rather the fulfillment of that eternal content.¹

These words express his desire to see the correction of the conceits and errantry of the godless age and the empowerment of a new brand of human being religiously inspired to usher in a new world of the spirit.

By contrast, the ideas of Minc and Tanaka were more realistic. Faithfully going with the flow of modern and contemporary history, they sought an inductive but empirical positioning at the great turning point faced by modern civilization.

Whatever the case, we will have to grasp this turning point, not as a matter of several decades, but as the whole of modern civilization; otherwise we will not be able to negotiate the change of directions smoothly and without error.

Regardless of what is happening in the realm of the spirit, however, in the diverse and interlocking endeavors of people to overcome the current crisis, there does seem to be a common recognition: that the modern nation-state, that progeny of modern history that ran

rampant especially during the twentieth century, is changing. It might be extreme to describe it as a "hollowing out" of the state, but certainly its presence is less formidable than it once was.

While the status of sovereign states may have sunk somewhat, it is unreasonable to think that the structural frameworks they provide will easily give way. It would be foolhardy to quickly establish a world federation or global government system to replace them; in fact it could be quite dangerous. The world has learned all too well, through the breakup of the former Soviet Union and its aftermath, how the forced dismantling of an existing framework can lead, far from ushering in a new order, to anarchy and chaos.

Currently I am engaged in a continuing dialogue with Hong Kong author Jin Yong, who is known as the contemporary Dumas. In our conversations, he expressed his hope that it would become possible for people to move back and forth between Hong Kong and Japan without visas after the return of the British colony to China. Of course, I said I was very much in favor of the idea. However, a dream is a dream, and I fear that it will be a very long time before all peoples of the world can bypass familiar frameworks and freely move back and forth from one country to another without visas.

Transcending "National Interest"

NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE that the age in which the sovereign nation-state was the strongest, virtually the only agent of decision-making power in international society will gradually fade with the passing of the twentieth century into his-

tory. We cannot afford to lose sight of this mega-trend.

The trend is inevitable for several reasons. To cite the negative factor first, it is because none of the global problems I mentioned at the beginning of this appeal, including damage to the Earth's environment and overpopulation, can be solved within the framework of sovereign states alone. Remedies can only be found through the close and coordinated efforts of all actors in the international arena.

In terms of the positive reasons, a crossnational trend is now the unarguable development in almost all realms of human activity, brought about by tremendous strides made in information, telecommunications and transportation technology. The greatest indicator of the borderless age can be seen in the economy. As data from many sources tell us, developments such as the emergence of transnational corporations are threatening even such paramount prerogatives of the nation-state as tax collection. And, unless some completely unforetold circumstance should occur, it is unlikely that this trend will ever be reversed. Peter F. Drucker is among observers who go so far as to say that the nation-state has not become unnecessary, but decisions must now be made not so much on the national level as on the global and corporate levels.

Further reflecting these changes, people are now beginning to argue that the words *global* and *transnational* are more suitable than *international* when discussing the world systems of the twenty-first century. Indeed, while *international* assumes the primacy of relations between individual sovereign states, it does seem more in tune with the times to speak of the *global*, which does not necessarily assume the existence of sovereign states, or of *transnational*, which refers to movements that transcend national boundaries.

I completely agree. We may call ourselves Soka Gakkai International, but the movement we lead to foster solidarity among world citizens on the private level and build the infrastructure for world peace is global and transnational in the true sense of the words.

The late scholar of international politics, Takehiko Kamo, spoke eloquently to this point in an article contributed to the *Seikyo Shimbun* in 1985.

Economic interdependence has deepened, but it is by nature subject to the market mechanism. We need to stress transnational relations in the more fundamental areas of human endeavor that do not necessarily generate profits: ideas, lifestyles,

sports, the arts, and so forth.

Kamo had high expectations for our movement, which aims to invigorate in new ways NGO activities in the international arena.

The Limits of "External Reform"

AS WE OBSERVE THIS mega-trend that is irrevocably binding the world into one, beyond all national boundaries, beyond ethnic differences, for better or for worse, we are seeing that the term *global civilization*, which if not purely fantasy once carried a mostly utopian ring, is now suddenly ready to take on a realistic image.

We need to know what is most essential to give global civilization some clarity of image. If we do not endeavor to fulfill this task, even in the roughest outline, we may find that global civilization turns out to be no more than a pipe dream. This would be a most regrettable—not to mention irresponsible—legacy to leave to posterity. We must not allow ourselves to depart the twentieth century with sighs of regret and resignation.

In December 1970, I wrote a long poem dedicated to young people. The reverberations of the fierce student demonstrations that erupted in Japan and other countries in 1968 and 1969

New Middle Ages

In *Atarashii Chusei* [New Middle Ages] (Nihon Keizai Shinbun-sha, 1996), Tanaka divides the post-Cold War world into three spheres: The Chaotic sphere, the Modern sphere, and the New Middle Ages sphere. The criterion for classification is the degree of maturity of democracy and the market economy. He discusses the interdependence of various forces, comparing the contemporary world—where corporations, NGOs and other non-governmental actors in the industrially advanced countries directly determine movements in international society—to the middle ages when feudal lords, the Church and merchant cities exercised power multilaterally.

had still not subsided, and only a month before, the outspoken novelist Yukio Mishima had shocked the nation with his death by suicide following traditional rituals. It was, in sum, a time consumed by deep emotions and widespread turmoil. I wrote the poem as a gentle, thoughtful call to young people, including in it my broad vision of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries:

What the people long for
to carry them through the
twenty-first century

is no reorganization of external
forms alone
They desire a sound revolution
carried out within themselves
gradually and in an atmosphere
of peace
founded upon the philosophy
and beliefs of each
individual
This calls for farsighted
judgments
and a profound system of
principles
This is what I would name a
total revolution

and it is this
we call kosen-rufu²

Admittedly my ideas here are not fully developed, partly due to the restrictions of the poetic form, but it does point to the historic tasks of humankind as we face them at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

The twentieth century has thus far been a time of obsessive and reckless pursuit above all of solutions to contradictions through social reform, that is, through

Invasion of Czechoslovakia

The Soviet Union feared that the liberal political and economic reform policies adopted by Alexander Dubcek, who had become first secretary of the Czech Community Party in January 1968, might affect other Eastern European countries. Moscow condemned the reforms, and in August, Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces suddenly invaded Czechoslovakia and forced the reformist leaders to resign. The incident, which ended the short period of liberalization in Prague, shocked the world and made disillusionment with the communist vision a decisive trend. Crowd listens for news of the overthrow, September 10, 1968.



HILTON DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CONRBS

remodeling of “external forms.” Now the primary task we cannot avoid as we enter the twenty-first century is to attend to the revolution within ourselves, what I described as “a sound revolution carried out within ... gradually and in an atmosphere of peace.” I entrusted to this poem my strong belief that the point of departure for everything we attempt from now on must be the redirection of our primary goal.

In this poem I call on young people to shift the vector of their youthful energies. Instead of starting with the external, in the belief that changes there would bring about internal change, I made my case for a bold shift to change from within as the key to changing the world outside. Engineering this shift, I believe, is the unavoidable concern we will carry from our century to the next. Although it is not my intent to tout my horn, I believe that this task has during the past quarter century become the urgent demand of our times.

In that year, 1970, the leftist movement of which the student movement was a part, at long last began to show signs of slackening and decline in response to the disillusionment brought on by the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops (see box p. 10). Still the urge to remake the world through social revolution of external forms clung on stubbornly within the halls of academia. That well-known thesis of Marxism, though now at its lowest ebb — “consciousness does not determine existence; rather, existence determines consciousness” and “consciousness is nothing but the existence one is conscious of” — at that time still held strong sway among the leftist camp of opinion leaders.

Amid all the turmoil of the times, I could not but catch the telltale scent of nihilism and decadence stealing in to the momentary fervor of anarchy. (I later learned in my dialogue with French author Andre Malraux that he, too, saw the shadow of nihilism in the atmosphere of the times of the “May Revolution” in Paris (see box p. 13). I felt that I had to appeal to the young for a bold redirection of their thinking and actions.

The decades since witnessed immense tragedy. The century that validated revolution only of external forms has been essentially a century of wars and revolutions, and its devastating and cruel toll is now exposed for all to see. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites is a particularly pitiful sight: partly because socialism sought to legitimize social upheaval of external forms with theoretical flourishes that distinguished it from the vandalism of the Nazis, and partly because socialism attracted so many young and conscientious idealists indignant at the inherent contradictions of capitalism.

The words of novelist Chingiz Aitmatov of the former Soviet Union, with whom I had held a dialogue, were unforgettable. He said:

Second, a piece of fatherly advice: revolution is riot. Young people, put no trust in social revolutions! For nations, people, and society, it is mass sickness, mass violence, and general catastrophe. We Russians have learned this fully. Seek instead democratic reformation as the way to bloodless evolution and the gradual rebuilding of society. Evolution demands more time and patience, more compromises than revolution. It requires the building and culti-

vating of happiness, not its forceful establishment. I pray to god that the younger generations will learn from our mistakes!³

But even the liberalist societies could not rest easy and dismiss the tragedies of socialism’s demise as “fires on the opposite shore.” The collapse of socialism might be interpreted as evidence of the relative superiority of liberalism and capitalism, and yet conditions in the free societies themselves were not exactly shining with the glow of victory. I believe that it must be said that, although liberalism may not have been as extreme in ideological terms as socialism, it was equally obsessed with the revolution of outward forms.

The Free Society on Trial

TSUNEARI FUKUDA, DRAMATIST and literary critic, once said that the paramount concern of modern society is security in the most secular sense of the term. I believe this is an appropriate summary and description. For the liberalist’s slogans of “freedom” and “democracy” as well as “peace” and “human rights,” at least in Japan’s case, all boil down to that one point: secular security.

After all, external forms are important, it is true. A country like Japan, which fed the engines of its modernization process with all manner of values and institutions introduced from the West, ultimately suffered from profound cultural indigestion. And with no sign of any cure for its ailment in sight, it can only carry on an endless struggle against the forces that threaten human dignity. Indeed, if we do not we will never be able to change the bad habit of what first Soka Gakkai president Makiguchi called Japan’s servile and

fragile spiritual ethos, which so easily buckles to the pressures of the strong.

In his well-known essay, "Being and Doing," the late intellectual historian Masao Maruyama pointed out that "Like freedom, democracy by its very nature can become democracy only through the ceaseless process of democratization."⁴ As is true of all modern values, freedom and democracy are not givens; you have to fight for them to make them your own. In Japan, however, modern values have more or less been "given" from above by the authorities, be it the emperor or the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. That is why the task of "winning" values holds special significance in Japan, and for the same reason our Buddhist movement has had to take on the strong characteristics of the broader struggle for human rights.

This is all the more reason that I wish to declare that the struggle to defend the sanctity of life must never be aimed only at "secular security"—what I have called "the revolution of external forms alone." In order to make outward reforms thorough and genuine, I believe, it is crucial that we turn our eyes inward, toward our inner selves, once again. Legal and institutional guarantees of "freedom" and "democracy" as well as "peace" and "human rights" are indispensable, but they alone are not enough to preserve human dignity.

Indeed, as the situation in the liberal democracies in these final years of our century so clearly portrays, we will never arrive at our goal by pursuing simply secular security and external reforms alone. We will end up neglecting the human spirit and cultivation of human character. When that happens, the movement to defend human dignity will degenerate into one that casts down and harms humanity.

"Life is struggle," as Johan Huizinger wrote, incessant struggle between good and evil, between, in the words of Buddhism, the Buddha and the Devil. Freedom and indulgence, democracy and mobism, peace and complacency, human rights and self-righteousness are qualities that are as close to each other as two sides of a coin. To slacken even the slightest in this struggle is to risk succumbing to the other side of that coin.

Looking back over the past fifty years of democracy in Japan since the end of World War II, I am sure there is no one who would boast that we have been immune to disgraces to modern values. The shocking corruption of high-ranking bureaucrats and wretched and unprincipled behavior of our political leaders are only the tip of the iceberg that debases the character and integrity of our people, from adults to children. Far from striving to polish and refine themselves, they brandish their ugly egotism, revealing nothing of the shine of the finer qualities of humanity. They are the epitome of what Spanish thinker Jose Ortega y Gasset decried as "conceited spoiled brats" (*Revolt of the Masses*). Anyone would despair to think that it is this kind of human being that has been created by the postwar democratic educational system.

This is why, now as nearly thirty years ago, I continue to appeal to the young "to desire a sound revolution/carried out within themselves/gradually and in an atmosphere of peace/founded upon the philosophy and beliefs of each individual." I urge them to practice self-discipline and cultivate their inner selves. My mentor and second president of Soka Gakkai Josei Toda used to tell us, "When young, you ought to experience all sorts of hardships, even at a price," and as I look back

on my youth, I can see that maxim is also my unshakable creed. It is the internal revolution that will lay the bridge of hope to the twenty-first century, overcoming all the numerous tragedies of the twentieth century that were caused by our obsession with external reforms.

I believe that it is religion (at least those that are worthy of the name) that will provide the strong supports and the propelling forces for the building of such bridges. I believe that many of the world's most brilliant intellectuals, going all the way back to Arnold Toynbee and Andre Malraux, have honored the SGI movement with their understanding and encouragement precisely because they know the historic significance of what we are doing.

The concept of the "new middle ages" requires an approach to the spiritual dimension of humanity, a dimension all the more urgently needed because of trends toward globalization and transnationalization of the market economy. Without some sort of centripetal force, leaving matters up to the centrifugal forces of the world market (globalization of the market is, after all, motivated by the pursuit of profit, and such globalization by its nature is not conducive to strong centripetalism), we may find that what is created is not cosmic harmony, but uncontrollable, barren anarchy and chaos. Any approach to the spiritual dimension of humanity has to be made from a broad perspective of one hundred, perhaps two hundred years.

