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

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FROM OUR READERS

From time to time, as space allows, we will print poetry submitted by our readers. Please mail all correspondence to: Letters, 525 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401 or e-mail: LivingB1@aol.com

THANKS TO FAY HOVEY AND ED LEE

THANK you so much for printing the stories of Fay Hovey, beautifully illustrated by Ed Lee. Her first-person accounts of Nichiren Daishonin's disciples never fail to touch me to tears.

I renew my vows of faith with each story as it evokes my passion and appreciation for Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I hope there will be many more. Thank you again.

ANNEMARIE MCDONELL
Washington, D.C.

FAMILY

In Africa
Sankofa means
remember your roots—
lie deep and varies
with each tree
its absolute love
binds a family
blood bonds and
distant kin
people called friend
children's laughter and
holiday meets, a time
to relive history
to speak of the dead
how it used to be
tell our story
fill our present with joy
illuminate our future with hope
anchored by life before

BONNIE LYNN TOLSON
& SGI-USA MEMBERS
Kansas City, Missouri

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

karma: Sanskrit word meaning *action*. The life tendency or destiny

each individual creates through thoughts, words and deeds that exert an often unseen influence over one's future.

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

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

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

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

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

Soka Gakkai International (SGI): The Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a worldwide association with membership in 128 countries and territories. In the service of its members and of society at large, SGI centers its activities on human potentialities for individual happiness and for global peace and prosperity. The breadth and focus of its mission derive from the philosophy and practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Soka Gakkai means *value-creation society*. The SGI-USA is a member-organization of the SGI.

Frequently Cited Sources

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

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

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. 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 Daishonin, 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, CA 90401-1427: (310) 451-8811. Check out our Web page at: <http://www.sgi-usa.org>

A REMARKABLE MAN OF PEACE

AS featured in this issue (p. 42), the national touring exhibition "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" opened in San Francisco September 20. In preparing for my own participation in the opening, I decided to reread the discussion between the late Nobel laureate and SGI President Ikeda in their published dialogue, *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*.

In the opening pages, the two men share memories of their childhood. One exchange in particular struck a responsive chord with me. Dr. Pauling had just mentioned how lenient discipline was in his childhood home. In response, President Ikeda said: "It appears that American parents tend to be lenient. They seem to teach the basics of social living and to respect their chil-

"Different people have different views of happiness ... true happiness [is] a sense of satisfaction in living." No wonder President Ikeda was able to form such a deep bond with this truly remarkable man.

dren's individual personalities and freedoms ... the traditional Japanese system is far less open and trustful."

That passage reminded me of one of the most difficult episodes my wife and I shared in the raising of our children. Our family's first real home in America was in Los Angeles, then in Seattle, Washington, where we lived for eleven years, from 1980 until 1991. My children were quite young when we moved to Seattle, which meant that after eleven years it was without question their home. For me those years spelled a brief interval in my life, but for my children, it was the most important period of growth in their lives. None of this entered my mind when I learned in June of 1991 that we would be mov-

ing to Los Angeles. Since our two sons were nearing graduation from the University of Washington, they remained in Seattle. But my daughter was just starting high school, so naturally she would have to come down to Los Angeles with my wife and me.

IT never crossed our minds how difficult a move this would be for a young teenaged-American girl. She would be leaving her friends, her home and everything she had known for almost her entire life. Nor did it occur to us to discuss the matter with her. Had we, we would have learned how much she absolutely hated leaving Seattle.

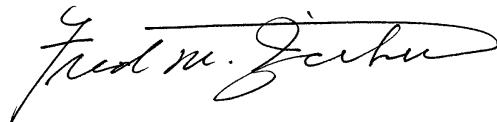
My wife and I decided to search out the best high school we could for her, again only discussing the matter between ourselves. As "traditional Japanese" parents, we thought that simply putting her in a better school would make her a better student than she had been in elementary school. But that wasn't the case. She felt totally alienated and isolated at the school we had chosen for her. She wouldn't go to class. Eventually she began to hang out with other students who skipped classes. One thing led to another and before we knew it, she was getting into trouble with school authorities. It was a very difficult period for us, but an excruciatingly painful time for our daughter.

Naturally we chanted a great deal during that period, searching for a solution to our family's suffering. That is why reading the aforementioned passage in the Ikeda–Pauling dialogue reminded me of that time. We realized that not once had we thought of our daughter and what her needs might be; we lacked consideration for her. In this case she didn't need the best high school, rather a school where she could enjoy studying. She was 16 years old, fully capable of having a point of view worth honoring. Instead we had blindly imposed our values on her. With

deep apology, my wife and I increased our chanting sessions and we did our best to listen to what our daughter had to say. Eventually things began to change for the better. Our daughter realized that her choice of friends wasn't the best she could have made, especially since, on one occasion when the police became involved, her friends deserted her. Things moved from worse and worse to better and better.

TODAY of course, our daughter is close to graduation from the University of California at Riverside. That was a great challenge for all of us. But in the process our whole family changed. Now, looking back we have no regrets. Any change in our environment may give us difficulty and pain, but by challenging our circumstances based on faith, we can definitely make progress. It is hard, but we should not stay in our comfort zone in order that we can grow and develop happy and fulfilling lives.

Later in the Ikeda–Pauling dialogue, Dr. Pauling said: "Different people have different views of happiness. I consider true happiness to be a sense of satisfaction in living." No wonder President Ikeda was able to form such a deep bond with this truly remarkable man. The depth and range of Dr. Pauling's work over his ninety-two-year life is quite encouraging. □



Fred M. Zaitso
SGI USA General Director



Humanism Is at the Core of Buddhism

by Brian Matsuo
SGI-USA Vice General Director

The history of Buddhism—from the establishment of Buddhism by Shakyamuni, to the advent of the Daishonin's Buddhism and today's SGI movement led by President Daisaku Ikeda—reveals that Buddhism is a continuous reform movement that seeks to establish the happiness of humanity and the dignity of life as the fundamental principles of society. Based on this respect for the dignity of life, the significance of our SGI movement and our individual human revolution cannot be underestimated, as part of the process that makes such humanistic social reform possible.

IN the foothills of the Himalayas, near the Indian border south of central Nepal, the historical founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni,¹ was born. Although the exact date of his birth is unknown, historians believe it was the end of the eleventh century B.C.E. (some sources say the fifth or sixth centuries B.C.E). Buddhism, as we know it today, originates from the teachings of Shakyamuni or the Buddha. Derived from Sanskrit, the term *Buddha* means an “enlightened” or “awakened one.”

At that time in Indian society, people were divided according to a strict hierarchical structure called the caste system. The caste system placed people at different levels of society based on their birth, with Brahmans, or the priestly class, at the highest

level, and the untouchables (people laboring in indispensable but unsavory jobs such as garbage handlers or butchers) at the lowest level of society. It was socially unacceptable for people to marry across classes or even to mingle with people of the untouchable class.

Based on his enlightened view of life, Shakyamuni desperately wished to reform people's perception of life and one another. He believed that all people had the potential for enlightenment, and strove to enable all people, equally, to become happy. Based on his conviction in the dignity of life, Shakyamuni relentlessly taught the people in their own language² that they could become happy. His ultimate teaching was revealed in the Lotus Sutra. His compassionate and humanistic behavior

revealed to others how a human being could live.

After the Buddha's passing, his followers, afraid of losing his elevated view of life, began to gather and discuss his teachings, recording them for ages to come. Among these Buddhist councils, the most famous took place under the patronage of King Ashoka³ (268–232 B.C.E.) with the Monastery playing the central role. The Buddha's teachings were originally passed on orally, and his disciples would begin their discourse with the words, “Thus I heard...,” which is why many sutras begin with this phrase. In this way Shakyamuni's teachings were compiled over several centuries after his death.

The various Buddhist councils meant to preserve the Buddha's words for the people. In spite of their good intentions, over time the spirit of Shakyamuni's teachings was lost as the members of the Buddhist Order became more and more separate from society. They began to view themselves as an elite group, select in understanding Shakyamuni's teachings. This Order became known

as the Hinayana movement or “lesser vehicle teaching.”⁴ Today, it is referred to as the Theravada school of Buddhism.

Some people were uncomfortable with this development in the Buddhist Order because they felt it went against Shakyamuni’s true intention. They awoke to the original viewpoint that Buddhism was for the happiness of all people. With this awareness they began to reform the Order both from within and without. They returned to Shakyamuni’s original teaching that all people equally had the potential to attain enlightenment, and began to involve the priesthood and laity alike, as equal participants in the pursuit of human happiness. This reform movement later became known as Mahayana Buddhism, or the Buddhism of the “greater vehicle.”

THERAVADA Buddhism spread mostly to countries in Southeast Asia, and Mahayana Buddhism spread northward to China, Korea and Japan. As Buddhism moved eastward, it was translated from one language to the next. The people who could translate the teachings were usually highly educated people or priests from the upper classes of society because traditionally they were the only ones to receive an education. So unfortunately, once again Buddhism became a religion of an elite group of priests who prayed for the laity and received alms in return.

At the time of Nichiren Daishonin’s advent in the thirteenth century, the priesthood of various sects of Buddhism

formed an elite group of religious specialists, a privileged class, which once again separated itself from the rest of society. By this time, there were so many sects based on differing interpretations of Buddhism that people were confused and simply followed the religion their parents practiced.

It was this confused and chaotic era in which Nichiren Daishonin was born. Through his intense and extensive studies of Buddhism, he awakened to the true intention of Shakyamuni expressed in the depths of the Lotus Sutra. Realizing that all people equally possess the ability to become happy, the Daishonin clarified the Buddha’s original intent and revealed the essential meaning and practice of Buddhism for people in the Latter Day of the Law.⁵ By establishing the practice of chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo and inscribing the Gohonzon, Nichiren Daishonin enabled all people in the Latter Day of the Law to attain the supreme state of happiness, or Buddhahood, in their lives.

We can clearly see that the Daishonin’s actions represented yet another reformation movement within Buddhism that established the concept of the dignity of life for all humanity as the fundamental tenet of Buddhism. The authorities of the time, both religious and secular, constantly persecuted the Daishonin because the very basis of his movement undermined the power and prestige they had come to enjoy.

History has a tendency to repeat itself, and once again the

deviation from the original spirit of Buddhism is apparent in the recent actions of the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood against the SGI and its president, Daisaku Ikeda. Even within the Nichiren Shoshu of the past, there were episodes when priests attempted to reform a corrupt and distorted priesthood [see “The Untold History of the Fuji School,” p. 12]. For example, both the ninth high priest, Nichiu, and the twenty-sixth high priest, Nichikan, are revered as reformers of Nichiren Shoshu who returned the sect to harmony with the original spirit of the Daishonin.

TODAY, the so-called “temple issue” is completely based on the spirit of reformation. It includes exchanging Gohonzon transcribed by Nikken for Gohonzon transcribed by the twenty-sixth high priest, Nichikan, who, as mentioned previously, was a reform priest. It also includes meeting and talking with individuals under the influence of Nikken about the true spirit and intention of Buddhism. Through these various activities, we are returning to the fundamental spirit of the Daishonin’s Buddhism to save all humanity.

It has been my observation that the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood feels they are preserving the orthodoxy of Buddhism simply because they possess the Dai-Gohonzon.⁶ But as the history of the sect attests, high priests have deviated from the teachings of the Daishonin repeatedly—in spite of the fact that they possessed the Dai-Gohonzon.

This struggle to establish the heart of the Buddha is the battle to develop our humanism.

The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood feels they are special and unique and, therefore, better than the laity. The sect's chief administrator, Nichijun Fujimoto, writes in a letter to the SGI in 1991: "To talk about the priesthood and laity with a sense of equality are expressions of great conceit. In fact, they correspond to the five cardinal sins... (January 12, 1991, letter to the Soka Gakkai from Nichiren Shoshu's chief administrator, Nichijun Fujimoto).

Unfortunately, those who are sincerely following the alleged authority of Nikken and the priesthood end up losing their independence and sense of equality, which is contrary to the most basic intentions of Buddhism. This is why Nichiren Shoshu does not represent the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin but rather Nikken's own distorted personal view.

True humanism, as expressed in Buddhism, is characterized by a life based on inner motivation and the view that all people are equal. These two aspects of humanism are explored by President Ikeda in several university addresses. Buddhism teaches that these two points can be fully actualized through the process we know as human revolution—an inner reformation of the life of each individual.

This revolution occurs when an individual challenges the many different views of life in society and attempts to establish a harmonious balance between the self and the environment. SGI-USA members, through their faith, become happier by grappling with their

own personal problems and with the contradictions of society, and creating value in that process. That is the process of human revolution. "In other words, human revolution is expanding your view beyond your restricted, ordinary, everyday world and striving for and dedicating yourself to achieving something more noble, more profound, more all-embracing" (*Discussions on Youth*, vol. 2, p. 247).

PRESIDENT Ikeda once recalled the following episode: "One young man said: 'I'm having a hard time participating in SGI activities as much as I would like to because of my busy work schedule. How can I find a way to do both?'" Mr. Ikeda immediately replied, "To get right to the point, it boils down to making a decision to do your best in everything and then having the determination not to retreat a single step" (*The New Human Revolution*, vol. 4, pp. 144–45). Later he says: "There are two sides to everything. Not seeing things just one way is very human. Life involves striking a balance amid the tensions of conflicting issues while always striving to improve ourselves and move ahead" (*Ibid.*, p. 147). Rather than elucidating a tried and true formula for dealing with life's daily conflicts, Buddhism stresses developing

a broad-minded attitude toward life, which requires an inner struggle that enables us to fully reveal our humanity. As a result of these inner struggles, we develop wisdom to lead a happy and humanistic life. This is the process of human revolution.

Buddhism introduces the concept of the Ten Worlds⁷ inherent in all life. Since history is created by individuals, let us look at the reformation of the individual life from the Buddhist viewpoint of the Ten Worlds. The four lower worlds are Hell, Hunger, Animality and Anger. These lower worlds can be transformed into the six higher worlds through the practice of Buddhism, especially through the bodhisattva practice—the compassionate practice for the sake of others.

I would like to look at the life-state of Anger to clarify the process of human reformation. One characteristic of the world of Anger is an arrogant nature. Arrogance is the life-tendency to view oneself as superior to others. An arrogant person's mind is constantly occupied with the thought, "I am greater than everyone." In this state the explosive energy of anger is channeled into self-preservation or more specifically preservation of the image that "I am superior to everyone else." This energy can manifest itself in an aggressive manner; or it

can show itself in humble behavior while in reality, one believes one is superior.

The three lower worlds of Hell, Hunger and Animality are basically dominated or influenced by the environment. The world of Anger moves beyond this reactive realm and establishes some autonomy and ability to act proactively. But this autonomy is based on the intense desire to win over others.

This desire to protect oneself and to win over others is the epitome of selfishness, which is why the life-state of Anger, as well as Hell, Hunger and Animality, can also be called the lesser self or lesser ego. How does one overcome this lesser self? By directing the energy from winning over others to winning over oneself, one can transform this lower world to more elevated states.

Another aspect of anger is jealousy. When one cannot win over others and the self is not recognized as superior, anger comes to the surface due to this defeat. Usually, we think of anger as a sudden powerful burst of emotion, but in observing it from a deeper level, anger often manifests insidiously as jealousy. In general, when we are jealous of others, we are actually admitting that they are better than us. This realization is unbearable to a mind consumed by the belief of its own greatness.

For example, in Shakyamuni's time, Devadatta⁸ was jealous of Shakyamuni because everyone respected him. He wanted everyone to respect his greatness, too, so he did every-

thing possible to defeat Shakyamuni, even attempting to kill him.

Today, when we observe the irrational actions of Nikken—the destruction of the Grand Reception Hall and Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo), which were built by the donations of thousands of sincere believers and the excommunication of millions of members who dedicate themselves to kosen-rufu—we can see that these actions are not motivated by a desire to protect the Law but by a desire to destroy the SGI and President Ikeda. Viewed in this light, Nikken's life must be dominated by the life-state of Anger, which is manifest as jealousy and arrogance.

HOW can we overcome this destructive state of life? In one of President Ikeda's speeches, he describes the transformation from the lower worlds to the higher worlds by using the concepts of lesser ego and noble ego, or lesser self and greater self. The following anecdote demonstrates true humanity, which is a reflection of the noble ego and higher life states. In a Nazi concentration camp, some of the survivors followed one basic rule—that as a group the members were to share everything. When any of the members began to keep food to themselves and did not share with others, that marked the beginning of the end for that individual. An individual who stopped sharing in that environment quickly deteriorated, losing not only their humanity, but, more often than not, their own lives.

The following story from the sutras reveals the difference between lives based on the greater self and those based on the lesser self. One day a person visited Hell. He was surprised to observe that there were mounds and mounds of food everywhere. It was like a feast for a thousand kings laid out before him. But the people there were emaciated, with their ribs jutting out and stomachs swollen from malnutrition. He discovered that everyone held chopsticks that were five feet long. So whenever someone picked up food to place it in their mouths, they were unable to get the long chopsticks to their lips and the food would fall to the ground. He left the misery behind him and visited Heaven.

Again he found a feast for a thousand kings. But unlike the people in Hell, these people were laughing and singing and plump as could be. The people in Heaven also had five-foot chopsticks, but they did not try to feed themselves. They simply fed one another, which the extra long chopsticks actually facilitated. The man realized then that the difference between Hell and Buddhahood is not the environment but the difference in the hearts of the people (see "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra," p. 22). This struggle to establish the heart of the Buddha is the battle to develop our humanism.

The Lotus Sutra tells the story of Bodhisattva Fukyo⁹ who held everyone in reverence. To each person he met, he said: "I deeply respect you. I would not dare despise you or

be arrogant, for you will all practice the Bodhisattva way and surely attain Buddhahood." Therefore, he was called Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. People ridiculed and attacked him with sticks and rocks, but he never retreated. He still bowed and praised the Buddha nature within them.

Nichiren Daishonin often cites the story of Bodhisattva Fukyo to illustrate the principle and practice of attaining enlightenment. The Daishonin states: "What does Bodhisattva Fukyo's profound respect for people signify? The real significance of the Lord Shakyamuni Buddha's appearance in this world lay in his behavior as a human being. How profound!" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 2, p. 16)

President Ikeda explains this principle of attaining enlightenment:

The spirit of the Buddhism of the true cause finds expression in the practice of cultivating respect for the dignity of life. It is the passage "Originally I practiced the Bodhisattva way" here in "Life Span" that directly indicates this.

"I" indicates Shakyamuni the ordinary human being—just like us—who carried out bodhisattva practices in the remote past. He definitely was not superhuman. "Remote past" means the wellspring of life; Shakyamuni the practitioner of the true cause represents the ordinary people of *kuon ganjo* who base themselves on the wellspring of life. (*Lectures on the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span"*

Even though this battle is difficult,
Buddhism provides us with a
positive approach to carry out our
own reformation from lesser
self to greater self and by
extension the reformation
of humanity.

Chapters of the Lotus Sutra, vol.
3, p. 16)

FROM this quotation we can see, in a sense, why Nichiren Daishonin exhorted us to practice for the happiness of ourselves and others based on faith in the Gohonzon, the wellspring of life.

The practice of Buddhism is the practice of cultivating respect for the dignity of life and cherishing the lives of other people.

It is easy to understand this in theory, but in reality it is difficult to overcome our selfishness and transform our small ego into our noble ego, concerned with the welfare of others. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through the process of human revolution.

By chanting and participating in activities with other SGI members, constantly striving for others' happiness, we are able to break the shell of the small ego and expand our world to that of the noble ego and the world of Buddhahood. This process is a never-ending battle between self-centeredness and the altruistic self, which takes place moment by moment, day after day.

Suppose you have accomplished something great or suddenly become very successful. Quite naturally you feel pride in your accomplishment. At that moment the lesser self may be activated. If you remain attached to your pride you may gradually develop a self-centered life that spirals toward unhappiness.

We should never underestimate the difficulty of this battle. Nichiren Daishonin expresses this in various writings. He says: "The believers of the Lotus Sutra should fear those who plague their practice more than they fear bandits, burglars, midnight killers, tigers.... This world is the province of the Devil of the Sixth Heaven. All of its people have been related to him since time without beginning..." (MW-1, 135).

And in another writing: "I launched the battle of the provisional and true teaching ... I have raised the banner of *Myoho-renge-kyo* ... attacking first one and then another ... I have refuted the Nembutsu, Zen ... I continue to repulse their attacks and defeat them, but there are legions of enemies opposing ... So the battle goes on even today" (MW-1, 101). In

another writing, he encourages us: "Because I have expounded this teaching, I have been exiled and almost killed. As the saying goes: 'Good advice is harsh to the ears.' But still I am not discouraged. The Lotus Sutra is like the seed, the Buddha is like the sower and the people are like the field" (MW-1, 166).

Even though this battle is difficult, Buddhism provides us with a positive approach to carry out our own reformation from lesser self to greater self and by extension the reformation of humanity. Through constant prayer and action, we are able to develop a truly positive mind and attitude toward life. In the letter "Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain," the Daishonin says: "Therefore, the best way to attain Buddhahood is to encounter a *zenchishiki*, or good friend. How far can one's own wisdom take him. If one has even enough wisdom to distinguish hot from cold, he should seek out a good friend" (MW-5, 109).

When we develop our faith, all experiences and circumstances, no matter how bad they may seem, become good

friends—propelling us on to even greater spiritual development. This is why Nichiren Daishonin encourages us to be the happiest people of all: "There is no greater happiness for human beings than chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" (MW-1, 161). "Nam-myoho-enge-kyo is like the roar of a lion" (MW-1, 119).

In the same letter he also states, "If one considers the power of the Lotus Sutra he will find perpetual youth and eternal life before his eyes" (MW-1, 120). Because we can definitely win in this battle, there is no more joyous world than the world of faith. People who chant have nothing to fear because there is no dead-end in Buddhism. With youthful vitality we can overcome any obstacles and gallantly advance with a sense of mission.

In the following quotation, Nichiren Daishonin illustrates the great concept of *kosen-rufu*: "Disasters will be driven from the land, and the people will be rid of misfortune. They will also learn the art of living long, fulfilling lives" (MW-1, 102). As a result of the process of individual reformation, society-at-

large is transformed into a truly humanistic society.

Some may be concerned that the history of Buddhism is simply a repetitive process of reformation, but I believe social undercurrents are definitely showing that this reformation process is leading to a society based on humanism and respect for the dignity of life. This is why we should not underestimate the significance of our movement and our human revolution.

The great historian Arnold Toynbee, visualizing a global society, predicted, "The historians of A.D. 5047 will say, I fancy, that the importance of this social unification of mankind was not to be found in the field of technics and economics, and not in the field of war and politics, but in the field of religion" (May 1998 *Living Buddhism*, p. 20). Here, he alludes to the inevitability of the integration of humanism into society and the decisive role religion will play in that process. So, together with President Ikeda, let us continue to practice joyfully and make the twenty-first century a century of humanity! □

1. *Shakya* is the name of the tribe in India to which Shakyamuni was born and *muni* means sage. So Shakyamuni means the sage of the Shakyas. It is said that his name was Gautama Siddhartha.
2. Not in the Vedic vernacular, which many priests believed holy teachings should be transmitted. In fact, Shakyamuni was criticized by priests who felt that the common language denigrated his teachings.
3. The third ruler of the Indian Maurya dynasty and the first king to unify India. He began as a tyrant but later governed

compassionately in keeping with the ideals of Buddhism.

4. The terms *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* are considered derogatory terms. They were applied to Buddhism by a group within the religion that called itself Mahayana or the "Great Vehicle" and proclaimed its doctrines as superior to and superseding those of earlier Buddhism.

5. Latter Day of the Law: Known as the last of the three periods following Shakyamuni's death when Buddhism falls into confusion and Shakyamuni's teachings lose the power to lead people to

enlightenment. It is said to last for ten thousand years or more.

6. The object of devotion inscribed by Nichiren Daishonin, October 12, 1279.

7. Ten states of life or life-conditions that a single entity of life manifests.

8. Devadatta: A disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha who later turned against him. Devadatta made several attempts on the Buddha's life and persecuted the Buddha's followers.

9. Fukyo: A bodhisattva described in "The Bodhisattva Never Disparaging," the twentieth chapter of the Lotus Sutra.



The Untold History of the Fuji School: The Origins of the Temple Issue (8)

This series is based on The Dark History of the Fuji School: Revealing the Origin of the Nikken Sect (Ankoku no Fuji Shumonshi: Nikken Shu no Engen o Kiru) by Hajime Kawai, a vice senior advisor of the Soka Gakkai Study Department. The last installment introduced the seventeenth high priest, Nissei, noted for enshrining Shakyamuni's statue at several temples, as well as the influence of Kyodai'in, the powerful lay patron, in appointing Nissei's successor, Nisshun.



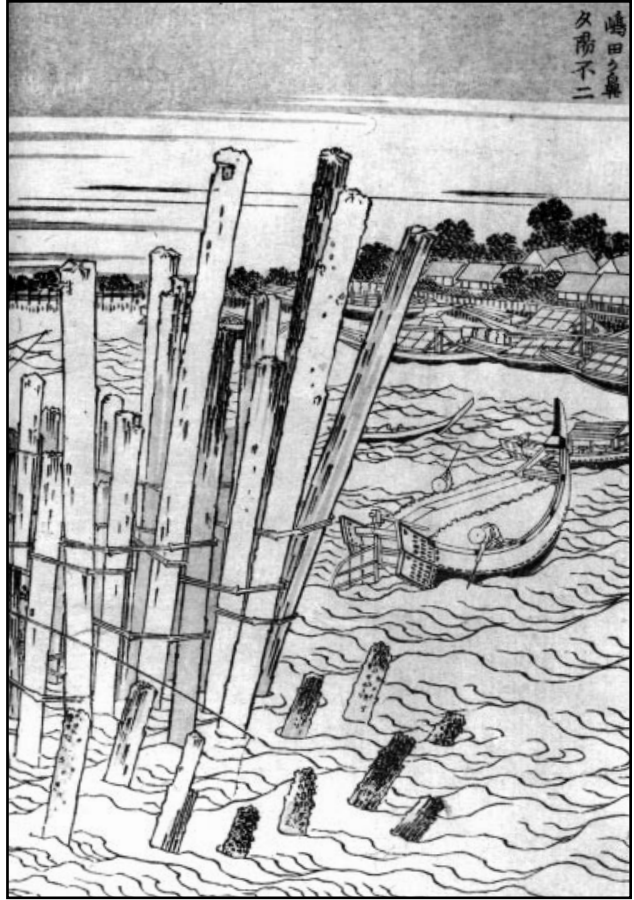
Chapter 8: Nichikan: The Restorer of the Fuji School

(1) The Refutation of Erroneous Teachings

THE twenty-sixth high priest, Nichikan (1665–1726), is known as the great restorer of the Fuji School because he refuted erroneous beliefs and traditions brought into the school by his predecessors. As recounted in previous installments, the head temple, Taiseki-ji, turned to another temple, Yobo-ji¹, to fill the position of high priest when capable candidates could not be found within their own priesthood. The

result was the introduction of teachings and practices contrary to those established by Nichiren Daishonin. This was something Nichikan saw as urgently needing correction.

Born into a family of the samurai class, Nichikan entered the priesthood at 18 and studied under Nichiei, the twenty-fourth high priest. At 24, he went to the Hosokusa Seminary—a Buddhist seminary in Hosokusa Village, Kazusa Province²—to study further. The Hosokusa Seminary was established jointly by Taiseki-ji and the Eight Chapters School, which maintained that



A nineteenth-century print of Mount Fuji and the area around the head temple, Taiseki-ji.



the Daishonin's core teaching lay in eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra—the fifteenth through the twenty-second. After nine years, Nichikan became a professor at the seminary.

He later moved to Taiseki-ji and lived in Renzo-bo, a lodging temple on the head temple grounds. He assumed the important position of study master, generally held by those considered candidates for the office of high priest. In 1718, he became the twenty-sixth high priest.



Nichikan practiced and studied diligently in his efforts to clarify the Daishonin's Buddhism. He lectured and wrote extensively on the Daishonin's writings and completed his most vital work, *The Six-Volume Writings*, in 1725. The purpose of this work was to refute

the erroneous doctrines of the various Nichiren schools and clarify the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's Buddhism. These six volumes include: "The Threefold Secret Teaching," "Meanings Hidden in the Depths," "Interpretations Based on the Law," "Teachings for the Latter Day," "The Practice of This School" and "The Three Robes of This School."

In "Teachings for the Latter Day," Nichikan specifically took up the doctrines propounded by Nisshin (1508–76) of Yobo-ji. In the first half, he points out the errors of reciting the entire twenty-eight chapters of the Lotus Sutra. In the latter half, he refutes the practice of worshipping statues of Shakyamuni Buddha. By correcting Nisshin's teachings, Nichikan purged Taiseki-ji of the



The twenty-sixth high priest explains that chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo cannot be called a correct practice of the Daishonin's teaching unless it is accompanied by sincere faith in the Gohonzon and concrete actions for the propagation of Buddhism.



unorthodoxy espoused by previous high priests who had been influenced by Yobo-ji. By the time Nichikan became high priest, some 400 years after the Daishonin's passing, Nichiren schools had distorted his teachings and promulgated various misinterpretations. Through *The Six-Volume Writings*, Nichikan reestablished the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's Buddhism as transmitted to his legitimate successor, Nikko Shonin.

According to the "Accounts of High Priest Nichikan," when Nichikan bestowed *The Six-Volume Writings* to his disciples, he states: "With these six volumes of writing, which are like the lion king, you need not be afraid of the various sects and schools in the nation even if they all come to this temple for debate like a pack of foxes..." (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 5, pp. 355–56).

Nichikan believed that the purpose of Buddhist study was to propagate the Daishonin's Buddhism. In the beginning of "The Threefold Secret Teaching," he states: "There are many important matters in this writing. This I did solely to perpetuate the Law. My disciples should deeply understand my intention" (*The Six-Volume Writings*, p. 3).

He begins "Interpretations Based on the Law" by stating: "This is solely for the sake of the widespread propagation of the Law" (*ibid.*, p. 115).

Through his writings, Nichikan reconfirmed the basics of faith, practice and study. He clarified Nichiren Daishonin as the original Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law and the Gohonzon

as the basis of faith. Through his efforts came a period of unprecedented development in Buddhist study. Many student priests traveled to the Fuji School to further their studies.

Nichikan also contributed greatly to the construction of buildings on the grounds of Taiseki-ji. He oversaw the construction of a main gate and reception hall on the temple grounds. He built the Ever-Chanting Hall and a lodging temple, the Ishino-bo. He also left behind the funds later used for the construction of the Five-Storied Pagoda, which was completed in 1749 during the tenure of the thirty-first high priest, Nichiin.

According to "The Accounts of High Priest Nichikan," on August 19, 1726, Nichikan died peacefully after enjoying his favorite meal of buckwheat noodles. After dinner, he declared cheerfully, "How wonderful the City of Tranquil Light is!" then chanted daimoku (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 5, p. 359).

Nichiko Hori, the fifty-ninth high priest and noted historian of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, said of Nichikan:

It was said that Teacher Nichikan was held in such high esteem that the day would not break nor the night fall without his presence. This was due to his behavior and character rather than his scholarship, for one cannot command trust from the priesthood and laity if he is lax in everyday conduct regardless of his achievements in Buddhist study and debate. In this regard, Teacher Nichikan was

extremely modest and honest. I believe this is why Teacher Nichikan's faith, let alone his understanding of Buddhism, flowed through the people. (*The Dai-byakurenge*, November 1956, p. 20)

Nichikan gained the respect and trust of those who knew him; and that is how he reestablished the Daishonin's correct spirit in the hearts of believers. Nichikan's life was eloquent proof that a high priest of outstanding faith, practice and study as well as outstanding character need not invoke the mysterious "transmission of the Law" to support his office or promote his own infallibility.

(2) Nichikan's emphasis on the basics of faith and practice

Nichikan viewed study as a means to deepen faith and practice—never for merely displaying one's knowledge. At the end of his commentary on the Daishonin's "On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings," he states:

If we do not constantly ponder the four dictums³ and if we ignore propagation, our hearts will become accomplices in slandering the Law. If we do not accomplish propagation with our voices, they will become accomplices in the slander of the Law. If we do not face the object of devotion with prayer beads in our hands, our bodies will become accomplices in the slander of the Law. Therefore, those who ponder the object of devotion of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra, face the object of devotion of the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo of the actual 3,000 realms in a single life-moment—that is, the Buddhism of sowing contained in the "Life Span" chapter of the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra—

shall be the ones propagating the Law through the three types of karma—thoughts, words and deeds. (*The Collection of High Priest Nichikan's Commentaries*, p. 767)



Nichikan teaches us that our basic practice lies in gongyo, daimoku and teaching others the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. He warns that when we become slack in this basic practice, we develop a tendency to go against the Law.

Nichikan also expounds on the meaning of chanting daimoku:



So know that the daimoku of true Buddhism must be accompanied by faith and practice. The chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with faith in the object of devotion of true Buddhism shall be known as the daimoku of true Buddhism. But although there is faith, if it lacks practice, it shall not yet be known as such.... Therefore, be aware that the daimoku of true Buddhism shall be the kind that encompasses both faith and practice. (*The Six-Volume Writings*, p. 107)

The twenty-sixth high priest explains that chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo cannot be called a correct practice of the Daishonin's teaching unless it is accompanied by sincere faith in the Gohonzon and concrete actions for the propagation of Buddhism.

Commenting on the passage, "simply chanting the daimoku" from the Daishonin's "The Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra" (MW-3, 9), Nichikan states: "Here 'simply chanting the daimoku' means to chant with faith. If one chants the Mystic Law without faith, it is not called chanting the daimoku" (*The Collection of High Priest Nichikan's Commentaries*, p. 639). He reiterates the point that no matter how much we chant Nam-myoho-renge-



**Through our faith and practice to the Gohonzon,
our lives reveal the life of the Buddha of absolute
freedom, that is, a state of life no different from
that of Nichiren Daishonin.**



kyo to the Gohonzon, if we lack faith, all our efforts will be to no avail.

**(3) The Daishonin's
Buddhism and the
Gohonzon transcribed by
Nichikan spread worldwide**

IN October 1993, the SGI began conferring Gohonzon transcribed by Nichikan upon its worldwide membership. This was in response to the fact that Nikken Abe, the sixty-seventh high priest, had excommunicated the SGI and ceased issuing Gohonzon unless SGI members seceded and joined the temple. Sendo Narita, chief priest of Joen-ji in Tochigi, Japan, who had renounced his affiliation with Taiseki-ji in protest, proposed to the SGI that a Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon in the possession of his temple be reproduced and made available. The SGI accepted this proposal.

The Daishonin writes: "Nichiren has been trying to awaken all the people of Japan to faith in the Lotus Sutra so that they too can share the heritage and attain Buddhahood" (MW-1, 24). He inscribed the Gohonzon for this purpose—that all people can receive the heritage of the Law and attain Buddhahood.

In this regard, Nichikan comments:

All those who accept and embrace this object of devotion will enter the Buddha Way of time without beginning.... The bodies of us ordinary people who enter

the Buddha Way of time without beginning are exactly the Buddhas of absolute freedom from time without beginning. The entity of the Buddha of absolute freedom is nothing other than us ordinary people.... This is what is meant by the oneness of mentor and disciple." (*The Collection of High Priest Nichikan's Commentaries*, p. 488)

Through our faith and practice to the Gohonzon, our lives reveal the life of the Buddha of absolute freedom, that is, a state of life no different from that of Nichiren Daishonin. This, Nichikan stresses, is the meaning of the oneness of mentor and disciple. The heritage of the Daishonin's Buddhism, therefore, is nothing other than faith in the Gohonzon. It is the lifeblood of faith that enables us to attain Buddhahood.

The mission of the Daishonin's disciples lies in spreading his teaching so that many people take faith in the Gohonzon and attain Buddhahood, thus creating the basis for a peaceful society. The fact that Nikken excommunicated the SGI, which has been propagating the Daishonin's teaching on a global scale, clearly demonstrates that he has renounced the mission of the Daishonin's disciple as well as the role of high priest. In light of such circumstances, the SGI, in order to fulfill its mission and responsibility as the Daishonin's disciples, began conferring the Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon for the further spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood criti-

cizes the SGI's conferral of the Gohonzon, claiming that unless conferred by the high priest, Gohonzon are devoid of the heritage of the Law and have no beneficial power. The tradition of entrusting the high priest at Taiseki-ji with the transcription and conferral of Gohonzon was to protect the integrity of the Daishonin's Buddhism and further promote its widespread propagation. It was never meant to create a privileged class of clergy with the power to manipulate believers with the Gohonzon. Neither was the tradition meant to allow the clergy to exploit believers financially through the conferral of the Gohonzon.

Nichiren Daishonin writes, "Without the lifeblood of faith, it would be useless to embrace the Lotus Sutra" (MW-1, 25). Those who lack faith and make no effort to spread the Law, not to mention deliberately obstructing its propagation, do not inherit the heritage of his Buddhism. This is why the current priesthood has lost its qualification to reproduce and confer Gohonzon.

The heritage of the Daishonin's Buddhism exists only in the selfless dedication to kosen-rufu of millions of SGI members. That the Nichikan-transcribed Gohonzon issued by the SGI are in accord with the Daishonin's teaching and spirit is also proven by the benefits they have received.

The priesthood's assertion that the SGI-issued Gohonzon are counterfeit because they are not sanctioned and consecrated by the high priest or issued by the head temple contradicts its own recorded history. Up until the mid-1950s, a number of branch temples reproduced Gohonzon transcribed by past high priests with whom they had strong ties. These branch temples then freely issued those Gohonzon to their parish members. Of course those branch temples never asked for the high priest's permission, nor did the high priest perform the so-called "eye-opening ceremony" upon

those Gohonzon to consecrate them.

Even after the head temple established its sole authority to reproduce and confer Gohonzon in the 1960s, the high priest never performed an "eye-opening ceremony" on every Gohonzon issued. In fact, priests have testified that most Gohonzon were shipped out of the head temple without receiving the high priest's consecration. Now they claim it is essential to infuse the Gohonzon with the power derived from the "Living Essence" of the Daishonin, which is only possessed by the high priest. There is no record in any of the Daishonin's writings that he performed an "eye-opening ceremony" on the Gohonzon. Nor did he mention anywhere that it is necessary.

The Gohonzon is already the embodiment of the Mystic Law; it is already the eye of all Buddhas with which to perceive our own Buddha nature. What draws upon the power of the Buddha, and the power of the Law in the Gohonzon, is our own powers of faith and practice. When those dedicated to the spread of Buddhism pray to the Gohonzon with sincere faith, they manifest the same state of life as Nichiren Daishonin.

(Translated and edited by
SGI-USA Study Department)

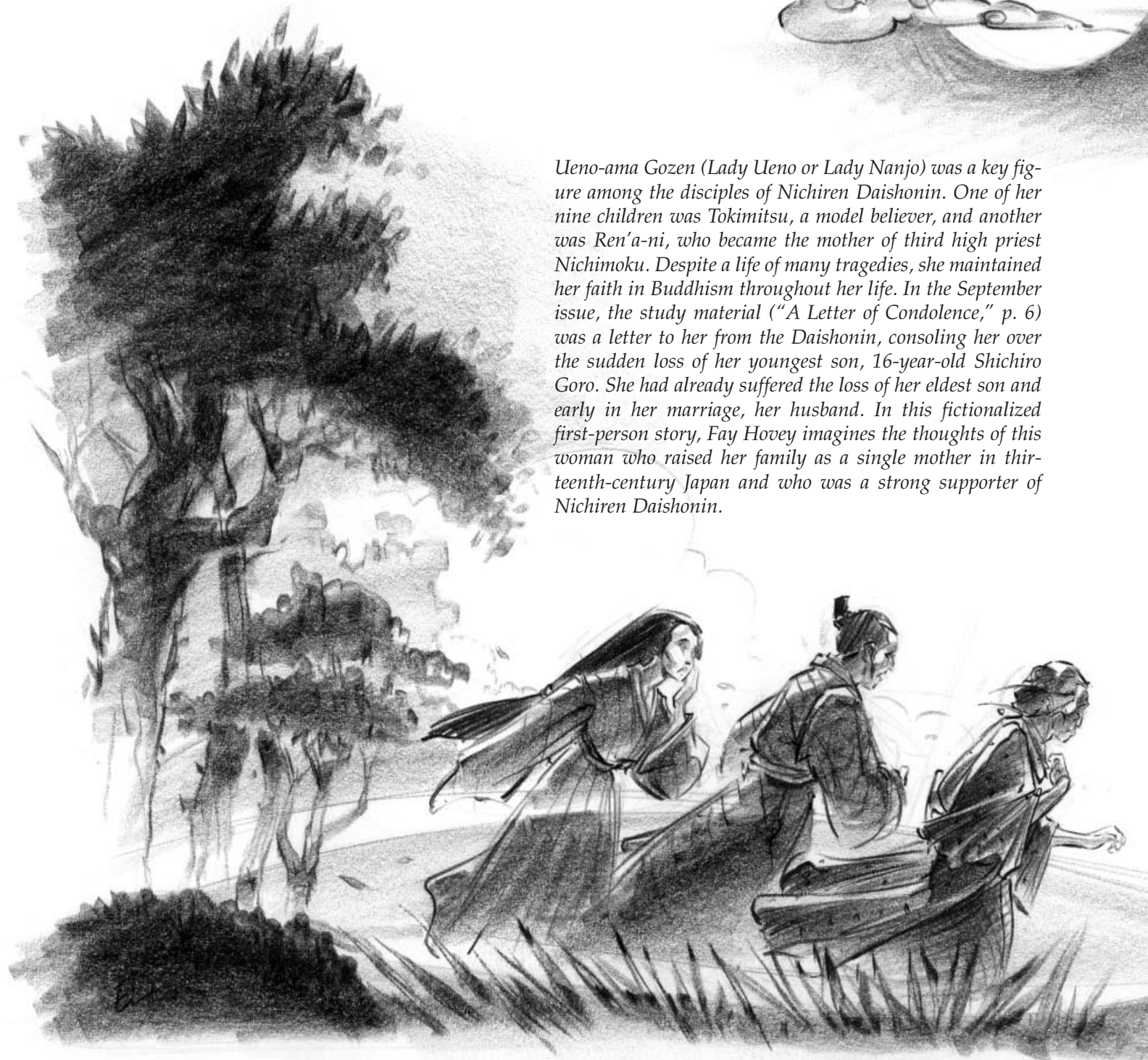
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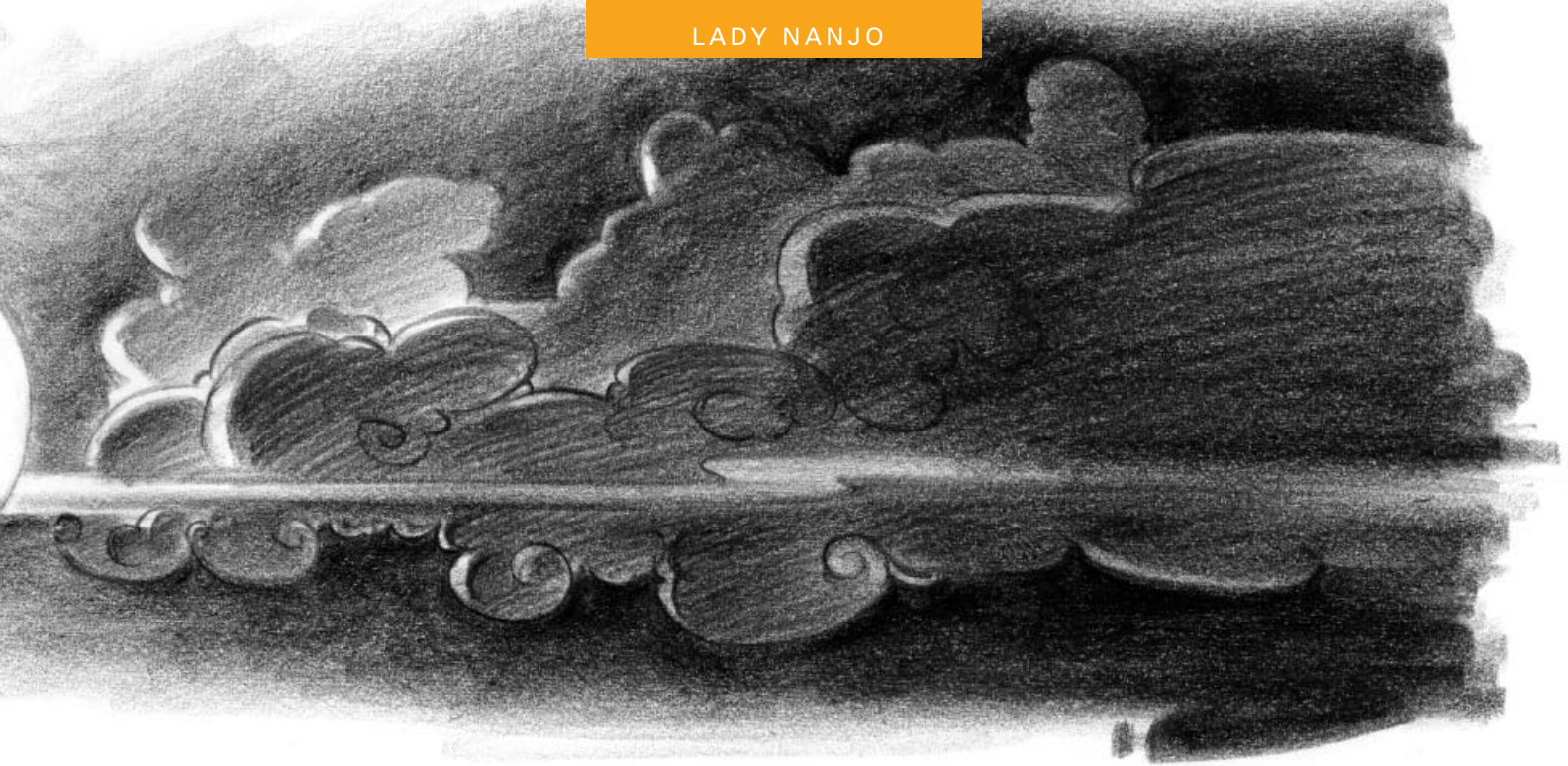
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1. Yobo-ji was an offshoot of the Fuji School that propounded original doctrines and practices contrary to Nichiren Daishonin's teachings. It was originally part of the Fuji School under the name Juhon-ji. Its chief priest Nisshun combined with another temple in 1550 and renamed them Yobo-ji. See May 1998 *Living Buddhism*, p. 40, and August 1998 *Living Buddhism*, p. 4).
 2. Present-day Oami Shirasato-machi, Chiba Prefecture.
 3. Four dictums: Also called the four maxims. Four statements with which Nichiren Daishonin denounced the four most influential Buddhist sects of his day, summarizing his repudiation of their doctrines. They are: (1) "Nembutsu leads to the hell of incessant suffering," (2) "Zen is the teaching of devils," (3) "Shingon will ruin the nation," (4) "Ritsu is traitorous."

Lady Nanjo: "My Story"

By Fay Hovey, Maui, Hawaii

Ueno-ama Gozen (Lady Ueno or Lady Nanjo) was a key figure among the disciples of Nichiren Daishonin. One of her nine children was Tokimitsu, a model believer, and another was Ren'a-ni, who became the mother of third high priest Nichimoku. Despite a life of many tragedies, she maintained her faith in Buddhism throughout her life. In the September issue, the study material ("A Letter of Condolence," p. 6) was a letter to her from the Daishonin, consoling her over the sudden loss of her youngest son, 16-year-old Shichiro Goro. She had already suffered the loss of her eldest son and early in her marriage, her husband. In this fictionalized first-person story, Fay Hovey imagines the thoughts of this woman who raised her family as a single mother in thirteenth-century Japan and who was a strong supporter of Nichiren Daishonin.





IT was the hell of all hells.

I had been visiting with Tokimitsu's wife and beaming over the newest grandson born just ten days earlier. Such joy we experienced—a happiness had settled over my heart with this new birth. Life indeed was good in spite of its trials and sufferings. I touched my cheek to the soft and fragrant skin of his face. To see the face of a younger Tokimitsu in him already made me feel young again. This is the great wonder of being a grandparent: to see oneself in the story of humans, continuing onward, flesh to flesh.

Like a dark cloud that suddenly covers the sun, blotting out all the vividness of landscape and sky, one of our servants, throwing himself upon the mat and crying in misery, told me that my 16-year-old son, Goro, was dead. "How can this be?" my mind careened. "This is not possible! He is wrong, he is mistaken!" I clung to that thought as we made our way to him sprawled where he fell.

"He is only sleeping," I said through my tears. "See, he is in a deep sleep! Come now, Goro, stop playing with us. Open your eyes now! You have us in a panic, enough is enough!" And still he would not open his eyes. My son Tokimitsu joined us and taking Goro into his arms, he shook him and said to him roughly: "Goro! Wake up! Wake up!" And there was confusion and wild sounds of crying. We sat in the grass, our hands helpless, shoulders rounded in despair. I looked into my young son's still face and Tokimitsu gently closed the eyes that had reflected the trees and skies but no life. Eventually I asked to be alone with him and I sat, talking with him under the whispering trees, told him how much I loved him, what a wonderful young man he was. I sang him songs I'd sung when he was a baby. I patted down his hair, straightened his limbs and clothing. I held his hand as it grew stiff and cold and I chanted Nam-myoho-rence-kyo until I could not recognize my own voice.

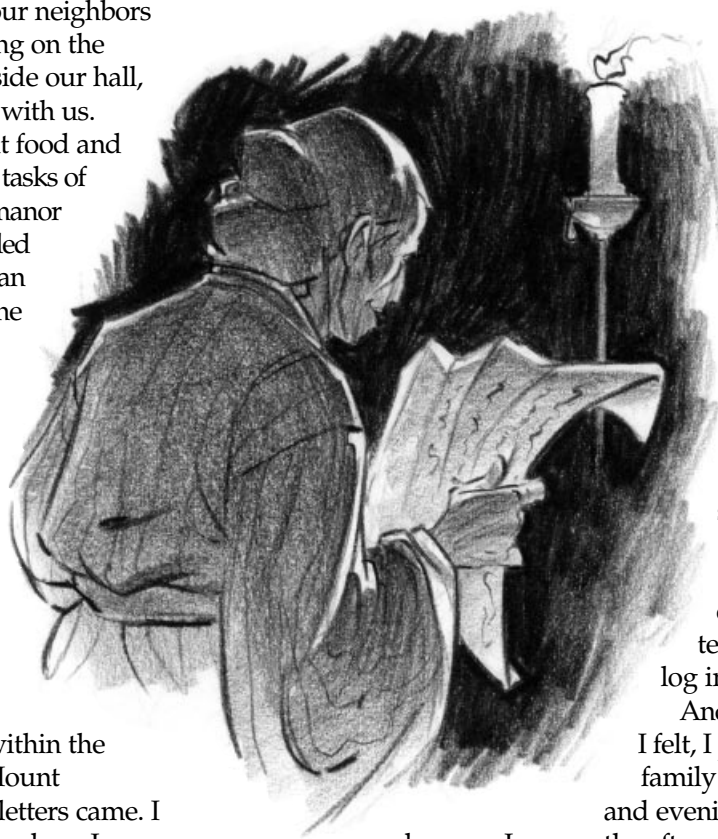
All the while, I kept expecting him to get up or that I would suddenly wake up and this would have been a horrible dream, nothing more. The first evening star appeared as I sat chanting and soon the rest of the family came, helped me up and tenderly, we walked home with Goro, chanting and weeping every step of the way.

We placed him upon a pallet in the main room of the manor house and lighting candles and incense, we chanted our evening gongyo sitting shoulder to shoulder in a sorrowful huddle. How quickly heaven had turned to hell. How swiftly the bright eagerness and vigor of life is doused. Like the snuffing of a candle or the brief life of a butterfly, life in all of its animation is gone. My husband had died when Goro was a little one in my womb. I wanted to die then, wanted to follow my husband, but knowing the baby would need me kept me alive. And now, the impartial hand of death lay coldly upon our family once again. My heart grew cold and numb with a grief so deep and

wide I believed I would never be able to cross back over the abyss to normal life. The sounds of our solemn gongyo and daimoku rose on the curls of incense smoke as we chanted on into the night. We chanted all night long. And when the morning sun rose, we offered our morning gongyo.

Many of our neighbors came, kneeling on the veranda outside our hall, and chanted with us. They brought food and took over the tasks of running the manor while we pulled together to plan his funeral. The first of the Daishonin's messages to me soon arrived. Like us, our mentor was in deep shock and could only express his disbelief. From deep within the recesses of Mount Minobu, his letters came. I cannot tell you how I clung to them, rereading them, chanting to understand the meaning of life and death. As the Daishonin could not join us, we performed Goro's funeral ourselves. Tokimitsu led us all in gongyo. We offered incense. Our friends and neighbors gave their condolences and we spoke of Goro and

how much he made us all laugh, how glad we were to be around his spirited personality. We read one of the Daishonin's letters. And still in my heart, deep within me was the question: "Why, why this child? Why now? What had I done to bring such suffering to us all?" I blamed myself. "Was it



because I had wanted to deny living when my husband died? Had I not chanted enough to protect my family? Did I lack sufficient appreciation? What could I have done to avert this tragedy?" My thoughts were like birds, darting in and out of my mind. I refused all food and took to my bed, wishing I had

died instead. I would have willingly given up my life for his. Still, it seemed each day a letter would come from the Daishonin and I would prop myself up, read it with shaking hands and streaming eyes and I would feel I could go on just one more day because there was someone who

really understood what I was feeling. Even though he was at Minobu, I could feel his weeping with me, could feel his compassion and concern for me. I don't believe I would be telling you this story now, if he hadn't written to me. I hung on to those letters like a floating log in a stormy sea.

And, no matter how I felt, I joined the family for morning and evening prayers. In the afternoons, I would go to sit by Goro's grave and chant. Needless to say, my family was worried about me and watched over me closely.

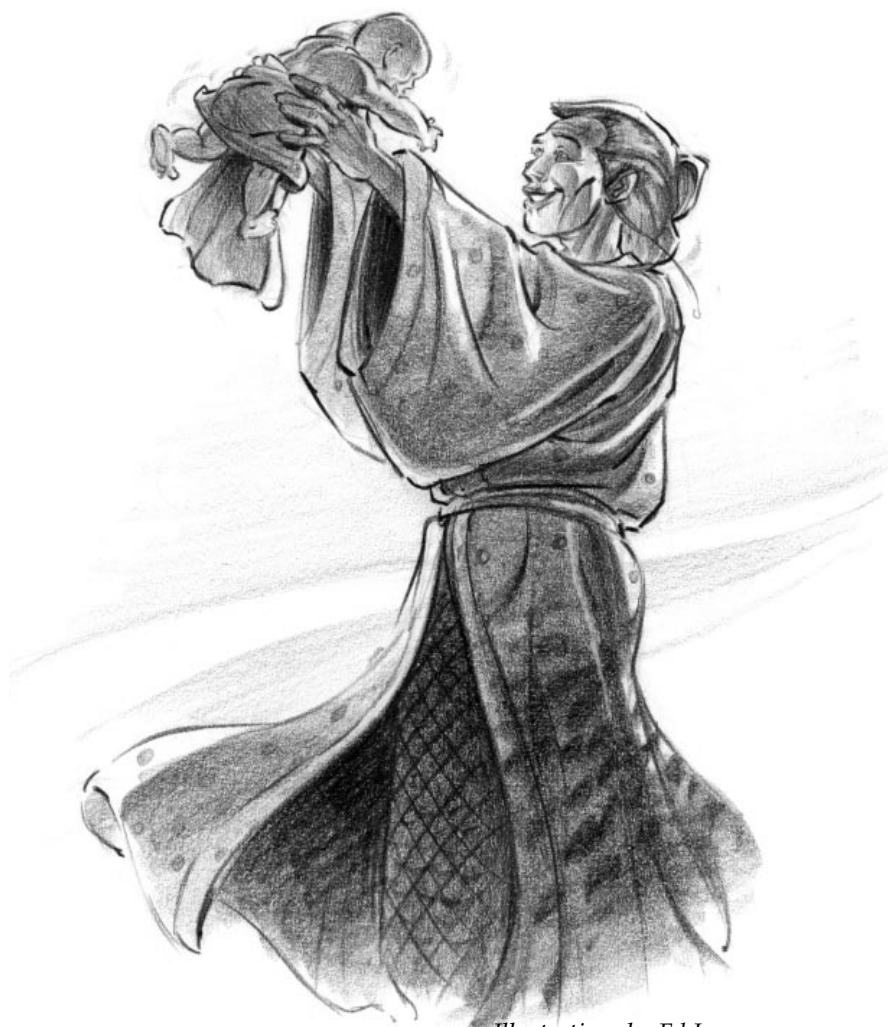
You see, there is a bond between a mother and a child like no other. When a child dies, something inside the mother dies. We can survive, but we

will always have a part of us that is dead. No pain can match it. The only comfort I had was the letters from the Daishonin, telling me that surely Goro was reunited with his father at Eagle Peak. He told me that I could be with them by chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Please understand me. Life requires us to be ferocious sometimes. It beats us down, time and time again, and we can still get up. We must get up. Because of the Daishonin's letters and the loving patience of my family, I began to eat the food my daughter-in-law would discreetly leave in my room. I saw through the eyes of direct experience just how precious life is, how important it is to continue to chant no matter what pain you are in. The pain, now sharp, will become duller as time passes. This is the way life is.

One day I woke from a nap and found my little grandson had been tucked beside me while I slept. He was now 4 months old and beginning to drool and wiggle, waving his arms and grinning with merry little eyes. "Ah, little Hiwaka ... you've grown up so much!" I breathed and he laughed, reminding me of Goro when he

was a baby. As I picked him up and held him, I realized I hadn't looked at him since the day Goro had died. He had been growing all along while I had been in the depths of sorrow, waiting for me to wake up one day and notice him. "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo," I softly told him. "Hello, I'm your grandmother, what do you think of that?" And he kicked his wrappings off and showed me his chubby little legs.

You know, life handed me a lot. Perhaps I have not always acted with wisdom, and perhaps my karma was such that I had to experience such suffering. The fresh hope and happiness I began to feel as I held my grandson grew with my appreciation for my mentor and the Buddhism he taught us. I knew that as long as I had the Gohonzon and could chant, I could continue and life could be sweet again. And it was. □



Illustrations by Ed Lee

DIALOGUE

on the *Lotus Sutra*

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

This is the thirty-second installment of an ongoing discussion on the Lotus Sutra among SGI President Ikeda and Soka Gakkai Study Department Chief Katsuji Saito and Vice Chiefs Takanori Endo and Haruo Suda. It appeared in the September 1997 issue of the Daibyakurenge, the Soka Gakkai study journal.

The teaching of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds first expounded in the Lotus Sutra is the key to the principle of human revolution. This time they begin a discussion on the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. Focusing on the worlds of Bodhisattva and Buddhahood, they investigate possible means for overcoming egoism and developing a state of absolute happiness, and creating a society pervaded with compassion.

32 The “Life Span” Chapter—Part Seven From the Six Paths to the Four Noble Worlds: The Mutual Possession of the Ten Worlds <Part I>

Katsuji Saito: Our past three discussions on the doctrine of the Ten Worlds have elicited quite a response from readers.

Many informed us that reading these dialogues inspired them once again to talk with their friends about Buddhism. One person wrote, saying: “I found the discussion easy to understand and entirely convincing. I am much more confident in my understanding of the Ten Worlds now and am eager to talk with others.”

Also, a number of readers commented that they had gained renewed appreciation of the Ten Worlds as a teaching for elevating one’s capacity or state of life. One wrote: “With a deeper understanding that this doctrine is a mirror of life, I am confident that from now on I will be able to lead a more profound existence. And I will!” Another said, “In the process of reading and rereading these pieces, I feel as though my life is expanding.”



President Ikeda meets with Linus Pauling at Soka University of America in Calabasas, February 1987.

Make a Fresh Start Each Day

Daisaku Ikeda: That's wonderful to hear.

People need to grow. Leaders, moreover, must not lull themselves into complacency, thinking, "Haven't I done quite enough already?" Rather, they should always reflect on themselves, asking themselves such questions as "Am I truly going in the right direction?" "Is my present state of life how it should be?" "Am I sure there is no one in the community who is suffering?" We need to examine everything with clear eyes. Only when we are able to reflect seriously upon ourselves have we truly internalized the message of the Lotus Sutra, the "scripture of human revolution."

From a certain standpoint, nothing is as vulnerable and fragile as a human being. Nor, perhaps, is there anything potentially as base or cruel. On the other hand, there is no limit to how strong or noble a person can become through cultivating the heart. The heart, the mind, has neither color, nor shape, nor extension; but given the

proper conditioning it can expand boundlessly.

Our present state of life, while it might seem stable, is in fact a fleeting phenomenon, an expression of the truth of temporary existence.¹ This means that our lives are changing constantly, never pausing for even a moment.

Takanori Endo: The view that all things are in a state of constant flux is termed the truth of non-substantiality.

Ikeda: Precisely because our lives are "non-substantial," there are no limitations on the extent to which we can develop. We must not become attached to whatever aspect of the self that happens to appear at any one time; there is always change. The real issue, therefore, is the way in which we change—whether for better or for worse. It can only be one or the other.

Haruo Suda: Some people complain about their inability to further develop themselves. This,

The key to revolutionizing one's state of life is to revolutionize one's heart, one's mind. That is most important. The results one produces are completely different depending on the focus of one's heart.

however, is a thoroughly indulgent attitude, for if we are not moving forward in life, we are moving backwards.

Ikeda: Indeed, as Nichiren Daishonin says, to not advance is to retreat. In particular, there is nothing more deplorable than when the leaders of an organization stop growing. When this happens, everyone suffers.

This is precisely why human revolution is so essential. The important point is to make a fresh start—to renew oneself—each and every day.

Leaders who have stopped seeking their own development tend to behave arrogantly. They are the ones you'll find needlessly scolding people. Such high-handed and arrogant conduct is characteristic of the worlds of Animality and Hunger. Praising others, on the other hand, is the hallmark of the world of Bodhisattva. It is important to recognize greatness in others. SGI members throughout the world are like precious gems; we must respect one another and encourage each other to lead the best possible life. That is the whole purpose of the organization.

Now is the time for leaders to revolutionize their state of life. In light of the principles of three thousand realms in a single moment of life and the inseparable relationship between oneself and one's environment, when all members genuinely stand up in faith, a great current that cannot fail to change society will be generated.

Saito: Lack of direction and a sense of foreboding seem to pervade the world today. Against this backdrop of worsening malaise, many people are voicing concern that Japan's future prospects, if the country stays on its present course, will be gloomy indeed; and that only through a fundamental change in the lives of the people can the

path to recovery be found.

Endo: In other words, it will no longer suffice to simply treat the superficial symptoms. The deep-rooted cause for the malady has to be addressed.

To illustrate, any attempt to effect educational reform that does not address issues of philosophy, and views of humanity and life itself—which are the very starting point of education—will devolve into little more than clever arguments over teaching technique.

Suda: Moreover, if not approached properly, all such initiatives—however well-intentioned—will simply become fodder for unscrupulous politicians.

The Buddha Is Someone Who Understands the "Mysteries of the Heart"

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin says, "If you try to treat someone's illness without knowing what the cause of the illness is, you will only make the person sicker than before" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 193). The key to revolutionizing one's state of life is to revolutionize one's heart, one's mind. That is most important.

Where is the focus of our heart? Are we striving to become healthier so that we can participate more in activities for kosen-rufu? Or are we allowing ourselves to backslide, using illness, for example, as an excuse for slackening our efforts, and consequently becoming more ill? Are we aspiring to grow more and help those around us become happy? Or are we taking advantage of the organization and our position, lording it over others?

The results one produces are completely different depending on the focus of one's heart. Such subtle workings of the heart are the central theme

of the doctrines of the Ten Worlds and their mutual possession. The Daishonin says: "Explaining the wonder of life is the prime objective of all the sutras. One who is awakened to the working of the mind is called a Thus Come One" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 564).

Saito: In other words, a Buddha is someone who thoroughly grasps the "wonder of life."

Ikeda: That's right. And it's only through practice that we can attain this state.

There was a famous judo expert who related the secret of his mastery. He recounted how he was thrown repeatedly by his teacher, becoming totally exhausted in the process, until suddenly his heart became one with his technique. From that point, he began to win. Likewise, in the process of reading a difficult book, even if at first we do not understand the ideas being expressed, if we would but continue to make strenuous effort, in an unexpected moment of clarity we will be able to grasp its meaning. Such flashes of insight come only after much steadfast and patient effort.

Everything depends on the heart. It is the same in our Buddhist practice. It is only by studying and struggling to deepen our faith that we can bring forth our Buddha nature. Simply talking on and on about revolutionizing one's state of life does not change anything. Someone who sits atop the organization and makes other people work hard while personally taking it easy is decadent. Such a person could never realize Buddhahood. It is those who have agonized and endured the most on account of faith who reveal their inherent Buddha nature.

Bodhisattvas Go Out of Their Way To Take On Hard Work

Saito: That is the way of the bodhisattva.

Ikeda: Indeed. A bodhisattva is someone who willingly goes out of his or her way to take on hard work; who possesses the spirit to eagerly undertake difficulties for the sake of the Law, as well as for other people and society. This is the very antithesis of being self-centered.

Suda: Those dwelling in the six paths (Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Heaven) and the two vehicles of Learning and Realization are self-centered.

Endo: The world of Bodhisattva is a realm in which one thoroughly dedicates oneself to other people and the Law. This is the exact opposite of what we find in the worlds up through the two vehicles. Reaching this stage entails fundamentally transforming our state of life.

Nichiren Daishonin says, "A bodhisattva dwells among the common people within the six paths, acting humbly and respecting others. They draw devils to themselves and provide blessings to others" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 433). Bodhisattvas treat themselves lightly while cherishing others, he says; and they take things that are difficult and painful on themselves while imparting joy to others. This is an ideal for all human beings and an unchanging code of conduct for leaders.

Suda: It's the exact opposite of a way of life that is based solely on instinct. In society today, many people think it natural to look out only for themselves without concern for others, some even going so far as to foist difficulties on others while jealously seeking ease and relaxation for themselves.

Ikeda: That's so true. From this we can really see the necessity of the SGI. The lives of SGI members illuminate the darkness of people's hearts with the light of happiness.

Endo: Dr. Linus Pauling (1901–94) remarked, "Number nine, the world of the Bodhisattva—a state of compassion in which one seeks to save all people from suffering—this is a spirit that people would do well to accept."

[Dr. Pauling, the "Father of Modern Chemistry," received Nobel Prizes in chemistry and peace. His dialogue with the SGI president has been published under the title *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*. When Mr. Ikeda spoke at Claremont McKenna College in California, U.S.A. (in January 1993), the eminent scientist traveled from San Francisco to Los Angeles to attend the event. He praised the SGI leader's speech, characterizing it as a "number nine."]



UPI/CORBIS-BETTMAN

The Atomic Bomb Dome at Peace Memorial Park, Hiroshima, Japan is the only structure damaged by the August 6, 1945, bombing of Hiroshima that remains standing. It remains the symbol against the use of nuclear weapons.

Changing the Underlying Current of an “Egoistic Society”

Ikeda: A self-centered heart is destined for the world of Hell. This is true for individuals and society at large.

A heart directed “for the Law” and “for the people,” on the other hand, is destined for the world of Buddhahood. In fact, in light of the principle of the simultaneity of cause and effect, Buddhahood already exists in such a heart.

Kosen-rufu is a struggle to change the underlying current of society from self-centered to altruistic, from egoistic to compassionate. Through our present activities, we are making the most necessary and fundamental contribution to this change. I hope you will take pride in this; and that you will have the confidence to defend the righteousness of our actions before any and all detractors.

The world of Bodhisattva is not a special realm. The Daishonin says: “Even a heartless villain loves his wife and children. He too has a portion of the Bodhisattva world within him” (MW-1, 53).

He is talking about the natural love a person

has for their family, and the unabashed love parents have for their children. The world of Bodhisattva emerges in a society where such heartfelt love and concern are not confined to families but extend to all people.

Endo: I am reminded of the Monument of Prayer for World Peace in Hiroshima.² One of the six bronze figures making up the monument symbolizes the “spirit of continuity.”

Ikeda: It’s a statue of a mother holding a child.

Endo: Yes. The mother holds the child in her hands, raising it up above her. The expression on her face is striking; she seems to be saying, “I will bequeath to you a better world.”

Saito: That spirit is a part of the world of Bodhisattva.

A Better Age for Children

Suda: It is now forty years since second Soka



Located in Chugoku Peace Park in Hiroshima, Japan, The Prayer for World Peace Monument was dedicated in 1997 to the victims of atomic bombs. The six bronze statues, created by noted French sculptor Louis Derbré, represent construction, tolerance, courage, hope, continuity and joy.

Gakkai president Josei Toda issued his famous “Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.”³

A little earlier it was said that a self-centered existence leads to the world of Hell. I think that war and atomic weapons are a good symbol of this. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce an anecdote of a mother who heroically battled this scourge of the modern age.

Her name was Asayo Yamashita and she was a victim of the atomic-bombing of Hiroshima. Married in 1944, she was pregnant with her first child at the time of the explosion. She was only about 1.5 miles from the epicenter of the blast and narrowly managed to avoid being crushed by the buildings that collapsed around her. Running to a nearby school where she hoped to seek refuge, she was caught in a downpour of “black rain”⁴ and drenched from head to toe.

Those who drank water from this rain, which contained high levels of radiation, within a few days lost their hair, became diarrhetic and eventually died. Of course at the time, Mrs. Yamashita had no way of knowing just how dangerous the rain was.

Four months later her first son was born, and three years later she gave birth to a second son. Mrs. Yamashita repeatedly taught her young children about the importance of peace. At meals, while doing the laundry or mending torn bed-sheets, she would tell them, “Mommy will change the world so that when you fellows become adults you won’t have to go to war.”

Around the time her eldest son was in fourth grade, Mrs. Yamashita began holding study meetings in her home with other mothers. They pursued a wide range of studies, including women’s history, home education and history. In addition to engaging in impassioned discussion once a week, they also initiated and carried out a variety of grass-roots campaigns—a movement to ban atomic and hydrogen bombs, a petition drive to make available live vaccines to prevent polio, and activities for peace, human rights and educational reform.

The study meetings steadily developed over time. Five years later, they had a regular participation of more than twenty mothers, and were holding both daytime and night sessions.

Endo: It was a true grass-roots movement.

Suda: Yes, it was. Once, when her eldest son remarked on how busy she was with her activities, Mrs. Yamashita told him: "That's because these are activities to put an end to war. Even now the victims of the A-bomb continue to suffer. The people of Hiroshima who experienced the horror of nuclear attack are the ones who must stand up in the forefront of this movement. No matter how arduous, this is something that has to be done."

Throughout this time, however, Mrs. Yamashita was gradually succumbing to the cancer she contracted from exposure to radiation. In the summer of 1962, she was hospitalized and underwent surgery. She was released from the hospital once, but was sent back again the following February, and underwent another operation in the summer of that year.

One day her eldest son, then a high school student, visited her in the hospital ward to find her neatly folding up some old pajamas. "What are you planning on doing with those?" he asked her. "You should just throw them away."

"When you get married and have children, they can be used to make diapers," she replied. Then, as if trying to gaze into the future, she said: "I wonder what the world will be like when your children are full grown. I would give anything to be able to see that."

Jokingly her son responded, "You would doubtless be a meddling grandmother."

"I would like to be able to tell the young people about how hard their grandmothers worked to create such a peaceful age," she remarked.

In May of the following year, 1964, she had a third operation. The results were not positive. And on June 16, after thanking each of the family members and relatives who had gathered at her bedside—demonstrating concern for others to the very end—she passed away. She was 39. The cancer had spread to her lungs, liver and uterus.

Saito: That must have been caused by the black rain.

Suda: The study meetings for mothers that she had pioneered continued over the next twenty years. The activities of the members of this group in promoting peace education and opposing war and nuclear arms shines to this day as a towering achievement.

At one point, Mrs. Yamashita's son asked his mother, while helping her make a placard for use in a peace demonstration, "Why do wars happen even though everyone knows that war is bad?"

"Before they realize what is happening, people get swept up in a current leading to war. That's human nature," she replied. "That's what's frightening." She recalled the very first words in the UNESCO constitution and asked her son if he had learned them in school: "'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.'"

"What does it mean that war is born in people's minds?" he asked.

"The tendency people have to hate one another, to think: 'As long as I'm safe, nothing else matters,' to view others' suffering with indifference—such an attitude ultimately leads to war. The only way to guard against this is by constructing the 'defenses of peace' in people's minds."

"But how can war be eliminated?" he further probed.

Sighing a little, she replied, "I'm not sure."

Saito: It seems she clearly apprehended the deep-seated negativity that is part of the karma all people share. Because she was earnestly struggling to alter the reality of society, she keenly understood how enormously difficult it is to change people's hearts.

Suda: Two years after Mrs. Yamashita's death, her eldest son, Yoshinori, encountered the Daishonin's Buddhism and took faith. Having had to squarely face and overcome his own fear of death as a result of his exposure to the atomic bomb, he became a major force behind the series of anti-war publications produced by the youth division members of Hiroshima. Presently, he is vigorously participating in activities for kosen-rufu together with other Soka Gakkai members in Hiroshima. He is a central figure in the men's division.

Ikeda: I know him well. Your account illustrates the oneness of parent and child; he is certainly connected to his mother eternally. I think his mother must be really delighted by his continuing efforts in the cause of peace.

Saito: The prayer of Mrs. Yamashita and the other



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Two S.S. guards march a crowd of prisoners at a concentration camp at Emsland, Germany, 1935.

mothers to “construct the defenses of peace in people’s minds,” I believe, is part of the great river of the popular movement for kosen-rufu.

The Oneness of Self and Others

Ikeda: There are countless people in the world whose hearts have been wounded for some reason or other. We need to extend a healing hand to them all. Through such efforts, we in fact heal ourselves.

When something untoward happens, people tend to imagine that no one could possibly be as unhappy and miserable as they. They wallow in self-pity, and turn a blind eye to everyone and everything else. But dwelling on their own pain and stewing in feelings of discontent and hopelessness only causes their life force to wane even more.

It seems to me that it is human bonds—the desire to live for the sake of others—that can give someone the strength to live on at such times. As long as one is holed up in egoism, there is no happiness. It is when we break out and take action for

others that our lives spring with vitality.

Endo: In terms of psychology, we often hear that concern for others has a stimulating effect on a person’s own mental and emotional health. People laboring under stress or anxiety tend to spend their time brooding endlessly over their own suffering. One method of treatment for such a condition is to bring a group of such people together and guide them to put their energy into thinking about and coming to the assistance of one another.

Saito: Is that so they can learn to care about people who are suffering in the same way as they are?

Endo: Yes. An atmosphere is created where individuals can easily listen to one another and talk things over together. Researchers find that this kind of group therapy results in a marked rise in the strength and will to live of all involved.

Suda: When you encourage someone, you find your own spirits refreshed. This is something we

often experience in our Buddhist activities.

Ikeda: The SGI is truly an oasis of rejuvenation.

When we look after and care for others—that is, help others draw forth the strength to live—our own strength to live increases. When we help people expand their state of life, our lives also expand. This is the marvel of the Bodhisattva path; actions to benefit others cannot be separated from actions to benefit oneself.

To merely talk about “benefiting others” is arrogant. To only say the words “saving people” is hypocritical. Only when we realize that our efforts on others’ behalf are also for our own sake are we practicing with true humility.

One’s own life and the lives of others are ultimately inseparable. The bodhisattva path, therefore, is the correct path in life.

Endo: To put it another way, by helping others we help ourselves. A survivor of the concentration camps during the Holocaust attributed his making it through alive to his having lived based on one rule: “In our group we shared everything; and the moment one of the group ate something without sharing it, we knew it was the beginning of the end for him.”⁵

Ikeda: That’s a remarkable observation. This is a truth of life learnt in the most extreme circumstances.

Saito: As soon as someone lost the spirit to share with others, they began to die. This is a chilling testimony.

Ikeda: It is of course impossible for those who were not there to casually discuss the concentration camp experience; it was such an overwhelming ordeal. And for that very reason, this is a valuable lesson for humankind, as well as a stern reality.

Endo: Yes. While many survivors of the camps have labored under lifelong psychological scars, one survivor asserted that he did not suffer in the least over the experience in the years after the war. That’s because, he explained, at Auschwitz he learned the true meaning of friendship. “When I was a child, strangers shielded me with their bodies from the blowing winds, for they had nothing else to offer but themselves.”⁶

There were of course those who descended to the level of animals, only looking out for themselves. That’s not unreasonable given the extreme hardships they faced. But there were also those who used themselves as “shields” to protect children from the harsh winds assailing them.

The Trap of a “Society of Narcissism”

Endo: The psychologist who introduces these experiences, Dr. Julius Segal, warns that the modern age is caught in a trap of narcissism. He says: “Narcissism is becoming increasingly common and accepted in our culture. Thinking of others is out of fashion now.”⁷

He then quotes the Viennese psychiatrist and Nazi death camp survivor Dr. Viktor Frankl (1905–97) who observed, “You’re always forced—ordered—to feel joy, be happy, and experience pleasure.” Dr. Segal adds, “Self-sacrifice and thinking about others are made to seem irrelevant, even unhealthy.”⁸

Ikeda: He makes a good point. The question is, have we realized a happier society as a result. I don’t think so.

Endo: Indeed. Increasingly, people are becoming isolated, forgetting what it means to encourage one another. Consequently, they are losing their will to live to the full.

Saito: Then, the desire to find something “still more fun” grows only more overwhelming. It’s a vicious circle.

Ikeda: It is the world of Bodhisattva—the way of life of “number nine,” as Dr. Pauling once called it—that cuts the dark chains of this trap.

There’s a well-known story that clearly illustrates this point. It goes like this: Someone goes to Hell and finds that everyone there is suffering because they cannot eat even though each has a sumptuous meal right in front of them. The reason they can’t eat is that their chopsticks are longer than their arms, so they cannot put the food into their mouths. The person then goes to the Buddha land. There, again, the chopsticks are longer than people’s arms. But everyone is content. Why? It’s because they take turns feeding each other.

The Mystic Law is the constant, unchanging core; and it is the fundamental power causing all things to go in a positive direction. When we base ourselves on this absolute and unchanging Law, both our lives and society prosper eternally. Apart from the Law, everything else is, in a manner of speaking, an illusion.

Saito: In other words, the difference between Hell and Buddhahood is not one of environment. The difference lies solely in the hearts of those dwelling in these realms.

Suda: I think the story highlights why there is still a great deal of suffering in a time of so much abundance, as in Japan today.

Ikeda: In any event, society changes. It changes moment by moment. Politics, economics, fads—everything in the world undergoes change. The issue is whether, in the midst of so much change, one possesses an unchanging “center.” We have such a center in the Mystic Law.

The Mystic Law is the constant, unchanging core; and it is the fundamental power causing all things to go in a positive direction. People change, but the Law does not. People can be deceived, but the Law cannot. Trying to cheat the Law is of absolutely no avail. When we base ourselves on this absolute and unchanging Law, both our lives and society prosper eternally. Apart from the Law, everything else is, in a manner of speaking, an illusion.

After all is said and done, the most supreme way of life is that of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth who thoroughly dedicate themselves to kosen-rufu. There is no more lofty or sublime way to live. Realizing this is a matter of faith.

A Courageous Heart of Faith Is Itself Buddhahood

Saito: It is said of bodhisattvas, “Seeking enlightenment above, saving sentient beings below.”⁹ From our standpoint, these correspond to practicing for oneself and practicing for others.

Ikeda: We become happy ourselves, and we help others do the same. This is analogous to the two

motions of a planet, which rotates on its axis while revolving around the sun. It is a universal principle.

In a sense, bodhisattvas exert themselves to help people become happy, even if it means putting off their own happiness until later. This is the spirit of the Soka Gakkai. It is a most noble way of life.

Faith is a struggle. Life is a struggle. Buddhism is a struggle. It is by waging a courageous and high-spirited struggle against “evil” that we can draw forth the states of Bodhisattva and Buddhahood from within.

This world is dominated by the Devil of the Sixth Heaven, which exerts a powerful “force of misery” over all people. That’s why when a truly happy person appears, the Devil of the Sixth Heaven envies, hates and tries to destroy the person. Nichiren Daishonin vigorously battled this negative influence, as did Shakyamuni.

We must challenge and defeat the negativity in life, which causes people to resent and persecute one another, and seeks to keep them in a state of misery. Only when we win over the forces of evil can we achieve true happiness or Buddhahood. That’s why Nichiren Daishonin urges us to “summon up the courage of a lion” (MW-1, 241).

Suda: Faith like the “courage of a lion” must be the hallmark of the world of Buddhahood, which is also described as a state of indestructible happiness.

Ikeda: Yes. Such happiness is absolute. It’s called “absolute” because a person in this state of life is able to discern the significance of all affairs of life and society; which is in itself wisdom. Also, no matter how things may change, the person’s heart remains calm and steady; this is inner strength. Moreover, it’s “absolute” because one can freely tap this wisdom and strength from the depths of

“The difference between Hell and Buddhahood is not one of environment. The difference lies solely in the hearts of those dwelling in these realms.”

one’s life whenever necessary.

It certainly is not a state free of worry or suffering. Such a life, if it existed, would be monotonous and dull. If everything were to go smoothly—that in itself would be an illusion, a lie. Worries are an integral part of the reality of life.

Nichiren Daishonin teaches the principle “earthly desires are enlightenment.” Because we have desires and worries, we can appreciate happiness. Because we face and overcome painful difficulties, we can attain Buddhahood. The truth is that a life without any suffering is not at all happy. That is the perspective of Buddhism.

What, then, is the world of Buddhahood? From our standpoint, it is none other than faith.

President Toda said, “Attaining Buddhahood doesn’t mean simply becoming a Buddha or heading in that direction. Honestly believing in the Daishonin’s teaching that the ordinary person is most respectable and the principle of the true entity of life, we are profoundly confident that we are Buddhas just as we are, from the eternal past into the infinite future. This is what it means to become a Buddha.”¹⁰

This comes down to faith, determination. It’s a matter of our internal awareness.

The Essential Teaching Is To “Return to the Original Life”

Ikeda: The “Life Span of the Thus Come One” (sixteenth) chapter of the Lotus Sutra describes the “Buddha enlightened since the remote past” or the “eternal Buddha.” Just who is this Buddha? Commenting on the passage in the Lotus Sutra that reads, “It has been immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas since I in fact attained Buddhahood” (LS16, 225),¹¹ the Daishonin explains: “‘I’ represents the living beings of the Dharma realm. Each and every one in the Ten Worlds is being referred to here in the word ‘I’”



(*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 753).

The “eternal Buddha” of the “Life Span” chapter means all living beings. We are all “eternal Buddhas.” Ordinary people are Buddhas just as they are.

There are no grades or distinctions among people. We are all equal; we are all equally Buddhas. The only difference among people has to do with whether, or the extent to which, we realize this in our hearts. From the standpoint of Buddhism, that is the only meaningful distinction.

A Buddha is not someone displaying the thirty-two features or eighty features.¹² Our lives, originally, are the Buddha. The universe itself is originally the Buddha. The appearance of the sun is a function of compassion. The illumination of the moon is also compassion, as is the beautiful respiration of green plants and trees. The entire universe is a great living entity carrying out activities of compassion from the beginningless past through the eternal future. This vast organism of compassion is the eternal Buddha. And the life of every being in the Ten Worlds is one with this Buddha of the “Life Span” chapter. Faith in the



Mystic Law is the key enabling us to “return” to this original life.

Saito: Returning to the original life—that’s the Lotus Sutra’s essential teaching.

Ikeda: Exactly. The Daishonin clearly states in the “Ongi Kuden” (Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings), “The ‘Life Span’ chapter reveals the original life of all beings in the Ten Worlds. This chapter is called the essential teaching or *hommon* because it is the gate (Jpn *mon*) to the truth of eternity (Jpn *hon*)” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 799).

Suda: The great life of the Buddha enlightened since the remote past is the “original life” of the beings of the Ten Worlds. The essential teaching is so called because it enables us to return to this original life.

Endo: Since this original life is fundamentally a property of one’s own life, there is no limit to the extent to which we can tap the power of the original Buddha.

Ikeda: The entire universe is like our own personal bank account. The amount of fortune we can withdraw depends solely on our faith.

Faith means battling life’s negative functions. Justice means opposing evil. Buddhist practice means struggling against adversity.

At one point, the Daishonin’s follower Shijo Kingo, who was known for his spirited practice, was so overwhelmed by difficulties that he unwittingly began complaining: “I thought that those who believe in the Lotus Sutra were supposed to enjoy peace and security in this life.” When the Daishonin heard this, he instructed him as follows: “The boughs of the long-lived pine tree become bent and twisted as it grows older. . . . The votary of the Lotus Sutra is the Buddha of eternal life; no wonder his practice is hindered, just as the pine tree’s branches are bent or broken” (MW-1, 128). Just as the pine tree stands up to wind and snow, showing proof of its eternal life, practitioners of the Lotus Sutra, through enduring difficulties, manifest their true identity as Buddhas of eternal life. The Daishonin stresses to Shijo Kingo that now is the time to reveal the supreme world of Buddhahood. At this time when you are about to receive supreme benefit, he questions, what can you possibly have to complain about?

Saito: In the same writing, the Daishonin also says, “Those who embrace this sutra should be prepared to meet difficulties”; but he assures Shijo Kingo that “continuing faith will lead to Buddhahood” (MW-1, 127).

Ikeda: It’s a matter of “embracing” the Mystic Law. We need to steadfastly uphold the Mystic Law through every obstacle, confident that we truly have a mission for *kosen-rufu*.

We Attain Enlightenment by Defeating “Devils”

Ikeda: Shakyamuni constantly battled “devils.” It would be no exaggeration to say that to continuously fight devils is to be a Buddha.

Suda: Yes. It is clear from the sutras that Shakyamuni fought negative forces throughout his entire life. And when “devils” rose up in force against him, Shakyamuni dauntlessly put down

When the Mystic Law blossoms in our hearts, our lives shine like the sun with perfect calm and composure, and with infinite strength. This is the world of Buddhahood. Buddhist practice means never coming to a standstill. We have to cultivate a self that absolutely no negative influence can sway.

their underhanded attempts to infiltrate his mind with illusion and lead him astray. His only “weapons” in this struggle were faith, tenacious effort and wisdom.

Ikeda: To begin with, the essence of Shakyamuni’s enlightenment lay in this battle against devilish influences. The words that Shakyamuni uttered immediately after attaining enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree are recorded in sutras.

Endo: There is a description of how, after long years of earnest practice, Shakyamuni, sitting peacefully, apprehended the Law in his life blazing like the sun in the sky, and declared, “I have defeated the devil’s army.”¹³

Ikeda: When the Mystic Law blossoms in our hearts, our lives shine like the sun with perfect calm and composure, and with infinite strength. This is the world of Buddhahood.

Manifesting the world of Buddhahood and defeating the devil’s forces are one and the same. “Devils” exist both within our lives and in our environment. But whether we defeat them or are defeated by them depends solely on our own spirit and determination.

The important thing is that we win and that we do so continually. Buddhist practice means never coming to a standstill. We have to cultivate a self that absolutely no negative influence can sway.

Suda: Not only at the time when he attained enlightenment, but thereafter as well, Shakyamuni continually fought against negative forces, driving back their insidious influence. The eminent Buddhologist Dr. Hajime Nakamura writes:

It is not the case that the Buddha gained enlighten-

ment after the devils had scattered in disarray. Rather, defeating devils and gaining enlightenment are two sides of the same feat.¹⁴

His identity as the Buddha must be sought within his very actions to drive off illusion. Continuous spirited advance is itself the activity of the Buddha. It is not that Shakyamuni became a different being because he attained enlightenment.¹⁵

Ikeda: Buddhahood is a state of life of oneness with the Mystic Law. A Buddha is someone who makes the Mystic Law his or her teacher. Thoroughly and steadfastly upholding the Mystic Law is itself the world of Buddhahood.

Immediately after attaining enlightenment, Shakyamuni vowed to “live always making the Law my teacher.” He declared: “I have awakened to this Law. I will venerate and revere and base myself on this Law.”¹⁶ And that is precisely how he lived out the rest of his life.

Saito: When he was on the verge of death, Shakyamuni remarked, “I have succeeded in devoting my life to the self,”¹⁷ meaning his complete devotion to the eternal Mystic Law within.

Endo: He also left behind words urging his disciples to likewise “rely on the Law and on your life.”

Ikeda: The Rokuharamitsu Sutra¹⁸ states that “One should become the master of his mind rather than let his mind master him” (MW-5, 164). It’s not a matter of leading a self-centered existence, but of living based on the Law, based on kosen-rufu. Faith means having such a spirit.

Faith Is Proof of Buddhahood

Ikeda: Tremendous importance attaches to the Daishonin’s statement in the Gosho “The True

Object of Worship”: “That common mortals born in the Latter Day of the Law can believe in the Lotus Sutra is due to the fact that the world of Buddhahood is present in the world of Humanity” (MW-1, 53). Our faith in the Lotus Sutra is proof that the world of Buddhahood exists in our lives.

Suda: I sense something very subtle and important in the proposition that it is possible to believe in the Lotus Sutra because we possess the world of Buddhahood. The usual assumption would probably be that because one believes in the Lotus Sutra, one can reach the world of Buddhahood. But the directionality of the aforementioned statement is just the opposite.

Ikedo: There are two ways of looking at it. Certainly, you can say that because we believe in the Lotus Sutra we will attain the world of Buddhahood. But it is because we ourselves are entities of the eternal Mystic Law, in other words, because the world of Buddhahood is inherent in our lives, that it is possible for us to believe in the Lotus Sutra in the first place. Whether it is the revelation of the theoretical teaching that all people can become Buddhas, or the revelation of the essential teaching that the Buddha’s life is eternal, we are able to believe in the teaching because we can sense something eternal in our lives.

Saito: I think that on some level—whether conscious or unconscious—everyone senses the existence of something eternal.

Ikedo: Everyone indeed has the ability to sense the eternal. That may be the most salient characteristic of human beings. That’s probably why only humans have religion.

This inherent capacity could be described as an awareness of the sanctity of life or a connection to others, or as the ability to harmonize with nature and the universe. This inner sense or capacity for goodness is itself the source of the power of faith to believe in the Lotus Sutra.

In any event, precisely because our lives are endowed with the world of Buddhahood, it is possible for us to believe in the Lotus Sutra. And when we summon forth the power of faith and believe in the Lotus Sutra, we can liberate the

power of the world of Buddhahood inherent in our lives and channel it into creating value. Our continual practice then enables us to display the power of the world of Buddhahood all the more strongly.

Suda: Because we possess the world of Buddhahood, we can manifest faith; and through faith we can open up the world of Buddhahood in our lives. This seems to be the relation.

Saito: To give a simple analogy, dwelling in the nine worlds could be compared to being shut up inside a room. Dwelling in the world of Buddhahood, on the other hand, is like bathing in the clear, bright sunshine of the outdoors. The beings of the nine worlds fundamentally dwell in the great macrocosm that is the world of Buddhahood. People vaguely sense this as some kind of eternal aspect of their lives; but because they are shut up in a room surrounded by dense walls of illusion, they fail to fully comprehend their true environment. But when they break down these walls of illusion through faith, they become able to freely enjoy the fresh air of the Mystic Law pervading the universe.

Endo: When we use the “key” of faith to open up the “window” of our heart, the “room” of our life is flooded with fresh air and brilliant light from outside. Then, there is no difference between being in the room and being outside.

Ikedo: Why don’t we continue this discussion of the relation between the nine worlds and the world of Buddhahood next time?

A Mind That Perceives the Buddha Is the Buddha

When living beings have become truly faithful, honest and upright, gentle in intent, single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha, not hesitating even if it costs them their lives, then I and the assembly of monks appear together on Holy Eagle Peak. (LS16, 230)

Ikedo: In any event, this outpouring of inner strength is something that we actually experience through faith. When we put our all into our activities

for kosen-rufu, we feel a sense of unbounded freshness and exhilaration. We must not practice passively. It is when we practice with the spirit of not begrudging our lives that true power wells forth.

Nichiren Daishonin teaches (in the “Letter to Gijo-bo”) that the world of Buddhahood appears in our heart, citing the passage, “single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha, not hesitating even if it costs them their lives” (MW-2, [2nd ed.], 205). Single-mindedly striving to bring forth one’s Buddha nature without begrudging one’s own life is faith. This is a seeking spirit. The power of the original Buddha manifests in the heart of someone who earnestly seeks the life-state of the original Buddha.

The Daishonin’s interpretation of the line, “single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha,” is much more profound than the literal meaning.

Suda: Yes. In one place he says, “Single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha’ also means to see the Buddha in one’s own mind, to concentrate one’s mind on seeing the Buddha, and that to see one’s own mind is to see the Buddha” (MW-2, [2nd ed.], 205).

Ikeda: Exactly. While initially we start out “single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha,” he indicates that, in the end, we perceive with our own mind that we are the Buddha. Our determination in faith, our spirit to practice without begrudging our life, is itself the manifestation of the eternal world of Buddhahood. In short, faith itself is the world of Buddhahood. This is the true aspect of “the world of Buddhahood existing in the world of Humanity” (MW-1, 53).

Endo: Practicing without begrudging one’s life—this is what is meant by the line: “If you exert a hundred million aeons of effort in a single moment of life, the three enlightened properties of the Buddha will appear within you at each moment. Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the practice of genuine and constant devotion” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 790).

Saito: This is also what Nichikan Shonin indicated when he said, “What we call a strong mind of faith in the Lotus Sutra is the world of Buddhahood.”¹⁹

Ikeda: The Daishonin and Nichikan Shonin were saying the same thing. We need to practice with the “courageous spirit of a lion” to protect Buddhism and the Buddha’s children, and to resolutely stand up to persecution. This is the secret to causing the world of Buddhahood to manifest in our life.

Saito: I can really see the importance of the SGI spirit—that is, the spirit to spread the Law and practice selflessly without begrudging one’s life, regardless of the cost.

Ikeda: Faith means carrying out a practice of dedicating one’s entire being to realizing kosen-rufu. It means to abandon egoism and uphold one’s principles no matter what.

President Makiguchi and President Toda lived entirely for the sake of kosen-rufu, for the sake of all others, for the sake of the members and for society, without giving any thought to themselves, putting everything off for later. And I have done the same.

One certainly cannot attain Buddhahood with a slovenly or lazy attitude. The Daishonin says, “[On the path of attaining Buddhahood] one is certain to meet with some great trial that will demand of him that he be willing to give his life; only then can one become a Buddha” (MW-5, 123).

The Buddha is a human being—a person who struggles continuously. The Buddha is not some kind of special being existing in another world. The Daishonin teaches that the ordinary person is the most respectable and noble being. This is the principle of the true entity of all life; the “true entity” manifests amid the reality of “all phenomena” of life and society. Therein exists the world of Buddhahood.

In the same way that people exert themselves in different fields, whether as a company employee, a teacher, a housewife, or a farmer, so too does the world of Buddhahood pulse vibrantly in all spheres of activity. This is the perspective of the Lotus Sutra.

Suda: A high priest who wants to be revered as a Buddha while failing to take action to spread the Daishonin’s teaching is trampling on the heart of the Lotus Sutra.

Endo: Such fraud and deception is inexcusable.

Ikeda: Regarding the oneness of Buddhahood and the nine worlds, putting our palms together when we pray symbolizes this. It also represents the Mystic Law.

[In the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings,” the Daishonin says, “(In the term *pressing palms together*) *pressing* refers to *myo* or Mystic, while *palms* refers to *ho* or the Law;... *together* means ‘the world of Buddhahood’ and *palms* means the other ‘nine worlds’” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 722).]

In other words, Buddhahood lies in chanting daimoku based on faith no matter what happens. Whatever sufferings of the nine worlds we may

be undergoing, through strong faith we can lead a life in which the nine worlds manifest the world of Buddhahood, and the world of Buddhahood manifests the nine worlds.

While there may be instances when our prayers are answered immediately, there will also be times when that is not the case. Even so, we should continue offering prayer, chanting daimoku and taking action. Such resolute faith is itself the world of Buddhahood; it is victory. Maintaining such faith to the very end of our lives enables us to set out on a journey over the three existences at one with the “eternal Buddha” of the “Life Span” chapter.

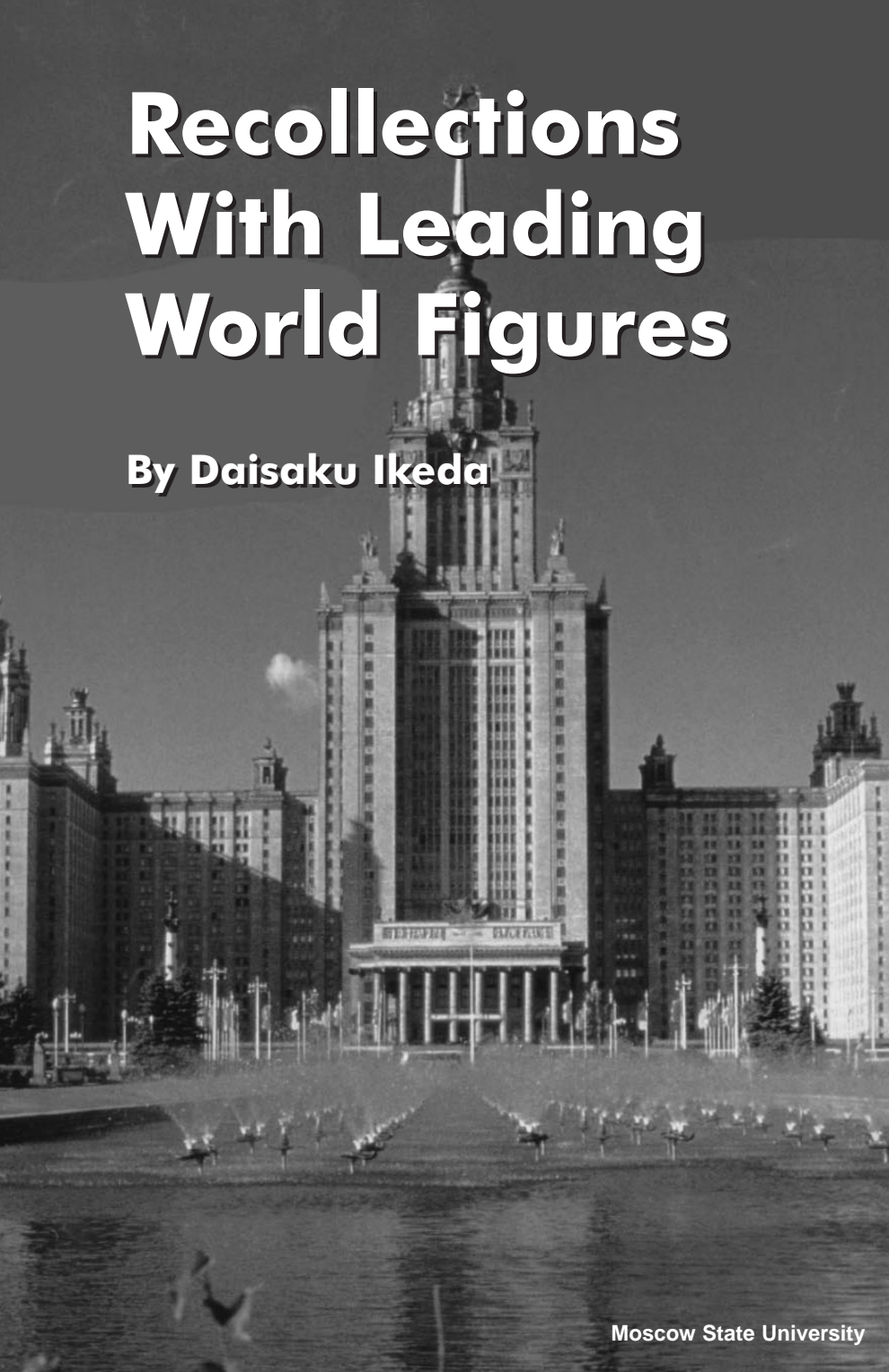
(To be continued)

Illustrations by Blair Thornley

1. Truth of temporary existence: Along with the truth of non-substantiality and the truth of the Middle Way, one of the three truths formulated by the Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai of China to clarify the essential nature of phenomena. The truth of non-substantiality is that phenomena have no absolute or fixed existence of their own; the truth of temporary existence is that while all things are non-substantial in nature, they nevertheless possess a provisional or temporary reality that is in constant flux; and the truth of the Middle Way is that all phenomena are characterized by both non-substantiality and temporary existence yet are in essence neither non-substantiality nor temporary existence.
2. The Monument of Prayer for World Peace was commissioned by the Soka Gakkai and completed in June 1997. Sculpted by French artist Louis Derbré, the six-statue bronze monument pays tribute to the atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as to all those throughout the world who have suffered at the hands of nuclear testing.
3. On September 8, 1957, at a youth festival held at the Mitsuzawa Athletic Stadium in Yokohama, President Toda proclaimed his absolute opposition to the testing of nuclear bombs, declaring, “It is my wish to attack the problem at its root, that is, to rip out the claws that are hidden in the very depth of this issue.” He further declared that anyone or anything that threatened the right of people to exist was a “devil incarnate,” a “fiend” and a “beast.”
4. Black rain: Following the atomic blast at Hiroshima, a wide area of the city and surrounding countryside was drenched in a heavy rain. The rain contained much soot caused by the destruction of the city, and was hence dubbed “black rain.”
5. Julius Segal, *Winning Life's Toughest Battles—Roots of Human Resilience* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1986), p. 103.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
9. T'ien-t'ai's *Maka Shikan* (Great Concentration and Insight).
10. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1983), vol. 3, p. 175.
11. Editor's note: All quotations from the Lotus Sutra are from: *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). For purposes of convenience, all citations from this work will be given in the text and abbreviated as follows: LS followed by the chapter number, and then the page number.
12. Thirty-two features or eighty features: Remarkable physical characteristics said to be possessed by Buddhas and bodhisattvas, symbolizing their superiority over ordinary people.
13. Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha* (Gautama Buddha), bk. 1, *Nakamura Hajime Senshu* (Selected Writings of Hajime Nakamura), vol. 11, (Tokyo: Shunshusha, 1992), p. 398.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 401.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
17. Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha* (Gautama Buddha), bk. 2, *Nakamura Hajime Senshu* (Selected Writings of Hajime Nakamura), vol. 12, (Tokyo: Shunshusha, 1992), p. 210.
18. *Rokuharamitsu Sutra*: “Sutra of the Six Paramitas.” A sutra translated into Chinese by Prajna of the T'ang dynasty. It explains in detail the six kinds of practices or “perfections” (*Skt paramita*) that bodhisattvas must carry out in order to attain enlightenment.
19. *Sanju Hiden Sho* (The Threefold Secret Teaching).

Recollections With Leading World Figures

By Daisaku Ikeda



Moscow State University

SEIKYO PRESS

Dr. Rem Khokhlov—Former Rector of Moscow State University

AS I walked down the steps leading from the plane, a smile as bright as spring sunlight greeted me. Though this was our first meet-

ing, I felt a strange sense of familiarity and rapport.

The meeting I describe took place more than twenty years ago, in September 1974. Dr.

Rem Khokhlov, then rector of Moscow State University, was at the head of the group who had come to welcome me at the airport on my first visit to the Soviet Union.

“President Ikeda, please have a leisurely look around our nation,” said Rector Khokhlov, in the bus on the way to the airport terminal building. It was here that our dialogue began.

Dr. Khokhlov, a respected nuclear physicist, was 48 at the time, two years older than I was. His handsome, sharply defined features revealed a keen intelligence. A genial smile always lit his face. It was a smile that came from the very depths of his being, where a warm, empathetic current of love for others flowed. He displayed a lively interest in people. He was full of energy and vitality, always in pursuit of something finer, something higher.

On that first trip to the Soviet Union, I vowed in my heart to meet and forge ties of friendship with as many people as possible, as one human being to another, even if critics called my efforts naive.

Soviet-Japan relations in those days were as cold as the frozen winter earth. The Soviet Union’s relationships with the United States and China were also frosty, and mutual mistrust and suspicion had led to a seemingly inextricable arms race.

The average Japanese person had no real grasp of what the people of the Soviet Union were like, only a vague picture of them as somehow frightening and inhospitable. A variety of



President Ikeda meets with Dr. Rem Khokhlov at Moscow State University in 1974 for an educational and cultural exchange.

historical factors had predisposed the Japanese toward holding such an image. But harping on the past did not serve the best interests of either nation. Nothing could be more dangerous than allowing mutual distrust to perpetuate a relationship of meaningless antagonism—and nothing could be crueler for the future generations of both nations.

That is why I declared to Dr. Khokhlov: “I have come for those of future generations.”

Differences do indeed exist between nations, peoples, social systems and ideologies. But I have always believed that we should recognize those differences and, precisely because of them, work harder to get to know and understand each other better as human beings.

I decided to make a start, doing whatever it was in my power and capacity to do. I would light lamps of friendship, no matter how small, that would provide comfort and

reassurance, just as lights burning in one or two windows of a house can warm the heart of a caller on a dark, icy-cold winter night. Confident that even the seemingly endless Siberian winter eventually turns into spring, I would plant seeds—if only a few—for the flowers of a new season of hope. I mentioned this determination to Dr. Khokhlov.

I was not a politician, nor was I undertaking this trip on anyone else’s behest or agenda. Nevertheless, when I announced my decision to visit the communist country, I was harshly criticized in Japan. “Why are you going to the Soviet Union now?” the media demanded to know. “Why is a religious leader visiting an atheist nation?” “Are you going to endorse communism?” Such were the attacks I endured.

Three months earlier, I had also made my first visit to the People’s Republic of China. My Chinese friends, too, criticized me for even contemplating a trip

to the Soviet Union. The standoff between the Soviet Union and China that had begun in the ‘60s had become fierce mutual antagonism by the early ‘70s. Those who wished to pursue friendly relations with China could not be friends with the Soviet Union, and those who tried to forge closer relations with the Soviet Union would find the doors to China barred. That was largely the mood that existed at the time of my first visits to both countries.

I had my own thoughts and beliefs on this subject, however. No matter how strident the opposition, someone had to take the first step to open a pathway to peace.

It was with that intention that I went to the Soviet Union, where the very first person I should have the good fortune to meet was Dr. Khokhlov. My meeting with him—covered in the Japanese media and a number of articles I later wrote on my visit—changed many

Japanese people's opinion of the Soviet Union. They learned that people of fine character most certainly did exist in that country, contradicting the stereotype image they had formerly cherished; they discovered that behind the "Iron Curtain" were living, breathing human beings who loved peace as much as they did.

Standing atop the observation tower of Moscow State University and looking out across the city, Dr. Khokhlov and I discussed the subject of educational exchange as a means for fostering peace. "Soka University is like a young 'grandchild' compared to your venerable university," I told him, "but it is my dream that by the twenty-first century, our school will become as respected as your fine institution and make valuable contributions to the world." Dr. Khokhlov held my gaze and assured me: "A university's greatness has nothing to do with its size. Soka University has a wonderful founding spirit that upholds global human values. That is why we of Moscow State University are committed to developing a meaningful mutual relationship with your school."

When I was ushered into the rector's office, I saw prominently displayed on one wall a huge tapestry depicting the grand vista of the thirty-two-story main building of Moscow State University. "This," revealed Rector Khokhlov, "was a gift from Beijing University on the occasion of our bicentennial." Here, at least, I thought, is a world without "walls." Here

was proof that friendship in the realm of education could survive despite strained relations between nations in the political realm. This encouraged me tremendously.

We promised to meet again, and the occasion arrived sooner than I expected. Just six short weeks after my return, Dr. Khokhlov and his wife, Elena, a woman of simple refinement and culture, came to Japan [in November 1974]. During their stay they visited Soka University as well as the Soka junior and senior high schools.

During their visit to the latter, a smiling Dr. Khokhlov stopped to talk with students who had gathered to welcome him at the entrance, saying: "You are the treasures of Japan. You are a gathering of fine young people of intellect. The world is eagerly awaiting your contributions." Everyone could feel his sincere desire to respond to the heart-given welcome he had received by offering warm encouragement in return. Many people would have simply waved and hurried inside the school. But people of character create an unforgettable impression wherever they go.

The following year, in May 1975, I made my second trip to the Soviet Union. White apple blossoms adorned the campus of Moscow State University, where I was awarded an honorary doctorate. After my commemorative lecture on that occasion, titled "A New Path for the Cultural Exchange Between East and West," Rector Khokhlov said to me: "Yes, it is just as you have said.

Exactly. Let us open a spiritual Silk Road." His words rang with all the more profound determination given the closed nature of Soviet society at that time.

When Dr. Khokhlov visited Japan again two years later, in April 1977, I learned that his mother was ill. He was looking for a particular medicine in Japan, but he couldn't locate it. We made various inquiries on his behalf, and finally tracked the medicine down in a country overseas and had it forwarded to him. The next month, May, I received a letter of thanks from the rector. "I hope we can meet again in Moscow," he wrote. However, in August, less than three months later, I received the news of his sudden death.

Dr. Khokhlov died as the result of a mountain-climbing expedition. According to the report of one of my close friends from my first visit to the Soviet Union, Dr. Vladimir Tropin, pro-rector for International Affairs of Moscow State University, Dr. Khokhlov was making his third attempt to scale the summit of the country's highest mountain—the 24,591-foot-high Communism Peak. He made it up to 16,405 feet and was preparing to make an ascent of the summit when he suffered a sudden attack of chills, the result of insufficient acclimatization to the bitter weather conditions at such high altitude. His feet began to freeze and grow numb.

Dr. Khokhlov was not the type of person to give up easily his goal of reaching the top, and it was only with great reluctance that he finally decid-



Down on Moscow's Arbat Street, sailors enjoy the music by street performers celebrating the national holiday honoring the Russian Navy, 1991.

TUNNEL/ICORBIS

ed to descend. Yet, in spite of the fact that he was so ill, he allowed the younger members of the team to go first. That delay in his own descent may have contributed to the rector's death, admits Dr. Tropin. Dr. Khokhlov was flown to a hospital in Moscow. But it was too late. He died at the young age of 51.

In a collection of memorial tributes published by his friends, one person writes: "He met his death challenging the highest peak, just as he lived his life." These words attest to the high esteem and respect in which others held him. Dr. Khokhlov was forever looking onward and upward, and acting based on that vision. His warm smile was born of the rigorous self-discipline and high standards he always demanded of himself.

The world has changed

greatly since Dr. Khokhlov's death, but my friendship with his family has remained constant. Three years ago, in Mie Prefecture, Japan, I had another opportunity to meet with his son, Dr. Aleksei Khokhlov, a professor of physics at Moscow State University. It was our third meeting since I visited Rector Khokhlov's grave and his family home in May 1981.

At our meeting, Professor Khokhlov said:

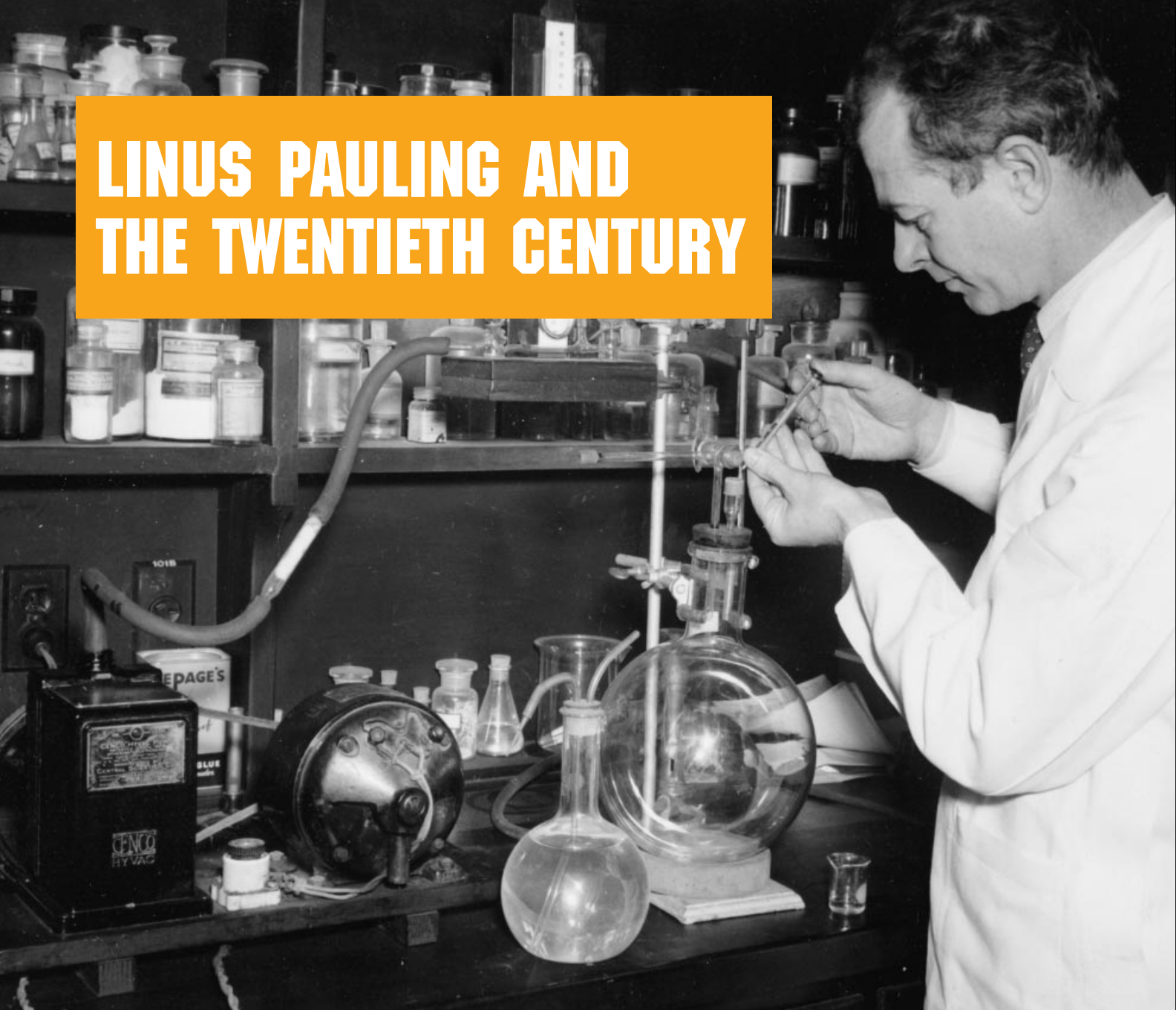
I am very proud of the fact that a new flow of exchange between our two countries was set in motion through the relationship between my father and you, President Ikeda.... Today, it is easy to talk about friendly relations with other nations, but I know how difficult it was at the time of your first visit—amid public skepticism and

lack of understanding—to advocate that people of different nations could be friends, and to act on that belief.

Gazing at the younger Dr. Khokhlov, I couldn't help but think how proud his father would be of him. The torch had been passed from father to son.

The exchange program signed between Moscow State University and Soka University two decades ago has produced and will continue to produce many talented young people. "Let's do it, for future generations!"—this was the shared determination of Rector Khokhlov and myself all those years ago. Today's young generation is demonstrating just how right we were to take that first step toward spring, toward a season of hope—a step of faith in our shared humanity and trust in the invisible ties of the heart. □

LINUS PAULING AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



MAGNUM PHOTOS

"I believe that there is a greater power than the evil power of military force, of nuclear bombs—there is power of good, of morality, of humanitarianism. I believe in the power of the human spirit."

Linus Pauling

**By Dianne Douglas
San Francisco**

ON September 20, 1998, the national touring exhibition, "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century," premiered at the Herbst International Exhibition Hall at the San Francisco Presidio. With touring plans for Boston and Orange County in 1999, the seven-week exhibition was well



(Above) Linus Pauling, wearing buffalo-hide chaps, 1906, Condon, Oregon.

(Right) Pauling (far left) enrolled in Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) in 1917.



(Left) Linus, with mother, Belle, and sisters Lucile and Pauline, 1920.



received on its first stop by audiences throughout the San Francisco Bay Area who came to learn about and celebrate the life of Linus Pauling.

The seed for a Linus Pauling touring exhibition was planted in 1987 when Dr. Pauling and SGI President Daisaku Ikeda met for the first time. Recalling his first meeting with Dr. Pauling, President Ikeda said, "I

was at once struck by his profound humility and enormously encouraged by the thought that I had gained such a noble-minded and dedicated ally in the quest for peace." Dr. Pauling and Daisaku Ikeda developed a deep friendship during the final years of Dr. Pauling's life. As two men who shared lifelong commitments to peace, their dialogues, spanned the subjects of science,

education, humanity, social activism, war and peace. Their conversations were eventually published in the book titled *A Lifelong Quest for Peace* in 1992. In March of 1993, they met again in San Francisco in what was to be their last encounter. It was during this meeting that Dr. Pauling agreed to President Ikeda's proposal to organize an exhibition about his life.



(Left) Linus and Ava in La Jolla, California. When he was 18, Pauling began teaching basic chemistry classes at Oregon Agricultural College. In his senior year, one of his students was freshman Ava Helen Miller, "the smartest girl I ever met." They married in June of 1923. (Right) Linus Jr., Linda Pauling Kamb, Linus, Ava Helen, Crellin and Peter assemble for the Paulings' fifty-fifth anniversary.

It was not until 1995, a year after Dr. Pauling's death, that plans for an exhibition would resume with subsequent discussions between Mr. Ikeda and Dr. Pauling's son, Linus Pauling Jr. Oregon State University's (OSU) involvement was proposed for its preeminent role in preserving the legacy of Linus Pauling through its Pauling Papers, Special Collection and the Linus Pauling Institute (LPI).

The Linus Pauling Institute was established in August 1996 at OSU, as a working memorial to Linus Pauling, under an agreement reached between its antecedent organization, the Linus Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine, and OSU. OSU's work in preserving for future generations Linus Pauling's life work in chemistry, biochemistry, orthomolecular research, and studies

in nutrition and human health provided the exhibition project an invaluable resource upon which to draw the legacy of this most extraordinary man.

Exhibition Sponsors

IN the spring of 1997, the exhibition project was officially initiated with the combined commitments of three sponsors: the Linus Pauling Family, Oregon State University and the Soka Gakkai International. The sponsors agreed on the importance of creating an advisory body to help steer the content and direction of the exhibition. Invitations were extended to Nobel laureates, science professors, biographers and other professional associates of Dr. Pauling's as well as representatives from the three sponsors to serve on the Advisory Committee.

In the fall of 1997, the first Advisory Committee meeting was held in San Francisco to discuss the creation of the exhibition. The weekend-long conference included the video taping of committee members to capture their personal stories and anecdotes from their memories of Linus Pauling. After several productive planning sessions, the task of creating the exhibition script and design was turned over to two Los Angeles-based exhibition designers, Gary Murie and Mary Worthington (see article on following page).

Concentrated production and event development for the exhibition began in June involving close collaboration between the cosponsors, advisory committee members and the exhibit designers. San

(continued on page 46)

Exhibit Planner Gains Inspiration From a Passionate Crusader

By Mary Worthington, Los Angeles



Mary Worthington

Mary Worthington is an SGI-USA member and a museum exhibition and education consultant. She was associate director of the Los Angeles Children's Museum and since 1992 has worked with the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. There she was responsible for the original design of the Museum's Legacy Center, an educational and interactive exhibition space, and was also the museum's director of public programs. She has been involved in the SGI-USA's exhibition program since its inception, beginning with "Humanity in Education: The Soka School System," which opened in 1991 and toured fifteen cities, followed by the "Ecology and Human Life" exhibition in 1993. She shares the following thoughts about Linus Pauling and her work as exhibition developer and writer on the SGI's exhibition about the scientist's life and accomplishments:

IT seems as though most Americans have either never heard of Linus Pauling or think of him as "the Vitamin C guy." I knew he was a scientist, and I remember him as a peace activist, but I too knew little about him when I began this project.

As I researched for the exhibit script, I learned more about Pauling and his remarkable life. I began to understand why President Ikeda thought that Pauling was such an admirable man, and why he felt that it was important to do an exhibition about Pauling so that new generations could learn about his life, his scientific discoveries and his work for peace.

Pauling was a brilliant scientist, a charismatic teacher, a humanitarian and a tireless crusader for peace. Above all, it seems to me, he was a man of

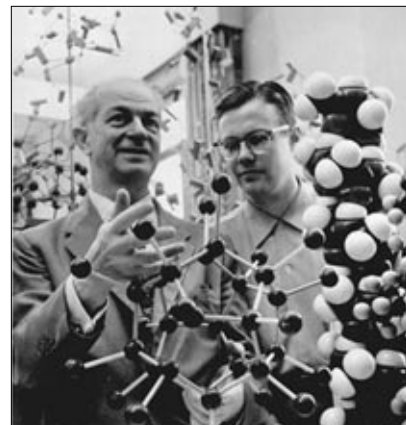
extraordinary courage. As a world-renowned scientist, he could have stayed comfortably in his laboratories doing the work he loved. Instead, urged by his wife, Ava Helen, he chose to devote more than half of his time in the 1950s and '60s to what the Paulings called "peace work." He spoke out publicly and often about the dangers of atomic fallout and the immorality of war in an atomic age.

This was an incredibly risky time to take such a stand—the country was in what the exhibit calls an "atomic panic." People were building bomb shelters in their backyards, and the Army McCarthy hearings set a tone of hysterical, anticommunist witch hunting. Pauling risked his career and his reputation, but he continued in the face of great difficulty and persecution.

Courage was just what I needed in my own life as I began this project. I was ill, depressed and exhausted. I had left my museum administrative job for uncertain work as a private consultant because I love working on exhibitions and dreamed of making that a full-time job. But jobs were scarce and I often had to scramble for unrelated projects in order to get by.

In the process of working on the exhibit, I was hired by the Japanese American National Museum to develop and write a major exhibition for their new 85,000-square-foot expansion pavilion. This was my dream. It is exactly what I want to do: work on value-creating exhibits (and be well paid to do it!). Deeply moved, I understood that the dream came true because of my Buddhist practice and my work on the SGI's exhibitions.

I hope, most of all, that visitors to "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" are inspired by Pauling's life, as I have been. He had insatiable scientific curiosity about the nature of the universe and went fearlessly wherever his curiosity took him. He took risks and stood up for his beliefs. He was passionate about living. The exhibit ends with his words: "I love this world. I have had a good life." □



(Left) Pauling lecturing in front of blackboard with sickle-cell notes, 1949.

(Above) Pauling, with a student and alpha helix model at OSU. The alpha helix was a breakthrough discovery in the structure of proteins.

Francisco-based SGI volunteers handled everything from local promotion, community affairs, event planning, an educational CD-ROM project, the creation of a website at www.paulingexhibit.org, graphic design, an exhibit docent and schools tour movement, as well as a Linus Pauling Exhibition lecture series. Over 100 community groups, including nationally recognized organizations, academic institutions, museums, local school districts and elected officials, joined as supporters of the exhibition, lending their names, promotion efforts and links to their own websites.

With strong public and community involvement, the exhibition has inspired audiences of all ages and from every public sector with the life of one of the greatest scientists and

humanitarians of this century—the only person in history to have won two unshared Nobel Prizes (chemistry in 1954, peace in 1962).

Dr. Pauling's first Nobel award was received for his landmark research on the nature of the chemical bond and its application to understanding the structure of complex substances such as protein molecules and antibodies. The second Nobel Prize acknowledged his courageous protest against atmospheric nuclear testing as detrimental to the health of humans and the environment, and his championship of international peace.

The exhibition traces seven decades of Linus Pauling's life and influence on the twentieth century: as scientific discoverer, dedicated humanitarian,

crusader against the testing of nuclear weapons, defender of civil liberties, and prominent researcher on orthomolecular medicine, nutrition and health.

Designed around the central themes of Pauling's remarkable life, the more than 2,000-square-foot exhibition features photos, diaries, molecular models and historic artifacts loaned by Oregon State University's Pauling Special Collection and the Pauling Family. The Pauling Collection contains over 300,000 items and includes all of Pauling's personal and scientific papers, notebooks and correspondence from 1916 to his death at age 93 in August 1994.

The exhibition demonstrates how Dr. Pauling's scientific pursuits and efforts to "minimize human suffering" were not mutually exclusive. Pauling's



NORWEGIAN TELEGRAM BUREAU

(Above) Ava Helen and Linus Pauling with Nobel Prize for peace, 1963.

(Right) Receiving the Nobel Prize for chemistry, 1954.



PRESSENS BILD, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

profound understanding of the physical universe strengthened his personal resolve to secure peace through international nuclear disarmament. The exhibition reveals one man's untiring efforts for peace that was fueled by a belief best expressed in Linus Pauling's own words: "I believe that there is a greater power than the evil power of military force, of nuclear bombs—there is power of good, or morality, of humanitarianism. I believe in the power of the human spirit."

The Pauling exhibition is providing a rare opportunity to teach today's youth about the role of scientists in creating conditions for a secure and peaceful world. As a cosponsor of this significant exhibit, SGI has been instrumental in helping to

bring Linus Pauling's life to future generations so that they may know the difference one person with courage and conviction can make.

It is the expressed hope of the cosponsors and organizers, as the exhibit continues its tour, "That the legacy of Linus Pauling's courageous work in science, health and peace will inspire new generations to meet humanity's challenges in the twenty-first century."

The Extraordinary Life of Linus Pauling

AN excerpt from Thomas Hager's *Force of Nature: The Life of Linus Pauling* (1995) reads: "Pauling's life was extraordinarily long, varied, tumultuous, and important for the

history of twentieth-century science. During his career, Pauling, among many other achievements, described the nature of the chemical bond; discovered the structure of proteins; intuited the cause of sickle-cell anemia; engaged in this century's most famous scientific race for the structure of DNA; won a Presidential Medal of Merit for his World War II research; advanced the fields of X-ray crystallography, electron diffraction, quantum mechanics, biochemistry, molecular psychiatry, nuclear physics, anesthesia, immunology, and nutrition; and wrote more than 500 articles and eleven books; not to mention two Nobel Prizes.

"But his scientific work is only half the story. Pauling,



(Above) Marching together for peace—The Paulings marched and spoke all over the world for causes they saw as just.

(Right, top) Pauling speaking at a rally at Los Angeles's MacArthur Park.

(Right, bottom) Ava Helen Pauling was a lifelong liberal and activist who continually educated her husband and family about her beliefs.



LINDA PAULING-KAMM



PAULING PAPERS, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

influenced greatly by his wife, Ava Helen, used his scientific renown as a springboard to jump into political activism. Along with Albert Einstein and Leo Szilard, Pauling was a member of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists, a small but important group that, after World War II, worked to limit the spread of atomic weapons. Pauling's increasingly outspoken views on nuclear policy led to political persecution that included a twenty-four-year

investigation by the FBI, an inquiry into revoking his government security clearance, the revocation of his passport, the loss of government grants, vilification in the press, and intimidation and threats of a contempt citation by the U.S. Senate. He fought back with articles, speeches and legal action, including his well-publicized suits against the Hearst organization, William F. Buckley's *National Review*, and the Department of Defense." □

Dianne Douglas is an SGI-USA member and a public relations consultant. Ms. Douglas has a background in education, music and communications.

She has served as a public relations and communications professional in the technology and multimedia industry for more than twenty years. She resides with her husband, Sean, their daughter, Danielle, and family dog, Dizzy, in San Francisco.

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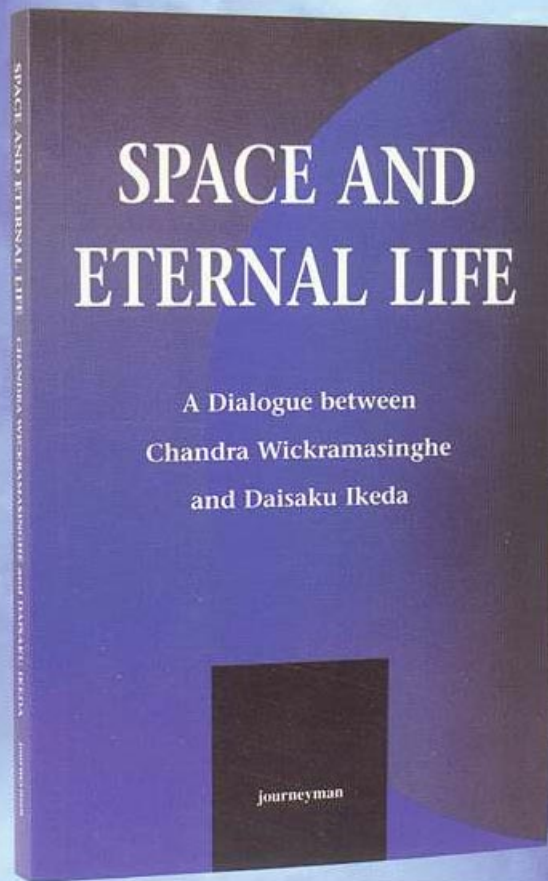


(Above) President Ikeda's final meeting with Linus Pauling in San Francisco on March 16, 1993, discussing the possibility of an exhibition about his life, the future of education and memories of Dr. Pauling's deceased wife, Ava.

(Right) SGI President Ikeda welcomed Linus Pauling, Jr., the eldest son of the late Linus Pauling, to Japan on October 12, 1997. Mr. Ikeda and Dr. Pauling, Jr., director of the Pauling Institute of Science and Medicine, discussed how to develop a humanistic heart, the theme of religion and psychology and the exhibit honoring the accomplishments of his father.



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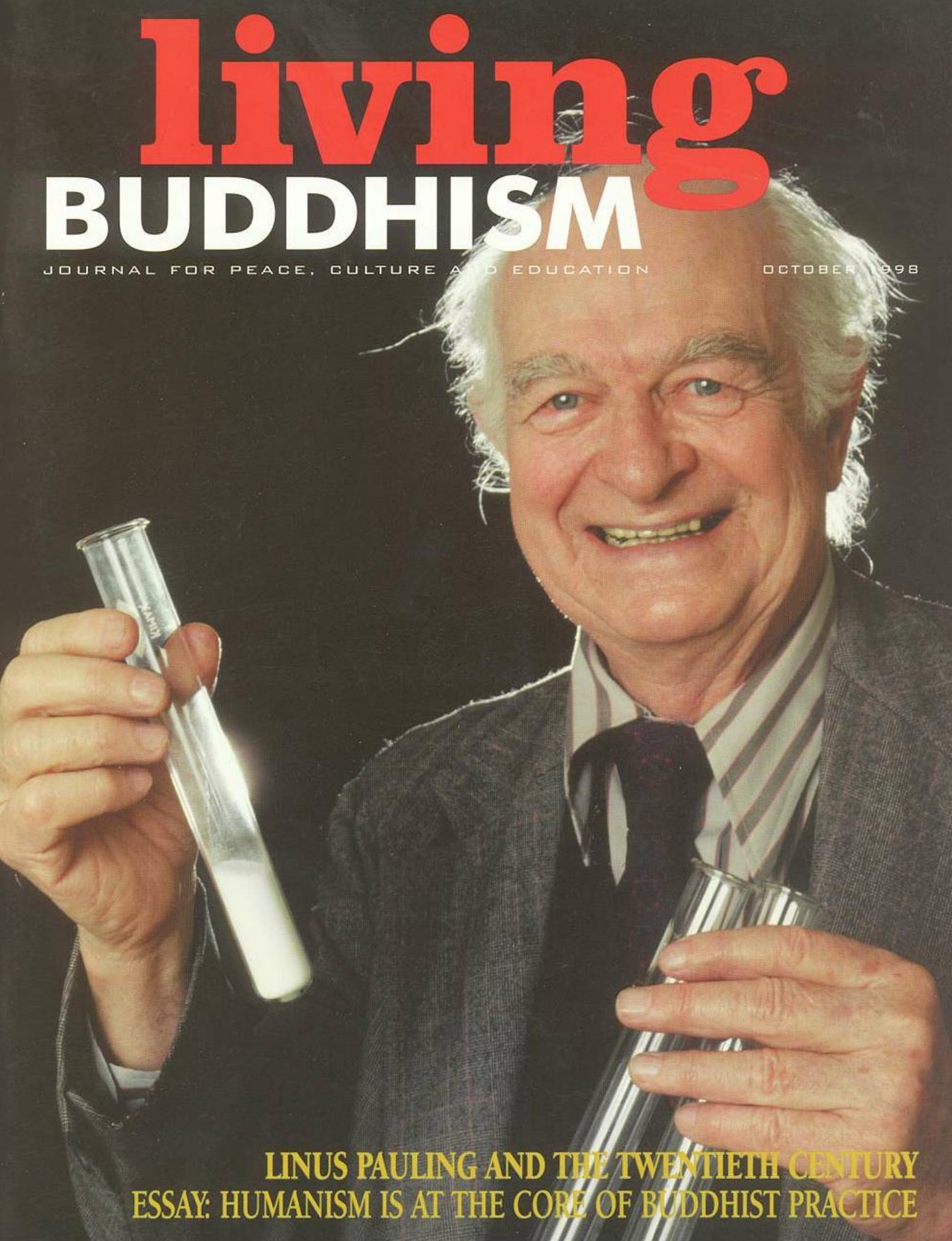
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**LINUS PAULING AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
ESSAY: HUMANISM IS AT THE CORE OF BUDDHIST PRACTICE**

KOREA CULTURE CENTER

THE Culture Center of Soka Gakkai International of Korea, located in Seoul, was opened in September 1987. The building has three above-ground stories and one story below. It contains an office, a library and several rooms for conferences, prayers and exhibitions. Standing amid a beautiful flower garden is a stone monument engraved with the words "Mountain of Peace, Hwa Kwang Castle." The monument was presented by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda in celebration of the center's opening.

On May 15 of this year, marking his most recent visit to Seoul, President Ikeda met with the Chancellor of Kyung Hee University, Dr. Choue Young Seek, to receive an honorary doctorate in philosophy. In light of his efforts to develop more humanistic relations between the two countries since the Korean War, this honor is a manifestation of President Ikeda's vow "to extend a bridge of friendship and cultural exchange between Japan and Korea."



On May 15, 1998, SGI President Ikeda receives a bouquet upon receiving an honorary doctorate in philosophy from Kyung Hee University.