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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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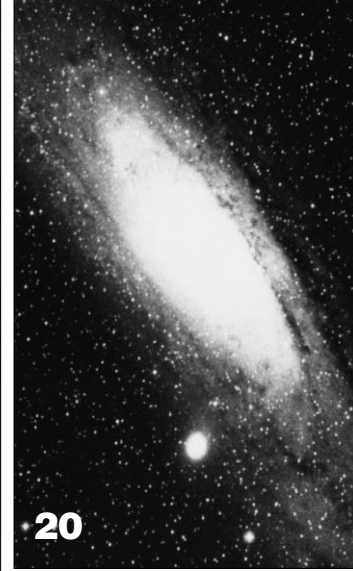
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FROM OUR READERS

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

IN RESPONSE TO PUBLISHER'S COMMENTARY

THIS is in response to the publisher's commentary in the September 1998 *Living Buddhism*. It encourages members to not be influenced by harsh weather conditions when doing activities for kosen-rufu, looking back to the courageous example of Nichiren Daishonin. This is certainly a commendable view, but it misses another extremely important point about the adverse weather we are currently experiencing.

In 1992 in Brazil, then again in 1997 in Japan, the United Nations sponsored international conferences on the protection of the earth's environment. At these meetings, scientific evidence was compiled from around the world, which strongly indicates that it is the behavior of human beings—polluting the air and water, cutting down forests, etc.—which is upsetting the balance of nature and now is beginning to adversely affect the weather around the globe. As the commentary in *Living Buddhism* says, these weather changes have led to the premature deaths of people in many parts of the world.

America continues to lead the world several times over, in per-capita consumption of natural resources, as well as production

of both waste and environmental pollution. The situation is already serious, but if population-giants, like China and India, with their long, proud histories, continue to develop and were to approach even a significant fraction of the amount of per-capita consumption and waste that exists in America, it is unpleasant to contemplate the environmental response and loss of human life.

As an American, currently living in Japan, I have been concerned about these issues since my high school days in the early 1970s. Today I drive a car as little as possible, using a bicycle to go to and from work, or to run errands. My family recycles most of the garbage we produce and we make a point of turning off electricity when it's not being used. In Japan it's quite common for some drivers to leave their cars running when they park and enter a building, anywhere from a couple of minutes to ten, fifteen minutes or longer. I wrote a message in Japanese, explaining that such behavior is both wasteful of gas and pollutes the air, and I now put copies of the message under the windshield wiper of cars that are left running without a driver.

The SGI has explicitly supported the campaign for abolition of nuclear weapons, since

President Toda made his declaration against them in 1958. This is praiseworthy, but an equally insidious threat to humanity is our gradual destruction of the natural environment. The environment is something we can begin to save through our daily behavior. Conversely speaking, we can worsen the threat by ignoring the problem in our daily lives.

Of course the SGI cannot be expected to embrace every issue or cause which concerns general society. The main purpose of our organization is to encourage each other in faith. Nevertheless, the issue of the widespread destruction of the environment is certainly important to us as

Buddhists, who promote the principle of the oneness of life and its environment.

In particular, the way we conduct activities is important in this regard. With the current focus on neighborhood discussion meetings, many of us may not necessarily need to use our cars, but could walk, ride bicycles or busses to meetings. This is one way we can show society we are aware of and are actually doing something to lessen the global destruction of the environment.

DAN FROST
Hamamatsu, Japan

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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>

THE SCHOOL OF VALUE CREATION

AS we celebrate November 18, the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Soka Gakkai's founding in 1930, I can't help but reflect on the life and mission of our founder, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. For starters, he was a man with a brilliant mind. Professor Dayle M. Bethel writes that Mr. Makiguchi was one of Japan's most significant educators: "Makiguchi was saying and expressing many of the same criticisms and ideas about education that John Dewey was expressing at roughly the same period" (*Makiguchi the Value Creator*, p. 152).

Which is to say that the roots of our organization lay in pedagogy or the art and science of education. It is here where SGI President Daisaku Ikeda places utmost value. In fact, in a 1996 lecture delivered at the Teacher's College of Columbia University, where John Dewey once taught, he said: "Education must be the propelling force for an eternally unfolding humanitarian quest. It is for this reason

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that I consider education the final and most crucially important undertaking of my life" (August 1996 *Seikyo Times*, p. 8).

Personally, I am no expert on education. I certainly wasn't a top student. As an elementary student, I preferred to spend my time reading cartoons which I enjoyed a great deal, as I enjoyed reading in general. I was totally indifferent to math and science. Those subjects left me cold. But if it had anything at all to do with what we now call the humanities—language, sociology, the liberal arts—those classes, much to the surprise of my teachers, I found

easy. So how did I manage to get a college education? I attribute it to the teachers who encouraged me. It was during those years that I learned how important a role the teacher can play in shaping a young person's future. That's probably why I will always remember the junior high school teacher who inspired and helped me gain the confidence to continue even though I was a poor student. To

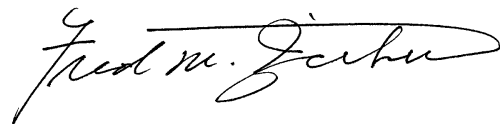
me that's the kind of humanistic education Mr. Makiguchi and Josei Toda advocated. Another aspect of humanistic education is the role our friends can play. In my day in Japan, we began learning English after we got to junior high school. While I was still in elementary school, I had a close friend already in junior high school who taught me the basics of English. Needless to say, his help went a long way as I studied English in junior high school. My teachers helped me as did my friends, not by imposing their authority, but by sharing their wisdom with me. Bethel highlighted the difference when he wrote:

In the traditional, or dialectical, model the learner is perceived as empty, a passive recipient who must be filled up by one who has been previously filled and who is in possession of knowledge. The key element in this model is authority. However, in the open, or dialogical, model the learner is perceived as a dynamic organism interacting with his environment and being changed in significant ways by that interaction. (*Makiguchi the Value Creator*, p. 18)

When I think about teachers and schools, I never cease to be troubled by the state of education today. Teachers are underpaid while trying to do their work in overcrowded classrooms with inadequate facilities. I've read of some school districts that lack even books. And where there are books in some of our poorer communities, many are so outdated as to be irrelevant to the education process. Politicians squabble about what language children should be taught in, and who should or should not get help in getting into the best schools. As I think about Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda this November, it occurs to me that we can all play a role in the important task of educating our youth. As President Ikeda said at Columbia University:

"Education is a uniquely human privilege. It is the source of inspiration that enables us to become fully and truly human, to fulfill a constructive mission in life, with composure and confidence" (August 1996 *Seikyo Times*, p. 8).

By way of analogy, just as my friend helped me get a head start in my language studies, discussion meetings held throughout the SGI-USA are a perfect venue to carry out this important task of humanistic education. When you think about it, the structure of the discussion meeting isn't much different from any place of learning. People come together with an open mind to learn something more about life. We learn not necessarily from a lecturer, but from the experiences we share with one another, from presentations and through open-hearted discussion. Like a school, we also have our textbooks—the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*—our textbooks of faith in Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. And like a school, we have our seniors to learn from as well, as we form relationships with one another that can last a lifetime. It is where we can create value, which, "put simply, ... is the capacity to find meaning, to enhance one's own existence and contribute to the well-being of others, under any circumstance" (*Ibid.*, p. 9). With that I express my eternal gratitude to Mr. Makiguchi, Mr. Toda and Mr. Ikeda—educators, men of faith, and value creators.



Fred M. Zaitu
SGI USA General Director

“The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future”

The following passage is taken from the book Learning From the Gosho: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, pp. 178–89, and can also be found in the Gosho Zenshu, pp. 563–64.

Life Transcends Birth and Death

WHAT, ultimately, is Buddhism? The Buddhist canon encompasses an immense number of scriptures, known as the eighty-four thousand teachings. And then there are also countless commentaries. Trying unaided to come to terms with such a monumental body of material is like journeying through a vast jungle without a map.

However, Nichiren Daishonin clearly states, “The eighty-four thousand teachings are the diary of one’s own life” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 563). The Buddhist sutras, in other words, are a record, a diary, of one’s life. “They are about you,” he is saying. “There is

nothing at all in the sutras that does not pertain to your life.”

To conceive of life and death as separate realities is to be caught in the illusion of birth and death. It is deluded and inverted thinking.

When we examine the nature of life with perfect enlightenment [the true enlightenment of one awakened from the dream of illusions], we find that there is no beginning marking birth and, therefore, no end signifying death. Doesn’t life as thus conceived already transcend birth and death?

Life cannot be consumed by the fire at the end of the kalpa, nor can it be washed

away by floods. It can be neither cut by swords nor pierced by arrows.

Although it can fit inside a mustard seed, the seed does not expand, nor does life contract. And although it fills the vastness of space, space is not too wide, nor is life too small. (GZ, p. 563)¹

Death is an issue of the greatest importance for all people without exception. No one can honestly say that death is of no concern. At the same time, however, few important issues are given so little serious consideration. It is said that there are two things people cannot gaze at directly: the sun and death.

With the view that life continues eternally over past, present and future, accomplishing human revolution becomes the ultimate purpose. When we polish and revolutionize our lives, then life is joyful—and death is joyful, too. We will also experience happiness in our future lives. What else can we call eternal?

The French philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–62) decried people's tendency to avoid thinking of their own mortality: "This negligence in a matter where they themselves, their eternity, their all are at stake, fills me more with irritation than pity; it astounds and appalls me."² His dismay at people's irrational indifference toward death drove him to use such strong words.

What is death? What becomes of us after we die? Failing to pursue these questions is like spending our student years without ever considering what to do after graduating. Without coming to terms with death, we cannot establish a strong direction in life. Pursuing this issue brings real stability and depth to our lives.

Many views of life and death have been articulated over the ages by religious leaders, philosophers and scientists. Without going into a detailed discussion, I think it's fair to say that human knowledge has not advanced sufficiently to either definitively affirm or deny the possibility of life after death. Science takes as its object of investigation phenomena discerned with the five senses; what happens after death is

beyond its purview. Its basic stance disqualifies it from speaking on the matter one way or the other.

No view of the nature of existence can offer direct proof of what happens after death. It seems, therefore, that rather than trying to compare the relative merits of different views, it is far more fruitful to ask how a particular view influences people's lives in the present—whether it makes them strong or weak, happy or miserable.

Buddhism teaches that life is eternal. It encourages us to use this existence to thoroughly polish the eternal entity of our lives. Eternal happiness, it explains, lies precisely in making such efforts.

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In a letter to his follower Shijo Kingo, Nichiren Daishonin says, "No matter how dearly you may cherish your estate, when you die, it will only fall into the

hands of others" (MW-3, 238). You should not jealously cling to your possessions, the Daishonin says. All too often, people fail to fully come to terms with their mortality and as a result become attached to things that ultimately have no worth.

In his *Essays*, the French Renaissance philosopher Montaigne (1533–92) introduces the following episode about a king of ancient Greece who was planning to conquer Italy:

When King Pyrrhus [of Epirus, 319–272 B.C.E.] was undertaking his expedition into Italy, Cyneas, his wise counselor, wanting to make him feel the vanity of his ambition, asked him: "Well, Sire, to what purpose are you setting up this great enterprise?" "To make myself master of Italy," he immediately replied. "And then," continued Cyneas, "when that is done?" "I shall pass over into Gaul and Spain," said the other. "And after that?" "I shall go and subdue Africa; and finally, when I have brought the world under my subjugation, I shall rest and live content and at my ease."... Cyneas then retorted, "Tell me what keeps you from

being in that condition right now, if that is what you want. Why don't you settle down at this very moment in the state you say you aspire to, and spare yourself all the intervening toil and risks?"³

The source of this anecdote is Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*. Pascal and others in later ages have cited it.

The point is that people find contemplating their lives and facing mortality so distasteful that they instead look for one thing after another in which to absorb themselves. Thus avoiding the essential point of polishing their lives, they arrive finally at death without having prepared in the least for that moment. The King Pyrrhus anecdote teaches the folly of such a life.

Tolstoy wrote:

Death is more certain than the morrow, than night following day, than winter following summer. Why is it then that we prepare for the night and for the winter time, but do not prepare for death. We must prepare for death. But there is only one way to prepare for death—and that is to live well.⁴

"To live well" means to develop, cultivate and elevate our lives. Socrates called this "attending to one's soul." His famous words to the effect that "philosophy is practice for dying" carry the same meaning.

In the Goshō we are studying this time, Nichiren Daishonin teaches that the

eternal entity of our lives cannot be burned by fire, corroded by water or destroyed by weapons. The eternal entity can both fuse with the universe in all its vastness and take the minuscule form of a mustard seed. It truly exists in the perfectly free state of non-substantiality (Jpn *ku*).

Buddhism teaches how we can gain firm control over the function and power of the free, unimpeded aspect of life—the power of the Mystic Law. This is the teaching that a single life-moment possesses three thousand realms. Herein lies the ultimate meaning of faith.

We possess within us an indestructible life force equal in power to the universe. When we tap this life force, there are no sufferings or worries that we cannot overcome.

What Is True Transcendental Power?

People, confused by their minds, fail to understand and awaken to the true nature of their lives. The Buddha is awakened to and manifests the wondrous workings of life, which he has called "transcendental." By transcendental he means "in command of all laws of life, unobstructed by anything." This free transcendental power exists in the lives of all sentient beings. Therefore, foxes, raccoon dogs⁵ and the like can manifest their respective transcendental powers. This is the [expression of] their relative enlightenment.

It is from this single entity

of life that the differences among lands arise. (GZ, p. 563)

True transcendental power is not along the lines of so-called supernatural abilities. It is actually the ability to help others become happy. Nichiren Daishonin says, "Aside from the attainment of Buddhahood, there is no 'secret' and no 'transcendental power'" (GZ, p. 753).

Manifesting true transcendental power means thoroughly polishing the eternal essence of our lives, elevating ourselves toward the state of Buddhahood. By so doing, we can realize eternal happiness and develop our state of life to where we can help others become happy, too.

Even if supernatural abilities enabled people to fly, the ability to fly would not make us happy. For that matter, to fly all we need to do is get on an airplane.

As the Daishonin indicates where he says, "It is from this single entity of life that the differences among lands arise," society and even the land change depending on the state of life of people living there. The power to change even the environment exists in the heart.

A great human revolution in the life of one person can change the destiny of humankind and the planet. It is Buddhism, the Lotus Sutra, that encourages and enables people to become aware of this great power, to draw it forth and use it. Buddhism gives people the means to develop themselves

thoroughly and opens their eyes to the limitless power inherent in their lives.

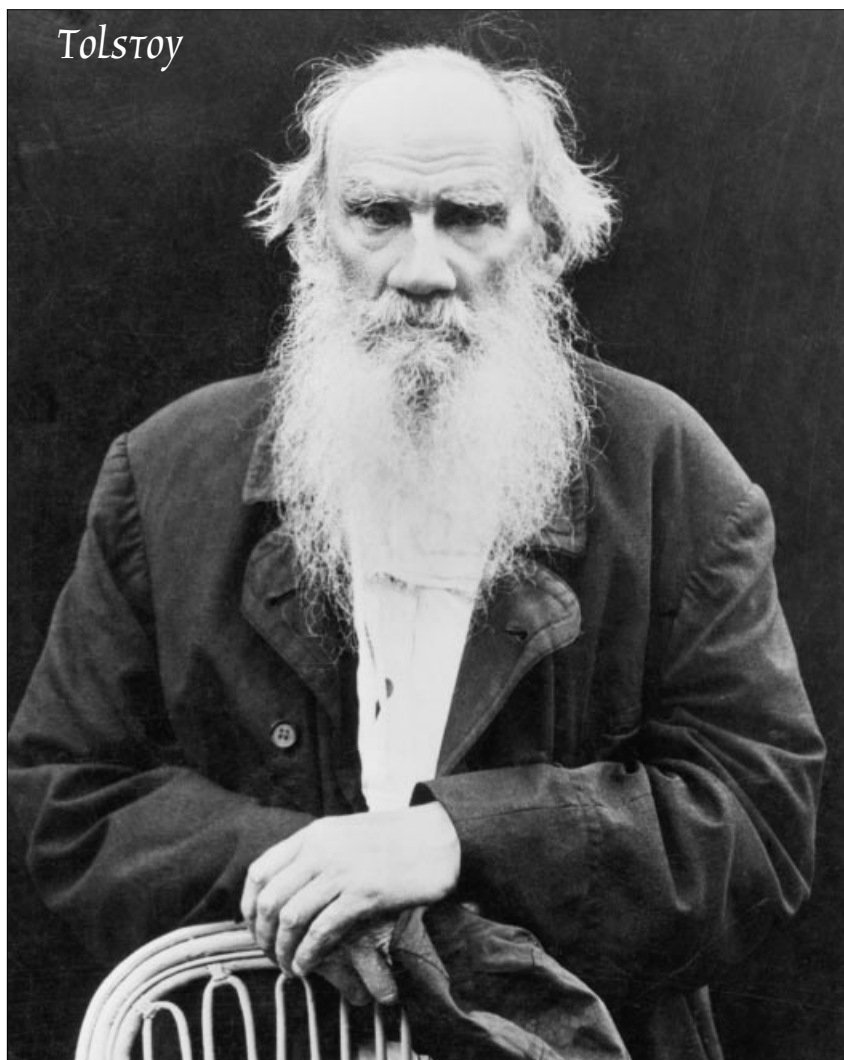
Through training hard, an athlete can bring out hidden strengths and abilities to the maximum. Similarly, the extent to which we can manifest our latent power, the true essence of our lives, depends on our practice. The requisite discipline is Buddhist practice—it is faith. With the view that life exists eternally over past, present and future, establishing solid faith becomes the fundamental concern. We should make establishing solid faith our main purpose in this existence.

The Daishonin says: “Explaining the wonder of life is the prime objective of all the sutras. One who is awakened to the workings of the mind is called a Thus Come One” (GZ, p. 564). Buddhism reveals the “wonder of life” from a wide variety of angles. Attaining Buddhahood is the same as gaining a full understanding of this wonder.

The Buddha Fully Grasps the Wonder of Life

Explaining the wonder of life is the prime objective of all the sutras [that Shakyamuni preached], termed the eighty-four thousand teachings. These doctrines all exist in one's life. Accordingly, the eighty-four thousand teachings are the diary of one's life.

We hold and embrace the eighty-four thousand teachings in our lives. To suppose that the Buddha, the Law



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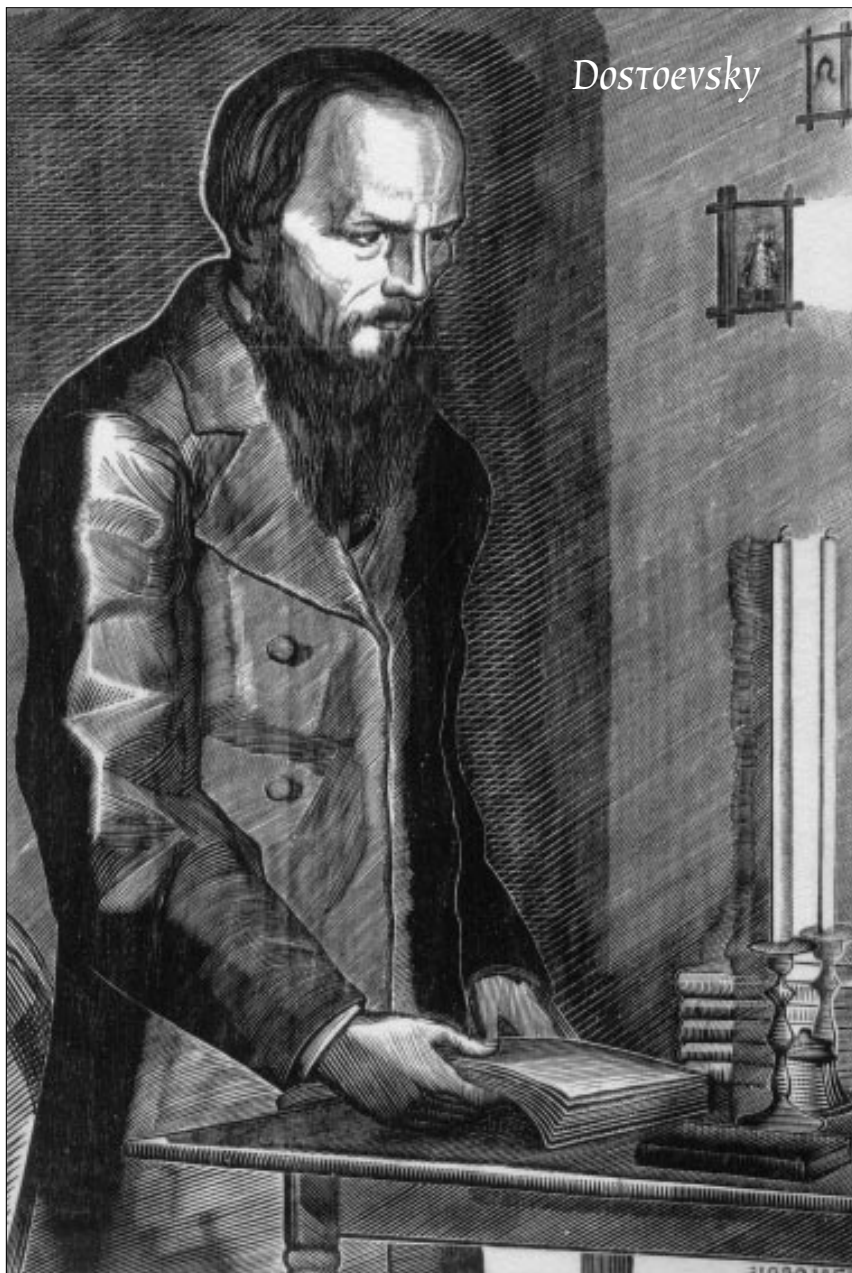
and the pure land of Eagle Peak exist apart from one's life and to seek them outside is a delusion. (GZ, pp. 563–64)

The Buddhist sutras, again, are said to number eighty-four thousand. This is because human beings supposedly have eighty-four thousand earthly desires; the sutras explain the means for overcoming these.

The sutras are a record of the Buddha's life. But the Daishonin also says, “The

example of one person represents the impartial truth inherent in all human beings” (GZ, p. 564). The sutras are a diary of each person's life. Whether we can believe this, whether we can remember this, depends entirely on us.

Buddhism was expounded for each of us. By fully comprehending the wonder of life, we gain complete, total freedom. We have no sufferings we cannot overcome, no prayers that are not answered. We gain all the good fortune and enter the journey of eter-



Dostoevsky

a civilization that has forgotten human beings will not bring people happiness.

Tolstoy says: "An enlightened man is he who knows why he lives and what he ought to do. Do not try to be either learned or educated, but strive to become enlightened."⁶

In this sense, aren't the lives of SGI members, who strive to cultivate themselves and serve others based on the eternity of life, enlightened?

There are countless dramas of life and death in the SGI. I have heard of one person who, after expressing gratitude for the SGI, said, "I'll be back soon" and then passed away. Another person, smiling gently, closed her eyes, saying, "I'll be born right away and return to the garden of kosen-rufu." Someone else died after bravely relating his dream—to undertake great activities in his next life—while listening to such favorite Soka Gakkai tunes as "Song of Comrades" and "The Song of the Human Revolution." Aren't these enlightened people who have awakened to the eternity of life and met death with complete composure?

A civilization that revolves around cultivating life respects human dignity and excellence. It is a society that treasures people of wisdom.

In modern society, where highest value tends to be placed on material wealth and utility, people are often judged on whether they are "useful." As a result, the elderly and the sick tend to be marginalized. A civilization that does not

nal life in which living is a joy and dying is joyful, too.

Happiness does not exist outside us. It is found within, in our own state of life.

Yet modern civilization continually draws our gaze outward. Ours is a civilization, it is said, that has forgotten death—death has become an anathema. People try to get by

without thinking about or coming into contact with it. But does ignoring death enrich life?

While science can push back the moment of death, it cannot stop it. Death is a condition of human life—no one can escape it. A civilization that has forgotten death, therefore, has forgotten human beings. And

squarely face death also deserts people in sickness and old age. For the rapidly gray-ing populations of many countries, this spells a bleak future.

This would not be the case in a civilization that treasures human maturity and depth of wisdom. If there is value in the young shoots of spring and the light of summer, then there must also be value in the mature trees of autumn and the grand sunsets of winter.

This is all the more so for those who practice Buddhism. For us, old age is a time of unsurpassed fulfillment when we put the finishing touches on the “golden journal” of our lives and attain Buddhahood; days of mission when we show actual proof and relate to others the wonder of life and power of the spirit we have experienced. This lifetime is precious and irreplaceable.

As a young man, the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–81) was arrested for revolutionary activities and sentenced to die. He was taken to the execution grounds and, along with his friends, tied to a stake. Guns were pointed at them.

The thought that in a few moments he would no longer be in this world stirred a pow-

erful reaction in the young Dostoevsky. A character from one of his novels in a similar situation thinks to himself:

What if I were not to die!
What if I could go back to life
—what eternity! And it
would all be mine! I would
turn every minute into an
age; I would lose nothing, I
would count every minute as
it passed, I would not waste
one!⁷

At the last moment the execution was canceled, but the episode left its imprint on Dostoevsky’s entire life. His experience might have been extreme, but if we think about things objectively, everyone, differences in length of life notwithstanding, is certain to die. From that standpoint, each of us is a “prisoner on death row.”

Incidentally, I understand that efforts are being made to educate people on the subject of death. One example of this is having people imagine that they have only three months to live, encouraging them to think how they would spend that time. This kind of exercise prompts people to think earnestly about what they need to accomplish.

Tolstoy observed:

If a man knows that he will die inside of thirty minutes, he will not do anything trifling or foolish in these last thirty minutes, surely not anything evil. But is the half century or so that separates you from death essentially different from a half hour?⁸

Use your time wisely and polish your life. When I was young, my health was so poor that I might have died at any time. Therefore, I threw myself into efforts for Buddhism with the determination to use each moment to the fullest.

We have to work hard. We have to develop ourselves. As the Daishonin says, “Arouse deep faith and polish your mirror night and day” (MW-1, 5). That is the fundamental objective of life and the conclusion of “The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future.” Daily, we carry out this practice, the essence of Buddhism—this is the same as mastering the eighty-four thousand teachings.

Let us live aware of the fantastic wonder of life, with the realization that each day is a priceless treasure. □

1. “Sanze Shobutsu Sokanmon Kyoso Hairyu” (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 558–75), written in October 1279 when the Daishonin was 58.
2. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin Books, 1966), pp. 156–57.
3. Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans.

Donald M. Frame (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 196.
4. Leo Tolstoy, *The Pathway of Life*, trans. Archibald J. Wolfe (New York: International Book Publishing Company, 1919), part 2, p. 179.
5. Raccoon dogs: A small, raccoon-like, burrowing dog of Asia, called Tanuki in Japan, having long, loose fur and a

short, thick tail. In Japan foxes and raccoon dogs were thought to possess supernatural powers, which they used to trick or deceive people.
6. Tolstoy, *The Pathway of Life*, part 1, p. 296.
7. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), p. 57.
8. Tolstoy, *The Pathway of Life*, part 2, p. 32.

Study Material Background

Faith As the Fundamental Purpose of Our Lives

By SGI-USA Study Department

NICHIREN Daishonin wrote “The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future” while living at Mount Minobu in October 1279 when he was 58. Since the original document is no longer extant, its precise background and recipient remain uncertain. One theory holds that the recipient was Toki Jonin, one of the Daishonin’s earliest converts and a leading lay follower of erudition. Jonin received many letters from the Daishonin and catalogued them, but this writing is not listed.

The year 1279 was tumultuous for the entire nation of Japan, as well as for the Daishonin and his disciples. Basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter were so inadequate at Mount Minobu that his health was deteriorating. In July of this year, Hojo Tokimune, a regent of the shogun-

nate government in Kamakura, ordered the beheading of a Mongol envoy who carried a message from Kublai Khan demanding that Japan capitulate to Mongolia. Other delegations had come years earlier followed by a nearly successful invasion in 1274. The military might of the Mongols far surpassed that of the small island country of Japan and the entire nation feared a second attack.

In September, alarmed by the rapid spread of the Daishonin’s teaching, Gyochi, a deputy chief priest of Ryusenji, a Tendai school temple in the Atsuhara area of Suruga Province (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture), schemed to have twenty peasants who practiced the Daishonin’s Buddhism arrested on a false charge. They were transferred to Kamakura and tried by Heino Saemon, the deputy chief of the Office of the Military and

Police Affairs, a powerful political figure who schemed to oppress the Daishonin and his followers for many years. Since none of the peasants renounced their faith, three of them eventually were executed, and the rest were banished. On October 12, in the midst of this persecution befalling his lay followers, the Daishonin inscribed the Dai-Gohonzon for the sake of all people, thus fulfilling the purpose of his advent. In the same month, the Daishonin penned this letter. No doubt the plight of the Atsuhara peasants weighed heavily on his mind as he wrote. As is clear from his intent behind his inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon, the Daishonin’s heart must have burned with a profound passion for humanity’s peace and happiness.

In this letter, the Daishonin affirms that the Lotus Sutra is “the ultimate teaching affirmed

by all Buddhas of past, present and future," a designation that also became the letter's title. He contrasts the Lotus Sutra with the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings from various perspectives. Through his careful examination, the Daishonin demonstrates that the Lotus Sutra directly reveals the Buddha's enlightenment, while the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings are provisional in the sense that they were expounded in accord with the various conditions and capacities of the people. He concludes that the Lotus Sutra contains the essential truth of Buddhism and that the practical application of the sutra enables the ordinary people of the Latter Day to attain enlightenment.

In his lecture on this letter carried in this section, SGI President Ikeda writes: "We have to develop ourselves. As the Daishonin says, 'Arouse deep faith and polish your mirror night and day' (MW-1, 5). That is the fundamental objective of life and the conclusion of 'The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future.'" Here he further clarifies the essential point of this letter, in which the Daishonin states: "To suppose that the Buddha, the Law and the pure land of Eagle Peak exist apart from one's life and to seek them outside is a delusion."

Put another way, the essential message of this letter is to develop faith, that is, to strengthen

the conviction that within us we possess "the Buddha," "the Law" and "the pure land of Eagle Peak." Here, the Buddha may be described in more general terms as the supreme essence of humanity; the Law as the law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, which gives rise to all activities in the universe; and the pure land of Eagle Peak, a metaphor often employed by the Daishonin for the state of enlightenment, or the indestructible happiness of Buddhahood. To have such belief or conviction is what is meant by faith in the Gohonzon.

Regarding the importance of faith, President Ikeda also writes: "With the view of life existing eternally over past, present and future, establishing solid faith becomes the fundamental concern. We should make establishing solid faith our main purpose in this existence."

Establishing and strengthening faith, then, is our fundamental objective as Buddhists. But isn't faith a means to an end, not the end itself? It is certainly the means to achieve a genuine, enduring level of happiness that is synonymous with what we call Buddhahood, or enlightenment.


The word *faith* of course means belief, but there are many forms and degrees of belief, not all of which are good or positive. In the Daishonin's Buddhism, however, we delve deeper into the meaning of faith. In our practice, faith may

be interpreted as our state of life, a state of life in which nothing can sway our confidence that "the Buddha," "the Law" and "the pure land" exist in our lives no matter what our circumstances. Such confidence, such conviction, when coupled with prayer and practice, has the power to call forth dynamically these very qualities from within us. It also allows us to fully appreciate and respect that potential in others. Having full access to our highest intrinsic qualities—qualities such as life force and wisdom—we cannot be anything but happy. This is what it means to be a Buddha. Viewed this way, faith is synonymous to happiness. In this regard, Nichikan, the twenty-sixth high priest of Taiseki-ji, who was known for his efforts to correct the errors brought into his school by his predecessors and restore the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's teaching, comments: "The heart that strongly believes in the Lotus Sutra is itself called Buddhahood."

The stronger the faith we develop, therefore, the more enduring the happiness we build within our lives. To realize that we do not have to seek happiness outside, that an inexhaustible source of happiness and fortune exists within us, is to have faith, to become happy. In "The Ultimate Teaching Affirmed by All Buddhas of Past, Present and Future," the Daishonin drives this point home. □



The Untold History of the Fuji School: The Origins of the Temple Issue (9)



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 covered the efforts of the twenty-sixth high priest, Nichikan (1665–1726), who refuted erroneous beliefs and traditions brought into the Fuji School by his predecessors.

Chapter 9: Persecutions in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

There were three incidents concerning the persecution of lay believers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries worth noting in the history of the Fuji School—the Kanazawa Persecution, the Ina Persecution and the Owari Persecution.

(1) The Kanazawa Persecution

IN the early eighteenth century, many samurai under Maeda Tsunanori, governor of the Kaga, Noto and Etchu provinces, converted to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. They did so after attending sermons at Jozai-ji, a branch temple of the Fuji School in present-day Tokyo.

Upon their return to Kanazawa, the capital of Kaga, they began to propagate their new faith among retainers of the Maeda clan. This is believed to be the beginning of the spread of the Daishonin's teachings in Kanazawa. But because of the restrictions of the parish system, they could not openly convert to the Fuji School and had to conceal their faith from government officials and priests of other temples. Under the government instituted parish system in Japan, citizens were legally bound for life to the temple of their parents and ancestors.

In 1726, Ryomyo, a priest of Jiun-ji, a Nichiren School temple, converted to the Fuji School while traveling to further his studies of the Daishonin's Buddhism. He then entered the school's Hosokusa Seminary. Ryomyo's conversion, however, became an issue in local religious circles.



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

There was no branch temple of the Fuji School in the Kaga areas governed by the Maeda family, so converts had no temple to register with.

Furthermore, priests from the Minobu branch of the Nichiren School reported to the provincial authorities that the Fuji School was very similar to the Fuju-fuse branch, which had already been outlawed by the government. The Fuju-fuse School had a policy of not making or accepting contributions to or from those it regarded as heretics, which was highly offensive to the authorities. As a result, the Maeda clan issued an edict that outlawed the Fuji School as well, concerned that its apparent similarity to the outlawed Fuju-fuse School would cause confusion within local parishes (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 9, p. 278).

The Daishonin explains the inevitable persecution that those who propagate his Buddhism will

face, stating: “If you propagate it [the doctrine of *ichinen sanzen*], devils will arise without fail. Were it not for these, there would be no way of knowing that this is the true teaching” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 145). For the believers in Kanazawa, it came in the form of suppression by their local government.

In 1727, twenty-eighth high priest Nissho sent a request to the governor asking for a permit to build a temple in the area in an effort to lend support to the growing number of believers. But Nissho’s request was denied. In the petition, Nissho mentions that “those who took faith for the last few decades number several thousand” (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 9, p. 293). In spite of the persecution befalling them, there were a substantial number of believers in the Kanazawa area.

Nissho could have appealed the governor’s



Historical records indicate that there were at least thirteen lay organizations of the Fuji School in the area. Those believers propagated the Daishonin's teaching and encouraged one another without any support from the priesthood.

decision to the shogunate government, but decided against it. Nichiko Hori, the fifty-ninth high priest and a noted historian of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, has speculated as to the reason why Nissho did not file an appeal and persist in the efforts to construct a temple in the area. Nissho, he points out, probably was "concerned about bringing danger to his own temple" as well as "the possibility of believers in Kanazawa being subjected to more severe punishment" (Ibid., vol. 9, p. 291).

While the head temple failed to extend any further support, believers in Kanazawa continued to practice and spread the Daishonin's Buddhism. Despite the ban issued by the authorities, believers did organize themselves. Historical records indicate that there were at least thirteen lay organizations of the Fuji School in the area. Those believers propagated the Daishonin's teaching and encouraged one another without any support from the priesthood. They also exerted themselves in Buddhist study. About 400 books on Buddhism copied by the believers in Kanazawa still exist. In June 1749, when Taiseki-ji built a five-storied pagoda, they donated a large sum of money—more than 300 *ryo*¹—to the priesthood, despite having been left to fend for themselves.

Toward the end of 1770, the ruling Maeda family again issued a ban on the religious practice of Taiseki-ji and the Fuji School. At that time, seven or eight leading believers, including Nishida Joemon and Takeuchi Hachiemon, were sentenced to varying forms of punishment. Most of them were low-ranking samurai serving the Maeda family, and were finally pardoned three years later.

But Joemon, who had exerted himself in propagation for thirty years and had helped form two lay organizations, died of an illness while serv-

ing his sentence. In March 1786, Hachiemon was again summoned by the provincial officials, who demanded that he renounce his faith. When he refused to do so, he was imprisoned and died in prison on April 29 of the same year. Records show that several hundred fellow practitioners attended his funeral to honor a life dedicated to the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

There were about 12,000 people in Kanazawa and surrounding areas practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism. The office of religious affairs, which enforced the parish system, was clearly alarmed by the rapid growth of the Fuji School. In July 1786, seven leading believers, including Nakamura Kohei, were arrested and questioned by the provincial government. Nakamura Kohei, representing the believers, responded to government officials during the examination. He was pressured to reveal the names of those who practiced with the Fuji School but refused, stating: "Out of respect for the government system, I wish to remain silent [about the outlawed faith]. Since I do not know who practices the faith, it would be difficult to tell" (Ibid., vol. 9, p. 305). He did explain how he had taken faith in the Daishonin's teachings and how he believed his faith helped him serve his lord.

Nakamura Kohei was summoned several more times after that, but he refused to give up his faith. He went so far as to submit a letter of remonstrance proclaiming that "the faith of the Taiseki-ji School is in accord with the time and conditions of the Latter Day of the Law" and that "if the true object of devotion is abandoned and thus the true Law becomes extinct, the [Maeda] family would not prosper" (*The Records of the Kanazawa Persecution*, p. 87). On September 26, 1786, Nakamura Kohei was imprisoned. Later, on December 23, he was pardoned and returned to work. This was the last recorded

incident of the Kanazawa Persecution.

The propagation efforts of ordinary people brought about the Kanazawa Persecution. In its course, five believers were imprisoned, with one of them dying in confinement, fourteen were placed under house arrest, and many were harshly interrogated. The priesthood at Taiseki-ji, on the other hand, submitted one petition to build a branch temple in the Kanazawa area and thereafter remained silent. Eventually the enthusiasm of Kanazawa believers died down, and by the time Taiseki-ji finally established a temple nearly one hundred years later in November 1879, only eighty households remained. Only 150 people attended the opening.

(2) The Ina Persecution

IN May 1784, believers in Ina, Shinano Province, came under government persecution. Jokura Mozaemon was a farmer in Koide Village in Ina. Although his family had for generations belonged to Jorin-ji, a Zen temple, he eventually began to practice at Jinmyo-ji, a Nichiren School temple. In 1763, when he was 19, he determined to visit 1,000 temples related to Nichiren Buddhism. During this trip, Mozaemon encountered the correct teaching of the Daishonin at Taiseki-ji and converted to the Fuji School. Upon his return to Ina, he began to spread the Daishonin's teaching based on this school. It was at a time of many natural disasters and people were receptive to the Daishonin's teachings.

As more people began to practice, Mozaemon built a small hall on his estate for his fellow believers to gather and chant daimoku. Alarmed by the increasing number of Fuji School believers, three temples—Kokyu-ji and Jorin-ji of the Soto branch of the Zen School and Jinmyo-ji of another Nichiren school—lodged a complaint with the local government. In response, the office of religious affairs of the provincial government sent out some thirty men to arrest three leading believers—Mozaemon, Saheiji and Tozaemon.

They were imprisoned on the suspicion of

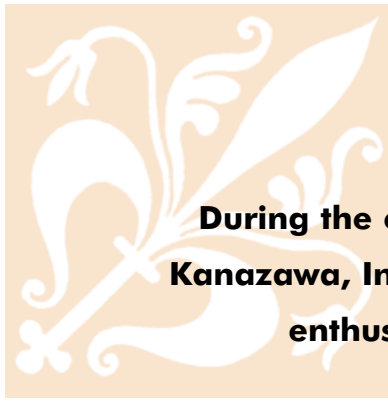
being Christians. Apparently the priests had complained to the provincial government that they were Christians—the practice of Christianity being illegal. For three days the authorities attempted to torture a confession out of Mozaemon. He was forced to kneel on sharp wooden planks, his head was submerged in water nearly to the point of drowning, and he was forced to drink an excessive amount of water. It is recorded that “No matter how severely he was tortured, he continued to chant daimoku as long as he could breathe” (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 9, p. 410). Since the government could not find any evidence that he practiced Christianity, Mozaemon escaped the death sentence. But he and his family had their house and fields confiscated and were exiled from the village. Some other believers were placed under house arrest. The priests of the three temples were also placed under house arrest for lodging a false complaint.

Twenty-three years later, Mozaemon was pardoned and returned to Ina. For the next one hundred-some years, the believers of Ina continued to gather to chant daimoku and study the Daishonin's writings. Unlike the Kanazawa Persecution of believers in the samurai class, the Ina Persecution was prompted by the propagation efforts of farmers and peasants. Meanwhile, the priesthood at Taiseki-ji remained silent throughout the affair.

(3) The Owari Persecution

IT was ordinary people who first propagated the Daishonin's teachings in Owari Province (present-day Aichi Prefecture) as well—particularly in the area around Nagoya. Around 1822, toward the end of the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate, a lay believer named Nagase Seijuro, from Meguro in Edo (present-day Tokyo), went to Owari Province to spread the Daishonin's teaching even though there was no temple of the Fuji School located there.

When he was young, Seijuro was a believer of the Minobu branch of the Nichiren School. Later he converted to Taiseki-ji. He often traveled to



During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ordinary people of Kanazawa, Ina and Owari awakened to the Daishonin's Buddhism and enthusiastically spread their faith [despite persecutions].

various areas from the northeastern region of the mainland to the Owari area of the central region to spread the Daishonin's teaching. He also excelled in religious debate. Around 1830, he won a debate with an influential believer of the Minobu branch. (This debate is known as the Sunamura Debate.)

Takasaki Tayo, a woman who had been converted by Seijuro, led propagation efforts in the Owari area. She established a women's lay organization. Her son Takasaki Katsuji, who was a retainer of the ruling Tokugawa family of Owari Province, also exerted himself in propagation and established a lay organization. With these efforts, the number of believers in the Owari area increased dramatically.

Seijuro also went to the Hokuzai area of Nagoya (present-day Komaki, Inuyama and Kasugai cities) to spread the Daishonin's teaching. In this area, Funabashi Gizaemon, Hiramatsu Masuemon, Kimata Ukyo and Iwata Rizo led the propagation campaign. They were all ordinary citizens—farmers and merchants—but they were well educated. Since they had been believers of a Nichiren School, they had some foundation in Buddhist study. Once they were awakened to the orthodox teachings of the Fuji School, they became a driving force behind propagation in their area.

They also challenged priests and lay believers of the various Nichiren schools, such as the Minobu branch, the Kenpon Hokke branch and the Eight Chapters branch, in religious debate and repeatedly defeated them. This caused those various Nichiren schools to lodge complaints with the office of religious affairs of the provincial government. Such complaints prompted the local government to persecute the believers in Owari four times over a fifty-year period.

In 1825 and 1826, local officials raided believers' homes in the Hokuzai area of Nagoya and

confiscated their Gohonzon. In those raids, believers were beaten and kicked. Funabashi Gizaemon was a main target of the raids. In the fall of 1837, another persecution occurred. After an initial series of raids, believers became cautious and hid their Gohonzon behind statues of the Buddha in their altars. But Hiramatsu Masuemon had his Buddhist altar examined by local officials and was immediately arrested. He was taken to the office of religious affairs and interrogated for an extended period. Iwata Rizo and Kimata Ukyo experienced similar treatment. These incidents took place repeatedly until spring of the following year.

For eight years from 1847 to 1854, persecutions of Fuji School believers intensified. Each year they suffered some form of harassment from the provincial government. In February 1848, Kimata Ukyo completely refuted Chijo-in, a priest of Myoraku-ji, in a religious debate. Incensed, Chijo-in demanded that Kimata Ukyo and his son, Sakyō, submit a letter of apology. The priest also attempted to have Ukyo's job at a local Shinto shrine taken away.

On August 25 of the same year, Kimata Ukyo was summoned to Hon'en-ji by someone claiming to act on the authority of the office of religious affairs and was detained there. On August 29, Kimata Ukyo along with Iwata Rizo and Zen'noemon, were transported to the office of religious affairs, escorted by eighty-some priests and lay believers of the Minobu branch. There they were flogged, beaten and tortured by local officials.

On September 9, Zen'noemon was released and returned to his village, sick and almost beaten to death. The government regarded Ukyo and Rizo as ringleaders and detained them for further interrogation. Meanwhile, Hiramatsu Masuemon submitted a petition to a steward of the ruling family. Upon reading the petition, the

steward was moved by the plight of these believers and issued a warning to the office of religious affairs. As a result, on September 27, Ukyo was released, and on October 4, Rizo returned to his village. Incapacitated from torture, the two men had to be carried home in a litter. On October 22 and 23, Masuemon was summoned and questioned by local officials.

Masuemon, Rizo and Ukyo then had a religious debate with high-ranking priests of the officially sanctioned temples of the various Nichiren schools. These schools worked closely with the office of religious affairs. The debate was held in three sessions—October 25, November 2 and November 10—under the supervision of the office of religious affairs.

Through this debate the provincial government sought to convert the leading believers of the Fuji School to other already established Nichiren schools in the area. However, the lay believers led by Rizo refuted the priests' arguments and pointed out their errors one by one. On many occasions, the priests were unable to respond. Furthermore, to the embarrassment of the debating priests, some priests in the audience acknowledged the points argued by Rizo and others.

Their arguments compelled the priests to accept the two transfer documents that validate Nikko Shonin as the legitimate successor of the Daishonin, and confirmed the slanderous nature of actions by Hagiri Sanenaga, the steward of Minobu, which prompted Nikko Shonin to leave the area. Through the debate, known as the Owari Debate, the lay believers of the Fuji School affirmed the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

Regarding the Owari Debate, Nichiko Hori writes: "The debate ended in triumph for the lay believers of the Fuji School and in miserable defeat for the officially sanctioned temples. The fact that the positions of priests as teachers and lay believers as students were completely reversed brought public honor to the three [lay believers] and indelible disgrace to the seven temples. Furthermore, [at the debate] government officials heard that the faith of the Fuji School is not erroneous, but is the orthodox and correct teaching among all Nichiren schools" (*History of the Owari Persecution*, p. 85).

After the Owari Debate, Iwata Rizo and Kimata Sakyo, the son of Ukyo, led propagation efforts. In 1854, Sakyo refuted the priests of Gyokuzen-ji about the relative merits of the theoretical teaching (or the first half) of the Lotus Sutra and its essential teaching (or the latter half). After Sakyo's victory, more people took faith in the Fuji School throughout the Owari area.

As propagation progressed, another persecution occurred in 1858 in the Komeno area of Owari Province. On November 8, about thirty villagers in the area were arrested. Three of them were severely tortured. Until 1876, when the new Meiji government issued an edict to ensure religious freedom, the local feudal government continued to harass the believers of the Fuji School in Owari Province.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ordinary people of Kanazawa, Ina and Owari awakened to the Daishonin's Buddhism and enthusiastically spread their faith. