

LIVING BUDDHISM

June • 1997
Vol. 1 • No. 6

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 Daishonin's Buddhism.



2 From Our Readers

4 Publisher's Commentary

6 Perspective—Making Soka Gakkai Truly International

20 Topics for Discussion—Encountering Obstacles and Persecution

22 Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra (19): A Discussion on Religion in the Twenty-first Century

36 Daisaku Ikeda's Recollections of World Figures: Dr. B.N. Pande—An Indomitable Champion of Human Rights

40 The Human Revolution, Vol. XII—Final Installment

46 Expressions: Tary Socha



On The Cover: *Reef Dancers*, ©1995, mixed media on paper, 30 x 22 in. by Tary Socha.

LIVING BUDDHISM (USPS 385-750) (ISSN: 1093-5169)

Published monthly by SGI-USA Publications, 525 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA, 90401. Periodicals postage paid at Santa Monica, CA, 90401 and additional mailing offices. Postmaster—send address changes and returns to SGI-USA Subscriptions, P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA, 90401-1427. Copyright© 1997 SGI-USA. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rate: \$50.00 per year, \$90.00 for two years, \$125.00 for three years.

LIVING BUDDHISM

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Publisher: Fred M. Zaitso
Executive Editor: Ted Morino

Managing Editor: Margie Hall
Asst. Managing Editor: Dave Baldschun
Art Director: Gary Murie
Contributing Translators: Jeff Kriger,
Shinsuke Yatomi
Volunteers: Tobie Marsh, Tesfaye Abagaz,
Marianne Winfield, Alice Ross, Kitty Scalzo,
Lisa Chune

BUREAU CHIEFS:

Atlanta: Sam Harris
Boston: Anne Hudson, Beth Zimmerman
Chicago: Bill Endsley
Florida: Terry Ellis
Hawaii: Joanne Tachibana
Los Angeles: Patti Brundige, Kathleen
Slattery, Laura Aved
Midwest: Jim Celer
New York: Nikki Amdur, Brigid Witkowski,
Steve Piontek, Leslie Wines, Paul Grossman
Philadelphia: Claude Lomden
Rocky Mountain: Rodney Richards
San Diego: MJ Frazier
San Francisco: Ron Baird
Seattle: Bill Lawrence
Texas: Nellda Gallagher

DOMESTIC SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES:

\$50 per year, \$90 for two, \$125 for three
Subscriptions Department: (800) 835-4558
Subscriptions: SGI SUBS@aol.com

INTERNATIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Canada, Mexico & Caribbean: U.S. \$65 per year
Latin America: U.S. \$75 per year
Europe and Africa: U.S. \$83 per year
Asia, Oceania and India: U.S. \$90 per year
Send money order in U.S. funds to:
525 Wilshire Blvd. Santa Monica, CA 90401

WRITTEN/ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS:

Send all written, photographic or fine art submissions to your local Living Buddhism Bureau Chief or to the above address or e-mail:
LivingB1@aol.com

Contributors assume liability for all copyrighted material. All written submissions become property of SGI-USA.



FROM OUR READERS

Due to the volume of letters we receive, not all can be printed, and all letters are subject to condensation. Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the SGI-USA or *Living Buddhism*. 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

Cure for Racial Disharmony

I WANT to express my very great appreciation to Darlene Oliver for her feature article in the February issue, "A Cure for Racial Disharmony in Our Society." As she so cogently and objectively expresses, this Buddhism stirs and inspires all of us to value our lives profoundly, stepping away from the anger and superficiality of discord in our society. By bringing together people deeply dedicated to treating ourselves and all others as treasure towers, we are changing our world.

JANE ROBINSON
Oakland, Calif.

I TAKE exception to Darlene Oliver's speech on racism printed in the February *Living Buddhism*. Ms. Oliver's main premise is that "the suffering among the races is caused by their inability to perceive the...human potential that exists in their lives and the lives of others." Earlier she states that the focus on racism is limited because it addresses external factors instead of looking internally. "The cause of the emotional suffering and insecurities within the African American community," she says, "is the inability to perceive true nature or worth of their existence."

Ms. Oliver's analysis is far too simplistic and lacks historical perspective. Personal prejudice and racial "insecurities" in America can only be fully understood in the context of deliberate, systematized, legitimized and institutionalized racism. In 1967, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton wrote in their book, *Black Power*, "Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two closely related forms, individual whites acting against individual blacks and acts by the total white community against the black community.... The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society."

The African American quest historically has been to try to lift off the "forces" of law, politics, ideology, economics and social custom that have tried to keep "Negroes in their place." Ms. Oliver's focus on racial "securities" brings to mind the old quip about somebody who is being chased is paranoid.

In 1966, Thomas Pettigrew said, "I think one of the greatest fallacies we have had in the field of race relations for many decades has been to worry about attitudes rather than conditions."

Martin Luther King said, "Morals cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated.... We must depend on religion and education to alter the

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>

errors of the heart; but meanwhile it is an immoral act to compel a man to accept injustice until another man's heart is set straight."

I have no doubt that a strong Buddhist practice and consequent "human revolution" can set a person's heart straight. However, it is also in the Buddhist tradition to recognize when laws and authority are unjust and speak up. This is the tradition of Nichiren Daishonin as he submitted his treatise "On Securing the Peace of the Land through the Propagation of True Buddhism," to the government and went toe-to-toe with corrupt priests. This is the tradition of presidents Makiguchi, Toda and Ikeda as they resisted government pressure and went to jail to defend their beliefs.

Understanding race relations in America must be predicated on the understanding that racism is not an illusion. It is real and contemporary. The battle today, as in the past, is to speak out against punitive, one-sided public policy, unfair laws and discriminatory economic practices. The ultimate solution to racism in America is not simply whether blacks and whites recognize their own and each other's humanity. Rather, having done that, whether each will have the courage to reject a system of privilege and make justice a practical reality for all.

BONNIE BOSWELL HAMILTON
Los Angeles

On The Confederate Flag

I AM writing in response to Mr. Jeffrey L. Towery's letter to you titled "Confederate Flag." I must confess that upon reading it I was incensed.

The Confederate flag is a symbol of

the Confederacy, namely the Confederate States of America (1861–65), the government established by the southern states of the U.S. after their secession from the Union. When President Lincoln was elected (November 1860), seven states—South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Texas—seceded. A provisional government was set up at Montgomery, Alabama, and a constitution was drafted; it resembled the U.S. Constitution but had provisions for states' rights and slavery.

After the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, four more states—Arkansas (my birthplace), North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee—joined. Richmond, Virginia became the capital, and Jefferson Davis and A.H. Stephens were elected president and vice president.

The story of the Confederacy is the story of the loss of the Civil War and of the callousness of those who were for States' rights (a doctrine based on the 10th Amendment to the Constitution, which states: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people). Proslavery states used states' rights to justify secession. Why? Because they wanted to continue to perpetuate the lucrative business of selling human beings into slavery.

Because I studied American history in school and did much reading on my own, I am aware that the Confederate flag signifies a consciousness held by people who would persist in keeping my ancestors in bondage. I cannot in good conscience find anything laudable about it.

Let us make no mistake: the flag of the Confederacy was never intended to

honor, represent or symbolize the equality of all human beings in America.

I would appreciate not having to read such disingenuous rubbish in *Living Buddhism* ever again.

JAMES TRAMBLE
Brooklyn, New York

SYMBOLS can be misused. The Confederate flag should be unfurled from Southern statehouses, buried with the KKK, and eliminated from the USA forever as definitive evidence that racial division is behind us. Unfortunately, it continues to animate a strange sentimentality as the letter by Jeffrey Towery demonstrated (April 1997 issue).

Towery painted the Confederate flag as a harmless, even noble symbol of the fighting and dying of "loyal" Civil War soldiers. He clearly fails to grasp the division, hatred, violence and evil it represented in its conception, sustained throughout its history and perpetuates today. The Confederacy fought to defend slavery as a way of life on the American continent. Its soldiers died for a vision of life that prolonged injustice for millions of black people, caused the deaths of thousands of soldiers and led to the assassination of a president.

It would have been best not to publish the letter at all. Like most African Americans, I fight racism daily and resent having such ideas and images thrown at me. I will continue to receive the publication in hope that the principles of a 700-year-old movement might hold more wisdom than Mr. Towery's confusion and your misguided action could negate.

PAMELA SPRATLEN
Paris, France

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.

STANDING ALONE— BUT NOT IN ISOLATION

NICHIREN Daishonin states in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” that “the voice does the work of the Buddha” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 708). Nichiren Daishonin set the example. Of course we’ve never heard him speak, but the manner in which he wrote, in other words, how he used language, provides some insight. I continue to be impressed with the care with which he chose each word he wrote. And the fact that he was able to encourage and inspire such a variety of recipients with his correspondence illustrates the thoughtfulness with which he crafted each letter and treatise. Using the “voice of the Buddha,” he clearly put his heart and soul into what he wrote. He embraced men, women, government officials, the wealthy, the poor, the educated and the commoner alike with his words.

How we employ the “voice of the Buddha,” that is, how we use language as we tend to our daily affairs is vitally important. And given that what we say can have such an effect on another person’s life, the ideas and expressions we use should convey our thoughtfulness and conviction. It is one thing to parrot what we’ve heard others say. It is another matter entirely to understand what we are saying. How many expressions have we used over the years that seem to slip off our tongue automatically, from force of habit?

One expression that comes to mind is the “stand-alone spirit.” It’s a phrase we’ve all heard hundreds of times, but what really does it mean? On one level it can mean to depend on

no one but ourselves. But how do we strike a balance between standing alone and standing apart? To stand alone does not mean to stand in isolation. It means to take full responsibility for our actions. Misunderstanding that point alone can be the difference between being curious about life or falling into a state of self-satisfaction; between being open or being closed.

Inherent in having a stand-alone spirit then is the desire to learn, to seek out new knowledge about the intricacies of life from any source. As Nichiren Daishonin states in “The Gift of Rice”: “To have a profound knowledge of this world is itself Buddhism. No affairs of life or work are in any way different from the ultimate reality” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 269).

WHEN you consider the classic literature, the many novels, the number of scholarly works available to us, not to mention the journals on every subject imaginable, there is certainly no shortage of material to choose from. We just have to seek it out. If we are to change our environment, we must understand it from as broad a perspective as we can. In other words, curiosity is an aspect of a stand-alone spirit.

I attended the 10th Headquarters Leaders Meeting on April 21 in Tokyo where President Ikeda spoke about the military regime that was installed in Brazil after a coup d’état in 1964. Two years later in 1966, he visited Brazil. But the climate was so oppressive he had to cut his trip

short and it would be another eighteen years before he could secure a visa to visit Brazil again. During those years, one woman, Sylvia Saito, exercised her stand-alone spirit. She decided she wouldn't accept such an untenable situation. Of her own volition, she set out to chant daimoku relentlessly to turn things around. She didn't boast about her campaign or coerce others to join her. She simply took it upon herself to pray for the political situation to change.

FINALLY, in February 1984, President Ikeda returned to Brazil to an overwhelming reception. And again, in 1993 he returned and met with Mrs. Saito and her husband at the Nature and Culture Center of Brazil where he praised her sincere endeavors. It was soon after that she passed away on April 28. More than 5,000 people attended her funeral, including many prominent members of the government and Brazilian society.

Today, a park and a street have been named after the first Soka Gakkai president, Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi, and another park to be named after the second president, Josei Toda, is in the planning stages.

No one told Mrs. Saito to do what she did. Her actions were propelled by her single-minded determination to see kosen-rufu flourish in her country and relieve the people's suffering of living under a military dictatorship. President Ikeda said that her daimoku was the driving force that created the current growth of Brazilian kosen-rufu.

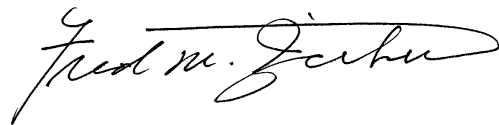
In his 1997 peace proposal, President Ikeda says:

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. (April 1977 *Living Buddhism*, p. 29)

Because of these mostly unseen efforts of SGI members throughout the world, the foundation of kosen-rufu has been laid. Just as the members in Brazil experienced, obstacles of all kinds may rise to hinder our efforts as we greet a new century. Now is the time to cultivate the stand-alone spirit—to confidently employ the wisdom, compassion and courage innate in our Buddhahood to lead brilliant daily lives and build an amazing future. At the conclusion of his peace proposal, President Ikeda declares:

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. (Ibid., p. 29)

It is up to our own sense of mission whether we are passengers on our own ship of fate or we take the helm as one woman "standing alone" in Brazil so eloquently demonstrated.

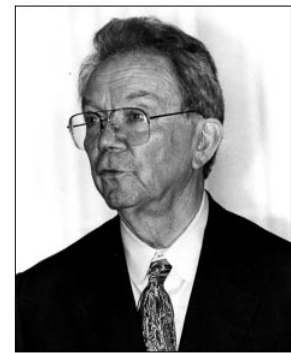


Fred M. Zaitso
SGI-USA General Director

MAKING SOKA GAKKAI TRULY INTERNATIONAL

DR. HOWARD HUNTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION OF TUFTS UNIVERSITY, HAS WRITTEN WIDELY ON THE SOCIAL ROLE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF. HE OFFERS SOME CONCLUSIONS TO HIS FIRSTHAND OBSERVATIONS OF SGI IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE.

THE growth of Soka Gakkai to the point where it has communities established in more than 120 countries has been one of the most interesting developments I have noted throughout my nearly forty years of teaching in the field of world religions. It was my good fortune to become familiar with Soka Gakkai when it was known as Nichiren Shoshu of America and



DR. HOWARD HUNTER





was establishing its foundations in the United States. In subsequent years I had opportunities to attend several events in the United States and in Japan sponsored by Soka Gakkai. My interest in the organization deepened and I found it especially interesting to see its rapid global expansion. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself for me to investigate the Soka Gakkai within the limits of a sabbatical semester away from my university, I was eager to see for myself how it is making the notable transition from a distinctively Japanese religious movement to become Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

This article presents some conclusions to which my initial explorations have led, after I conducted individual and group interviews in SGI centers in India, England,

Mexico and Italy. I have reported my observations of my visits in a series of brief articles in the *SGI Quarterly* during the past year and in *Living Buddhism* (January–April 1997). My research into the SGI communities in these widely differing cultures has by no means been detailed and exhaustive in the conventional scholarly manner. Instead, I conducted intensive person-to-person interviews with individual members and leaders. I was especially interested in questions having to do with the reasons for individual members joining and remaining with SGI, with the experiences they were having, their sense of relationship with the original Soka Gakkai organization in Japan and its leadership, and their views on the future of SGI as an independent religious movement



President Vaclav Havel of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and SGI President Ikeda met at the State Guesthouse in Tokyo, April 1992, during which Mr. Havel explained his concept of “anti-political politics.” He said, “This is politics from the bottom up—not mechanical politics but human politics, politics based not on theory but which grows organically from human hearts.”



following its separation from the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood in Japan. The central issue underlying all of my inquiries was this: Is SGI a truly multinational religious organization or is it a Japanese religion exporting itself to many different lands, comparable to Sony, Fuji and Honda?

WITH the separation of the Soka Gakkai lay movement, from its ties to the Nichiren Shoshu head temple—which claimed possession of exclusive rights to not only the property but also the philosophy and practice of the Buddhism of Nichiren—Soka Gakkai was presented with an extraordinary challenge and quite inescapable opportunity. It had to determine what its appropriate response should be as it faced an uncharted future. One might suppose that one of the options would have been to dissolve the lay movement and to express allegiance to the priesthood and its leaders. This clearly was impossible given the depth of Soka

Gakkai’s fundamental theological and structural alienation from the priesthood which culminated in the excommunication edict. A far different option was to acknowledge that now Soka Gakkai was presented the freedom—indeed the clear necessity—to articulate for itself a new understanding of its mission. Fortunately for Soka Gakkai, it had within its organization precisely those types of leaders who possess a worldwide vision of a universal humanistic movement embracing but also transcending national identities. This movement, they saw, could be religious in its expression, philosophical in its rationale, and activist in promoting means of achieving peace, education and culture.

Any authoritative assessment of SGI today would require a vastly expanded base of research as well as wider experience in many more SGI communities. Though this article appears in a respected scholarly journal, it can only be a description of my necessarily limited experi-

ence. Acknowledging the formidable limitations of my research, it remains clear that given the lack of information about SGI among the public and given the misinformation frequently encountered from the media, there is considerable value in a friendly but unbiased account of actual experience with SGI members and groups in widely differing countries. Based on that experience, I am able to summarize my current conclusions with the hope that future research of a similar sort will be possible.

Rather than to begin with a review of the experiences that have led to my current and tentative conclusions regarding SGI’s internationalism, I would like to share with the reader two events that affected my opinion of the value of my own project. While I thought that a firsthand examination of the efforts of SGI in several different countries was worthwhile, I also thought it not especially urgent. The first event to change my mind occurred in Bombay at the home of



President Ikeda talks with children in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he attended the 11th SGI World Peace Youth Culture Festival held at the Coliseo Theater, February 1993.

the president of the local chamber of commerce, a prominent businessman whose son attends my university. I told him why I was in Bombay, and when he heard that I was visiting SGI centers he proceeded to procure for me a copy of *Time Magazine International*, which devoted a lead article to SGI in Japan and termed SGI President Ikeda the most important person in Japan. Then its contents conveyed at best an ambivalent and at worse a scurrilous portrait of SGI and its leader. It cited extremely negative sources and gave examples of what it portrayed as embarrassing episodes in Soka Gakkai history in Japan. It emphasized the political movement of Soka Gakkai, Ko-meito, and related its role in past and current Japanese politics. I could not help comparing what I have experienced in my associations with SGI in the U.S.A. and Japan and what I was learning for myself in meetings with Indian SGI members with what I was reading about the problematic aspects of

SGI in Japan. I began to see that my humble interviews might, if reported, convey a more balanced and certainly unambiguous and accurate picture of SGI as it develops its programs internationally.

THE second event was of a similar but perhaps even more dramatic sort. I had not been in India long before several people asked me whether I had seen a film from the British Broadcasting Corporation dealing with SGI and President Ikeda. I had not, but in Bangalore the opportunity came, and at least three times I was able to view a film that I found seriously flawed and deeply offensive. It is a film that has been shown repeatedly in India over a period of several months and even in the air by British Airways.

The film begins with a short review of the criminal activities of the pathologically dangerous leader of the infamous AUM cult, whose members poisoned the Tokyo subways and engaged in other terrorist

acts in the name of their religion. Then the film devotes the largest part of its time to a presentation of SGI and President Ikeda. The film necessarily cannot reach a uniformly negative conclusion and ends on a note of ambivalence in its evaluation of the work of SGI and its leadership. The film did not suggest that SGI was another AUM cult, but the damage was done: an uninformed viewer—and practically all the viewers were uninformed—might easily conclude that the two religious groups were similar if not identical. Now I had a new zeal for my research: I would see for myself whether the SGI I had encountered had anything like the characteristics implied by the magazine article and the film. I was free to find out anything I wanted and not once did I receive anything but full cooperation in my pursuit of the facts about SGI.

It was not until I had returned from my visits abroad and had a few months to reflect on them that I found my thoughts returning to an



The arts offer one of the most effective avenues in establishing the SGI movement internationally. (Above, left) The 13th World Peace Youth Culture Festival at Paradise Cove, Oahu, Hawaii, January 1995. (Above, right) The 1st SGI General Meeting at the SGI Brazil Nature Culture Center, February 1993. (Below) The Royal Ballet performs "The Sleeping Beauty" in Japan, April 1975. It was invited to Japan by the Min-On Concert Association, which was established in 1963 at the suggestion of President Ikeda to deepen mutual understanding and friendship worldwide through a people's music movement and the promotion of international cultural exchange.



observation that surprised me. I find it radical, quite possibly inappropriate, and maybe simply wrong, but it is an observation that may provoke worthwhile examination of a serious issue. Someone suggested that the SGI name be changed, since the present name conveys nothing outside its nation of origin. It requires interpretation and provides an instant focus on its being Japanese. He suggested the name, "International Buddhist Association." Perhaps discussions among the various national organizations as to the matter of the name would be productive. No harm would come of this. The good result would be to increase awareness that the many SGI groups in more than a hundred countries belong to a truly international movement that is encouraged, but not dominated, by the control of the Japanese central offices.

Both to satisfy my own curiosity and in light of prominent negative publicity regarding SGI, I persis-



(Above, left) A cast of over 350 members from throughout the United Kingdom presented the musical show "Alice!" at London's Hammersmith Odeon, the largest theater in the U.K., 1986. More than 10,000 people viewed three performances of the show. (Above, right) Invited to perform in Japan by the Min-On Concert Association, the Vienna State Opera (Wiener Staatsoper) performs "The Marriage of Figaro," October 1980.

tently inquired from each of the people I interviewed about his or her view of the relationship between the national organization and its headquarters and leadership in Japan. In not one instance did I receive any indication of any sort that the national movement was controlled either explicitly or implicitly by Japanese authorities. Appreciation was often expressed for the encouragement that the various centers in other countries received from Tokyo-based officials and especially President Ikeda. But, uniformly, members rejected emphatically any notion that their participation in SGI is anything other than totally voluntary and a matter of independent choice. They found ridiculous the idea that SGI is in effect a series of Japanese clones. Even where the current leadership in several of the centers I visited is fortunate enough to include Japanese members, it is clear beyond question that the membership considers its organi-

zation distinctly national and indigenous. It has been very important for Japanese members and leaders to offer their experience and talents in the crucial period of structuring and building the organization; for this, the Japanese members and leaders are respected and highly valued.

AN illustrative case in which Japanese leadership has effectively combined the experience and skills of the homeland with the concerns of identifying with the local culture is that of Dr. Akashi Ouchi, originally from Japan but a naturalized Indian citizen for many years. Dr. Ouchi came to India as a college student and remained in India after completing his doctorate at Nehru University. While a practicing architect, he also contributed his talents toward creating a chapter of Bharat Soka Gakkai, or Indian Soka Gakkai in New Delhi. The depth of his lifelong commitment to India—he has become a

citizen of India—and its cultural and religious traditions is beyond doubt. He retains his birthright identity as a person of Japanese origin. While the next generation of leadership of SGI in India is most likely to be of Indian origins, Dr. Ouchi admirably fulfills a unique role as a living bridge between Japan and India.

In order for SGI to be truly international, its leadership in the various countries will likely become totally indigenous or, as in the case of Dr. Ouchi, committed to the development of indigenous leaders and forms of expression. At every center I visited, I discovered that members were dedicated to the task of articulating the Buddhism of Nichiren in terms and actions familiar to their fellow nationals. The very future of SGI depends on the success of this effort to determine the values and practices in the local culture upon which SGI can identify and build. Thus, members of SGI in the several nations have

The SGI sponsors multicultural and multi-faith events, such as exhibitions dealing with social issues affecting the entire community and even global concerns. (Right) "The Courage to Remember—Anne Frank and the Holocaust" toured Japan in 1994 under the cosponsorship of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Soka Gakkai. (Center) The "Humanity in Education: The Soka Education System" exhibition, Los Angeles, 1991. (Bottom) "Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi: Passion for Education" exhibition sponsored by SGI France's education division in 1995. (Photo on p. 13) Viewers in Bangkok, Thailand, January 1988, at the exhibition "Nuclear Arms: Threat to Our World," which attracted 1.2 million people in its worldwide tour.



the task not only of maintaining their own specific identity but also becoming, as it were, culture critics. They must become strategists in determining which cultural traditions are compatible with the goals of SGI and to work effectively within them. They must be tacticians as well, by determining the ways in which the distinctive teachings of the Buddhist tradition may be articulated effectively. These are extremely difficult tasks for any individual or organization, and it is likely that progress will necessarily be slow. At this stage most SGI centers outside of Japan are very young. They are only beginning to find their approaches to the task of establishing a distinct identity while ultimately working to become an influential part of the mainstream of their local culture.



Were contemporary SGI to look at the now severed historic roots of the Buddhism of Nichiren, it would see a tradition ill-prepared to face its current and future responsibilities. It would find a cloistered, traditionalist, authoritarian model insisting upon preserving its age-old style at all costs. Fortunately, the international SGI centers need not concern them-



selves with the old patterns but can instead look at the model provided by President Ikeda. His persistent promotion of activities relating to issues critical to each culture, but transcending any one of them, gives reason to hope for the strong success of SGI in the future.

As one example, President Ikeda, through his ceaseless travels around the world meeting with educators, business and social leaders, heads of state, politicians and religious leaders of every persuasion, effectively destroys any notion that SGI can retreat into a series of self-satisfied small religious or philosophical discussion groups content with doing their own rather esoteric thing. They are instead challenged in thought, word and deed to fulfill the idea of the Bodhisattva who is not content until all others have received the message and the opportunity for enlightenment. In every one of the centers I have thus far visited, I saw nothing but admiration for this activist model of leadership from the Tokyo headquarters of SGI.

The future of SGI as a truly international movement is a topic too large for precise determination, but it is clear even now that its future will depend very much on the skills of its members to achieve adequate expression of their unique identity while at the same time identifying sufficiently with the mainstream cultures to make meaningful contributions to it. In interviews with a number of scholars in Italy, for example, I learned that, from their disinterested perspective, SGI was, in fact, making progress in this formidable task.

DISTINGUISHED Roman Catholic scholar Professor Massima Introvigne of Turin, Italy, observed in conversation with me that his analysis of the Soka Gakkai movement in Italy led him to conclude that its membership is indistinguishable from the broad cross-section of Italian society. It shared and expressed values familiar and acceptable to Italians generally. Of course, its stress on the primacy of individual conviction rather than

ecclesiastical authority and its Japanese provenance made it distinctive. Numerically speaking, the 50,000 Buddhists of Italy of whom approximately 17,000 are members of SGI do not represent a statistically prominent group among the millions of Italians. One of the leaders of the Piedmont SGI, Nino La Piana, noted that so long as this remains the case, SGI will not experience much negative reaction among Roman Catholic authorities, but he anticipates that there would definitely be such reaction if Buddhist thought and practice became a considerable force in Italian life. It is for this reason that there is reluctance among Italian SGI groups to be seen as politically ambitious. Whereas in Japan SGI has long been associated with a political party, in Italy members of SGI wishing to gain political office have been discouraged from identifying themselves with SGI. So far as the matter of cultural exchange is concerned, it would appear to be a wise policy for the various national SGI groups to be free of political connections.

Surely the arts offer one of the most effective avenues in establishing the movement of Soka Gakkai internationally. The visits I made in India, Italy, England, Mexico, Japan and the United States made clear to me the importance of the arts as a way of expressing common concerns beyond the barriers of differing languages and cultures. In India, for example, the Bangalore Cultural Center achieved city-wide and regional attention of a most positive kind for its presentation of children's art. Not only were there examples from Japan but also from throughout the city from children of a wide variety of religious traditions. In Italy, Mexico and England



Soka education, which literally means education for value creation, traces its origins to the educational theories of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, an innovative educator and the first president of the Soka Gakkai. SGI President Ikeda founded the Soka school system that begins with the Soka kindergarten and includes elementary schools, junior and senior high schools and two university-level institutions. (Right) Tokyo Soka Elementary School was opened in 1978. (Below, left) A class learning English at Tokyo Soka Elementary School. (Below, middle) Hong Kong Soka Kindergarten, which opened in 1992, was the first Soka kindergarten established outside Japan. (Below, right) The Central Library at Soka University, Hachioji, Tokyo, campus.



outstanding exhibitions relating to social issues have extended the philosophy of SGI well outside the SGI community centers.

The SGI of Turin, Italy, brought forth a festival of many arts which was most enthusiastically received by capacity crowds. Similar accounts of the successful transmission of the values of SGI through the arts could be cited. The good-will engendered by such programs, which have a direct appeal beyond ecclesiastical, political and national boundaries, is incalculable. Occasionally, one hears a remark from someone unsympathetic to the emphasis on cultural programs, who asks, "What has all this to do with Buddhism?" The answer is

clear. Was it not Shakyamuni himself who saluted his disciple for choosing a powerful but fragile object of beauty, a flower, rather than words to give voice to that experience of wonder and delight that underlies the Buddhist approach to life?

THIS distinctive emphasis within the SGI on the centrality of artistic expression is remarkably manifested in the choices for the most prominent statues gracing the administrative building of Soka University in suburban Tokyo. Two monumental statues of Victor Hugo and Leo Tolstoy greet visitors, and they lead to a third even larger statue, of American poet

Walt Whitman. Whereas one might have reason to anticipate statues of Soka Gakkai founders and leaders like Josei Toda, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Daisaku Ikeda, one finds instead French, Russian and American writers whose common characteristic was a profound humanitarian compassion for all mankind. It is the spirit reflected in the choice of these figures to grace a university, founded on Buddhist principles, that augurs well for the future of an organization that is achieving international status.

In discussions with a leader of the British SGI, Robert Samuels, I spoke of my admiration for the spirit that guided the choice of these humani-



tarian but non-Buddhist figures as emblems of SGI values. I raised with him a question that has persisted throughout my studies of the SGI. The question relates to the relationship between physical and spiritual longings. The SGI is sometimes criticized for its apparent “this-worldliness,” its concern for practical benefits and material needs and wants. I put my question to him in something like poetic form:

Bodies
Dew to the Spirit
Tell me then
Why does this dew yearn so?

A few days after sharing this question, I received from Mr. Samuels an answer that I believe shows great insight into the Buddhism of Nichiren and provides another avenue by which SGI may become truly international. He wrote:

Because the body and spirit are
one
Bodily yearning is
Yearning of the spirit
Based on the universal, or

greater self;
The tower of
compassion — some would
say love — wisdom, courage
of humanity
That yearning becomes the very
cause for
Enlightenment.

Mr. Samuels effectively expresses the central Buddhist conviction that no separation between soul and body exists, and his poem makes clear that when we correctly understand ourselves, we see that we are the Buddha. The deepest yearnings of our life are for love and wisdom and courage. To understand this is to be enlightened.

My first conclusion is that the national SGI organizations are succeeding in attracting and keeping members who are sincerely dedicated to the cultivation and expression of the philosophy of the Buddhism of Nichiren. Any organization would be considered fortunate to have the enthusiasm, intelligence, sensitivity and critical insights I found among members of every SGI organization I visited. In addition, I found the members



(Top of page) The Ikeda Auditorium and the Fountain of Plato's Academia at Soka University, Hachioji, Tokyo, campus. (Above) A statue of Madame Curie was unveiled in the Garden of Literature at Soka Women's Junior College in April 1994. Marie Curie won the Nobel prize for physics in 1903 and chemistry in 1911, but lived oblivious to fame. Statues of such historic figures whose common characteristic was a profound humanitarian compassion for humankind grace the campuses of Soka institutions.



(Left) Canadian members in front of the Houses of Government in Ottawa. (Above) With the participation of many friends, meetings in Lisbon, Portugal, are joyful and congenial.

and leaders to be realistic regarding their ability to express Buddhist values effectively in societies either foreign, indifferent or even actively opposed to such values.

One problem that I discerned, however, was not very often acknowledged. That is the problem of the tension caused by conflicting needs faced by SGI members and groups outside Japan. These needs are, on the one hand, to be loyal to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin and, on the other hand, to identify areas of common values and teaching in the faith communities prevailing in the local culture. The temptation is either to advocate too strongly the significant differences and thus risk alienating the prevailing or dominant society, or to gloss over and, in effect, to water down essential differences. If clear distinctions are not emphasized, then the question becomes one of asking why bother with so new and apparently exotic a philosophy and religion when they are not especially distinc-

tive. If distinctions are emphasized, then one has to be prepared to face some serious opposition.

PERHAPS at this moment an illustration of what is meant in the preceding comment would be helpful. This illustration comes from a discussion I had in Italy with members who believe that, in the long run, religions are very much alike, all attempting to reach similar goals of personal and social salvation. Buddhism and Roman Catholicism are quite compatible, for both promote personal spirituality, social justice and ultimate harmony with God. So said some members in Italy, but others rightly, as I see it, pointed out that there are distinctions of the most profound sort between Catholicism and Buddhism that are glossed over to the loss of members of both religions.

Granted the immense difficulty and enormous challenge to the prevailing view in Italy, but Buddhists will be truer to their own founders

and perhaps more effective in attracting a larger constituency if they insist upon a re-defining of the concept of God. For the Buddhist, the divine has the true transcendence of the immanent; God is not objectified and externalized but experienced as the dynamic presence within each sentient being that leads individuals toward truth, beauty and goodness. Forthrightly declaring that the authority in matters religious and philosophical lies in one's self is a true distinction that Buddhists have and which they should articulate as clearly as possible. To do so requires a most serious and prolonged educational effort, first of the practitioners themselves and then for those practitioners to prepare appropriate dialogues with non-Buddhists. Fortunately, the leadership of the groups I visited have a strong commitment in this area.

A second illustration came to my attention through a remark made by a member of the SGI in Mexico. She

said it concerned her upon occasion that it was easy for some members of SGI to replace their familiar statues of Jesus, Joseph and Mary with the Gohonzon and to pray to it in a manner similar to praying to the icons of Christianity. While a substitution had been made at least superficially, she wondered whether there had been an accompanying change in the thinking of some individuals. This is an illustration of the problems faced by leaders who must devise sufficiently accessible educational programs to promote accurate understanding of Buddhism's distinctions.

AS SGI develops its many separate national movements, the central question remains: Which model of development is best? To which historical epoch, so to speak, shall each country's SGI organization look? The obvious model might be that of Japan since it is there that the lay movement of the Buddhism of Nichiren has the longest history and the greatest numerical success. It is obvious that the new movements can benefit from those successes and learn from whatever problems the parent organization has faced. But at least two other national organizations offer instructive examples to which organizers of new SGI groups may look: Britain and the United States.

Nichiren Shoshu of America (NSA), now SGI-USA, appears to have experienced shifts in its self-understanding and its sense of mission, which are worth noting. Though I have witnessed for myself some of these changes firsthand, I am indebted to the detailed analysis written by Jane Hurst in her book *Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai in America*. Her study concludes that SGI in America has

undergone distinct phases of which the first culminated in a Bicentennial Convention coinciding with the Bicentennial of the USA. As she put it, "It was a crowning achievement of NSA's organizational skill at presenting cultural events and moving large groups of people."¹ It identified common values between NSA and America, provided a passionate exercise for practitioners to express their own "human revolution," and was, in Hurst's words, "the final expression of the movement in its most enthusiastic, youthful, and intense form."²

I can attest to the remarkable atmosphere of the International Culture Festival because I was one of some 10,000 participants and saw for myself the dramatic demonstration of the three themes that Hurst notes as the ethos of NSA, "individual power, change through the practice of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism, and unity to bring about world peace."³ It was an unforgettable experience to be seated on the speakers' platform before this great assembly and to note the huge portraits of America's founding fathers presented in somber tints and, among them, a similar portrait but in vibrant color of President Ikeda. For members of the SGI, such inclusion may not have seemed incongruous, but one might wonder what the uninitiated would make of this. To them it could be mysterious and a bit unsettling and challenging, as though a conclusion had been reached before the arguments were presented.

My conversations with leaders of SGI in Italy, England, Mexico and India lead me to believe that they appreciate the importance of identifying values their movement holds in common with those of their nation, but they wish to exer-

cise caution about the manner of presenting this identity. One of the most significant as well as most positive conclusions I reached from my study of SGI organizations is that their leadership is quite self-consciously selecting the means of their publicizing SGI, with particular attention to avoiding non-productive and unintended challenges and arguments with their respective societies.

FOLLOWING the perhaps inevitable change from the initial organization-building enthusiasm of the first phase of NSA in America, "the direction was much more concretely away from the group and toward the individual's own life."⁴ The larger social and even political goals became secondary to personal development. Hurst notes that it is not possible to answer how the NSA ethos has affected its members in any statistically verifiable way. "It is not the observable facts of the members' lives that have changed. Rather, the subjectively experienced NSA ethos has given the lives of NSA members an inner coherence which has endowed their ordinary activities with ultimate significance."⁵ Even where, as in the USA, NSA was initially a predominately Japanese movement with a tight hierarchical structure, it is now, as SGI-USA, a movement with American leadership developing into an established religion. Its early hopes for a dramatic conversion of the USA to the Buddhism of Nichiren appears to have given way to the cultivation of individual spiritual practice and to a patient effort to achieve Buddhist values within American culture. The second phase of NSA in the USA is toward the promotion of peace, culture and education. "The

Professor Bryan Wilson of Oxford University and SGI President Ikeda discuss final plans for the publication of their dialogue on society and religion, May 1981. Their conversations, reflecting an emerging international emphasis, were published in 1984 as *Human Values in a Changing World*. More recently Professor Wilson's extensive study of SGI in Britain, *A Time to Chant*, which he co-authored with Professor Karel Dobbelaere, details the way in which the concerns and perceptions of young persons in Britain converge easily with the values promoted by SGI.



more moderate, gradual, individualistic approach had won out."⁶

It now appears to me that the leaders of the SGI communities I visited have determined to build on the basis of phase two of the American experience rather than phase one. I believe they are wise to do so, for to do so provides ultimately a stronger and more lasting foundation for solid achievement. Though less dramatic than spectacular events involving masses of people and gaining considerable but ephemeral publicity, the development of dedicated local organizations interacting with non-SGI agencies in cooperative enterprises will likely bring more permanent benefits. This is not to say that excellent cultural programs utilizing SGI members' talents in a wide variety of ways—such as that recently presented by the Piedmont SGI in Italy—are not worthwhile, for they give both members and the public a fine demonstration of the quality and abilities of SGI members. In the long run, however, it is the multi-cultural and multi-faith events, such as exhibitions dealing

with social issues affecting the entire community and even global concerns, which will create a more lasting and informed understanding of SGI and its mission.

THOUGH my experience with SGI in Britain was less extensive than in Italy and India, I was fortunate to have intensive discussions with its leadership as well as with a number of individuals, including Professor Bryan Wilson of Oxford University. Britain presents distinctive opportunities and challenges for SGI as a society with institutions based on traditions and values which are deeply eroded if not rejected by many—for example, the monarchy and established church. From the SGI members, as well as from Professor Wilson, I gained a clear impression of a religious movement carefully studying to discover the most effective means of defining and achieving its goals in a modern, largely secular, post-Christian society.

In a study done twenty years ago, *Contemporary Transformation of Religion*, Professor Wilson con-

cluded that new religious movements are incapable of providing a lasting basis for a new religious culture. "Their growth, transient appeal, decay, and eventual replacement by other enthusiasms, appear to me to be evidence of the trials of the human spirit in a world in which new techniques and increasingly rational procedures dominate man's social experience."⁷ After this study, Professor Wilson met with SGI President Ikeda, and in 1984 their conversations, reflecting an emerging international emphasis, were published as *Human Values in a Changing World*. More recently Professor Wilson's extensive study of SGI in Britain, *A Time to Chant*, which he co-authored with Professor Karel Dobbelaere, details the way in which the concerns and perceptions of young persons in Britain converge easily with the values promoted by SGI. They write: "When thirteenth-century scriptures are given twentieth-century relevance, the mystery of the sacred invocation readily accommodates the pragmatism of everyday life."⁸ My discussions

with present leaders and members of SGI-UK fully support this conclusion.

ONE model for the propagation of SGI values is the development of schools where the educational theories of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first president of the Soka Gakkai, would be practiced. Alternatives to standard parochial or public school curricula might well find a very positive response in many countries. Already the Soka schools established by President Ikeda from elementary through graduate levels offer instructive examples of what could be done. The broadly humanistic approach would be welcome by many and would extend the constituency of SGI. Such schools not only provide prestige and exposure but, not incidentally, they could be financially self-supporting.

It would be a positive step for SGI leaders to concentrate some of their efforts on preparing appropriate materials on showing members how to discuss with their non-SGI associates both the areas of common values as well as the differences between the philosophy of SGI and the prevailing philosophies of the specific society. Instead of bluntly announcing, for example, the Buddhist rejection of traditional presentations of an extra-terrestrial male authority figure called God, the SGI members could counsel with the traditionalist who, whether

accepting or rejecting the standard view, is unsatisfied with it. The non-SGI person who is experiencing sincere frustration with traditional positions could be counseled that perhaps the problem is not due so much to his or her lack of faith, or to his or her disobedience to authority, as to an unfortunate manner of "locating" the divine, a problem of imagery. When the Buddhist points out that the historical development of Judaism and Christianity, for example, illustrates the process of progressive re-locating the divine to the heart of the believer, it becomes clear that there are areas of close affinity with the prevailing religion and Buddhism.

WHEN, as many SGI members have said to me, "As a Buddhist I do not believe in God," it naturally challenges or even antagonizes a believer without doing justice to the issue. Such confrontation opens doors that have been closed and keeps others firmly shut. What should be said, it seems to me, is that in keeping with the insights of traditional non-Buddhist religions I, as a Buddhist, find the meaning of God to be within my heart. I might refer to the Christian doctrine of Incarnation as complementing the humanization of the divine and thus presenting a rich opportunity for fruitful and mutually respectful dialogue. Clearly, the development of positive non-confrontational

dialogues with non-Buddhist groups is an important way for SGI centers around the world to become better known and stronger within their contexts.

Everything I have discovered in my visits to SGI centers in India, Italy, Britain, Mexico and the U.S.A. corroborates what Professors Wilson and Dobbelaere write in their conclusion to *A Time to Chant*:

The decline in the credibility of an anthropomorphic deity; the sense that traditional, formal religious institutions have in some sense become hollow representations of conceptions of worship that are superseded; the emphasis on the private nature of belief and practice—all open the way for less formal, less institutionalized patterns of faith.⁹

Soka Gakkai International strikes me as a most fortunate movement. It has a rich legacy of religious devotion and culture profoundly rooted in ancient Buddhist tradition. It has freedom from restrictive ties to that tradition and enjoys the leadership of dedicated leaders who bring to life a vision of an enlightened humanity devoted to peaceful living and to the cultivation of humanistic values. I see SGI as a movement well on its way to fulfilling its name, for it is building lasting organizations internationally. □

Photographs by Seikyo Press

1. Hurst, Jane, *Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai in America*, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), p. 268.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
7. Wilson, Bryan R., *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 101.

8. Wilson, Bryan R. and Karel Dobbelaere, *A Time to Chant. The Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 231.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

ENCOUNTERING OBSTACLES AND PERSECUTION

WHEN Nichiren Daishonin established his Buddhism on April 28, 1253, he knew full well that he would face unprecedented persecution. But he did so without retreating an inch for the sake of all people's happiness. He took great pride in doing so.

It is precisely because the Mystic Law is correct that people have difficulty in accepting it. Nichiren Daishonin teaches that the more

Buddha would have been in vain. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1514)

SGI President Ikeda explains this passage:

"Buddhism exists because I exist" — this is the Daishonin's immense conviction. The Buddha's word, in a sense, became true precisely because the Daishonin singlehandedly underwent great persecution. (*Learning From the Gosho: The*

continues, "they tend to react emotionally and negatively toward a person of justice. This is human nature.

"In particular, arrogant authorities cannot bear to have anyone stand up to them and speak out for justice. That's because they regard themselves as superior to everyone. This is an unchanging principle" (*Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 12).

The great mathematician and honorary rector of Fudan University in China, Su Buqing, was persecuted during the great upheaval in China known as the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). He survived the ordeal and eventually returned to teaching at the university. One of his sons Su Dechang, himself a university professor, said of his father:

The "Topics for Discussion" column is intended to stimulate discussion on the principles and practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. To spark dialogue, questions based on the material can be formulated prior to gathering.

correct a teaching is, the more opposition it will encounter. In "Gift of an Unlined Robe," he writes:

I have never heard of someone who was hated as much as I, Nichiren, on account of the Lotus Sutra....The fourth volume of the Lotus Sutra states, "Hatred and jealousy toward this sutra abound even when the Thus Come One [Buddha] is in the world. How much more will this be so after his passing?" (LS10, 164) If Nichiren had not appeared in the country of Japan, these golden words of the

Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 18)

When someone stands out from the crowd, people tend to want to bring them down. In school, the straight-A student is often outcast and criticized by other students. On the job, the gung-ho worker is the target of others' disdain. History is full of examples where those who stood up for justice were persecuted — Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr.

"Not only do people fail to do what is correct," President Ikeda con-

I think my father can best be described as a person of integrity and moral courage. He will not compromise his beliefs. It was precisely his unwillingness to compromise that led to his extremely harsh treatment during the Cultural Revolution. But it was that same unwillingness to compromise that made it possible for him to recover afterward. He does not bend. He has firm beliefs, which creates enemies for him.

Yet, it is because we have opponents that we can advance. Without opponents, we do not

move forward. I think that the SGI and President Ikeda face obstacles for the same reason. My father was very aware of this nature of things. (July 1996 *Seikyo Times*, p. 17)

We will never experience the kind of persecution the Daishonin did, but when we first began our practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, some of us were tormented by friends and family or teased by co-workers and neighbors. This kind of opposition is explained by the Buddhist principle of the three obstacles and four devils—forces that try to prevent us from “rising above the crowd” to become truly happy.

Three Obstacles and Four Devils

Various obstacles and difficulties occur in the course of Buddhist prac-

tice. These may arise from earthly desires originating from greed, anger or ignorance, or take the form of opposition from one’s spouse, children or parents; or present themselves as troubles of body and mind or death. They are not obstacles and devils in and of themselves. They become obstacles and devils when we allow our faith to be swayed by them.

The following is a brief explanation of the three obstacles and four devils:

Three Obstacles

- 1) The obstacles of earthly desires, or those arising from the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance.
- 2) The obstacle of karma or the result of negative causes made in the past. This includes opposition from one’s spouse or children.
- 3) The obstacle of retribution or

obstacles from slandering the Law in the past. This includes opposition from one’s parents or government authority.

Four Devils

- 1) Obstructions caused by one’s physical and mental functions (the five components).
- 2) Troubles originating from earthly desires.
- 3) Doubts caused by the death of a fellow member.
- 4) Persecution by the Devil of the Sixth Heaven. This devil is the king of devils and causes one to use the efforts of others for his or her own pleasure. Nichiren Daishonin explains that it originates in the fundamental darkness of life. It possesses the bodies and minds of those in power and causes them to persecute practitioners. □

From *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*

“Letter to the Brothers”

THE doctrine of *ichinen sanzen* (a single life-moment possesses three thousand realms) revealed in the “Maka Shikan” (Great Concentration and Insight) is especially profound. If you propagate it, devils will arise without fail. Were it not for these, there would be no way of knowing that this is the true teaching. One passage from the same volume reads: “As practice progresses and understanding grows, the three obstacles and four devils emerge, vying with one another to interfere.... You should be neither influenced nor frightened by them. If you fall under their influence, you will be prevented from practicing true Buddhism.” This quotation not only applies to Nichiren but

also is the guide for his disciples. Reverently make this teaching your own and transmit it as an axiom of faith for future generations (MW-1, 145).

“On Practicing the Buddha’s Teachings”

THEREFORE, from the very day you take faith in this teaching, you should be fully prepared to face the three kinds of persecutions which are certain to be more terrible now after the Buddha’s passing (MW-1, 99).

SUPPOSE someone, no matter who, should loudly proclaim that the Lotus Sutra alone can lead people to Buddhahood and that all other sutras, far from enabling them to attain enlightenment, only drive them into hell. Observe what happens should he thus try to refute the teachings and doctrines of all the other sects. The three powerful enemies will arise without fail (MW-1, 105). □

The Fact That
Evil People Can
Attain Enlighten-
ment Proves That
Good Will
Triumph

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

In this installment, they discuss the doctrines of the enlightenment of evil people and the enlightenment of women; the difference between the way of life of Shakyamuni and that of Devadatta; good, evil and the principle of the "oneness of good and evil"; and other topics relating to the "Devadatta" (twelfth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

IN future ages if there are good men or good women who, on hearing the Devadatta chapter of the Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, believe and revere it with pure hearts and harbor no doubts or perplexities, they will never fall into hell or the realm of hungry spirits or of beasts, but will be born in the presence of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and in the place where they are born they will constantly hear this sutra. If they are born among human or

heavenly beings, they will enjoy exceedingly wonderful delights, and if they are born in the presence of a Buddha, they will be born by transformation from lotus flowers. (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 185)

Katsuji Saito: You must be exhausted, President Ikeda, after your lengthy trip to the United States and Latin America. Your efforts in America, Cuba, Costa Rica, the Bahamas and Mexico to establish bonds of friendship

impressed me as actions truly representative of the practice of the Lotus Sutra.

Takanori Endo: In fact, the Lotus Sutra, which elucidates respect for all differences of social system, organization, culture and the like, connects people by urging them to conduct dialogue as human beings who are all on an equal footing.

Haruo Suda: Your trip abroad also speaks to the principle of the true entity of all phenomena (Jp. *shoho*

DIALOGUE ON THE LOTUS SUTRA



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



jisso, a tenet central to the Lotus Sutra) that teaches us to realize that all phenomena in their magnificent diverseness equally possess the true entity. This is easy to say, but very difficult to put into practice; all the more so on a global scale.

Daisaku Ikeda: This is work that I want young people to carry on.

José Figueres Ferrer (1906–90), the father of President José María Figueres Olsen of Costa Rica, is well known for having abolished

Costa Rica's military. Reportedly Mr. Figueres Ferrer's motto is "*lucha sin fin*" (boundless struggle). He has used this motto since the days of his youth, even naming his farm, *Lucha Sin Fin*.

Such a spirit is quite relevant for us as Buddhists. Buddhism is, after all, a teaching of boundless struggle where one experiences either victory or defeat. The true aspect of life and society can be found in the eternal struggle between good and evil, between the nature of enlightenment and the nature of darkness,

happiness and misery, peace and war, creation and destruction, harmony and turmoil. This is the true aspect of the universe.

Therefore, the only path is that of struggle. The only alternative is to win. Consequently, another name for Buddha is Victorious One.

Saito: Shakyamuni spent his entire life engaged in unceasing and arduous struggle. But it seems that many people — perhaps because of the impression they were left with from seeing certain images of the Buddha and other relics — envision Buddhism as a teaching of tranquillity and repose. But in reality Shakyamuni's life was full of intense turmoil. It was a succession of fierce struggles.

Ikeda: That's right. But because of his great struggles, the Buddha was able to cultivate a state of life as pacific and tranquil as a calm sea. No matter how much commotion there was around him, no one could upset the inner world he had constructed. His serene, dignified state of life as the Buddha enlightened since the remote past shone brilliantly in his heart at all times.

Suda: Of Shakyamuni's many great struggles, the most famous concerns his betrayal by Devadatta. Unlike persecutions coming from without, this incident arose from within the Buddhist community. It was all the more serious because the traitor had conspired with the ruler of the land, King Ajatashatru,¹ to do away with Shakyamuni.

Endo: Devadatta truly represents the "villain." Known as "traitorous Devadatta," in terms of evil it would be difficult to find a person of comparable villainy.

The “Devadatta” (twelfth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra explains that even this great scoundrel will attain Buddhahood. On the face of it, this seems a most peculiar doctrine.

Saito: In addition to the “enlightenment of evil people,” the “Devadatta” chapter also explains the principle of the “enlightenment of women” because it also chronicles the attainment of Buddhahood by the dragon king’s daughter. In the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, evildoers and women were specifically excluded from becoming Buddhas. In other words, it was a teaching that overturned the prevailing social ethos. This chapter gives dramatic expression to the Lotus Sutra’s revelation that all people can attain Buddhahood.

Suda: It seems that the presence of the “Devadatta” chapter is one reason why since ancient times the Japanese have been especially fond of the Lotus Sutra. There is evidence that during the Heian period (781–1184), for example, ceremonial cycles of lectures on the Lotus Sutra were held for the court nobles.² Since the “Devadatta” chapter was especially prized, lectures on the fifth volume,³ which contains that chapter, are said to have been particularly well attended.

Ikeda: Regarding the fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra, Nichiren Daishonin says: “The fifth volume presents what is the very heart and core of the entire sutra, the doctrine of attaining Buddhahood in one’s present form” (MW-6, 250). There are, of course, many other important chapters, but the Daishonin says that the “Devadatta” chapter represents the “very heart and core of the entire sutra,” sug-

gesting that this chapter is the key to the principle of attaining Buddhahood in one’s present form.

The spirit of the Lotus Sutra is to enable all people to become Buddhas. For ordinary people, the simple fact of whether one can attain Buddhahood or not is a matter of far keener importance than any doctrine. And the “Devadatta” chapter certainly offers a straightforward reply to that question.

The supremely evil Devadatta attempted to murder Shakyamuni and created a schism within the Buddhist order. Because she was a female, the dragon girl was discriminated against in society; in addition, her form was that of an animal. In terms of the cultural and social ethos of the time, both Devadatta and the dragon girl were probably seen as having absolutely the dimmest prospects of ever attaining Buddhahood. The teaching that even Devadatta and the dragon girl can attain Buddhahood is, therefore, a clear indicator that absolutely every being in the world can attain Buddhahood.

Through the concrete example of Devadatta and the dragon girl becoming Buddhas, people could accept this teaching not merely as theory, but as an actual fact. This is perhaps why people have felt a particular fondness for the “Devadatta” chapter.

Even Murasaki Shikibu, the eleventh-century Japanese court writer and author of the *Tale of Genji*, composed poems to describe how moved she was when she listened to a lecture on the “Devadatta” chapter and heard the doctrine of the enlightenment of women.

Saito: Nichiren Daishonin refers to the attainment of Buddhahood by Devadatta and the dragon girl as

the “two enlightening admonitions” (cf. MW-2, 151 [175]). By explaining their attainment of Buddhahood, thereby revealing the Lotus Sutra’s greatness, Shakyamuni is urging and at the same time admonishing the bodhisattvas to propagate the Lotus Sutra after his passing.

In short, evil people and women represent all common mortals. That they can attain Buddhahood reveals the power of the Lotus Sutra to enable all people to attain Buddhahood. In that sense, relating their enlightenment amounts to “urging” and “admonishing” all people to spread the Lotus Sutra.

Endo: The doctrine that all beings can attain enlightenment has already been explained theoretically in the earlier “Expedient Means” (second) chapter of the sutra. So, from a purely doctrinal standpoint, Nichiren Daishonin characterizes the “Devadatta” chapter as a “branch or leaf of the ‘Expedient Means’ chapter” (cf. MW-6, 11).

Ikeda: Yes. But the reason for the explanation of the attainment of Buddhahood by Devadatta and the dragon girl is probably because of its tremendous power to inspire. Devadatta had thoroughly turned against Shakyamuni. Since to turn against good is evil, Devadatta, who had turned against the Buddha, is a paragon of evil. The reason for the chapter’s powerful impact is that it explains his attainment of Buddhahood.

Again, the dragon girl’s becoming a Buddha is important because it indicates not only the enlightenment of women, but the principle of attaining Buddhahood in one’s present form. In other words, it teaches that ordinary people can

A person of faith seeks self-mastery; a person of ambition or power seeks to control others. A person of faith takes action, works hard and struggles to overcome his or her inner weakness.



become Buddhas without changing their form. This makes a powerful impression.

Today, let's discuss the first of these cases, the enlightenment of evil people.

Devadatta Was Destroyed by Jealousy

Saito: Why don't we begin by talking about just what kind of person Devadatta was? In the "Buddha" chapter of *The New Human Revolution*, President Ikeda, you give a detailed description.

Suda: A great deal of lore concerning Devadatta has been handed down. Regarding his birth, some sources indicate he was a half-brother of Shakyamuni by a different mother, while others say he was Shakyamuni's cousin. The latter explanation seems to be the more common. In any event, Devadatta is thought to have been younger than Shakyamuni, and to have renounced secular life about fifteen years after Shakyamuni

attained enlightenment.

At first, Devadatta earnestly exerted himself in his Buddhist practice as a disciple of Shakyamuni. And because of his talent and ability, he gradually gained distinction in the Buddhist order. Later, however, it is related that he approached Ajatashatru in order to gain backing, and came to harbor the ambition of trying to replace Shakyamuni as the head of the order.

Endo: It would appear that Devadatta was quite intelligent. The Daisyonin says that he had "committed to memory ... eighty thousand jeweled teachings" (MW-7, 40). That may be why he grew arrogant.

Ikeda: Intelligence makes a good person that much better, and makes an evil person that much worse. Probably Devadatta's inner mind or *ichinen* was not that of a person of faith, but of a person of ambition. A person of faith seeks self-mastery; a person of ambition or power seeks to control others. A

person of faith takes action, works hard and struggles to overcome his or her inner weakness; a person driven by power forces others to work for his own selfish purpose, never reflecting upon himself. Devadatta, perhaps on account of arrogance, was such a person. And so in the end he departed from the path of a person of faith.

Suda: When Shakyamuni was advanced in years, Devadatta approached him with the request that the Buddha invest him with control of the Buddhist order. The reason he gave was Shakyamuni's age. It is said that even though Shakyamuni refused immediately, Devadatta repeated his demand three times. Since many different writings are in agreement on this point, it is generally accepted as historically accurate.

Ikeda: No matter how seemingly sound his words might have been, religion for Devadatta was ultimately nothing more than a means for realizing personal ambition. Devadatta's



In India at the time, practitioners who strove to curb desires were greatly respected. Therefore, Devadatta probably thought he could win a following by advocating such severe precepts.

words and actions in this incident make plain his ignoble intentions.

Saito: Shakyamuni rebuked him to his face, calling him a person who “licks the spit of others” (MW-2, 107 [127], referring to the fact that he had put himself under the protection of Ajatashatru). Devadatta firmed up his traitorous resolve and left the order. Remarkably, Shakyamuni immediately instructed his disciples to spread word that Devadatta was harboring evil intentions.

Ikeda: Shakyamuni did so because he did not want even one person to be led astray by Devadatta; such was his sense of responsibility. An evil person has to be clearly identified as evil. If measures to deal with such a person are halfhearted, everyone will be confused. Also, in a struggle of this kind, speed is essential. If one vacillates and fails to act resolutely and decisively, people will be consumed by devils.

Also, the reason why Shakyamuni scolded Devadatta in front of

others, I believe, was so they would thoroughly understand what was at stake. Devadatta’s reaction is said to have been one of profound humiliation at having been put to shame in front of others. This shows that he no longer possessed the humble spirit of a disciple. His petty pride outstripped his seeking spirit.

It may be that in private Shakyamuni had previously warned Devadatta. And that he only took the step of a public reprimand because Devadatta had not heeded the Buddha’s earlier warnings.

Suda: Thereafter, Devadatta, having resolved to turn against Shakyamuni, incited Ajatashatru to kill his father King Bimbisara and assume the throne. Another account has it that King Bimbisara willingly passed on the throne to his son.

Then, availing himself of King Ajatashatru’s power, Devadatta hatched all kinds of schemes to kill Shakyamuni. He dispatched assassins, set loose wild elephants, and, finally, rolled a huge stone down on

him. But all of these attempts failed.

Ikeda: The Buddha’s state of life is such that no power or scheme can harm him. Devadatta’s failed attempts to do away with Shakyamuni eloquently attest to this. We see the same in the case of Nichiren Daishonin. Even with the immense power of the ruling Kamakura shogunate at their disposal, the Daishonin’s enemies could not make good on their schemes.

Saito: Devadatta also plotted to destroy the *sangha*, or community of Shakyamuni’s followers. On the one hand, he tried to kill his mentor; on the other, he tried to undermine Shakyamuni’s bond with his disciples. In terms of precepts, Devadatta advocated monastic rules even stricter than those upheld in Shakyamuni’s order, and so tried to make himself appear superior to the Buddha. There are some discrepancies depending upon the source, but the precepts Devadatta advocated are more or less as follows:

(1) Practitioners should dwell in the woods away from villages or towns; those who enter villages or towns are committing an offense. (2) Practitioners should live on alms alone; those who accept invitations to banquets are committing an offense. (3) Practitioners should dress in rags; those who accept donated robes are committing an offense. (4) Practitioners should dwell under trees and not under a roof; those who go near a roofed abode are committing an offense. (5) Practitioners should not eat the flesh of animals or fish; those who break this precept are committing an offense.

Endo: In India at the time, practitioners who strove to curb desires were greatly respected. Therefore, Devadatta probably thought he could win a following by advocating such severe precepts.

In fact, it is said that five hundred of the Buddha's disciples were deceived by Devadatta's words and became his followers. But these people later returned to Shakyamuni after Shariputra and Maudgalyayana, two of Shakyamuni's senior disciples, reasoned with them.

Those who remained with Devadatta created an order centering around the renegade disciple. This order, which revered Devadatta as an enlightened being, is thought to have survived in Indian society for as long as a thousand years.

Suda: These strict precepts must have sounded good. Indeed they are so austere that Shakyamuni must have seemed decadent by comparison.

Ikeda: That in fact was probably

Devadatta's intention. An evil person definitely does not present a face that says, "I am evil." Rather the person will use evil wisdom and cunning to make himself appear otherwise. At a time when many people were carrying out extreme practices, it probably would have been easy to criticize Shakyamuni's practice of the Middle Way as decadent. As a matter of fact, before attaining enlightenment, Shakyamuni had rigorously pursued the limits of painful asceticism. When he rejected this path, he was severely criticized as "decadent" by five erstwhile fellow ascetics.

Naturally, Shakyamuni's order, while having a certain open-mindedness when it came to daily practice and the following of precepts a quality intrinsic to the teaching of the Middle Way no doubt maintained a spirit of the greatest austerity when it came to seeking the Way. Without a certain measure of flexibility and openness, it would not have been possible to include many different people. The purpose of Buddhist practice and of precepts is to enable many people to enter the "path of good" and guide them to happiness. To impose precepts with the express purpose of causing people to suffer is perverse. Religions that bind and restrict people with external rules prohibiting one thing after another cannot capture people's hearts. Moreover, anyone hypocritical enough to affect poverty and austerity out of personal vanity and scheming is abusing the spirit of religion.

In short, Devadatta desperately wanted to be respected more highly than Shakyamuni. He was motivated by jealousy; and it was probably for this reason that he thought up his five precepts.

Endo: At root, the idea can only

have arisen from sheer madness.

Saito: I think Devadatta was destroyed by his own jealousy.

Ikeda: Josei Toda, the second Soka Gakkai president, often said that Devadatta represented "male jealousy." He would often point out that while jealousy is usually associated with women, it is not uncommon in men, in whom it may take a particularly virulent form.

Jealousy, instead of leading to appreciation of the greatness or outstanding qualities of others, impels us to try to find fault with, injure or somehow drag the other person down. That's the fearful power of jealousy. But the net effect of jealousy is to injure and drag ourselves down. The Greek philosopher Antisthenes (445–365 B.C.) said, "As iron is eaten away by rust, so are the envious consumed by their own passion."⁴

Saito: It seems to me that the state of Japan today is no different than when Nichiren Daishonin wrote: "The men of Japan are like Devadatta" (MW-2, 255 [303]). In a country ruled by jealousy, people cannot respect greatness and they regard trying to trip others up through underhanded means as natural behavior. It's truly a sad situation.

Ikeda: Devadatta saw only that Shakyamuni was widely respected; he did not attempt to understand Shakyamuni's heart. How Shakyamuni, unbeknownst to others, must have agonized day and night over the question of how to lead people to happiness and make them aware of the treasure of their own lives! How he must have struggled to gain self-mastery! What continuous and painstaking efforts he

must have made! But Devadatta did not try to understand Shakyamuni's difficult ordeal.

Why couldn't he see this? Most likely it's because he himself had given up his own internal struggle. If we perceive our "inner evil" but neglect making efforts to conquer it, then our lives are instantaneously stained with evil. In that sense, a "good person" is someone who struggles against evil. It is by fighting the evil around us that we eradicate evil within our lives and so purify them. That is the path of human revolution.

Saito: Perceiving inner evil—this brings us to the doctrine of *ichinen sanzen* (three thousand realms in a single moment of life). The extreme evil that Devadatta represents, dwelling in the world of Hell, even exists in the life of the Buddha, a being of the utmost goodness. That's because of the mutual possession of the ten worlds and *ichinen sanzen*.

Ikeda: Exactly. In that sense, the Lotus Sutra's doctrine of *ichinen sanzen* is the ultimate philosophy of self-reflection. It is a philosophy of equality that does not permit anyone the arrogance to claim special nobility or status. It is a philosophy of the sanctity of all life.

According to *ichinen sanzen*, even a supremely benevolent being such as the Buddha possesses the nature of evil, and even a great villain like Devadatta possesses the Buddha nature. On this premise, the paths of good and evil in fact greatly diverge, going in completely opposite directions; the path we take depends on whether or not we continue struggling against evil. This is in fact the key to understanding the "Devadatta" chapter. In conclusion, a spirit of resolute

struggle against evil runs throughout the chapter.

The Buddha Turned Even Devadatta Into a "Good Friend"

Endo: I'd like to turn to the outline of the "Devadatta" chapter. Shakyamuni begins by explaining his karmic relationship from the past with Devadatta. Shakyamuni relates that he had once been the king of a great country, and that he had carried out bodhisattva practice and devoted himself to the well-being of the people, expending his life and using up his wealth without hesitation on their behalf.

Saito: He must have been a great ruler. The foundation of political governance is compassion. In fact, governing is originally bodhisattva practice.

Endo: But the king was still not satisfied, and continued searching for the Law of the Great Vehicle that could lead all people to happiness. He sought a philosophy that would make it possible to bring people true peace and tranquillity. An outstanding leader seeks a great philosophy for the people.

Suda: The sutra says that he abandoned his throne to search for such a philosophy. This is the exact opposite of the "befuddled leaders" we often see who try to control the minds of the people and use religion in their attempts to maintain their power and protect their interests.

Endo: In response to the king's seeking spirit, a seer named Asita came forth. The seer told the king that if he practiced as instructed, then he, the seer, would expound the Sutra of the Lotus of the Won-

derful Law for him. The king rejoiced and earnestly went to work serving the seer, drawing water for him, collecting firewood and performing other chores. Although he continued this practice for a period of a thousand years, because in his heart he sought the Mystic Law, he did not become fatigued in either body or mind. As a result, the king eventually attained Buddhahood.

The curious thing about this story is that although it emphasizes that the king undertook tremendous practice in service of the seer, termed "millennial service," it does not make it entirely clear whether or at what point he was taught the Lotus Sutra.

Ikeda: On this point, Nichiren Daishonin explains in the "Ongi Kuden" (Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings) that the king carried out no actions apart from these in order to receive the transmission of the Law (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 745). In other words, the Lotus Sutra is transmitted through everyday practice, through strenuous action. The Mystic Law manifests in a heart that thoroughly seeks the Mystic Law. Our practice of chanting daimoku for the happiness of ourselves and others is itself the practice of receiving, upholding and transmitting the Mystic Law.

In the present age, carrying out "millennial service" means boundlessly exerting oneself body and mind for the sake of *kosen-rufu*.

Endo: After relating this episode from his past, Shakyamuni reveals that the seer who had served as his mentor was in fact Devadatta. Further, Shakyamuni attributes the fact of his own enlightenment along with his ability to broadly lead people to happiness to the role

It is by fighting the evil around us that we eradicate evil within our lives and so purify them. That is the path of human revolution.



Devadatta played in his life as a “good friend.” He also predicts that, because of these past causes and conditions, after immeasurable kalpas have passed, Devadatta will become a Buddha called Heavenly King Thus Come One.

Saito: For Shakyamuni at the time, Devadatta was an “evil friend.” He had tried to kill Shakyamuni and disrupted the unity of Shakyamuni’s followers, creating a schism in the Buddhist order, and had a follower of Shakyamuni (the nun Utpalavarna) beaten to death. Shakyamuni reveals that in a past life this man of great evil had been a good friend. Good and evil are thus completely reversed.

More to the point, Shakyamuni explains that, incredible as it might seem, in the past Devadatta had also been his teacher. In terms of common sense, the notion that a villain like Devadatta could have been the teacher of the Buddha is unthinkable.

Suda: The line in the “Devadatta”

chapter where Shakyamuni explains his attaining Buddhahood, “The fact that I have attained impartial and correct enlightenment and can save living beings on a broad scale is all due to Devadatta, who was a good friend” (LS12, 184), seems to offer a clue. In other words, had it not been for Devadatta, then even Shakyamuni could not have become a Buddha.

The Great Teacher T’ien-t’ai of China says in the fifth volume of the *Hokke Gengi* (Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra), “Good exists in response to evil. There is no good in isolation from evil”; and, “Evil supports good. Without evil there would also be no good.”

Ikeda: That’s it exactly. Good and evil are not substances. They are relative concepts. Therefore, it cannot be said that a particular person is intrinsically good or intrinsically evil.

Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president, said, “Even a good person, if he opposes great good, immediately becomes a person of great evil. Even an evil

person, if he opposes great evil, immediately becomes a person of great good.”⁵ He used the following illustration to clarify his meaning: “Had Yen Hui (514–483 B.C.) opposed Confucius, then this sage, who was second in order of esteem, would have immediately become a person of great evil. Had Confucius (551–479 B.C.) opposed Shakyamuni, he would have immediately created effects of supreme evil.”⁶

Endo: Yen Hui was one of Confucius’ major disciples; he was a sage second in order of esteem, that is, second in wisdom only to Confucius. For Yen Hui to turn his back on Confucius would be for a person of medium good to oppose a person of great good; he would at once have turned into a person of great evil. Similarly, had Confucius opposed the Buddha, a person of supreme good, he would have become a person of supreme evil. This is the relation of good and evil.

Ikeda: But President Makiguchi also said that if Confucius, Jesus



It is like the case of a person who in a dream sees himself performing various good and evil actions. The true entity of life embodies the oneness of good and evil. Both good and evil exist in life.

Christ or Mohammed were to meet Shakyamuni, it is doubtful that they would have opposed him. He explained: "That's because they all alike disregarded the self and had no concerns apart from their desire to lead people to happiness. They were not egoists."⁷

It seems that President Makiguchi regarded leading people to happiness as the ultimate good. By contrast, the egoism that allows one to think only about personal interests is the root of evil.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi said:

Generally speaking, people who pride themselves on being good or extraordinarily good, are most concerned with whether someone superior to them in character may appear, or whether a method other than their own will be proven superior. In that case, the higher a person's position, the more likely it is that he or she will make causes of great evil or extraordinary great evil.

Had Nichiren Daishonin not

appeared, then Ryokan,⁸ Doryu⁹ and others [who were venerated by society in the Daishonin's day] would likely have ended their lives revered as living Buddhas. Unfortunately for them, unable to accept the supremacy of the Daishonin's teaching and consumed by concern for their personal interests, they became priests of the greatest evil.¹⁰

I guess they became people of evil on account of jealousy.

Saito: President Makiguchi defined "good" as public benefit. The Lotus Sutra is the teaching that enables all people to attain Buddhahood. In that sense, we can say that the Lotus Sutra aims for the greatest public benefit and the greatest good.

Ikeda: That is also the Buddha's spirit. The Buddha, therefore, is a person of supreme good. But this is not to say that there is no evil in the life of the Buddha. It exists, of course, as a potential. But because

the Buddha aims for the ultimate good and relentlessly struggles against evil, good is what manifests from his life.

Nichiren Daishonin says, "Opposing good is called evil, opposing evil is called good. Therefore, outside of the heart there is neither good nor evil" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 563). Good and evil in themselves have no substance. In other words, they are not in themselves absolute, but reflect relative distinctions. It is important, therefore, to ceaselessly direct one's heart, and take action, toward good.

The Oneness of Good and Evil

Suda: It's a bit complicated, but the writing, "The Entity of the Mystic Law" says the following with regard to this point:

The mystic principle of the true aspect of reality is like this. The mystic principle of the true aspect of reality is one, but if it encounters evil influences it will manifest delusion, while if it

encounters good influences it will manifest enlightenment. Enlightenment means enlightenment to the essential nature of phenomena, and delusion, ignorance of it.

It is like the case of a person who in a dream sees himself performing various good and evil actions. After he wakes up and considers the matter, he realizes that it was all a dream produced by his own mind. This mind of his corresponds to the single principle of the essential nature of phenomena, the true aspect of reality, while the good and evil that appeared in the dream correspond to enlightenment and delusion, or ignorance, respectively. When one becomes aware of this, it is clear that one should discard the ignorance associated with evil and delusion and take as one's basis the awakening that is characterized by goodness and enlightenment. (MW-7, 59)

The true entity of life embodies the oneness of good and evil. Both good and evil exist in life. For precisely this reason, in terms of practice we have to base ourselves on the nature of enlightenment and strive for good.

Ikeda: That's right. Buddhism is victory or defeat. It is a boundless struggle. Because Shakyamuni defeated Devadatta, Devadatta's "evil" helped prove Shakyamuni's "good." On the other hand, had Shakyamuni been defeated by evil, then it certainly would not have been possible for him to call Devadatta a good friend.

President Toda clarified this matter as follows:

Devadatta was the slanderer in Shakyamuni's lifetime; he cut all

the roots of goodness in the world. The pre-Lotus Sutra teachings say: "Without the existence of evil, wise actions of good cannot be manifested. For this reason, Devadatta had for immeasurable *kalpas* always been together with Shakyamuni, and when Shakyamuni practiced the Buddha way, Devadatta practiced injustice. In this way, they mutually inspired each other." However, once good is completely revealed, evil in its entirety becomes good. Therefore, the Lotus Sutra teaches the oneness of good and evil, the oneness of the erroneous and the true, and the oneness of a reverse relationship and a positive relationship. This is the inner doctrine that had not been revealed in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings.¹¹

If evil functions to reveal good, then evil in its entirety becomes good. This is truly the oneness of good and evil. But if evil is simply allowed to run its course, then it does not become good. Only when evil is thoroughly challenged and conquered, does it become an entity of the oneness of good and evil.

In that sense, the enlightenment of evil people presented in the "Devadatta" chapter is great proof of the victory won by Shakyamuni. It is his "victory declaration." Only when he stands in this lofty state of life as a winner, can he say that Devadatta had in a past life been a good friend and mentor, and had in this life aided his efforts to instruct people.

Saito: Isn't the point of this explanation to reveal the doctrine of life, rather than to provide specific facts about their past relationship?

Ikeda: We could say that it explains

the truth of life. Devadatta, too, in terms of the true aspect of his life, is also an entity of the oneness of good and evil. Darkness and enlightenment are two facets of the one entity of the Mystic Law. Devadatta who had been Shakyamuni's teacher in a past life was in fact the entity of the Mystic Law. Therefore, Nichiren Daishonin says, "Devadatta is another name for Myoho-rence-kyo. In a past existence, he was the seer Asita. The seer Asita is another name for the Mystic Law" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 744).

Shakyamuni attained Buddhahood with the fundamental Mystic Law as his teacher. This is what the formulation in the "Devadatta" chapter of his having practiced and attained Buddhahood under Asita in a past life expresses.

Endo: The oneness of good and evil certainly does not mean that good and evil are the same.

Suda: Such a way of thinking amounts to an affirmation of evil; it is comparable to the erroneous concept of "original enlightenment"—the notion that all people are Buddhas just as they are, without having to carry out any practice—to which the Japanese Tendai school succumbed. By contrast, the Lotus Sutra's doctrine of the oneness of good and evil is about constantly striving to create good and changing even evil into good.

Ikeda: That's right. The power of the Mystic Law enables us to change even bad friends into good friends. The strength of our ichinen of faith changes suffering into joy, into a tailwind to propel our further advance. This is what the "Devadatta" chapter teaches.

Nichiren Daishonin says: "Deva-

datta more than anyone else proved the validity of Shakyamuni's teaching. In this age as well, it is not one's friends but one's enemies who assist his progress" (MW-1, 186). To attain Buddhahood, we have to thoroughly conquer our own "inner evil." The concrete means for doing so is struggling against and defeating "external evil." Struggling to defeat evil enables us to polish and purify our lives, and attain Buddhahood. Because we strive against the ultimate evil, we attain the ultimate good.

Even ultimate evil, when viewed in terms of its essential function of enabling us to polish our lives and attain Buddhahood, can be thought of as a teacher. The point, therefore, is Shakyamuni's victorious state of life in explaining that even the supremely evil Devadatta had been his teacher in the past. Because Shakyamuni won, he could say this; because he won, he became a Buddha.

Nichiren Daishonin, likewise, having realized great victory, could say, "For me, my best allies in the attainment of enlightenment are Hei no Saemon and Regent Hojo Tokimune, as well as Tojo Kagenobu and the priests Ryokan, Doryu and Doamidabutsu. I am grateful when I think that without them I could not have proven myself the votary of the Lotus Sutra" (MW-1, 186-87). In other words, these evil people who had persecuted the original Buddha were changed into good people by his victory.

Because of the model of such struggle set by Shakyamuni and the Daishonin, we of later generations know where the correct path lies. In that sense, Devadatta, Hei no Saemon and the others functioned in part as teachers who

revealed the "path of good" for later generations.

The Soka Gakkai has struggled against and victoriously overcome all manner of persecution, repression and scheming. As a result of these struggles, we have all been able to deepen and strengthen our faith. If it were possible to accomplish kosen-rufu easily and without obstacles, then we would not have the opportunity to polish ourselves or to carry out our practice for attaining Buddhahood.

Difficulties equal advance. Earthly desires are enlightenment. The key is to use all sufferings as fuel to become happy; to use all evil as firewood to cause the light of good to burn brighter still.

Saito: My understanding of the significance of the "Devadatta" chapter has increased dramatically.

Endo: Those who heard the "Devadatta" chapter the first time it was expounded must have been rather startled.

Suda: Even if he had made sincere penance for his evil deeds, the idea of the supremely evil Devadatta receiving a prophesy of enlightenment would have been utterly unthinkable in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings.

Saito: Shakyamuni expounded the principle of the true entity of all phenomena in the "Expedient Means" chapter; so, theoretically, people must have had a sense of the doctrine of the mutual possession of the ten worlds. Still, it may be that even Shariputra, known as foremost in wisdom, did not realize that this doctrine meant that evil people and women could attain enlightenment.

Ikeda: That's right. Later in the

"Devadatta" chapter it is revealed that Shariputra has a streak of obstinacy that prevents him from believing that women can attain Buddhahood. It's often the case that even if we understand something theoretically, our lives are still dominated by darkness. Therefore, it is important to have a practice for polishing one's life.

Endo: Fundamentally, all people can equally attain Buddhahood. Since that is the spirit of the entire Lotus Sutra, it would be a contradiction if Devadatta were excluded. Rather, in terms of the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, it can be said that the prediction of enlightenment for Devadatta is necessary. Nichiren Daishonin explains that the prophesy of enlightenment for Devadatta indicates that the world of Hell also contains the world of Buddhahood (cf. MW-1, 50).

Saito: It occurs to me that since everyone has in his or her life an evil nature just as heinous as Devadatta's, if it were the case that those with evil in their lives could not attain Buddhahood, it would mean that no one could. In other words, whether evil people can attain Buddhahood is not only an issue of concern for evil people; it in fact concerns all people. This is analogous to the principle we earlier discussed in connection with the enlightenment of the people of the two vehicles, i.e., voice-hearers and *pratyekabuddhas*.

Ikeda: The doctrine of the "mutual possession of the ten worlds" indicates that evil exists even within the life of the Buddha, and that the Buddha nature exists even within the lives of evil people. This is indicated point-blank by Devadatta's attain-

The power of the Mystic Law enables us to change even bad friends into good friends. The strength of our *ichinen* of faith changes suffering into joy, into a tailwind to propel our further advance.



ment of Buddhahood. It could be said, therefore, that if Devadatta's attainment of enlightenment had not been expounded, the Lotus Sutra would not be complete.

Endo: The fixed way of thinking that the Buddha should be the polar opposite of evil, someone who has completely eradicated evil from his life, is in a sense easy to grasp. But real people have an evil nature; and it cannot be completely eradicated. Therefore, if a Buddha were entirely free of evil, then the Buddha would simply be an abstract being, a myth, making it impossible for any ordinary person to actually become a Buddha.

The Daishonin indicates this when he says, "In actual terms, before the Lotus Sutra there were only provisional Buddhas. There are no cases of real people becoming Buddhas" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 403).

Ikeda: Because the doctrine of *ichinen sanzen* had not yet been revealed, the pre-Lotus Sutra teach-

ings, even where they talk about people attaining Buddhahood, are ultimately simply words without reality; they are all talk and no substance. The Lotus Sutra is not an abstract doctrine of this kind. It has the power to actually remove the blade of suffering from people's lives and lead them to happiness. The entity of the Law of the Lotus Sutra, which is the fundamental power to help people attain Buddhahood, is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Saito: There are various ways of looking at the relation of good and evil. One is as fixed things that are in opposition to one another. This is the kind of perspective we find in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings. Another view holds that good and evil are different sides or aspects of the same entity, like the front and back sides of a coin.

Ikeda: We might surmise that the oneness of good and evil corresponds to the latter view, but it does not. If that were the case, good

and evil would be merely differences in perspective, and life itself would become static and unchanging. From that standpoint, it would be impossible to capture the dynamism and ceaseless change that is the true aspect of life.

We must recognize that the entity of life, which sometimes produces positive value and sometimes produces negative value, is essentially one. This is the true meaning.

Suda: That gives us all together three ways of looking at good and evil. These correspond to the three interpretations of the meaning of the concept of the "oneness" given by the Chinese Tendai priest Chih-li (960–1028). They are "dualism between separate entities," "dualism of the same entity" and "unity in the depth of the entity [of life]."

The view of good and evil as existing separately, such that good appears when evil is extinguished, corresponds to the first interpretation. The view of good and evil as



Mountains are formed by movements in the earth's crust. Unless we change human beings and society from the very foundation, it will be too late for humankind. Creating such change is great good; it is spreading the Lotus Sutra.

like the front and back sides of a coin corresponds to the second interpretation. The third interpretation is the view that while good and evil always manifest in opposition, they arise from the true entity of life which itself embodies the oneness of good and evil.

Ikeda: That classification is rather complex. The Daishonin says, "Anger can be found in good and evil alike" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 584). Anger directed toward evil is good. Anger that derives from egotism is evil. Anger itself cannot be called either good or evil. Good and evil are relative. It is important, therefore, that we actively seek to create "good relations."

President Makiguchi continued to conduct dialogue even in prison. He would ask, loudly enough for people in other cells to hear, "Isn't not doing good the same as doing evil?"¹² In that way, he encouraged them to think about what was going on around them.

Ordinarily, most people proba-

bly suppose that doing evil is worse than simply not doing good. Not doing evil, but not doing any good either—this is how most people in the modern age live. But President Makiguchi argued that not to do good is the same as doing evil.

To illustrate, let us say that someone places a rock on a railroad track. That is evil. Let us say that someone else sees the rock on the tracks but fails to alert anyone to the situation, and just lets the rock be. It may well be true that this person has not committed evil; but neither has he done any good. If as a result of his inaction the train gets derailed, then it is the same as if he had committed evil.¹³

Not to fight against evil is itself evil. It was with this conviction that Mr. Makiguchi taught the importance of leading a life of "actively creating good." A conviction he put into practice.

He also argued that the accumulation of minor good is ultimately to no avail. "It has been said that the accumulation of particles of

dust will form a mountain, but at most all you can create from specks of dust is a mound of dust."¹⁴ President Makiguchi had an interesting way of putting things; and his words were really on the mark. He concluded: "Mountains are formed by movements in the earth's crust. Unless we change human beings and society from the very foundation, it will be too late for humankind. Creating such change is great good; it is spreading the Lotus Sutra."

Saito: In other words, not fighting against evil is the same as committing evil. It seems to me that this is a shrill warning to the people of the present age, who are inclined to live their lives oblivious to what is going on around them.

Ikeda: That was certainly the attitude of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–68), leader of the American civil rights movement. Dr. King believed those who stood by quietly in the face of evil were aiding and abetting evil; and that not to

President Makiguchi argued that not to do good is the same as doing evil.

oppose evil was to comply with it.

Suda: I have had the privilege of visiting some Asian countries. I sense that President Makiguchi's idea of leading a life of "active good" holds a strong attraction for many SGI members in these countries. In particular, throughout the world, there is a great deal of vagueness and ambiguity surrounding the question of just what good and evil are. I think that under such circumstances the Buddhist ideal of "actively creating good" is like a beacon in the fog.

Ikeda: Exactly. We must be careful lest this age, which is largely devoid of philosophy and ideology, give way to a dangerous era in which egoism is allowed to run amok. We must not allow nihilism to prevail. We have to show people a sure "path of life" and bring about the ascendance of a sun of hope.

Many philosophical arguments have been made about good and evil in both past and present, East and West. Without going into

these various perspectives, the point that life is the objective and the "end" and must not be turned into a "means" is key; this is the major premise. To enrich this supremely noble life and make it shine is good; whereas to turn life into a means and cause it to contract is evil.

Also, unity is good while fragmentation is evil. The highest good, therefore, is to help people open up the world of Buddhahood in their lives, and to forge a global solidarity of good will. The movement for peace, culture and education based on Buddhism, that is to say, the movement of *kosen-rufu*, accords entirely with this objective. Carrying out these activities means putting the principle of the oneness of good and evil, in which even evil is incorporated into good, into dynamic practice.

The point is to advance while intently reflecting on, and grappling to overcome, the self; to defeat one's inner weaknesses and advance. When we do so, we are truly reading the "Devadatta" chapter. In the final

analysis, the bitter struggle between Shakyamuni and Devadatta is contained within each of our lives. When we understand the sutra in this light we are reading it from the standpoint of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) compares the function of evil to the banks of a river. The river banks are obstructions, but they are necessary for keeping the river on track and flowing steadily in a forward direction. Without banks, the river would overflow, carving out a path of destruction instead of creating value.¹⁵

Like the river, let us use every obstruction to our benefit as we continue our "boundless struggle" against evil. Let us strive to further increase the volume of water in the "river of good," and extend its flow worldwide.

(To be continued)

Illustrations by Larry Ashton

1. Ajatashatru: King of Magadha in Shakyamuni's time. Under his reign, Magadha became the most powerful kingdom in India at that time. Later in life, he converted to Buddhism.
 2. These consisted of lectures on each of the eight volumes of the Lotus Sutra held morning and evening over four successive days.
 3. The fifth volume of the Lotus Sutra includes the "Devadatta" (12th), "Encouraging Devotion" (13th), "Peaceful Practices" (14th), and "Emerging from the Earth" (15th) chapters.
 4. *The Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims, and Famous Phrases*, ed. Burton Stevenson

(New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1948), p. 701.
 5. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi) (Tokyo: Daisan Bummeisha, 1987), vol. 10, p. 31.
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
 7. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Shingenshu* (Collection of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's Sayings), ed. Takehisa Tsuji (Tokyo: Daisan Bummeisha, 1979), p. 169.
 8. Ryokan (1217–1303): A priest of the Shingon-Ritsu school during the Kamakura period.
 9. Doryu (1213–1278): A priest of Rinzai school of Zen, also called Rankei. In 1246,

he came to Japan from China. He opposed the Daishonin and, with Ryokan and others, plotted against him.
 10. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Shingenshu*, p. 169.
 11. *Toda Josei Zenshu*, vol. 6, p. 360–61.
 12. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Zenshu*, vol. 10, p. 30.
 13. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Shingenshu*, p. 184.
 14. *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo Shingenshu*, p. 23.
 15. Cf. Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 47.



A driver rests on his bicycle rickshaw outside Red Fort, New Delhi, India.

AT first glance, you know when you have met a great person who has overcome life-and-death struggles. So it was at my first meeting with India's Dr. Bishambhar Nath Pande, a direct disciple of Mahatma Gandhi (1868–1948). Our minds instantly reached out to each other, and I knew I had met a person of outstanding humanity. In the solid

faith and commitment that radiated from his being, he was like a rock; in his profound spiritual depth, he was like the ocean. As we talked more and I came to know him better, that impression only grew stronger.

He is, together with the late Brazilian Academy of Letters President Austregésilo de Athayde, one of the great champions of

human rights of our times. There are no more respectable people; we must not fail to commend and value them.

Making the trip all the way to Japan in 1992 in spite of his advanced age (this year [1995] he will turn 89), Dr. Pande shared his family history with me—a family history that is like an account of the Indian struggle for indepen-

Daisaku Ikeda's Recollections of World Figures

Dr. B. N. Pande—An Indomitable Champion of Human Rights

struggle and one disappeared. His grandfather, the only remaining son, was later executed. On the very day his body was brought back to the family home, Dr. Pande's father was born.

Shortly thereafter, all of the family's property was confiscated and they were driven out of their village. Many of the surviving family members were women and children. They hid during the day and traveled on foot at night.

Tragedy struck when Dr. Pande's father was 1 year old. Early in the afternoon, after taking lodging in a certain village, Dr. Pande's grandmother took his father down to a stream to wash. While they were there, British forces attacked the village, burning the houses and the people inside. Thirty-five of the Pande family members were killed. Only Dr. Pande's grandmother and her infant son survived.

Mother and child lived on, undergoing indescribable hard-

ships. How could they forget such sorrow and rage? Because of it, Dr. Pande's father grew up to fight for freedom, too.

In the same way, Dr. Pande grew up with his father's and grandfather's righteous anger carved into his bones. In fact, on the day that Dr. Pande was born (December 23, 1906), his father was in prison.

What prevented Dr. Pande from allowing his anger to turn toward violent revolution and from ending up condemned to death by the authorities like his grandfather? Looking back, Dr. Pande attributes this to two special meetings.

The first encounter was with the poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) when Dr. Pande was a young boy. From Tagore, the young Pande learned three things: about the world, about the love of humanity, and about Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Pande's second meeting was with Gandhi himself—a meeting that changed his life. From Gandhi, he learned

dence in miniature. Dr. Pande told me how his grandfather was executed for his involvement in the independence movement.

In 1857, Dr. Pande's ancestors joined in an uprising of Indian soldiers that formed in response to unbearably cruel oppression from the British government. His grandfather was one of seven children; of the seven, five were killed in the

about nonviolence and the nobility of working alongside and for the people.

Tagore represented a garden of culture, while Gandhi personified the great earth of humanity.

The Indian independence movement grew in intensity. It came to a head in the first month (of the Hindu calendar) in 1919. The British fired on a meeting of civilians in the Punjab; the injured and dead numbered more than fifteen hundred. The Indian people had reached the limits of their endurance. They could no longer accept a government that killed people with impunity, as if they were no more than flies. The youthful Dr. Pande's blood surged. He determined to join Gandhi in the struggle.

IT was on an April afternoon in spring of 1921. Fourteen-year-old Pande, letter of introduction from Tagore in hand, visited Gandhi at his ashram. Gandhi, 51 at the time, looked the boy over slowly from head to toe. He asked the young Pande if he really wanted to live in the ashram. "Yes, of course," was the answer. Confirming that Pande was of the Brahman class, he entrusted the boy into a caretaker's keeping. He then asked the man to raise the boy well, specifying that Pande's first responsibility be cleaning toilets. In India, it was unthinkable that someone from a high caste as the Brahman would ever perform such a task!

Dr. Pande commented that in later years he was deeply grateful to Gandhi for assigning him to clean toilets. He realized that his mentor was determined to eliminate any feeling of superiority that young Brahman child might have felt toward his fellow Indians. Thus, Gandhi's actions as a mentor taught Dr. Pande to empathize with the oppressed.

Gandhi constantly taught his followers never to be alienated from the people, to always enter their midst, and to work for them; to devote oneself to them and serve them; and to become one of them by being their friend and their companion. He taught this all by his own example.

YET there were times when these teachings of Gandhi were not actualized by his followers. For instance, Gandhi lamented that when someone became a member of the national assembly, he or she tended to break away from the common people. But Dr. Pande was different. Even when he later became governor of the state of Orissa (1983–88), he was praised for sharing everything with the people and for living as one of them and experiencing their joys and sorrows, laughter and tears.

I understand Dr. Pande's feelings: his pride and joy is to live his life exactly as his mentor taught him. When his mentor, Gandhi, loved by millions, praised Dr. Pande's efforts, it was as if he, too, was praised by those millions. Is there any greater glory than this?

Young Pande devoted himself to work with his mentor. At age 15, one year after his meeting with Gandhi, Dr. Pande spent six months in jail. Altogether, he has been imprisoned eight times, for a total of nearly ten years.

He lived through tumultuous times. His boyhood was spent commuting between prison and Tagore's school. As he grew into a youth, he witnessed abominable cruelty and the arrogance of those in power. Yet, at the same time, he saw the nobility of the people, who had abandoned all fear.

During the massacre in Peshawar,

for instance, more than 400 were killed, but not one of them took a bullet in the back. Under the barrage of British fire, they marched forward, ever forward. In another state, ten children were strung upside down from trees by British soldiers. They hung there, nearly unconscious and bleeding from the nose and mouth. However, when Dr. Pande approached, he could hear them whispering in weak voices, like the sound of a mosquito's hum, "Long live the revolution."

In 1932, there was a general strike to protest Gandhi's imprisonment. Dr. Pande and the other people of the town lay down in front of the British soldiers. The officers beat the demonstrators with clubs, and the mounted police trampled them. Dr. Pande's knee was broken — to this day, it has not completely healed. Even this could not deter them.

Gandhi's power was his "great soul" (lit. mahatma) that could transform the people into heroes. When Gandhi passed through a crowd, people's hearts were purified, and all fear evaporated.

WHEN a mentor and his disciple are united in spirit, unbelievable courage, strength and compassion emanate from their lives. The relationship between Gandhi and his followers was a great experiment, a great demonstration, which unfolded during the passionate struggle for freedom.

In 1942, Dr. Pande went to East Bengal. Five young girls were at the head of a demonstration of a thousand people. "Disperse or we'll shoot!" shouted the British commander. But the girls did not run away. The girl in the lead, who was carrying the flag, was shot: Within thirty seconds, twenty-eight bullets were fired into her frail body, and



SGI President Ikeda met with a champion of human rights, Dr. Bishambhar Nath Pande, a direct disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, in Japan in 1992.

she fell. Immediately, the next girl picked up the flag—she was also shot. The third, then the fourth, and the fifth girl in turn took up the flag and each was shot down. All died grasping the flag to her heart. When the last girl was struck down, the flag was still waving.

When independence was finally declared, Dr. Pande said that he didn't have the heart to celebrate. The cost, the sacrifice, had been too cruel.

We must also never forget the tears that have been shed. Our freedom today, too, owes much to those who fought bravely against oppression and laid down their lives in the struggle.

Gandhi taught Dr. Pande to be a soldier in the army of the spirit of nonviolence, and to spare himself no hardship for the sake of practicing its tenets. Dr. Pande replied by keeping up the struggle long after his mentor's death. Gandhi's goal—to wipe away the tears from every eye that cries—has not yet been achieved; the light he kindled must not be allowed to be extinguished.

Dr. Pande did not forget that the women who marched in the

Salt March never dropped their salt, no matter how many times they were beaten by the British. They held onto their fist of salt with their last ounce of strength, even as they drifted from consciousness in the hospital. In their hands, they were holding onto the dream of the day when the people, who had been oppressed for so long, would claim final victory.

Dr. Pande confided to me that if he were only twenty years younger, he would like to work with and support me more actively in the struggle for world peace. He declared that he understood how great were the difficulties I had experienced, because he had also been fighting those same difficulties throughout his life. When I heard his words, a strong emotion passed over me. "Your words," I said, "are the greatest support I could ever hope for."

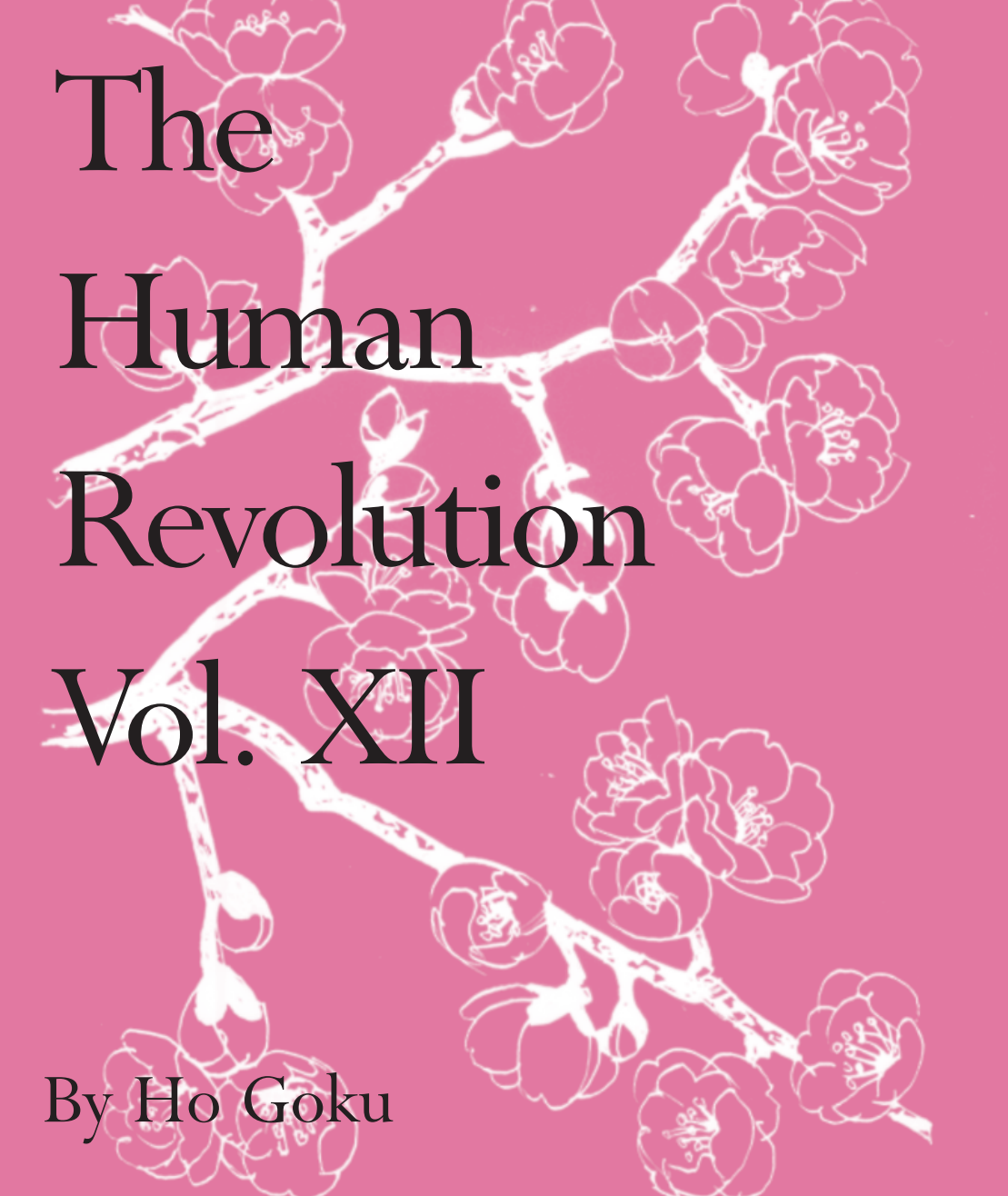
I was moved by Dr. Pande's integrity and earnestness. What a contrast from the majority of leaders, who only use their positions to further their own interests and

protect their privileges! The vow to serve others that he took as a young boy still burns brightly in his heart.

Dr. Pande then offered an important insight. Gandhi, he said, practiced the teachings of Shakyamuni as a means to transform society. He went on to say that Buddhism originally declined in India because the priests grew too wealthy and became corrupt. However, Dr. Pande believes at the present time that the SGI is bringing the message of both Shakyamuni and Gandhi to society around the world through action.

Before he died, Gandhi said that if his spirit could serve as a light to the world, he would go on speaking even from his grave. These last words have come true. Through the person of Dr. Pande, who embodies his mentor's spirit, Gandhi still speaks to us today.

Dr. Pande looked me straight in the eye and declared that, as Gandhi's disciple, he would not let his mentor's cry fade, but he would continue to fight, keeping his message alive until the last day of his life. □



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 concludes volume twelve.

He felt as if his mentor was warmly smiling down upon him. As he gazed at the picture, tears welled in his eyes. Shin'ichi Yamamoto proceeded to the stage, fighting to hold back the rising flood of emotion.



New Dawn 18

JOSEI Toda had enabled countless ordinary people to awaken to their mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth. By accomplishing a Soka Gakkai membership of 750,000 households, he had shown how to actualize the emergence from the earth depicted in the Lotus Sutra of bodhisattvas equal in number to the sands of 60,000 Ganges rivers. His achievement amounted to a fulfillment of the Lotus Sutra's prophecy, proof that Toda had directly inherited Nichiren Daishonin's spirit.

The challenge now awaiting Shin'ichi as Soka Gakkai president and heir to Mr. Toda's legacy would be actualizing this vision of countless bodhisattvas "emerging from the earth" throughout the world.

When individuals awaken to their innate mission as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, it imparts to their lives a deep and essential meaning. This awareness is the pivot on which human revolution turns—transforming people's lives, directing

them toward the creation of value and enabling them to change the most painful karma into the most wonderful mission. When individuals strive to fulfill their unique mission, they accomplish a sublime human revolution within, which can ultimately transform the destiny of an entire nation.

One after another, Shin'ichi recalled the faces of dear and familiar members. Each possessed a wondrous mission. All were children of the Buddha who had emerged from the earth, gathering from the various reaches of the universe, heroes ready to perform a grand drama of human revolution.

With these comrades in faith, Shin'ichi vowed, he would open a new page in the annals of kosen-rufu. He awaited the day of their new departure together, praying that all, without a single exception, would fulfill their mission for kosen-rufu and achieve lives of great and abundant happiness.

When that momentous day came, the May air was fresh and

the sky cloudless, the rain from the night before having completely lifted. The trees lining the streets bore fresh green leaves that shimmered beautifully in the brilliant sunlight.

On May 3, 1960, the 22nd Soka Gakkai Spring General Meeting, at which Shin'ichi Yamamoto was to be inaugurated as the third president of the Soka Gakkai, was held at the Nihon University Auditorium in Ryogoku, Tokyo.

The meeting was declared open at noon and the opening procession got under way, accompanied by the stirring strains of a Gakkai song. The 203 flags of the young men's and young women's division corps were followed into the auditorium by the flag of the Gakkai Headquarters, after which the new president, Shin'ichi Yamamoto, made his entrance. The eyes of the more than 20,000 members present were all riveted on him. He looked up at the photograph of President Toda that hung above center stage. To the left and right

**Shin'ichi inwardly pledged: "Sensei, following in your footsteps,
I now begin my great lifelong struggle for the Law. Transcending
life and death, I will march forth boldly on a journey for world
kosen-rufu in which I will spread the Daishonin's Buddhism
to the farthest reaches of India."**

of the photograph hung short *waka* poems by Toda inscribed in striking black calligraphy. The one on the right caught Shin'ichi's eye. It read:

Now, let us set out on a journey
Our hearts emboldened
To spread the Mystic Law
To the farthest reaches
Of India.¹

He fondly remembered the poem, which Josei Toda had composed in the New Year of 1952, the year after his inauguration as president, to express his commitment and determination to widely spread the Mystic Law throughout the world.

Gazing at the picture of his late mentor, Shin'ichi inwardly pledged: "Sensei, following in your footsteps, I now begin my great lifelong struggle for the Law. Transcending life and death, I will march forth boldly on a journey for world kosen-rufu in which I will spread the Daishonin's Buddhism to the farthest reaches of India. Please wait and see."

He felt as if his mentor was warmly smiling down upon him. As he gazed at the picture, tears welled in his eyes.

Shin'ichi Yamamoto proceeded to the stage, fighting to hold back the rising flood of emotion.

New Dawn 19

AFTER Shin'ichi was seated, Soka Gakkai Director Hisao Seki gave the opening words. When Seki mentioned the inauguration of the new president, cheers and loud applause erupted.

After a progress report from Kazumasa Morikawa, words from outgoing general director Takeo Konishi and an introduction of the new president by Koichi Harayama, Shin'ichi Yamamoto finally rose to deliver his inaugural speech.

An explosion of joy and a storm of applause rocked the auditorium. It was the day—the moment—they had all been waiting for. Now, in reply to their long and cherished hope, before them stood their new president, Shin'ichi Yamamoto. The air was filled with anticipation of a great, fresh surge of progress toward kosen-rufu. Hearts pounding with excitement, the members silently awaited Shin'ichi's words.

"Though I am young, from this day I will take leadership as a representative of President Toda's disciples and advance with you another step toward the substantive realization of kosen-rufu...."

His voice resounded with strength and dignity. It was a lion's roar, signaling a new dawn for the spread of the Law. The members' applause, expressing their desire to

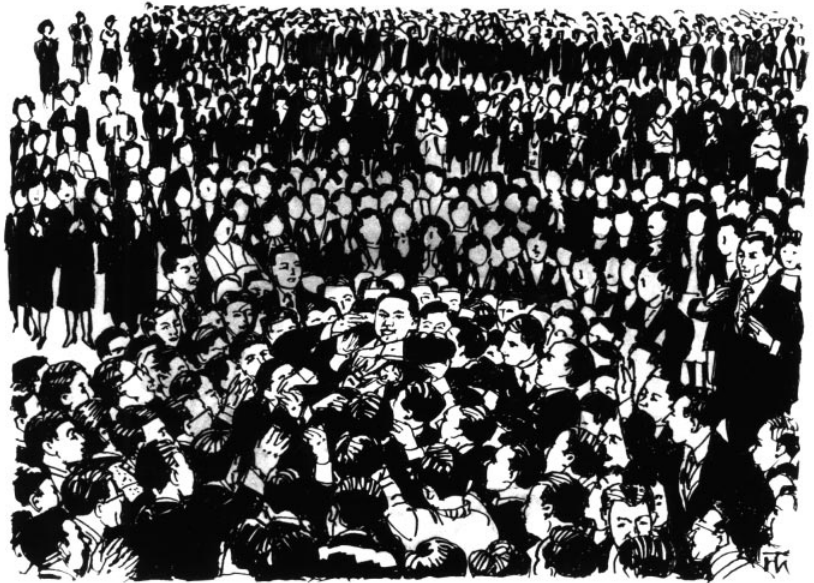
share in this struggle, echoed through the auditorium like surging waves of joy. The moment marked a powerful new departure into the vast and open seas of world peace and human happiness.

Attending the general meeting was also High Priest Nittatsu, who announced: "In his treatise 'The Opening of the Eyes,' our founder, Nichiren Daishonin, wrote, 'This I will state. Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will give my life for the sake of the Law' (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 174). These are the words I wish to dedicate to Mr. Shin'ichi Yamamoto, the third president of the Soka Gakkai, on this occasion of his inauguration."

Shin'ichi etched this golden statement deeply into his life. A passionate determination to selflessly devote his life to spreading the Law surged through his entire being.

The meeting drew to a close amid an atmosphere of jubilation. Later, as the celebration that followed was about to end and Shin'ichi was preparing to exit, a great cheer suddenly erupted as a surging crowd of youth swept toward him. Grabbing hold of him, they lifted Shin'ichi above their heads and began tossing him into the air. The joy of these youth, who

Grabbing hold of him, they lifted Shin'ichi above their heads and began tossing him into the air. The joy of these youth, who had long been awaiting their new president, was explosive.



had long been awaiting their new president, was explosive.

"Long live President Yamamoto!" someone in the ring of youth surrounding the group that was tossing Shin'ichi cried out at the top of his lungs, throwing his arms vigorously up in the air and practically jumping off his feet as he did so.

The rest joined in, yelling, "Banzai! Banzai! (Long life! Long life!)"

Their cheers echoed outward like a tidal wave, and a roaring torrent of applause reverberated in the vast domed space above them. Faces glowed with happiness, and cheeks glistened with tears of joy.

Light streaming in from one of the auditorium's high windows bathed Shin'ichi's form as he was tossed into the air amid a sea of outstretched hands. It conjured images of a graceful young whale leaping into the air, diving powerfully through the churning waters.

It was an unrestrained celebration of the departure of a gallant youth on a glorious, tumultuous voyage to the new century. Shin'ichi's heart was as

fresh and clear as a perfectly cloudless sky. He brimmed with fighting spirit, and a sun-like sense of mission burned with intense brilliance inside him, illuminating the clear skies of his heart with a golden light.

(End)

Dedicated to my late mentor, Josei Toda

By his disciple, Daisaku Ikeda

EPILOGUE

CHERRY blossoms danced in the wind, as if bidding a final farewell. The day of my mentor's funeral, and how I stood, with a thousand emotions in my heart, gazing up at the blue sky spreading out beyond the delicately falling cherry blossoms, remains indelibly etched in my memory.

On April 2, 1958, my mentor, Josei Toda, passed away peacefully at the age of 58. His life had been

as pure, noble and fresh as those cherry blossoms.

My mentor had struggled against the cruel oppression of the military government and stood alone in a war-ravaged, defeated Japan to build a citadel of peace for all humanity. He took up the cause of kosen-rufu in exact accord with the will of Nichiren Daishonin, bringing the Daishonin's Buddhism to life in an age when it was on the verge of perishing. He dove into the anguished, suffering masses of the people. Talking with them, sharing their laughter and their tears, he lit the torch of happiness for 750,000 households.

But this peerless leader of Buddhism was not understood by his contemporaries in Japanese society. Instead, we might say that his life ended in the midst of misunderstanding and defamation toward him.

In my youth, I vowed to create a written record that would convey the truth about my mentor. This was because I had resolved in my heart that my mission as his disciple

Ultimately, President Toda's life itself was an example of a single individual's sublime human revolution; I was convinced that chronicling it would make it possible for multitudes of people to pursue that same path.... In one sense, through writing *The Human Revolution* I have kept up a day-to-day dialogue with my mentor.

was to declare my teacher's magnificent accomplishments to the world. I felt that unless his selfless struggle to propagate the Law was properly communicated, transmitting this Buddhism to future generations would be impossible.

Ultimately, President Toda's life itself was an example of a single individual's sublime human revolution; I was convinced that chronicling it would make it possible for multitudes of people to pursue that same path.

Soon after Mr. Toda passed away, I began to formulate the concept for this work. What troubled me most was where to begin.

Under the pen name "Myo Goku," President Toda had written and published a single-volume novel titled *The Human Revolution* in which he depicted himself as the main character, named Mr. Gan. That novel ended with Gan's realization in prison that he was a Bodhisattva of the Earth who had been present at the Ceremony in the Air described in the Lotus Sutra, and with his determination to embrace the noble mission of widely propagating the Law as his own personal calling and lifework. In this way, my mentor committed to writing the state of life he had attained through his awakening in prison.

TO be aware of one's mission as a Bodhisattva of the Earth gives essential meaning to one's existence, inspires an awakening to one's genuine humanity and becomes a supreme source of value-creation for one's life. It also serves as a motivating force to transform the lesser self, which is bound by self-concern, in the direction of altruism, allowing for the establishment of a greater self capable of embracing all humanity. Wanting to teach us that herein lies the ultimate principle known as "human revolution," my late mentor thus set out to record his own experience in the form of a novel.

After his release from prison on July 3, 1945, he put into practice the profound determination he had arrived at, and in the process revealed the concrete means for achieving human revolution.

For this reason, with the intention that my novel *The Human Revolution* be a continuation of President Toda's, I decided to begin writing from the point of his release from prison.

I announced my aim to begin writing this novel on the occasion of my mentor's seventh memorial service (marking the sixth anniversary of his death) in 1964, and

began work on the first installment while in Okinawa on December 2 of that year.

Twenty-eight years have passed since then, and now at last this twelfth and final volume is in the process of being published in book form. I completed the manuscript on November 24 last year (1992), with the inscription, "Dedicated to my late mentor, Josei Toda. By his disciple, Daisaku Ikeda." As I wrote this, I envisioned my mentor's smiling face. I am uncertain about how adequately I have been able to record the whole truth of my great teacher's life, but I nevertheless now savor the profound joy of having fulfilled one of my duties as a disciple.

In one sense, through writing *The Human Revolution* I have kept up a day-to-day dialogue with my mentor. Particularly in writing this twelfth volume, which chronicles President Toda's life from August 1957 up through his death, there were many times when I, recalling those final days, found myself swept by powerful emotions. During that period, though he was growing weaker with each passing day, he summoned forth death-defying energy and mounted his final struggle for kosen-rufu. Aware of his own approaching death, he waged a

sublime battle against the limitations of his own mortality.

In the midst of this struggle, on September 8, 1957, he delivered his historic "Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons" at the Mitsuzawa Athletics Stadium in Yokohama. This constituted the first of his final prescripts to his successors for the sake of the future.

Then, that November, President Toda collapsed from illness while preparing to make a trip to Hiroshima to encourage the members there. The day before, he had strictly admonished me for trying to dissuade him from going. "As an emissary of the Buddha, I can't turn my back on something once I've decided to do it! I will go, even if it kills me!" This cry, which arose from his fervent fighting spirit, still echoes in my mind.

Mr. Toda's deep, indomitable resolution even forced aside the devilish functions of illness. As if by a miracle, he regained his health and, in March the following year, took leadership of a month-long general pilgrimage to celebrate the completion at the head temple of the Grand Lecture Hall. By way of the ceremony of March 16 held during that pilgrimage, he entrusted to the youth of the Soka Gakkai, of which I was then one, full responsibility for the future of kosen-rufu. Only a short time later, he passed away.

During that time at the head temple, President Toda kept me constantly by his side, pouring his life into training and tutoring me until the very end. Each of those days remains for me a rich and

glowing golden memory. Each word my mentor uttered at that time contains his will and testament to us, and serves as an eternal guide to illuminate the future.

Indeed, the record of President Toda's life and achievements portrayed in this twelfth volume is significant in that it constitutes the period of his life that is most essential to be conveyed to posterity. It is imbued with numerous and splendid guidelines and instructions that will be applicable for countless generations to come.

ORIGINALLY, I had intended to finish Volume 12 of *The Human Revolution* with the events surrounding President Toda's death. But I felt that would have been far too sad. Considering that my mentor's spirit had grown into a great river of kosen-rufu, and that that flow must be perpetuated, I felt I should somehow end this volume with a ray of hope for the future. It was with this in mind that I added the chapter "New Dawn," ending with Shin'ichi Yamamoto's inauguration as the third president of the Soka Gakkai. For this reason, the length of the manuscript for Volume 12 surpasses that of previous volumes, and I hope the reader will excuse this additional abundance of text.

President Toda passed away at the age of 58; were he alive today, he would be 93 as of this writing. Now I, his disciple, having myself suffered from illness and a weak constitution, have surpassed him in years. I can only feel that he has

bequeathed the remaining portion of his life to me. What I feel I must do now is fight on in my mentor's stead for the sake of world peace and the happiness of humankind, survive, and fulfill my mission in this life. This is the path I must follow as a disciple, to repay my debt of gratitude to my mentor. It is the path of human revolution that he forged for us. As I proceed along this lofty and noble path of the Soka Gakkai, President Toda continues to live on in my heart. I can only pray that he will live on forever in the hearts and minds of all our fellow members.

Finally, I wish to thank from the bottom of my heart all of those who have offered their dedicated effort and support to this project, including master artists like Mr. Teikichi Miyoshi, who has contributed illustrations since the very first installment of *The Human Revolution* series, the late Mr. Ryushi Kawabata and Mr. Kaii Higashiyama, both of whom worked on cover design.

The Author

February 11, 1993

The day of my mentor's birth

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(This concludes Volume XII, the final volume of *The Human Revolution*.)

Illustrations by Teikichi Miyoshi

1. India: Japanese *Gasshi*, literally "Land of the Moon." In his writings, Nichiren Daishonin refers to the eventual spread of Buddhism from

Japan, the "Land of the Sun," back to India, the place of its origins. This indicates the worldwide propagation of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

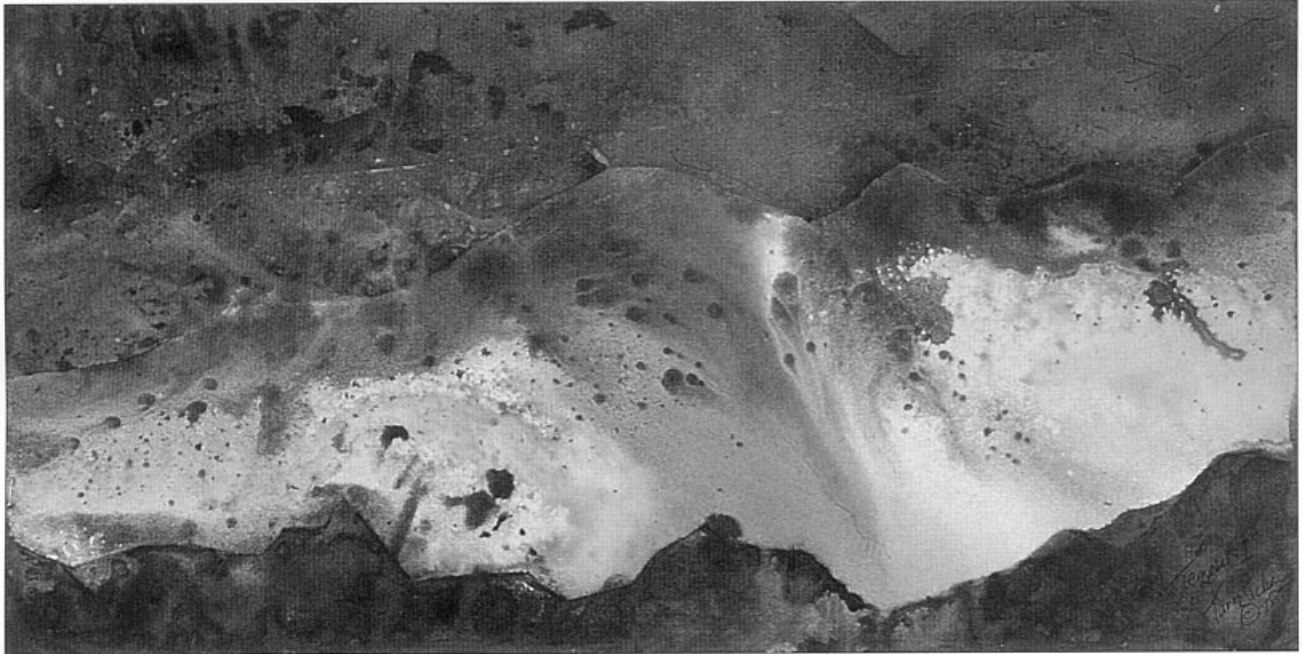
Tary Socha: The Search for Spontaneous Creation and Expression

Los Angeles Artist



I AM an innovative contemporary artist exploring unconventional images and techniques in mixed media, collage and acrylic painting. I am committed to experimentation and a dynamic and unique expression of my own view of the natural environment with unexpected color, texture and energy. Through my work, I intend to uplift and brighten the spirit of the viewer and cause them to ques-

Three Peaks, ©1996,
mixed media on strathmore board,
30 x 40 in.



Tempest I, ©1995, ink on strathmore board, 10 x 20 in.

tion their own perspective of nature and life.

My images are abstractions and impressions of earth, sky, sea and other mysterious phenomena. My work depicts mountains, reefs, submerged turbulent waters and an ethereal aspect of other worldliness. Yet the overall impression of my recent work is bright and warm, evoking a sense of whimsy, wonder and discovery.

My creative life began as early as I can remember, at age 4, helping my grandfather paint in his studio. I have always been fascinated by the way images emerge on the canvas, captured from some mysterious place. My art and my life have been a search for that ethereal source of spontaneous creation and expression, and an exploration of connecting to it and sharing it with others. As a Buddhist, I have discovered that source within myself, and I am inspired to reveal that spirit and reflect the interconnectedness of all things to others

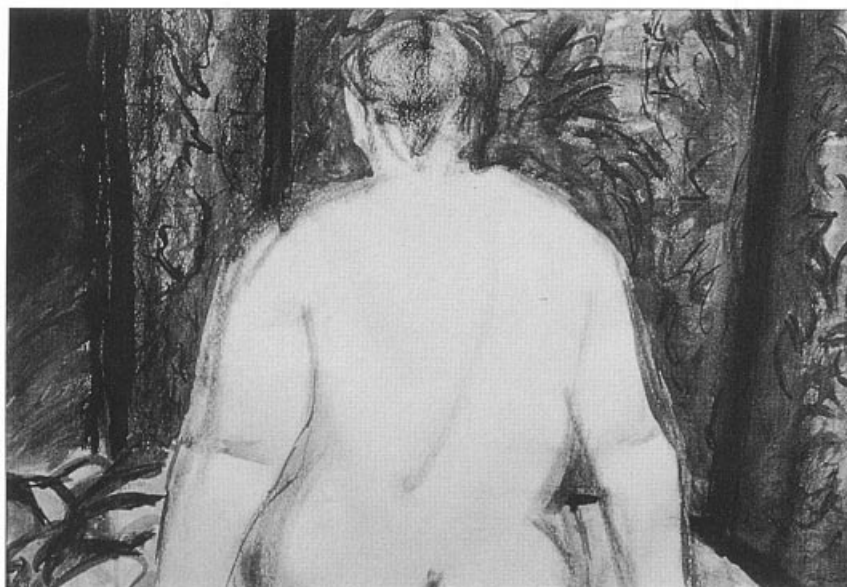
through my images.

I received my bachelor of fine arts degree from Rockford College, in Rockford, Ill., majoring in drawing and fiber art. After college I continued my studies in workshops in Santa Fe, N.M. For two years I worked as a commissioned artist on the famous "Canyon Road" in Santa Fe, assisting other artists while working additional jobs to make ends meet. Eventually I found little time to work on my own art, and the years as a "starving artist" became difficult and less than fully satisfying. I was distressed about my inability to support myself as an artist, so I moved to Los Angeles and went to law school.

ALTHOUGH I progressed and grew immensely through the hard work necessary to finish law school, pass the bar exam and begin a new career as a lawyer, I continued to feel a vague sense of dissatisfaction. I was missing

something essential to my life, but did not know what it was. Then in 1983, a secretary at the law firm where I worked invited me to attend a Buddhist meeting. I was drawn to the brightness and energy of the participants and the objectives of advancing peace and culture. As I continued in my Buddhist practice and study of Buddhist principles, my own perspectives transformed. My creative spirit was renewed, my desire to be a self-supporting artist was rekindled and a new, bright energetic spirit appeared in my art. I continued my artistic development by attending workshops with professional artists and working in my home studio. As a result, I have developed a uniqueness of personal style that artists strive for.

Movement and fluidity are essential aspects of my work. My experimental techniques use a variety of unconventional objects as painting tools, and the act of creating is as important as the result-



Nude III, ©1975,
mixed media on paper, 22 x 30 in.

ing work of art. Each painting is a record of the creative process, freezing the moment in time. As a result of my experimental techniques, often the images appear to be embossed or collages when, in fact, they are not.

Wassily Kandinsky, Georgia O'Keefe and Jackson Pollack have shaped my development as an artist. Although I am influenced by Kandinsky's sense of color and abstraction, O'Keefe's vast skies and earth images, and Pollack's unconventional method, my work maintains the unique quality and energy of who I am.

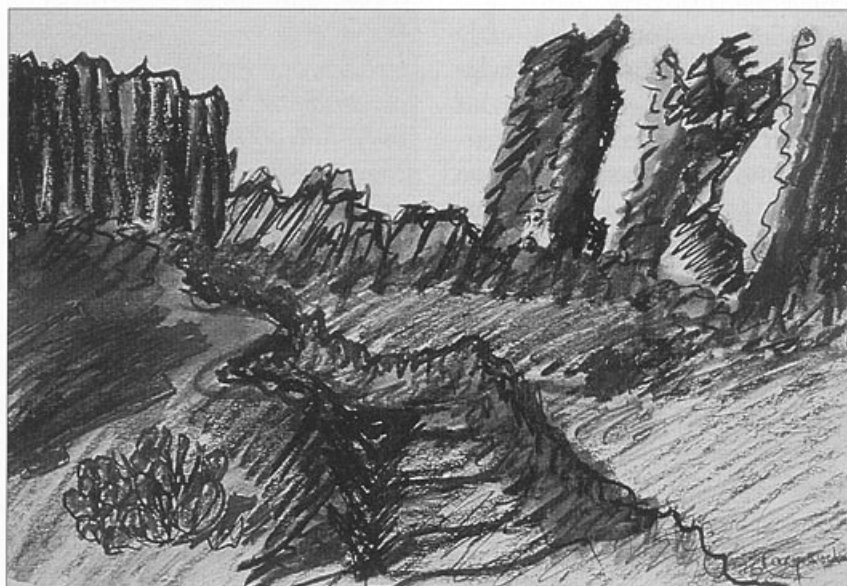
In the past few years, I have participated in several group exhibits at galleries in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas; I have held two studio exhibition events; and I have participated in numerous art fairs throughout Southern California.

My work is included in private art collections in Australia, Japan, New Zealand and throughout the United States. I recently have published limited editions of a few of my images, and I am now developing a listing on the Internet.

ALSO, during the past few years, I have continued to work as an attorney on a free-lance or on assignment basis. This has enabled me to seriously pursue my work in art at a professional level.

I am often encouraged by the excerpt from *The New Human Revolution*, when Daisaku Ikeda writes: "Buddhism is a teaching of unsurpassed reason. Therefore, the strength of one's faith must manifest itself in the form of studying, exercising one's ingenuity and making twice as much effort as anyone else....It is important that we establish clear and concrete goals for what we hope to achieve each day and then pray and challenge ourselves to achieve each one. This earnest determination will give rise to wisdom and resourcefulness, thereby leading to success. In short, to win in life we need determination and prayer, effort and ingenuity."

As my career as an artist continues to develop and prosper, I am determined to bring to those who view my art a bright, energetic, hopeful spirit. □



untitled, ©1976,
mixed media on paper, 12 x 18 in.



Serenity Reef, © 1996, dyptych, mixed media on strathmore board, total size 30 x 41 in.



Splash, © 1994, ink on strathmore board, 30 x 20 in.



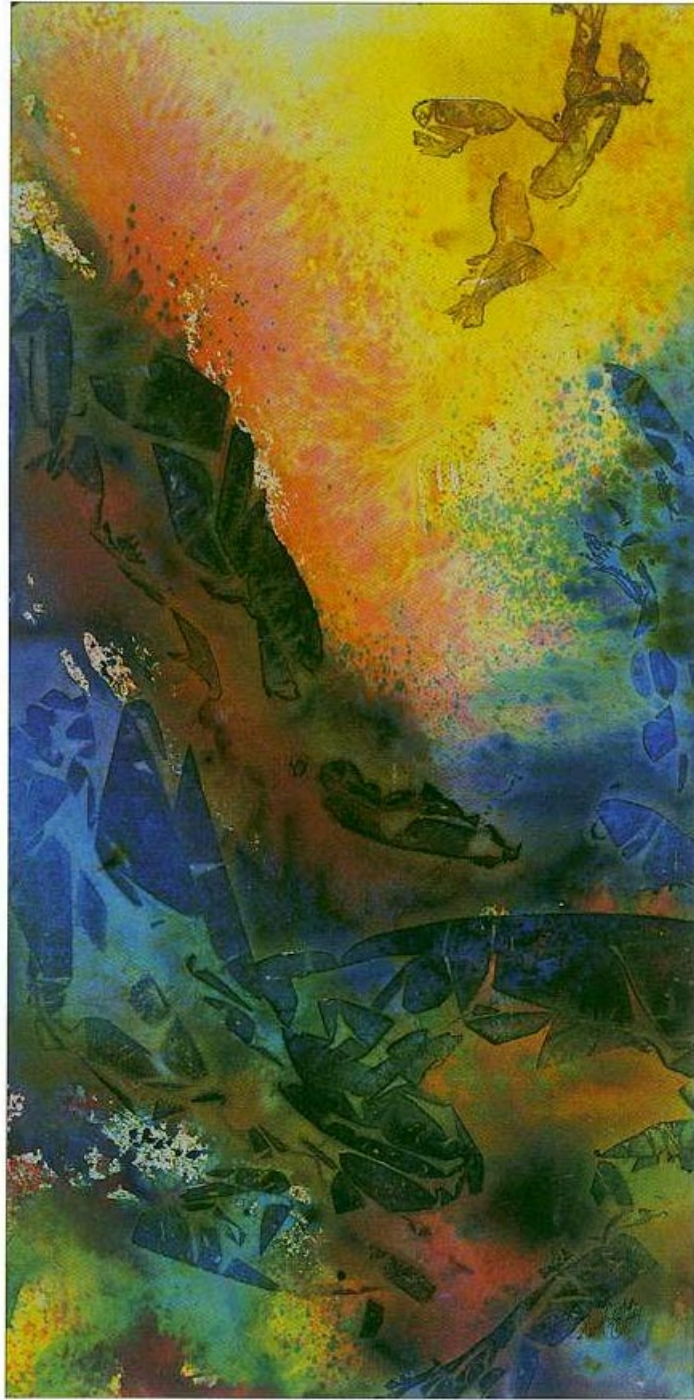
Bliss, © 1994, ink on strathmore board, 30 x 20 in.



Some Place Else, © 1995, ink on strathmore board, 30 x 40 in.



Red Feather Dancing, © 1994, ink on strathmore board, 30 x 20 in.



Up the Reef, © 1994,
ink on strathmore board, 20 x 10 in.
by Tary Socha

Living Buddhism
Periodicals Postage Paid
at Santa Monica, CA 90401

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

Return To:
SGI-USA Subscriptions Section
525 Wilshire Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90401-1467

Final Installment of The Human Revolution, Vol. XII • A Scholar's View of SGI

LIVING BUDDHISM

JOURNAL FOR PEACE, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

June 1997 • Soka Gakkai International-USA



SGI
KUMAR

BSG Culture Center, New Delhi



IN February 1961, SGI President Ikeda, then president of the Soka Gakkai, visited Bodhi Gaya, India, where Shakyamuni Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment. Over the past thirty-six years, Mr. Ikeda has worked untiringly to further Indo-Japanese exchanges for the promotion of culture. On February 11, 1992, he delivered a speech, "Toward a World Without War—Gandhism and the Modern World," on the occasion of the fourth Gandhi Memorial Lecture of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (Gandhi memorial hall) at the National Museum in New Delhi. The following day, members of Bharat Soka Gakkai (BSG),

the Indian SGI organization, held their 2nd Grand Culture Festival in New Delhi under the theme "Dawn of Peace in the Land of Eternity." They gathered from around the Indian subcontinent, demonstrating their joy to contribute to the prosperity and peace of their country.

In 1995, an exhibition titled "Rainbow in My Heart" was held in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka State, and was sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, BSG and the SGI. The opening ceremony, which took place at the Chitrakala Parishath Art Complex, was given national media coverage.