I must say that I can understand why Francis Fukuyama, author of the sensational book calling the collapse of socialism the "end of history," entitled his new work *Trust* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

Paris “May Revolution”

In May 1968, France faced a political crisis prompted by the student movement that came to be called the Paris “May Revolution.” A student strike the previous year had escalated into a student revolt after police tried to break up a student rally held at the Sorbonne. The new leftist movement, which sought to distinguish itself from established socialism, grew militant as it was joined by workers, and developed into a nationwide general strike that shook the de Gaulle government. (Bottom) A man waves the tri-color flag of France from atop the Arc de Triomphe as thousands of marchers fill the Champs Elysees, May 30, 1968.



In the earlier work, he argued that, with the triumph of liberal democracy vis-à-vis socialism, history as we know it came to an end. Yet the liberalist societies carrying the banners of freedom and democracy have hardly been in a position to present themselves as worthy of the honor of being called victors.

Indeed, as we have seen from the endemic turmoil, decay and stagnation of liberal democracies and liberalist societies in the years since, their “victory” is not something that leads by any easy road either to

peace and order or prosperity and vigor. Japan is by no means the only country where freedom has degenerated into indulgence, democracy into mobism, peace into cowardice and complacency, and human rights into self-righteousness. In varying degrees, it is a trend to be found in all the industrially advanced nations.

Key for Carrying on the Eternal Spiritual Struggle

HOW CAN WE TRANSFORM
the chaos thus generated into

an orderly and dynamic cosmos? Francis Fukuyama tells us that the key lies in “trust.” This is a virtue of quite a different hue from the pursuit of secular security that consumed modern societies for so long.

The liberal democracy that emerges at the end of history is therefore not entirely “modern.” If the institutions of democracy and capitalism are to work properly, they must coexist with certain premodern cultural habits that ensure their proper function-

ing. Law, contract, and economic rationality provide a necessary but not sufficient basis for both the stability and prosperity of postindustrial societies; they must as well be leavened with reciprocity, moral obligation, duty toward community, and trust, which are based in habit rather than rational calculation.⁵

I do not intend to discuss the content of this book at length. Fukuyama makes almost no mention of religion, but in the broad sense, "trust" is not a phenomenon simply of secular concern. Obviously it is linked in some way to the realm of the transcendent and the religious. What is noteworthy about his thesis is that it presents what seems at first glance to be an earthy, even primitive, quality in a familiar, straightforward fashion, as the key for opening up the "post-modern" age. I might add here that the notion of "spontaneous sociability," which Fukuyama considers the key to forming and regenerating trust, resonates strongly with our own movement's slogan "Human revolution first, and then social reformation!"

However, to the extent that trust is rooted in traditional culture and custom, it is only practical among those who share certain traditions, in what Bergson calls a "closed society." What is important is how to open up such societies. Our task is not to set in motion all sorts of cultural friction, but to find ways trust can be used to release the lubricants that smooth the functioning of the open society. And we must by all means build relations of trust that are strong enough to sustain the borderless, globalist age. Herein, I firmly believe, lies the original mission of world reli-

gion. The vision expressed in my poem cited above, calling for

...a sound revolution
carried out within themselves
gradually and in an atmosphere
of peace
founded upon the philosophy
and beliefs of each individual
This calls for farsighted
judgments and a profound
system of principles

does not have to be realized in a day. As Mahatma Gandhi put it, "Good travels at a snail's pace." I wrote it simply out of my fervent wish that our young will come forward and meet the task of building the bridges to the twenty-first century with courage, resolution and patience.

Now I would like to explore the means for changing the norms that are required to create a new global civilization or "human civilization," focusing on environmental issues that have emerged, demonstrating the limits of contemporary civilization. Today, ecologists are telling us that if radical changes are not made, the Earth itself might not survive another century. The greatest threat to human existence, therefore, is our failure to deal properly with environmental problems.

People have warned for a long time that science and technology are like a "two-edged sword." But their voices have been overwhelmed by the rapid succession of advances making what was once thought impossible possible. Economic growth and prosperity brought about by technological advancement have so captured people's imaginations that the progress and spread of the civilization of science and technology has known no limits and no barriers.

But now the triumph has been

found to be marred, with damage to the Earth's environment inflicted by the side effects of that civilization, telling us that a progressive view of history is an illusion and declaring that progress may in fact turn out to be our downfall. Air pollution, water pollution, pollution of the soil, indiscriminate cutting of vast forests, desertification, damage to the Earth's protective ozone layer and the resultant effects of global warming; none of these issues can be simply left to resolve themselves.

Fairness in Society and for Future Generations

IN 1972, THE CLUB OF ROME issued the first statement recognizing these problems as tasks of global concern in its report, "The Limits to Growth." That same year, the United Nations Special Conference on the Environment was held in Stockholm, known for its catch phrase, "our only one Earth." That conference ended with announcement of the "Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment," which states that environmental problems posed a real and serious threat to the survival of humankind and calls on the international community to contribute to their solution.

A great deal of research has since been conducted and numerous projects and initiatives undertaken to remedy the causes of environmental destruction, and the United Nations Special Conference on the Environment (the Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 drew the world's close attention. This summit was successful to a certain extent, marking the signing of a number of declarations and agreements, including the Rio Declaration on Environment



ROGER RESSA/REUTERS

Restrictions on the use of chlorofluorocarbons

Prompted by scientists' warnings, after discovery of a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica, an international movement emerged leading to the adoption of the Montreal Protocol in 1987 calling for reduction in production of the chlorofluorocarbon substances that are considered to be the major cause of damage to the ozone layer. At international conferences subsequently, the target volume for reduction was increased, and by 1994, production had been brought down by seventy-seven percent. This international movement, it is said, offers a useful framework for establishing restrictions in other areas, such as on the use of fossil fuels. (Above) Curator inspects core samples from the Greenland ice sheet; the samples will be examined for evidence of global warming caused by rising carbon dioxide levels.

and Development; "Agenda 21," an action plan aimed at achieving what came to be known as "sustainable development"; adoption of a set of principles for the protection of the world's forests; a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992).

The Convention on Biological Diversity went into effect in December 1993 and the United Nations Convention to Combat

Desertification in December 1996. The remarkable progress made in establishing restrictions on the use of chlorofluorocarbons in order to protect the Earth's ozone layer is testimony to the significance of consensus and concerted effort within international society (see box above).

This year, five years since the Rio Earth Summit, the next United Nations Special Conference on the Environment will be held to evalu-

ate and discuss what has been done and what progress made in the interim. Attention is centering on the third conference of countries signatory to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Japan as the occasion when specific conclusions will be reached about measures on reduction of carbon dioxide emissions to be implemented in the year 2000.

Despite the steady advances being made in international society on

Attention at last year's World Food Summit focused on the plight of the more than 800,000,000 people who suffer from starvation or malnutrition in the world today, and the Declaration of Rome and a related action plan were adopted aiming to decrease the numbers of the starving by half by the year 2015. I might add that 1996 is year one of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006). (Right) A family living in a shack on a rubbish dump in Guayaquil, Ecuador.



JEREMY HORNENCOORIS

these issues, many reports point out that they are far outpaced by the speed with which conditions of the Earth's environment are worsening. In April 1996, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) issued a statement prior to celebrations of Earth Day declaring that the Earth's environment had reached a critical state in so many areas that if major changes were not made it would soon become meaningless to celebrate Earth Day. The 1996 white paper published by the Worldwatch Institute stated that "The world today is faced with an enormous need for change in a period of time that is all too short." It also stressed that "if we fail, our future will spiral out of control."⁶

Indeed, it is now clear that the problems of the Earth's environment cannot be resolved merely as the extension of approaches adopted in the past. I believe that there is a growing awareness that cataclysm will occur if reforms are not made that will drastically change current trends and without efforts

to fundamentally reevaluate the nature of civilization.

Many and diverse efforts to scrutinize and reexamine the ideas and values that have sustained the modern technological civilization from this viewpoint have begun, and the field of environmental ethics is now becoming well established as an academic discipline. The theory of accountability of one generation to its successors proposed by Hans Jonas, that the present generation ought to limit its freedoms for the sake of coming generations, is certain to be the subject of close scrutiny from now on. The discussion unfolding on this topic involves not only a fundamental reexamination of the concept of "freedom," as it has been understood until now, but also a reevaluation of the synchronic approach to decision-making based on interests and consent of contemporary people alone. This debate is extremely instructive in appraising not only the validity of the "science-is-superior" persua-

sion but the implications of the progressive view of history extolled throughout the modern and contemporary eras.

In addition to fairness and responsibility among generations, of course, we must also pursue social fairness in our own time, as symbolized in the North-South problem. Any efforts we make to consider "sustainable development" as the keynote in dealing with environmental problems will be meaningless if we do not pay careful attention to these two dimensions of fairness. As many opinion leaders have pointed out, it is the conspicuous patterns of consumption of the nations of the "North" that lie at the core of today's environmental crisis, and I do not believe this charge can be denied.

It is fantasy to think that the kind of conspicuous consumption of resources by the mass-producing, mass-consuming North could be "sustainable" much longer. More importantly, it is very shortly going to be something that global society will no longer condone.



It is the conspicuous patterns of consumption of the nations of the "North" that lie at the core of today's environmental crisis.... It is fantasy to think that the kind of conspicuous consumption of resources by the mass-producing, mass-consuming North could be "sustainable" much longer. (Left) A palatial mansion on three thousand acres of land in Georgia, U.S.A.

KEVIN FLEMING/COMBIBS

A vicious circle plagues the nations of the "South," our close neighbors on this one-and-only Earth, linking poverty, population growth and environmental destruction. As many observers have pointed out, the harsh realities of the so-called PPE (poverty, population growth and environment) problem are directly attributable to the North-South disparities that have resulted from the structure of the international economy.

With regard to the polarization of the hemispheres, the yearly report of the United Nations Development Programme published last year, Human Development Report 1996 (Oxford University Press, 1996) warns that "If present trends continue, economic disparities between industrial and developing nations will move from inequitable to inhuman." The report describes the distortions of economic growth under five patterns: 1. jobless growth (growth without an increase in job opportunities); 2. ruthless growth (growth that does nothing to redress the disparity

between rich and poor); 3. voiceless growth (growth not accompanied by democratization or the advance of individuals in society); 4. rootless growth (growth that infringes on the ethnic identity of individuals); and 5. futureless growth (growth through wasteful consumption of resources that will be needed by future generations), summing them up as "patterns of growth 'that perpetuate today's inequalities [and are] neither sustainable nor worth sustaining.'"

Attention at last year's World Food Summit focused on the plight of the more than 800,000,000 people who suffer from starvation or malnutrition in the world today, and the Declaration of Rome and a related action plan were adopted aiming to decrease the numbers of the starving by half by the year 2015. I might add that 1996 is year one of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006).

In furthering international endeavors such as these, I believe, it is crucial to establish an environment

in which the inner resources with which each and every human being is endowed can be amply displayed. Eliminating starvation and eradicating poverty cannot be achieved through stopgap measures that simply supply material goods and financial support. Alleviating these problems depends, rather, on securing empowerment for the long term, which can be achieved by creating environments in which individuals can realize their inherent potential and by establishing the conditions where self-reliance can thrive.

In many cases, the causes of the devastating conflicts occurring in various parts of the world are deeply rooted in economic problems. All of us, I believe, must recognize our responsibility, as fellow members of a global society, to contribute in any way we can to break the vicious circle mentioned above.

It hardly need be said that environmental problems are not simply political, economic or technological issues that can be eliminated or alleviated by merely establishing

wise methods of using valuable resources. I believe a way will be found out of our difficulties if we probe much deeper, questioning and redesigning the relationships of human beings to each other, of human beings to the environment, and of human beings to society as a whole. Now is the time to transform our civilization into one based on values premised on the principle of human dignity in the true sense. It is time for a shift in the fundamental perspective of each and every person in the world.

The clues to a view of life and the world that will lay the philosophical foundations for that revolution can be found in the wisdom of Buddhism. The Buddhist canon gives us a beautiful parable of the cosmic view of history, showing how all the phenomena of the universe interrelate, producing a perfect, subtle harmony: "Suspended above the palace of Indra, the Buddhist god who symbolizes the natural forces that protect and nurture life, is an enormous net. A brilliant jewel is attached to each knot in the net. Each jewel contains and reflects the image of all the other jewels in the net, which sparkles in the magnificence of its totality.

A Fundamental Shift in Perspectives

THIS POIGNANT IMAGE illustrates the concept of "dependent origination (Jp. *engi*)."
Dependent origination is the fundamental Buddhist doctrine that teaches the coexistence of all things in the universe, including human beings and nature, in interdependent relationships. It expounds the symbiosis of the micro-cosmos and the macro-cosmos that unite as one organism.

The idea goes far beyond the mechanistic view, of the world removed from humanity, that formed the background for modern science. What I would like particularly to emphasize is that Buddhism sees the relationships of all things in the universe not as a still, static image but as the dynamic pulsing of creative life.

Buddhism sums up the dynamism of life as follows: "Without life, environment cannot exist, even though life is supported by its environment."⁷ "Life" here refers to the subjective life (Jp. *shoho*) and "environment" to the objective world (Jp. *eho*) that surrounds it.

The point I would like to make is that this passage conveys not a static image by simply giving two sentences showing that life and environment are the same thing. The first and second parts of the sentence cannot be reversed. By saying first, "Without life, environment cannot exist," it is clear that the subjective display of human life that embraces the universe comes first. Yet that expression alone constitutes an idealism, or indulges in the Faustian arrogance of the moderns. The second part of the sentence—"even though life is supported by its environment"—is added, therefore, to remind us not to forget that human beings, too, are part of nature.

This Buddhist doctrine of the oneness of life and environment (Jp. *esho funi*) is a dynamic, volitional concept seeing human life as the initiator of reform while referring to the impact environment in turn can have on it. It is in its relations with humanity in this fashion that environment is viewed.

The Path From Human Revolution to Global Revolution

THE WORD *SYMBIOSIS* IS often heard in our time, but I believe that real symbiosis can be achieved only through the well-balanced interaction of "life" and "environment," which requires firm determination to carry out reform—a resolve demonstrated in the phrase "Without life, environment cannot exist"—while at the same time maintaining close consideration toward the environment as the sustenance of our lives.

For that reason I feel a strong interest in and affinity with Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset's idea of life. The theme that he himself said epitomizes all of his philosophical speculation is, "I am myself plus my circumstance, and if I do not save it, I cannot save myself."⁸

Just as stated in "Without life, environment cannot exist," by saying "I am myself and my environment," Ortega meant that there can be no environment that simply exists, that environment does not idealistically or conceptually exist within one. One lives within environment, and environment, moreover, is a kind of objective entity that will continue to exist even after one's death. That is why he was thoughtful enough to add, "If that environment cannot be saved, I cannot be saved," like the second sentence of the above passage of the Buddhist canon, "life is supported by its environment." He placed the essential and acting "I" at the fine intersection of "I" and "environment."

Ortega's concise and profound proposition, reminiscent of Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am), keenly expresses the crisis of modern civilization. As



In 1992, in conjunction with the Earth Summit, The SGI mounted an exhibition titled "Toward the Century of Life: The Environment and Development." That exhibit toured throughout Brazil after the summit ended. (Left) Rio de Janeiro citizens view the exhibit.

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distinct from the Cartesian and mechanical or dualistic model of the world, it is apparently oriented to dualistic monism or monistic dualism. His question was: When will we awaken to the realization that definitive existence in this world is not material or spiritual, but essentially a matter of perspective?

I cannot help thinking that by implication this "perspective" shares the same principle as the "subjective and dynamic display of creative life," the principle that runs through the Buddhist doctrine of the oneness of life and the environment.

I mention these similarities because the dilemma—or perhaps I should say "trilemma" (destruction of the global environment vs. injunction to economic growth vs. the energy and resources crisis)—that confronts contemporary civilization on all sides presents such a pessimistic outlook as to cause people to lose all hope. I believe that we will not be able to muster the indomitable courage and confi-

dence it will take to chart a firm path toward resolution of these problems without the support of a strong philosophy of action.

It is out of this conviction that I argue that we must begin with revolution within the individual heart—the human revolution—through which we can then realize a revolution in the human relationship with the environment and thereby a revolution of "global civilization." It is indeed with this awareness that we at Soka Gakkai International have approached our endeavors to raise consciousness about environmental issues through exhibits and other activities.

In 1992, in conjunction with the Earth Summit, we mounted an exhibition entitled "Toward the Century of Life: The Environment and Development." That exhibit toured throughout Brazil after the summit ended. At Brazil SGI's Amazon Natural Environment Research Center, we are also engaged in a joint research project on reforestation of

the Amazon rain forest. Since 1993, our "Ecology and Human Life" exhibit has been touring major cities of the United States and in 1996, we also opened an exhibition on "The Amazon—Its Environment and Development" in Bolivia.

These exhibitions have been aimed at clarifying the sources of the problems and foster a firm determination among people to act in unison toward their solution. And, as I have declared many times, if we are ever to solve global problems of this kind, we must move beyond outmoded thinking based on national interest and seek approaches based on the interests of humankind as a whole.

Global environmental problems require that we reorient our perspective. We have to come to grips with the realization that the age has ended when we can afford to think of our concerns and responsibilities as limited by national boundary lines drawn from narrow, even arbitrary motives.

Human Solidarity Through United Nations Reform

HERE I WOULD LIKE TO present a number of proposals for the consideration of the United Nations, which will play a pivotal role in the solution of global environmental problems.

One of the achievements of the Earth Summit was establishment in 1993 of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) under the auspices of the U.N. Economic and Social Council. This commission will supervise the implementation of Agenda 21, the action plan adopted in order to achieve sustainable development, and will oversee and coordinate the related programs being carried out under different U.N. agencies.

The United Nations Environmental Programme was established back in 1972, and to policy in this field. Already the CSD is involved in follow-up activities for implemented projects by theme. However, as symbolized by the complicated debate over finances in the United Nations, there are many hurdles to overcome. In addition, even if the CSD is able to achieve a well-coordinated U.N. environmental policy, it will take considerable executive power to assure that it can be transmitted into action.

Toward a Permanent "Global Forum"

PART OF THE LIMITATIONS which the United Nations labors today derives from its organization founded on the assembly of sovereign nation-states. It will not be able to release itself from those limitations unless nations become able to think in terms that transcend national interests. I believe that efforts must be made on the global level to realize the creation of a system for promoting cooperative relations on global issues through the kind of voluntary restraint on sovereign rights being pursued in the European Union in environmental and other areas of policy.

Although the founding of the CSD has considerably ameliorated the problems of policy coordination, certainly there is an urgent need for an organization that can wield the strong leadership required to make final decisions and clarify the distribution of responsibility among different organizations with regard to global environmental problems. There ought to be an "Environment and Development Security Council," such as I have been advocating for some time, to serve as a forum for international decision-making regarding urgent problems of this kind.

Various groups have presented plans for the reform and reorganization of the United Nations, and many seek changes to a system that emphasizes a response to environmental issues. I believe that expert opinion should be widely sought and the options for the form and powers of the institution broadly studied in the process of determining the proper course for U.N. reform.

Another matter that should be studied is a framework for broad reflection of popular opinion in the changes made to the United Nations. Finding ways to take advantage of the constructive energies of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will not only help to solidify the directions of policy but contribute to the formation of the support base that is indispensable for implementation of policy.

Considering the relative diminishing status of the sovereign state touched on above, I am convinced that within the United Nations as well, its character as a federation of sovereign states will gradually fade, with the faces of individuals gradually taking precedence over the faces of states. In that process the network of NGOs will certainly grow stronger and larger.

If there is a broad support base on the popular level, I believe it will open the way for obtaining the financial resources needed to execute

The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility was set up in 1991 with the purpose of granting funds or extending low-interest loans to projects in developing countries that contribute to the protection of the earth's environment. The facility is run by the World Bank, United Nations Environmental Programme, and United Nations Development Programme. Unfortunately the Facility suffers from a very limited supply of funds, in many cases siphoned from other development assistance programs, so its funds do not necessarily add to the total amount of assistance countries receive.

The Global Forum

At the 1992 Earth Summit, it was agreed that non-governmental organizations would be permitted to participate from its preparatory phase, based on the UNCED (UN Conference on Environment and Development) formula. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the Global Forum, held in parallel with the summit, contributed greatly to wider international recognition of the role of NGOs. Ever since then, similar forums have been held in conjunction with major UN conferences as part of the effort to build new relationships for international cooperation.

policy, a matter which is now the greatest priority. At present, while it has become possible to procure funds for environmental protection through the Global Environment Facility, the available support remains small in scale, so it has yet to function as a full-fledged world system (see box page 20). Meanwhile, proposals have been advanced for securing working funds through environment taxes or fees for use of common international territories (such as for use of seaways and airspace). I believe the international groundwork will be laid for realistically considering such proposals as participation on the popular level expands.

I would therefore like to propose that an assembly along the lines of the Global Forum held in parallel with the Earth Summit five years ago be created to convene once a year (see box above). This forum could play a number of roles: as the "antennae of the people" channeling information from NGOs for the benefit of discussion at the regular and special sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, to pool voices from the grass roots, and to provide a certain overall direction to the outcome of discussions.

The Wave of Disarmament and Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

IN MY VOLUME OF *DIALOGUES* with founder of peace

studies, Dr. Johan Galtung, he proposed the founding of a United Nations People's Assembly (UNPA) as a second assembly to function in parallel with the current U.N. General Assembly. While it may take time to realize a people's assembly, I believe it will be meaningful to establish the regular functioning of a system like the above-mentioned Global Forum as an assembly that could bring to bear on decision-making in international society a certain amount of influence from the standpoint of the people.

This proposal should be considered not only in order to assure that the United Nations is permeated with the spirit, symbolized by the opening lines of its Charter, that each and every individual is an important actor in the global society, but in order to enhance the United Nations as an "assembly of humanity" in fact as well as in name.

All of these proposals will be difficult to realize, but I believe that, as we grapple with the problems and continue to search for the best possible measures for resolving the global environmental crisis, the new character of the United Nations that the times demand will gradually and naturally make itself manifest.

Now, let me go on to discuss two other themes for which solutions must be charted, alongside those for the global environment, in preparation for the twenty-first century: dis-

armament and the abolition of nuclear arms. The mood in support of disarmament and nuclear weapons abolition has improved since the end of the Cold War, and quite a number of efforts are being made in this direction throughout international society. In 1996, these efforts bore fruit in the realization of several landmark events.

In the field of disarmament, the Convention on Chemical Weapons (CCW), which had been signed in 1993, finally will go into effect this April. This convention is thorough enough to be considered a genuine "disarmament treaty" because it outlaws existing chemical weapons as well as the production of chemical weapons of any kind from now onward. It not only orders the abolition of all chemical weapons including those that are obsolete or abandoned in other countries' territory, but the demolition of facilities for the production of chemical weapons in order to assure the cessation of their manufacture.

The important aspect of this treaty is that it is binding on all signatory nations, thereby resolving the inequities that were an issue with regard to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Also, in order to prevent violations, the treaty approves a system for inspections of related industrial facilities as well as inspections without prior notice when requests



NGO Efforts Elicit ICJ Advisory Opinion

In May 1992, three non-governmental organizations, the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Weapons, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the International Peace Bureau, held a joint meeting, and launched a global movement calling on the International Court of Justice to consider the legality of the use and threat of nuclear weapons and issue its judgment. Many citizens and NGOs expressed their support for the movement, and the mounting international opinion that thus coalesced became the driving force behind the 1994 U.N. resolution requesting the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion on this issue. (Above) Two steers stand in their pen at the Mercury, Nevada, test site. Each steer has a plugged hole in its side to remove stomach contents for radiation tests.

are made. These features make it an extremely good model for the disarmament treaties to be drawn up in the future.

How effective such an epoch-making treaty will prove to be, however, depends on the attitude of the twenty countries that possess or are believed to possess chemical weapons. Particularly regarding the countries which hold most of the chemical weapons in the world but have yet to ratify the

treaty, international society must unite in urging them to sign the treaty as soon as possible.

I believe that the success of this treaty, with its highly reliable and broad-ranging verification systems, is an extremely important landmark in the movement toward disarmament of other kinds of weapons as well. As each signatory nation conscientiously performs its responsibilities under the treaty and trust is restored through the transparency

attained under its verification procedures, the number of signatory nations will increase until it becomes established as an effective international institution. If success can be achieved even in this single area of chemical weapons, I believe it will have a great impact on endeavors in other areas of disarmament where a consensus has been reached but little real progress made, such as in the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, whose effectiveness,

despite the fact that it was put into force in 1975, has been drastically lowered because it does not include verification or inspection clauses.

Another such example is the problem of the proposed treaty restricting the use of anti-personnel land mines, which saw some progress in 1996. In a review conference on the Convention on Conventional Weapons held last May, a new agreement was reached on the complete revision of the protocols included on the tightening of restrictions on anti-personnel land mines. However, a grace period of a maximum nine years before the restraints would come into effect was approved and, since the introduction of an inspection system was put off for future discussion, some have voiced fears that it may end up being no more than a "moral law" that carries no real clout.

In order to attain the goal of total abolition of anti-personnel mines being sought by the various U.N. agencies and by the NGOs, I propose that, apart from the CCW which requires agreement on a ban by all signatory nations, we should work toward a separate framework aimed at the enactment of a ban on anti-personnel land mines.

As indicated by the adoption of the first resolution seeking the formulation of a treaty completely banning land mines introduced in the United Nations General Assembly's First Committee in November 1996, a consensus in this direction is rapidly building, convincing me that it would not be impossible to create a framework for land mines similar to that of the Chemical Weapons Conventions. According to studies by the International Red Cross, some 800 lives are lost each month and countless people are gravely

injured by the 100,000,000 live land mines that remain strewn about different parts of the world.

The vast majority of the victims of land mines are civilians, especially children. The perils of undetonated land mines remain long after the horrors of war are over. I strongly urge that international society move as quickly as possible toward the total abolition of the land mines that imperil the lives and activities of innocent people every day.

International society, as we have seen, is very gradually and slowly moving in the direction of disarmament. Some important steps forward were made in 1996 in the area of nuclear weapons.

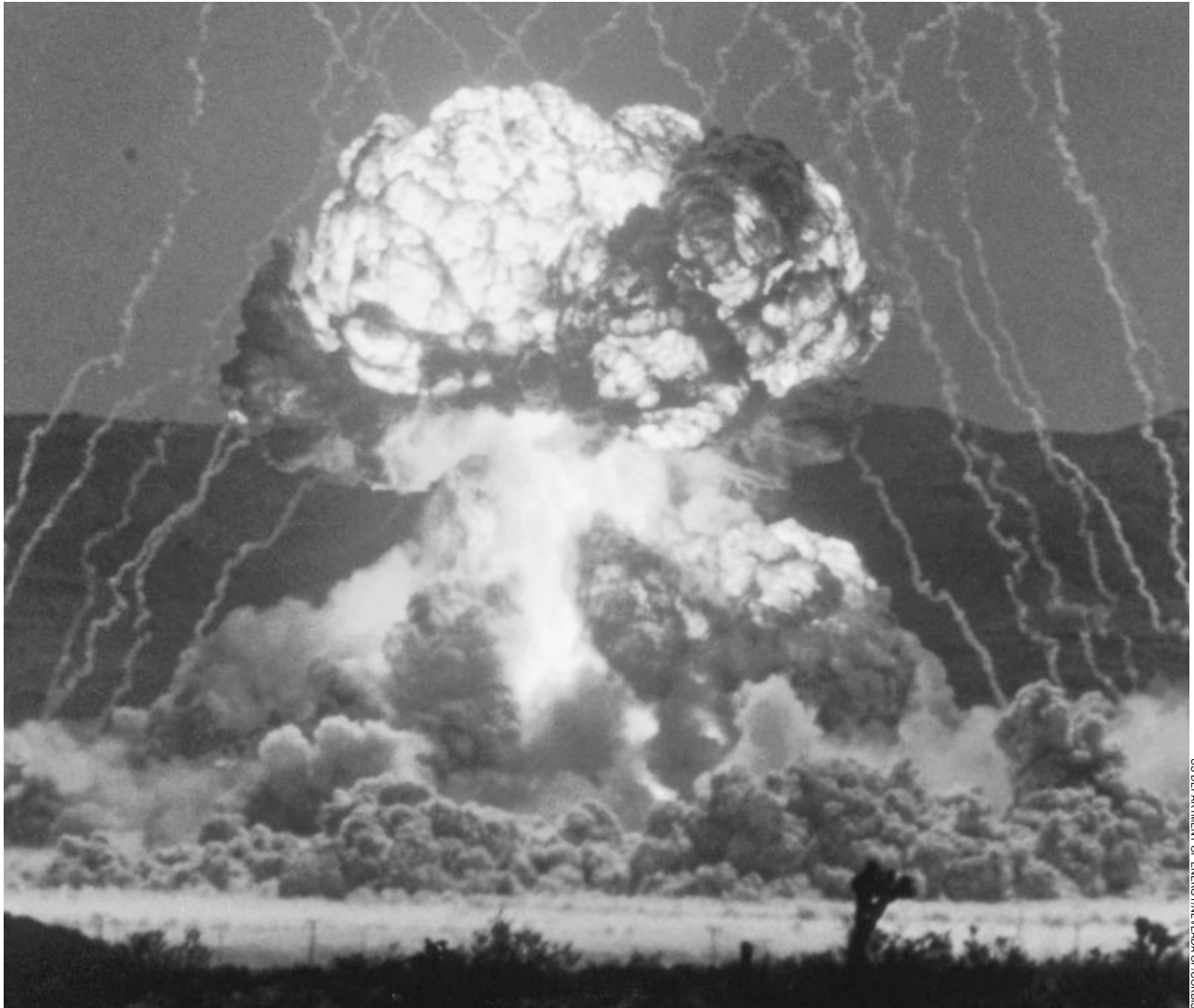
One of them was the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty banning tests and other detonations of nuclear weapons. Its adoption by an overwhelming majority in the U.N. General Assembly in September 1996 after an arduous process of deliberation has been criticized because it permits testing by computer simulation not accompanied by nuclear explosions, thereby allowing possessor countries to maintain and improve their nuclear weapons capabilities. But I believe it is still quite significant, as a clear indication that nuclear testing is banned by international law, compared with the complete lack of any kind of constraint that reigned before.

Nevertheless, no clear date has yet been set for the enactment of the CTBT. In order for it to go into effect, it is required that forty-four nations stipulated as possessing or suspected of possessing nuclear weapons ratify the treaty. These include a few countries that have yet to indicate they will sign, which means the treaty could hang in limbo for some time.

It is the common understanding in international society that signatories to a treaty should not engage in actions in violation of its intent or purposes (Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties) even before it goes into effect. I therefore believe that the CTBT, which has been signed by most of the countries, including the five major nuclear powers, already serves a substantial restraining role in international society.

In that sense, it is important to take further steps toward disarmament, building on the lessons learned by problems not overcome in the CTBT, particularly in consensus building toward a conscious commitment to disarmament among the nuclear nations. Ways must be found to overcome the matter of "quality," where the CTBT fell short, by setting firmer measures to put a stop to maintenance and improvement of nuclear arms capabilities of nuclear nations. In order to address the problem of "quantity," efforts have to be made to assure the actual reduction of the numbers of existing nuclear weapons. One focus of effort should be the early signing of the "Cutoff Treaty" that would prohibit the production of radioactive material which is used to manufacture nuclear weapons. Talks on this treaty are expected to be difficult, but because agreement is indispensable in order to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons that is the basic premise of nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-arms-possessing nations are duty-bound to work toward an early consensus.

Another area of effort is to create the environment for actual reduction of nuclear arms. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty negotiations



US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY/NEVEDA OPOCIBIS

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between the United States and Russia are bogged down by the latter's unwillingness to ratify START II. I urge the two countries to break through this prolonged stalemate in talks so that they can proceed to plans for carrying out the terms of START II, and immediately proceed with START III talks to lay the groundwork for the next stage of disarmament negotiations among all the nuclear powers—including the

United Kingdom, France and China.

Spreading Impact of International Court Opinion

EFFORTS HAVE BEEN GOING on for a long time among the non-nuclear nations to establish non-nuclear zones. In addition to the Tlatelolco Treaty in Latin America and the Rarotonga Treaty in the Southern Pacific region, the

Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty was signed in December 1995, and in April 1996 the Pelidandaba Treaty was signed in Africa. If the Antarctic Treaty is included, these treaties realize the establishment of nuclear-free areas stretching over the entire terrestrial area of the southern hemisphere and large portions of the southern part of the northern hemisphere.

As demonstrated by the docu-

ments adopted at the conference held for reexamination and extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 1995, global and regional peace and security can be strengthened through the establishment of non-nuclear zones, and I believe it is important to encourage this concept in other areas such as the Middle East and Northeast Asia in order to expand non-nuclear zones even further.

At the same time, in order to make effective the non-nuclear zones that have been set up, the guarantees and cooperation of the nuclear nations are indispensable. As with the establishment of a structure of cooperation by all the five major nuclear powers seen in the signing of a supplementary protocol to the Rarotonga Treaty in March last year by the United States, United Kingdom and France, it is hoped that the nuclear nations will also show readiness to pledge such cooperation for the other treaties as well.

I believe it also urgent to conclude treaties guaranteeing the non-nuclear nations that they will not be attacked with nuclear arms and prohibiting the preemptive use of nuclear arms. Given the conclusions of the NPT and CTBT, it is all the more important that the nuclear nations show their commitment by taking the initiative in furthering negotiations toward conclusion of such treaties. At the very least it will be a significant step toward eliminating the inequality between the nuclear haves and have-nots.

Indeed, the voices of those who seek a world without nuclear arms have risen to the point where the members of the nuclear club must listen. They can no longer afford to act only with their own interest in mind.

In July 1996, the International

Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its "advisory opinion" on the use of nuclear weapons, and it is now well known that the efforts of NGOs were instrumental in the adoption of the resolution passed in the December 1994 U.N. General Assembly, which sought this opinion. While the opinion avoided judgment regarding the use of nuclear arms for self-defense, its statement that "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law," is significant indeed. The ICJ opinion also stressed the justices' unanimous opinion that the nuclear nations are obligated to work conscientiously toward nuclear disarmament. It is notable that this point was made as an expression of opinion of the Court itself, not in response to a question from the General Assembly.

I believe that the vigorous debate around the world that unfolded concerning the illegality of nuclear weapons as a result of this statement is truly momentous. Even though, like the resolutions adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, the advisory opinion of the ICJ does not hold legal binding power, I believe it will have a strong moral and political impact in the creation of a consensus in international society aimed at the abolition of nuclear arms. Indeed, in the debate in the U.N. General Assembly concerning adoption of the CTBT, a number of countries cited the ICJ's advisory opinion, suggesting that it has contributed to a new rationale upon which to pursue the goal of disarmament. The resolution adopted in the U.N. General Assembly First Committee last November also made note of the ICJ

opinion, and called for the opening of negotiations for the early adoption of a total ban on weapons and providing for their elimination within the current year.

As these developments show, the world is steadily moving in the direction of a non-nuclear world. In order to strengthen the course of that trend I urgently call on people to discard the kind of thinking that calls the existence of nuclear arms a "necessary evil" for the sake of protecting the "national interest," and embrace the conviction that "the interests of humankind" take precedence over all, making use of nuclear weapons an "absolute evil," whatever the reason.

40th Anniversary of Toda Anti-nuclear Declaration

THIS YEAR, 1997, MARKS the fortieth year since Josei Toda made his landmark declaration denouncing the satanic nature of nuclear weapons and pronouncing them to be an "absolute evil."

In September 1957, rallying from the fatal illness he suffered, Toda summoned the strength left to him to appeal to the young. He challenged the mounting threat of nuclear arms that portended the advent of "the death of death," and issued his heroic cry for the right to existence for all people of the world. He said:

We, the citizens of the world, have an inviolable right to live. Anyone who tries to jeopardize this right is a devil incarnate, a fiend, a monster....

Even if a country should conquer the world through the use of nuclear weapons, the conquerors must be viewed as devils, as evil incarnate. I believe

that it is the mission of all Japanese youth to disseminate this idea throughout the globe.⁹

As is clear from the passage cited above, Toda's idea was an unconditional ban on the use of nuclear arms. In order to make his will reality, I have stressed the urgency of specific steps to be taken to achieve a treaty banning the development, possession and use of nuclear weapons. The declaration against nuclear arms he made—independently of all ideological or national interests and rising above all arguments based on power politics such as nuclear deterrence and limited nuclear war—shines with eternal radiance.

The declaration is imbued with his ardent wish to establish the right to live in peace as a fundamental right for every human being. He earnestly wished that people would not only be kept from the tragedies of nuclear destruction and human sacrifices but also would never again suffer from war.

Foresighted Call for Human Security

TODA'S DECLARATION, THE crystallization of his earnest wish to "eliminate all tragedy from the Earth," embodies a foresight that shares much with the central concepts of human security

increasingly being called for today. What I would like to stress here is that his declaration—as he expressed it, to "tear away the hidden talons"—was intended to urge those of us of the younger generations to wage an uncompromising fight with the evils part of human life, the invisible enemy responsible for the existence of nuclear arms.

The abolition of nuclear weapons is more than a question simply of their physical riddance. Even if all nuclear arsenals are removed, a serious question will remain as to how to deal with the knowledge of nuclear arms production that has been acquired by humankind. This is why I say that the only real solution to the issue of nuclear arms is to struggle incessantly against that "evil of life" that threatens the survival of humanity. And this is why Josei Toda entrusted younger generations with the task of disseminating the idea of the "dignity of all life" as the overarching ethos of our times.

Nichiren Daishonin, the thirteenth-century Buddhist sage whose teachings we at SGI follow, said, "Life is the most important of all our properties."¹⁰ This respect for life is the essential inspiration of the Toda declaration. Herein lies the reason we at SGI aspire for the inner revolution of all individuals—the human revolution—that

will establish the respect for all life as the basic norm of human society. Life is the world's supreme treasure. There is no value that is worth preserving at the sacrifice of life. The human revolution movement is the basis upon which SGI has held various exhibitions (such as "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World" and "War and Peace") designed to raise awareness of nuclear and other global issues, and through these activities we have worked to expand a network of solidarity among people worldwide. Our efforts are inspired by the conviction that we cannot sit by and overlook the crises occurring everywhere on the Earth.

The initiative in building a "world without nuclear arms" and a "world without war" lies in the hands of each and every individual. We have to embrace that conviction and be cognizant of our responsibility in that task.

Realistic measures for eliminating nuclear weapons are included in a very provocative report compiled in August 1996 by a group of specialists called the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (see box below). Based on plans of this kind, I believe we should move on to the next step, which is to mobilize global public opinion and pool the wisdom of people from around the

The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

The commission was set up in November 1995 at the initiative of Paul Keating, then prime minister of Australia. Made up of more than ten specialists, including Pugwash Conference chairman Joseph Rotblat and former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, it submitted to the United Nations in September 1996 a final report proposing realistic steps in three stages for building a world without nuclear arms, including a call on the five nuclear powers to issue a declaration pledging to abolish nuclear weapons.

This year, 1997, marks the fortieth year since Josei Toda (right) made his landmark declaration denouncing the satanic nature of nuclear weapons and pronouncing them to be an "absolute evil."

world in the endeavor to achieve consensus on more detailed procedures, as well as a specific timetable, for the eradication of nuclear weapons.

In February 1996, the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research was founded, an organization originating in Josei Toda's philosophy of peace. I am eager, knowing that this year, the fortieth anniversary of his nuclear disarmament declaration, to see the Toda Institute launch its research program with nuclear disarmament as its top priority.

Concerted efforts on the popular level should be encouraged to formulate and then implement constructive plans for a better world, alternatives that will reorient the world toward peace based on the interests of humanity. I believe that expanding such popular solidarity worldwide is the only feasible path toward constructing a world free from nuclear arms and the cataclysm of nuclear war.

In my January 26th peace proposal two years ago, I commented on the importance of strengthening and establishing an international law for peace as the correct course for international society toward the twenty-first century. I discussed the necessity of enlarging the international laws for peace by augmenting



SHIKHO PRESS

current international humanitarian laws and establishing a system that will have binding force. Toward that goal, I urged a close link between the development of international laws of peace and the United Nations in facilitating the laying down of rules for peaceful relationships among countries.

There are signs of that development recently, as symbolized by the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. These developments are the product of popular movements worldwide. I believe, therefore, that it is not

enough to set up international laws and systems based on government-level dialogue among countries. Individual commitment to building a new order for peace as propelled from the grass roots is indispensable to the establishment of genuine international laws of peace.

International laws have been effective only in settling problems ex post facto. Much, much more must be done, considering that the ultimate objective of international law is to achieve peace in its broadest sense. Moreover, such global issues as the environment and nuclear arms were not taken into consideration at the time of the founding of the United Nations, as



SEIKYO PRESS

SGI President Ikeda met with former president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters Austregésilo de Athayde in February 1993 in Rio de Janeiro. Dr. Athayde was one of the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a crystallization of the wish to not repeat the tragedies of World War II.

is clear from the U.N. Charter.

The concept of peace today is not limited to the state of no war, but is becoming more focused on "human security" in the broader sense. I would like to urge that aggressive efforts transcending the limitations of international society and institutionalizing peace as the foundation for the new millennium begin through initiatives at the grass roots.

An "Earth Charter" for the Third Millennium

ATASK I WOULD LIKE TO propose is a grass-roots endeavor that lays down a new set of principles, what can be called an "Earth Charter," that will provide a clear vision for the third millennium.

The Universal Declaration of

Human Rights is the crystallization of the wish to guarantee human existence for all people based on the resolve not to repeat the tragedies of World War II. Likewise, the Earth Charter should be a distillation of the spirit of coexistence and the resolve not to pass down the evils perpetrated by modern civilization to subsequent generations. Realization of such a charter will certainly involve many difficulties, but we have no choice but to break the path toward it by sharing responsibility for our common struggle against global crisis and by building trust through sustained dialogue.

The late Austregésilo de Athayde (former president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters), recalling his involvement in the work of formu-

lating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, said in his dialogue with me that the declaration, created after a process entailing much clash of doctrines, creeds, interests and ideologies, would survive forever as a milestone of hope along the arduous path of development of the human race.

He also said that economic and political ties were too fragile to unite people, and that there must be a kind of bond that links people together on a dimension that is noble enough, broad enough and strong enough to determine the fate of humanity.¹¹ The same kind of spirit, I believe, is required for the drafting of the Earth Charter.

I urge the establishment of such an Earth Charter with the support of people around the world as proof

that human beings possess the courage and wisdom as well as unshakable solidarity to determine our own destiny. I would like to propose that SGI, too, devote itself to that endeavor, centered around such organizations as the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century in the United States.

Opening of a New Century of Solidarity

THE FORCES OF DIVISIVENESS that tear at the human heart are the greatest source of the crises imperiling humanity and all life, whether it be the issue of Earth's environment or dilemmas of nuclear and conventional weapons of mass destruction.

Believing that divisiveness is inherently evil and unity is good, I have consistently argued that we can prevent the tragedies of human history from being repeated in the twenty-first century if we wield the power of good to allay divisive forces. This is my iron rule. I have expressed my belief in this rule in the dialogues I have engaged in and the friendships I have cultivated with many people around the world. I have sought therein a way to further the common struggle of humankind.

Encouraging solidarity is also the basic spirit that runs through the SGI Charter, which was inaugurated in the autumn of 1995 to mark the

twentieth anniversary of the founding of SGI. As discussed in detail in my January 26th peace proposal last year, the essence of Buddhism as expounded by Nichiren Daishonin is to build solidarity among human beings, to forge unity among humanity, so as to block out the evil forces of divisiveness.

Looking back over the course of history shows that people of good were always divided, and so their movements calling for social reform lacked effectiveness and often ended in failure. I want this unhappy recurrence in human history to cease. If we do not address this problem, people's feelings of helplessness and resignation will only grow and the chance for them to rally their courage and resources to rise together to overcome the crises will be lost forever.

Humankind is at a major turning point: Will it simply extend the existing course of history and wait for self-destruction? Or will it open up a new horizon and create a truly "global" and genuinely "human" civilization?

We must choose the latter. The crux of our challenge is whether to simply be a passenger on the ship of fate, leaving everything to others, or to take the helm and be responsible for that ship ourselves to search, with the help of all, for the most desirable course.

In a talk in February 1996, Club

of Rome president Dr. Ricardo Diez Hochleitner told me that the more serious the reality is, the more urgently people need hope. He also stressed the importance of efforts not only to find out where problems lie but to find out how to solve them. What he said following this is indelibly etched in my memory: "I believe the wisdom needed to solve all our problems comes from the people."

Indeed, every one of us should realize that we possess the nobility of spirit to be the main actor in changing the course of history, and with that conviction, to undertake the task we share of solving the global issues of our time.

We at SGI, firmly committed to that conviction, will further expand the network of solidarity based on renewed humanism through our Buddhist-oriented movement fostering peace, culture and education. Working together with people of good throughout the world, we will rally courage and pool our wisdom to overcome the crises of civilization, the greatest challenges humankind has ever faced, and open the door to a third millennium where the sanctity of every individual life shines with hope and glory. □

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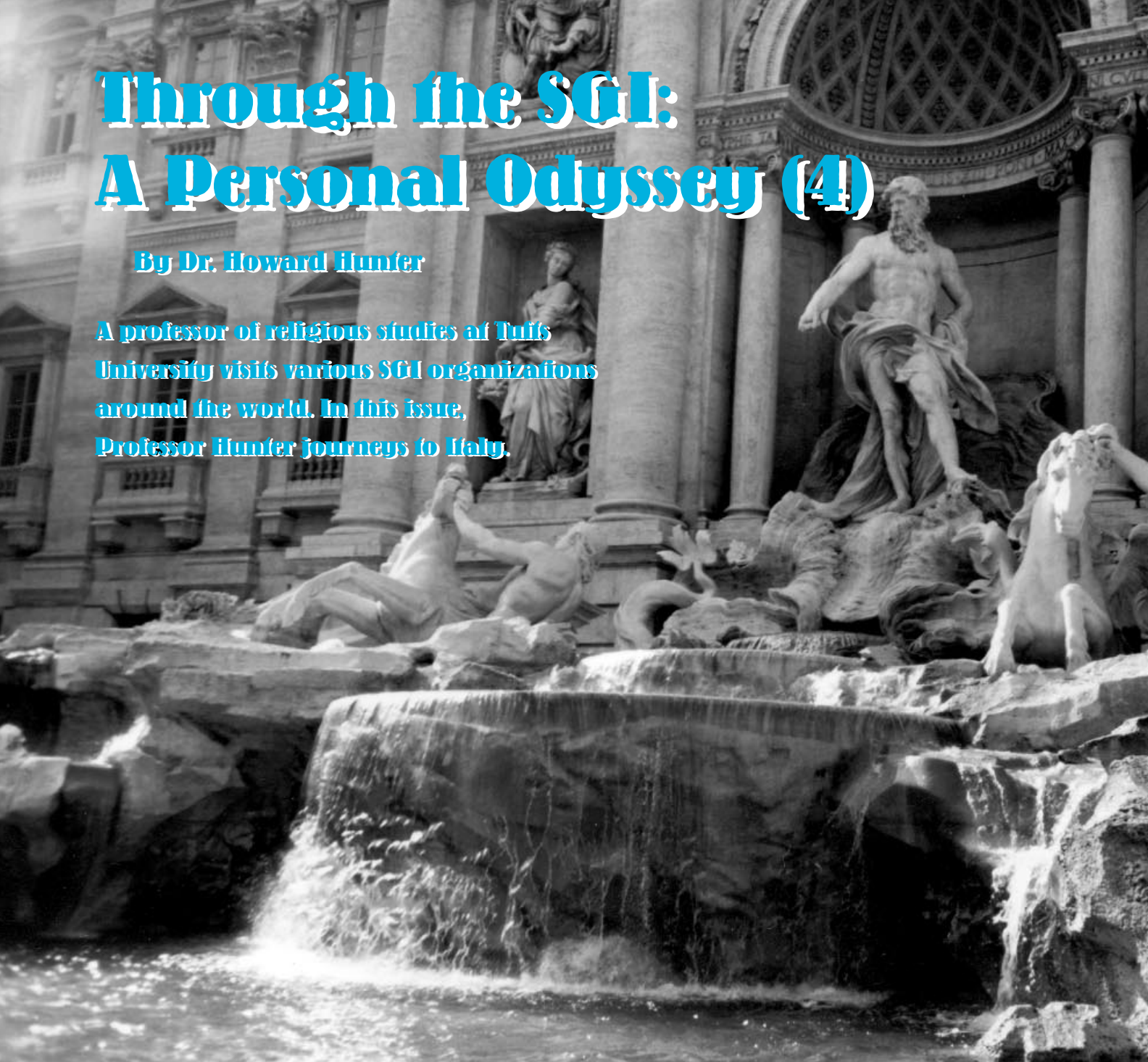
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Through the SGI: A Personal Odyssey (4)

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 Italy.



The Trevi fountain, located in the heart of Rome, was designed by Nicolo Salvi in 1732 and took 30 years to complete. It was featured in the movie *Three Coins in a Fountain*, which promised a return to Rome by those who tossed in a coin.

ALL roads lead to Rome." I could not help thinking of this familiar saying as I concluded my visits to SGI centers in India, the U.K., Mexico and Italy. I had developed a high regard for the fine SGI communities of New Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, London,

Mexico City, Turin and Florence, and members in Latina, Sienna and Bhubruneshwar. It was in my final Italian destination, Rome, that I found the quintessential expression of the multifaceted reality of present-day SGI outside of Japan.

What do I mean by this? I mean

that in Rome I experienced all the very positive aspects of other SGI groups I visited in Italy: a vibrant community of talented persons, a well-defined purpose, strong indigenous leadership and generous, committed and responsible members. Before discussing Rome,



GARY MURPHY

however, let me tell you about Turin and Florence.

My Italian visits began in the Piedmont area of northern Italy in the beautiful city of Turin where SGI leaders arranged a variety of meetings with members and non-members, including a distinguished Roman Catholic expert on the new religions of Italy. Professor Massimo Intravigne welcomed me to his home and to his library spe-

cializing in contemporary religions throughout the world. The professor informed me that his research on Soka Gakkai International in Italy led him to the conclusion that it was an organization well within the mainstream of Italian society. He views SGI-Italy as an organization appealing to a cross section of the Italian population and able to work effectively within Italian culture to present and to promulgate its message.

I found it especially interesting to learn from Professor Intravigne that there are 50,000 Buddhists in Italy, 17,000 of whom are members of SGI. I also thought it was a real testimony to the strength of SGI that a notable scholar was of the opinion that SGI has an excellent opportunity to contribute significantly to mainstream Italian life and thought.

ONE evening, members of SGI-Turin showed a video of a recent culture festival which highlighted the talents of SGI members in the area. Presented before standing-room only crowds, the entire program was prepared through the voluntary efforts of members. Not only were the audiences enthusiastic, but the members also found the experience very encouraging. The festival was a good example of the way in which SGI encourages artistic expression. In music, song, dance, dramatic and comic acts, stage and scenery design, as well as in many other ways, the members expressed an unmistakable joy. Several members told me that participation in such festivals was a rich and meaningful part of their membership in SGI. These festivals also bring SGI to the attention of the communities in which they are held.

My impression of Turin was so positive that I could not imagine it would be equaled elsewhere. I was wrong. In Florence, I again heard responses from members that similarly revealed the dedication they shared for the religion, philosophy and social activities of the SGI. Members from a wide-ranging spectrum of Italian society spoke to me individually and in groups about the ways in which their involvement with the SGI contributes to their well-being. In interviews which were sometimes intensely moving, I learned how the SGI had provided many members with practical methods to deal with the difficulties of their lives in positive and productive ways.

One member of a distinguished Florentine family described the changes in his relationship with his father over a period of years. He told how, when his father was facing a serious illness, and finally a terminal illness, the teachings of SGI Buddhism brought both him and his father to keep insights about life and their relationship that culminated in a profound sense of acceptance and reconciliation. The memory of the poignancy of this member's testimony will remain with me forever. Another member from a quite different part of Florentine society spoke simply of his problems with substance abuse and how he was able to overcome addiction through the practice of SGI's philosophy and his membership within its supportive community. Many others spoke of the central place that SGI-Florence holds in their lives. A significant asset to their programs is their headquarters in a villa that has been beautifully restored by SGI members.

While in Florence I was privileged to meet with two members of



The ancient Roman Forum, with a view of the Coliseum in the distance.

the faculty of the University of Florence whose expertise involves studying social groups within Italy. One of them had become familiar with SGI several years ago and is still quite interested in the organization as a subject of academic inquiry. Though reserved in expressing judgments, he noted that he had some difficulty in identifying the specifically religious aspects of SGI. He appeared to equate religious activities with the more devotional and contemplative practices with which he was familiar, and not with the activism and practical commitments that he viewed as distinguishing characteristics of SGI. One could scarcely come away from visits to SGI in Florence and nearby Sienna without being impressed by the considerable number of students among the SGI membership. Not only do they bring energy and vitality to the organization but they also give one reason to believe

that SGI is building a strong foundation for the future.

NEXT I traveled to Rome where I ended my visits to SGI-Italy on a truly high note. There, I again had the opportunity to have extensive interviews with a remarkably diverse range of individuals and groups. Meetings with the founders of SGI-Rome reminded me that within a short period of thirty years the teaching and practice of SGI have grown from the groundwork of two individuals, a capable Japanese man who arrived in Rome with no connections and a woman doctor who is greatly admired by members of SGI-Rome. Together these two dedicated individuals began the SGI organization in Rome and remain important figures in it.

It was in Rome that I had an experience I had nowhere else during my visits. Before beginning my

travels to Italy, I was asked whether I would be willing to meet with a newly formed special interest group of homosexual members within the larger organization. I replied that, of course, I would be happy to do so that I considered it a privilege to be able to discuss with these persons their deepest personal concerns. When I met with members of this group, I learned at once that several members had experienced rejection, alienation and severe self-doubt. Of course, not all of these members had experienced such a sense of despair but all of them had suffered to one degree or another. They uniformly testified that it was thanks to SGI and its teaching of self-acceptance, self-understanding and the unique worth of each individual that they had gained a positive view of their lives. They were able to put their concern for their sexuality in perspective and to avoid being pre-

occupied with it. It was genuinely moving to hear these testimonies. It was also heartening to hear very strong statements of support for these members throughout the general membership.

IN Rome, the leaders arranged for me to meet with university scholars who are familiar with new religions in Italy, especially SGI. Like Professor Intravigne, these scholars view SGI as integral to the larger Italian social order. Its values are compatible with the humanistic emphasis found in the teachings of major social institutions of Italy. A distinctive aspect of SGI Buddhism is its emphasis on locating the source of authority for one's life and actions within the divine that one has within, one's self. Throughout my visits to several countries, it was most interesting for me to ask members this question regarding the source of authority in their lives. To an almost totally unanimous degree, the answer was the same: "The source of my authority is the Buddha nature that is to be found within myself."

One of the distinctive characteristics of the young members I interviewed in Rome was the frequency with which they expressed a troubling sense of alienation. Some felt estranged from traditional religious institutions that too often left them dissatisfied with what they see as a disparity between the ideals and the actual practices of these institutions and their leaders. Some were alienated by the political system, which they felt to be too often corrupt and unresponsive to human needs. While such expressions are scarcely unique to Italian youth, the frequency of expression of such alienation was notable. This was especially so in



This fountain in the Piazza del Popolo (peoples' square) was the main entrance to medieval Rome and is now a popular gathering place for students.

relation to attitudes they held toward their fathers, whom they often described as excessively authoritarian and lacking in sensitive understanding of their problems. Also, nowhere else in any of my visits in India, England and Mexico did I hear so many references to problems young persons were having in the area of close personal and romantic relationships. Older patterns of behavior and standards of propriety seemed all but abandoned and the resulting lack of clearly stated and widely accepted values left many of these young people confused and perplexed.

My visits to SGI-Italy confirmed the impression I had gained throughout my visits to other countries: that SGI has a strong student membership; that SGI leadership and membership are indigenous to the local society, though Japanese founders and leaders are respected and appre-

ciated; that SGI groups have a distinct openness and engagement within their respective societies; and that there is a freedom of movement in and out of SGI organizations. There is an ongoing discussion in SGI communities about the most appropriate form the organization should take and the most effective methods of presenting SGI's philosophy and practice. My visit to Italy was a fitting climax to this initial series of visits to SGI globally. I have nothing but admiration for the SGI members I have met, and I am confident that SGI is a religious movement with a bright international future. □

Dr. Howard Hunter is chairman of the Department of Religion of Tufts University, U.S.A. He has written widely on the social role of religious belief.

Daisaku Ikeda's Recollections of World Figures

Oswaldo Pugliese — Venerable Maestro of Argentine Tango

MY fingers are as hard as nails. I'm just a carpenter, hammering away at the piano keys" — this is the spirit of the maestro of Argentine tango. I like people who are completely devoted to their chosen vocation. Oswaldo Pugliese is tango incarnate. In December of this year [1995], he will be ninety years old. His life has been inseparably intertwined with tango's century-old history.

To my question, "What is tango?" Mr. Pugliese replies: "It is the folk music of the Argentine people, born from their hearts. It was first heard in the lower class districts near Buenos Aires, and for a time it was regarded as indecent and disreputable. But the people took it into their hearts, and there it put down deep roots. Today, it is our national music, and it is loved equally by audiences in Argentina and abroad."

For a period after World War II, tango enjoyed a boom in Japan as well, and in Tokyo alone there were dozens of "tango coffee shops" — even in Kanda, the area where the

HUBERT STADLER/CORBIS



SGI President Ikeda meets with Argentine tango maestro Osvaldo Pugliese and his wife, Lidia, in Tokyo, December 1989.

old Soka Gakkai Headquarters was located. The annual Tango Concert Series, which began in 1970 under the sponsorship of the Min-On Concert Association, has been popular in Japan for nearly a quarter of a century now. Mr. Pugliese has played a major role in elevating tango to an international art form.

The famous tango rhythm that reaches into the very core of our beings pulses vibrantly in Mr. Pugliese's veins. He was born in downtown Buenos Aires in 1905, among factories and cheap apartment buildings where female workers stricken with tuberculosis and poor immigrant families lived packed together. But the people were

warm and affectionate, and gave free and unrestrained expression to the full gamut of human emotion — joy, anger, disappointment and sorrow.

HIS father, Adolfo, ran a bar, but he was also a flute player in a tango band. "My father took me everywhere with him, allowing me to absorb the diverse facets of the world of tango," recalls Mr. Pugliese. Tango — its poetry, its pathos, its longing for freedom, prayers for hope, joy in singing of sorrow; tango can express the laugh of a young maiden, the murmurs of men, the yearning for love and its warm comforts. Tango is wild, sophisticated, humorous,

stylish, angry, beautiful and fierce. Its rhythms pulsate with an inexpressible melancholy, a mournful yearning for something that cannot be put into words.

Behind his serious, scholarly demeanor, Mr. Pugliese is a great ocean in which all these tumultuous waves of human experience surge. He once told the members of his orchestra: "We are sailing on the vast ocean of tango. The important thing is to know the ocean currents that will lead us to the harbor of the people's hearts.... Tango must always be interpreted in terms of human emotions. It has a human voice. That is why we must bring forth the sound that

Accordianist and a guitarist entertain in the Plaza Dorvego in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

accurately expresses those emotions." This offers us a glimpse into the secret of Mr. Pugliese's long musical life. To always ask oneself: "What do people really want? What are they feeling in the depths of their hearts?" To humbly keep one's ears tuned to the times, listening until one can physically sense what people are feeling, and constantly striving to renew oneself until one becomes an instrument that plays in harmony with the voices of the people.

WE can't do the same thing we were doing ten years ago. We must always be thinking about tomorrow. We must always find something new," asserts Mr. Pugliese, who included a new composition even in his final concert tour before retiring from the stage [held in Japan and sponsored by the Min-On Concert Association in 1989]. Mr. Pugliese's musical career spanned seven decades, and his music has won the hearts of four generations of audiences — no small accomplishment in itself. The reason for this long-lived success had been his iron determination to stay in tune with the people's feelings, and his faith in the infinite creative richness of the people. "My greatest teacher has always been the people," he declares.

It is incorrect to divide artistic genres into elevated and vulgar arts. There are vulgar artists in the classical tradition, and extremely



HUBERT STADLER/CORBIS

sophisticated and accomplished artists working in popular genres. Mr. Pugliese began by studying classical music. "My mother always encouraged my efforts. When I was practicing the piano, she would often stand by the door watching me with warm approval. One day, she made the chance remark of how wonderful it would be if I could perform some day at the Teatro Colón." The Teatro Colón [in Buenos Aires, Argentina] is one of the three great opera houses of the world. It is a palace to classical music, where only

the finest artists in the world are invited to perform. "For us, poor as we were," says Mr. Pugliese, "to perform at the Teatro Colón seemed an improbable dream."

To support himself and his family, Mr. Pugliese switched from classical music to tango, and from the age of fifteen he began to earn his living as a professional musician. He started, he says, by playing the musical accompaniment to silent movies in theaters. "In those days, I would earn four pesos for playing all night in a cafe. The next

morning I always gave my earnings to my mother," he remembers. After a long apprenticeship, he finally formed a band of his own in 1939, when he was thirty-three. He and the other band members worked persistently, even stubbornly, to create their own sound, and were finally rewarded with explosive popularity. In the meantime, popular orchestras that had just contented themselves with following the trend of the moment were disbanding one after another.

Mr. Pugliese was known as a demon for rehearsal. When you joined his orchestra, colleagues would say, your whole life was spent rehearsing and performing. The Argentine composer once spent three days getting two bars of music to his satisfaction. He was always the first to the auditorium, the first to begin rehearsing. His perfect technique and enthusiastic performances made him the symbol of the world of the tango.

He has always been devoted to learning. He read *Das Kapital*, the epic work by Karl Marx, while working at a printers. He studied music theory with the same thoroughness and dedication. For his communist sympathies, he was imprisoned several times, but he remained undefeated. In 1968, he faced a crisis when the members of his orchestra, which he had nurtured warmly for so many years, left him to establish a new group just before the orchestra's thirtieth anniversary. Everyone thought that Mr. Pugliese's career had come to an end. But he did not let this setback deter him. Within six months, he had launched a new orchestra. Everyone applauded the undaunted strength of the venerable maestro.

In 1985, an unforgettable event in the history of tango took place.

Mr. Pugliese was invited to perform a tango recital at the Teatro Colón. Before the performance began, he was introduced to the audience in a poem:

A man of pure,
uncompromising melody,
A man of the slums and the
skyscrapers,
A man who wrote many of his
compositions behind steel
bars and under the cold gaze of
surveillance,
A man who brought the dawn
with his songs that
resound through our streets.

Now Pugliese will sit down at
this piano
At the request of the people.¹

THE applause was thunderous. Mr. Pugliese greeted the audience. He had only one thing to say at this glorious moment. Nothing else came to mind. "To my mother, who loved music more than anything, this Teatro Colón was heaven." The dream of sixty-five years before had come true. It was a brilliant triumph, the victory of a man who had made his life among the people.

Mr. Pugliese is without ego. Though he was made an honorary citizen of Buenos Aires (1986) and was awarded the Culture Award by the French government (1988), among many other honors, what really made him happy was that now the once-scorned tango was properly appreciated.

The Argentine composer is also well known for instituting a union policy for the payment of his orchestra members, including himself, by which all shared fairly in the earnings. Since his retirement, he has sold his personal possessions to create a "House of Tango,"

dedicated to preserving the history and tradition of Argentine tango and teaching and fostering a new generation of musicians and performers to ensure its future.

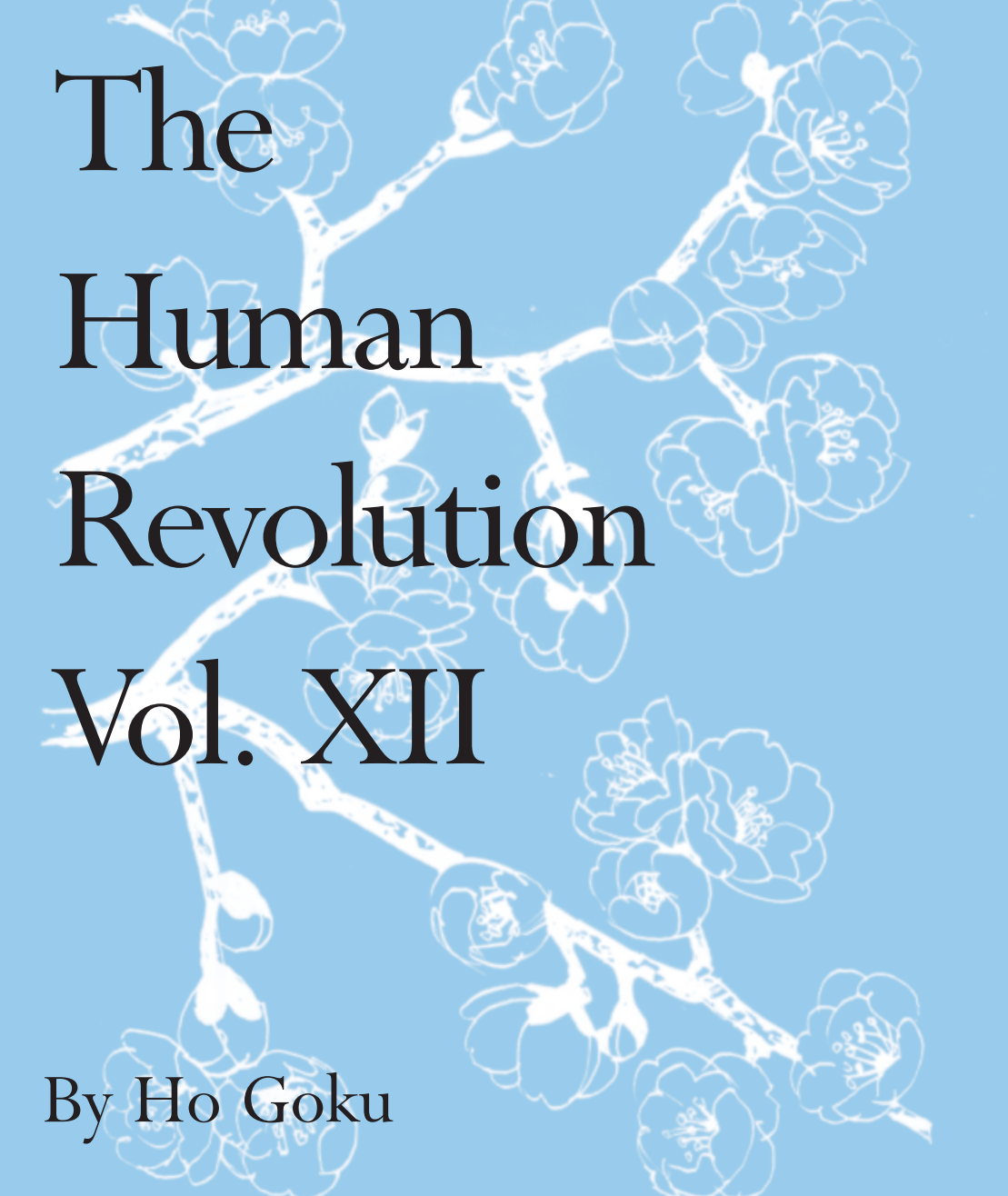
When I visited Buenos Aires in 1993, not only did Mr. Pugliese come with his wife, Lidia, to greet me at the airport, but he agreed to perform at the Eleventh SGI World Youth Peace Culture Festival [held in the Argentine capital on February 18, 1993]. This itself was a major news event in Argentina, but people were astonished when he brought his entire orchestra to rehearse two days before the festival.

"I don't like to sit at home. I want to be out among people, creating something together with them," he once said. His action was in perfect accord with this credo. When his piano was delivered, the then eighty-seven-year-old Mr. Pugliese revealed his amazing youthfulness by trying to push it into place himself!

On the day of the festival, he played the piece he had written for me as a token of his friendship with Japan, "Tokio Luminoso" (Shining Tokyo). As we all applauded his vigorous performance, I recalled what he had said to me in Tokyo: "I want to work with you, President Ikeda, for peace. So that we do not repeat the tragedies of the past. I will fight. To the very end, to the moment of my death, I will fight for victory."

Mr. Pugliese there on the stage was a living example of his message for all young people: "Study, inquire, seek hard. Learn what life is, what life should be — this is what you must pursue." □

1. Minoru Kizuki, *Latina* (a Japanese music magazine), October 1988.



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.

“Mr. Harayama, the Gakkai has made it this far through everyone’s united effort. But frankly speaking, I cannot see where to go from here....”
“I know, I feel the same,” admitted Harayama in frank simplicity.



New Dawn 8

THE Gakkai continued to press ahead in its broad-ranging propagation efforts: a great ship crossing a vast sea, breaking through surging swells and weathering storms without a president at its helm.

By December 1959, the Gakkai’s membership surpassed 1.3 million households. But General Director Takeo Konishi was still deeply concerned. In the eighteen months or so since Toda’s death, he had grown painfully aware of the limitations of trying to move ahead without the leadership of a president.

One day toward the year-end, Konishi shared his innermost feelings with Koichi Yamadaira, chief of the guidance department, in a conference room at the Gakkai Headquarters.

“Mr. Harayama, the Gakkai has made it this far through everyone’s united effort. But frankly speaking, I cannot see where to go from here....”

“I know, I feel the same,” admitted Harayama in frank simplicity. Working alongside Konishi, he, too, had come to harbor a kind of hopelessness about the future of a Gakkai with no president.

Konishi nodded when he heard Harayama’s response. Looking somewhat relieved, and began to speak his mind:

“An organization needs a solid central figure. Especially for a group devoted to kosen-rufu as the Gakkai is, a leader who is selflessly dedicated to spreading the Law is indispensable as a center of unity. Why was the Gakkai able to achieve such dynamic progress during President Toda’s time? There is only one reason: President Toda’s powerful inner determination. Mr. Toda was determined to accomplish a membership of 750,000 households even if he had to do it alone, and devoted his entire life to achieving kosen-rufu. Inspired by his determination and taking his guidance as

our source of energy, we fought and made tremendous progress, eventually achieving that 750,000 household goal.

“Everything depends on the leader. In no way can we expect kosen-rufu to advance if we place just anyone as the central figure. I feel that if we continue as we are, the members won’t be able to bring forth their true ability and potential.”

“Honestly speaking, I’ve been thinking the same thing,” Harayama concurred. “The Gakkai without a president is like a train without a locomotive.”

“That’s exactly right,” agreed Konishi. “Since President Toda died, it has been as if Mr. Yamamoto has been pushing the ‘train’ of the Soka Gakkai from behind. So far, I’ve simply been doing as Mr. Yamamoto has been telling me. You might say we’ve come this far because of that and due to the fact that we’ve been running on the residual energy from President Toda’s era.

None held greater hopes for a new president to lead the way in a new era than the youth division members. They were determined that Josei Toda's legacy of kosen-rufu never become an empty dream.



"But from here on, we have to have someone who can act as a new locomotive to pull the Gakkai forward. It was for this reason that President Toda trained Mr. Yamamoto for a period of ten years to be the leader who would carry on his work. Mr. Yamamoto is the only one who really knows what we need to do to accomplish kosen-rufu. I think it is just about time to ask him to become president."

"I've been thinking the same thing," said Harayama. "In fact, the time has already arrived. Why don't we of the board ask him?"

"The members are all sincerely looking forward to having a new president. No, more than just a president—they're looking for a mentor in faith to replace President Toda."

New Dawn 9

GENERAL Director Takeo Konishi, his arms folded in front of him, gazed thoughtfully at Koichi Harayama and said: "The question is when to ask. I personally feel it imperative to ask Mr.

Yamamoto to assume the presidency sometime next year. We'll have to exercise prudence, though, in how we go about this. It's an issue that should be handled with great care and discretion."

Harayama looked at Konishi and nodded, happy that his colleague had been thinking along the same lines.

With the start of 1960, which the Gakkai had designated the "Year of Advancement," the members' desire to see a new president gained further momentum.

None held greater hopes for a new president to lead the way in a new era than the youth division members. They were determined that Josei Toda's legacy of kosen-rufu never become an empty dream.

Toda had taught the youth that widely spreading the Daishonin's Buddhism meant building a society that respected and contributed to the welfare and happiness of human beings. Nevertheless, despite the Gakkai's dramatic surge in membership, the youth had no concrete vision of how to go about creating a new era grounded in

humanism, especially in the spheres of education and culture. Nor did they have any idea how best to proceed with expanding their movement to the rest of Asia and the world.

From time to time, the youth division leaders would ask General Director Konishi to share his vision for the development of kosen-rufu into the future, but Konishi always gave the same standard answer: "You'll have to ask General Administrator Yamamoto; he's the only one who can tell you that." It was an honest reply on his part, but very unsatisfying for the youth leaders. They longed for someone to head the Gakkai whom they could look to as a personal mentor—someone who could give clear answers to their questions and illuminate for them the course along which to advance, just as President Toda had done while he was alive.

More and more youth began to share the opinion that Shin'ichi should become president. They were hesitant to interfere in the leadership appointment process, especially

regarding the position of president, on whose shoulders would rest full responsibility for kosen-rufu. Yet whenever a tight-knit group of youth division leaders met, the topic of Shin'ichi becoming president would invariably arise.

Likewise, the board of directors, including Koichi Harayama and Hisao Seki, also began to discuss the issue seriously. It would soon be April 2, the second anniversary of Josei Toda's death—the occasion of the third memorial service honoring his passing.¹ Takeo Konishi wanted to see Shin'ichi's appointment as president formally decided by the board of directors immediately after the completion of the memorial service, and to have the presidential inauguration take place at the general meeting on May 3. If this were to happen, he would have to obtain Shin'ichi's acceptance before the anniversary arrived.

On the afternoon of March 30, Konishi and Shin'ichi met in a small conference room at the Gakkai Headquarters. Konishi's

expression was unusually tense.

"Mr. Yamamoto, today I have a very blunt request to make of you. Indeed, it is something that many of our fellow members have been thinking about."

New Dawn 10

TAKEO Konishi spoke with firm resolve: "In three days, we will be observing the third memorial of President Toda's death. I think the time is finally ripe. I would like to ask you now, Mr. Yamamoto, to take full-fledged leadership of our movement for kosen-rufu as president of the Soka Gakkai."

Shin'ichi Yamamoto gazed at Konishi in silence.

While trying to gauge Shin'ichi's reaction, Konishi continued: "The Gakkai can't go on indefinitely without a president. Being general director, I felt it unavoidable that I should assume central responsibility for running the Soka Gakkai until the third memorial service for President Toda had passed. But I've now

reached the limit of my capacity. The Gakkai will experience no fresh development if things continue as they are. Calls for you to assume the presidency have been growing louder throughout the organization. I would very much like to see you inaugurated as the new president at this year's spring general meeting."

Shin'ichi appreciated Konishi's sincere intent. He was well aware that calls from among the membership for a new president were intensifying every day. But he still thought the time was premature.

"I'm very sorry," Shin'ichi replied, "but I cannot accept the presidency. I am only 32 years old. That is far too young to be president. Mr. Toda himself did not become president until after the seventh memorial service for Mr. Makiguchi. So I'd like to ask that we continue as we are until at least after we observe President Toda's seventh memorial."

Konishi leaned forward, and said in all earnestness: "Mr. Yamamoto, the Gakkai has somehow managed to

Shin'ichi's refusal was polite but firm.... He felt as if Josei Toda and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, whose pictures hung on the wall of the conference room, were intently watching his exchange with Konishi.



A few days after Toda's third memorial service, directors Hisao Seki and Koichi Harayama called on Takeo Konishi at his home to advise the general director that Shin'ichi Yamamoto should be inaugurated as president at the upcoming spring general meeting.



develop this far, but the way things are now, something crucial is missing. There is no one for the members to rely and depend on in a real sense. The reality is that most harbor a sense of insecurity in their hearts, but they are valiantly struggling on with the belief that you, Mr. Yamamoto, will become president."

"I understand what you are saying," Shin'ichi responded. "But I, like yourself, am a defendant in the Osaka Incident trial. According to the lawyers, while you are almost certain to be found innocent, chances are very high that I will be found guilty. If I become president and a guilty verdict is handed down, people will perceive the Gakkai as an antisocial religious organization and this will greatly impede the progress of kosen-rufu. I'm sorry to be so selfish, but I would ask you to wait at least until I am exonerated."

Shin'ichi's refusal was polite but firm. Konishi's expression clouded with disappointment.

Shin'ichi was also concerned about his weak health, which could incapacitate him at any time. Should

he take leadership as president and collapse from illness while in office, it would be unfair to the members. He felt as if Josei Toda and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, whose pictures hung on the wall of the conference room, were intently watching his exchange with Konishi.

New Dawn 11

THE third memorial service for Josei Toda, marking the second anniversary of his death, was conducted against a backdrop of blossoming cherries on April 2, 1960. By that time, the Gakkai's membership was close to 1.4 million households.

While Toda's disciples offered prayers of appreciation for their departed mentor and silently promised to repay the profound debt they owed him, they also reflected with emotion on the progress they had made since his death with General Director Takeo Konishi taking the lead. They renewed their pledge to further develop the kosen-rufu movement, aiming toward the seventh memo-

rial ceremony of their mentor's passing as their next milestone. Nevertheless, they felt somewhat ill at ease at the prospect of moving ahead without the proper focus only a president could provide.

On the evening of April 7, a few days after Toda's third memorial service, directors Hisao Seki and Koichi Harayama called on Takeo Konishi at his home. They had come to advise the general director of their opinion—arrived at after giving careful thought to the Gakkai's future—that Shin'ichi Yamamoto should be inaugurated as president at the upcoming spring general meeting.

"So, you both feel the same as I do!" Konishi said. "Actually, sometime prior to the third memorial service, I discussed this very matter with Mr. Yamamoto. But he said he would like us to wait until after the seventh memorial ceremony. I was really disappointed. But now, hearing both of you express the same opinion, I am very encouraged. Let's discuss together what our next step should be." Konishi beamed with delight.

Seki then quickly added: "Everyone on the board of directors fundamentally agrees with the idea of Mr. Yamamoto becoming president. I think our problem now is how to make it actually happen." Then addressing Mr. Konishi, he said, "Why don't you start by talking with each member of the board to gain a consensus among all of the top leaders?"

"Yes, all right," Konishi responded. "I'll get to work on it first thing in the morning. Let's call the directors together for a meeting the day after tomorrow to decide on the issue of proposing a new president. After that, we can convene an official board meeting, have Mr. Yamamoto attend, and then have the board make a direct request to him to become president. How is that for a plan?" Konishi looked from Harayama to Seki.

"Very good," responded Harayama. "At any rate, time is of the essence. Still, I feel a little guilty about the board proceeding on this matter behind Mr. Yamamoto's back."

Konishi laughed and quickly put his fears to rest: "Nonsense! There's nothing to feel guilty about. Could anything be more right? As far as I'm concerned, it's the greatest good deed of my life!"

All three broke into laughter.

The next day, General Director Konishi met with each board member and discussed the matter of recommending Shin'ichi as president. All expressed their immediate and unreserved assent, as if it was a question they had been long awaiting. Some expressed their joy with great animation, while others did so quietly with tears. One director simply said with a look of excitement: "Is it really true? Thank you very much!"

Everyone was hoping and waiting for Shin'ichi to become president.

New Dawn 12

THE directors met on April 9. Late into the night, they discussed appointing Shin'ichi Yamamoto as the third president of the

Soka Gakkai, finally reaching a consensus that his inauguration should take place at the spring general meeting on May 3. Takeo Konishi phoned Shin'ichi at home and told him that because the entire board was considering appointing him as president, they were requesting his presence at a board of directors meeting on the 11th.

Shin'ichi had just returned that day from attending the wedding reception of Toda's son Kyoichi, and was feeling under the weather with a slight fever. Over the phone, Shin'ichi again politely declined Konishi's request. But Konishi told him that if he wished to express his opinion on the matter, the entire board would like to hear it from him firsthand; in any event, he should attend the next board meeting. This said, Konishi hung up the phone.

While serving under President Toda, Shin'ichi had become deeply and keenly aware of how awesome a responsibility the position of the Soka Gakkai president was and what an extremely important and

**In his fevered state,
Shin'ichi sat quietly
waging an internal,
solitary struggle.
His wife, Mineko,
silently looked on,
her own heart aching
to see her husband in
such torment.**



While serving under President Toda, Shin'ichi had become deeply and keenly aware of how awesome a responsibility the position of the Soka Gakkai president was and what an extremely important and profound mission it represented. That mission meant leading not only the members of the Gakkai but all humanity toward the destination of peace and happiness. It meant a duty to protect the members, to shield them from all criticism and attack, and to personally bear the full brunt of any such onslaughts.

profound mission it represented. That mission meant leading not only the members of the Gakkai but all humanity toward the destination of peace and happiness. It meant a duty to protect the members, to shield them from all criticism and attack, and to personally bear the full brunt of any such onslaughts. Moreover, the entire responsibility for achieving kosen-rufu, the mandate of the original Buddha, rested squarely on the Soka Gakkai president's shoulders. It was a sacred calling that accorded with the Buddha's will, a mission that could not be fathomed by intellect alone. Hence, the reason for Shin'ichi's cautious stance toward becoming president.

Shin'ichi was ready to give his very life to kosen-rufu. In fact, this had been the spirit with which he had come thus far. He was aware that he would eventually have to take leadership of the movement and bear full responsibility for the Soka Gakkai, and he knew that this, too, was the wish of his late mentor.

Nevertheless, he was hesitant about taking on the presidency at the young age of 32. Society, too, would view him as too young to be president. If they waited until after Toda's seventh memorial, he would still be only 36, not too late for him to be president. In addition, though

the charges were groundless, Shin'ichi worried about his being a defendant in the Osaka Incident trial. If the president of the Soka Gakkai were to be found guilty, then it would cause irreparable damage to this most precious organization.

Beyond that was the matter of his health, which was so poor that his survival thus far was something of a wonder, and which he had only exacerbated by driving himself relentlessly. So when he thought of taking on the arduous responsibility of president in his present state, he couldn't help feeling some hesitation.

If possible, Shin'ichi wanted to carry out his activities without overexerting himself, at least just until the observance of Toda's seventh memorial. Exhausted and worn-out as he was, he wondered if there might be someone else who could take over leadership of the Gakkai in his stead. Yet Shin'ichi realized only too well that there was no one else he could ask to shoulder such a responsibility. He agonized painfully over his dilemma, now without a mentor with whom to discuss his concerns.

In his fevered state, Shin'ichi sat quietly waging an internal, solitary struggle. His wife, Mineko, silently looked on, her own heart aching to see her husband in such torment.

New Dawn 13

AT the Soka Gakkai board meeting convened on April 11, the directors presented their unanimous, earnest request personally to Shin'ichi Yamamoto, asking him to accept the position of president. While he deeply understood their sincerity and enthusiasm, he demurred. But the directors were extremely determined, and showed no sign of backing down.

"You're the only one who can be president. We're doing a disservice to our members if we continue as we are. Please, Mr. Yamamoto." They all tried their best to persuade him.

But Shin'ichi would not concede to their request nor would the directors withdraw it. Shin'ichi even felt guilty for insisting so strongly on having his way, wondering if perhaps he didn't sound selfish. Finally, being left no alternative, he opted to end the momentary stalemate, saying, "It's a matter of grave importance. Please allow me one night to think it over."

That evening, Shin'ichi gave the matter a great deal of thought, but his wish to postpone becoming president until after Toda's seventh memorial remained unchanged.

When the time came, he would rise to the challenge. But if he was

At the Soka Gakkai board meeting convened on April 11, the directors presented their unanimous, earnest request personally to Shin'ichi Yamamoto, asking him to accept the position of president. While he deeply understood their sincerity and enthusiasm, he demurred.



to adequately fulfill the immense responsibility of president, he would need some time now to ready himself.

The next day, May 12, Shin'ichi gave his answer to directors Hisao Seki and Koichi Harayama, forthrightly sharing with them his feelings on the matter and again declining their request. But neither Seki nor Harayama accepted his response. They adamantly asserted again that prospects for further development in the Gakkai's movement for kosen-rufu were dim under the present circumstances.

Still Shin'ichi would not be dissuaded, so Seki finally said, "All right. I will communicate your response to General Director Konishi. But please be aware that no one will accept your decision."

Another board meeting was convened that day. As Seki had predicted, when told that Shin'ichi had again declined the presidency, none of the directors were happy.

Katsu Kiyohara strenuously implored them all, "We must not give up now! We've no choice but

to summon even greater resolve and insist even more strongly that he accept the presidency."

Harayama looked at the assembled directors and said, "I agree. The reason that Mr. Yamamoto hasn't accepted the presidency is that we haven't sufficiently communicated to him how serious and earnest we are that he do so. If we make a truly heartfelt and impassioned plea, he'll surely accept the presidency."

By mutual agreement, the directors decided to ask Shin'ichi again.

On the 13th, the following day, General Director Takeo Konishi and Director Harayama went to see Shin'ichi on behalf of the board. They came with an intractable resolve: No matter what it took, they would obtain Shin'ichi's consent.

"Sensei, we will not go home until we have gained your agreement..." Konishi then began to earnestly recount how much everyone was hoping for Shin'ichi to become president.

Their appeal lasted some four-and-a-half hours, and though

Shin'ichi keenly understood the board of directors' frustration, he still couldn't accede to their request. But given their persistent and tenacious entreaties, he felt he had no choice but to tell them, "In that case, please allow me another night to think it over."

Illustrations by Teikichi Miyoshi

(To be continued)

1. According to Japanese tradition, the first memorial service is held immediately after a person's death, i.e., the funeral memorial service, with the second memorial service held upon the first anniversary of that occasion, and so on.



Sandra Eliot: Art Is a Living Thing

Philadelphia Artist

Photographs by Giancarlo Luiso

“The creative process lies not in imitating, but in paralleling nature—translating the impulse received from nature into the medium of expression, thus vitalizing this medium. The picture should be alive, the statue should be alive and every work of art should be alive. Every work of art is the product of the artist’s power for conscious feeling, and of his sensitivity to life-in-nature and life within the limits of his medium.”

—Hans Hoffman, from “Search for the Real and Other Essays”

MY intention is always to create a work that is alive so that every time someone encounters it there is something new gained; a new way of seeing is discovered. As

Buddhists we can readily understand this idea of art as a living thing because we realize that life permeates the universe and everything in it.

From the beginning, my life has

been a journey with a crayon or paint brush in my hand. My memories of school days center on my being the class artist. My childhood summers were spent absorbed in



Unified Movements, 1997,
bronze, wood, 10 x 9 x 9 in.



Figure, 1991,
bronze, 14 x 7 x 4 in.



Expansion Spiral, 1997,
bronze, wood, 17 x 10 x 5 in.

Sandra Eliot with one of her sculptures titled *Winged*, 1996, wood, stone and flax paper, 29 x 30 x 8 in.

observing nature's "aliveness." This indirectly was the beginning of my lifelong connection to nature and my reflection of that spirit in the art medium. It was in high school summer art classes that I really started to express myself on canvas and paper.

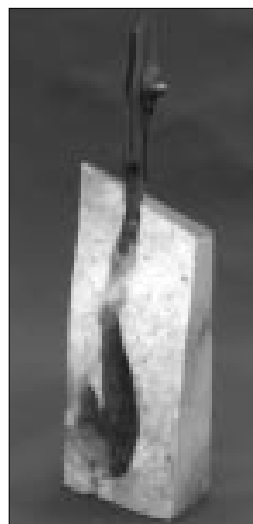
LANDSCAPES were now "alive" both in my heart and on my canvas. In college there was no teacher who had an impact on me; it was a time to be absorbed in life-drawing, art history and learning how to teach art. My seven years of teaching high school art was a learning experience. I was a very demanding teacher, always expecting the students to do their best. My responsibility made me equally demanding of myself so I was always learning more art history, techniques and mediums and then teaching them. I know my students appreciated it because many times I have had experiences of a student walking up to me a few years later and saying something like, "You really taught me to draw."

However, I was creating through my students' excellent work and producing very little myself. After seven years, it was not enough for me. I left teaching and began to paint the landscape and people. Soon I began a period of travel,



(right),
Contained and Emerging, 1997,
painted wood,
20 x 6 x 3.5 in

(far right),
Persistence of Joy, 1997,
painted wood,
24 x 10 x 10 in.





Occhi's House Valle Italy, 1991,
oil on canvas, 26 x 34 in.

which opened new lands and sights to me, with my sketchbook as constant diary companion. While living in Paris for about three years, I had a solo show and participated in six or seven group shows, such as the "Salon d'Automne" and the "Salon de Mai." There were also exhibits in Sydney, London, Zurich and New York where I showed and sold work. I also was able to study viscosity printing and etching plates with Sir Stanley William Hayler, founder of the internationally known Atelier 17. He taught art as a way to explore and learn about the world, saying: "Together with disciplines such as physics or mathematics, as with music or poetry, art is an attempt to extend and deepen our knowledge of life and our relations with our world. Furthermore, it is a way of seeking means of transmitting and sharing such experiences with others."

In 1979, while living in Paris, I was fortunately introduced to Buddhism when I visited Anne Sanders in London. In sixteen years of practice, my life has been a very exciting learning experience. I am very grateful to be a part of our

movement for peace and culture. My practice has helped me to focus on my work and to persevere no matter how many discouraging things happen.

PRESIDENT Ikeda's guidance has kept me encouraged and brought about a change in my attitude toward work when he said: "There are times when you must put forth tens of times the effort of those around you. If you lose the spirit of self-discipline, you will fall into a cycle of complaint, failing to produce anything of value." When I reach a deadlock, I reread his guidance: "When you encounter a wall you should tell yourselves, 'Since there is a wall here, a wide open expanse must lie on the other side.' "Rather than becoming discouraged, know that encountering a wall is proof of the progress you have made so far."

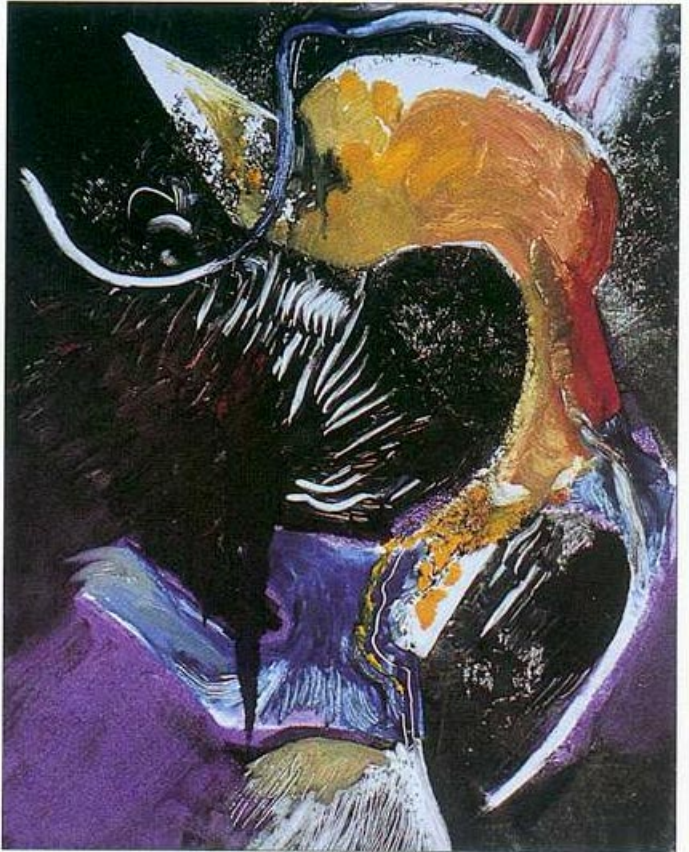
Advancing in my art's expressiveness is of prime importance. The abstract qualities in any art work are what make it strong and have emotional impact. The combination of elements such as line,

color and contrast and the balance and harmony of these elements operating together are what makes it work whether it is a realistic or non-objective painting.

I am still working from nature when I create an abstract painting. It is more like poetry or music in that it invents something new and open, permitting the viewer to bring in his or her own experience. I may start with lines based on what I see now or on observations remembered or from my subconscious. After that, the lines on the paper take on their own life and I can react to that as if having a dialogue. The work progresses and changes—and may have many layers of paint or other materials that give it a richness or surface, color and image. This richness and depth parallel that which exists in nature. It is a great feeling of accomplishment for me when I create a work that expresses some unique dimension of nature, or I share my perceptions with other people as an artist, or as a teacher, and they gain some insight about the world. □



Delicate Movements, 1996, monprint, 6 x 8 in.



Feu Follet, 1996, monprint, 14 x 11 in.



Oriental Carpet, 1995,
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 in.



Winter, 1996,
monoprint, 9 x 6 in.
by Sandra Eliot

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An abstract painting with vibrant colors and expressive brushstrokes. The composition is dominated by warm tones of red, orange, and yellow, contrasted with cooler tones of blue and purple. The brushwork is thick and textured, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is one of intense energy and emotional resonance.

LIVING BUDDHISM

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SGI President's 1997 Peace Proposal • A Personal Odyssey (4)

April 1997 • Soka Gakkai International-USA

Italy Culture Center



THE SGI-Italy Culture Center in Florence, which was acquired in 1986, opened officially six years later after repairs to the building and grounds were made by local SGI members. The area where the center is located was once owned by the Medici family, bankers, merchants and rulers of Florence and Tuscany in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who are said to have been the greatest patrons of the Italian Renaissance.

A visit to Italy in 1981 by SGI President

Ikeda laid the foundation for a flourishing organization: In 1995, SGI-Italy held its first joint autumn training course for members in the three southern provinces of Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria. The youth division also sponsored an open lecture series under the theme "A Solidarity of World Citizens" and invited lecturers spoke on human rights, education and peace. Rome and Milan hosted the exhibition "Toward the Century of Humanity—Human Rights in Today's World."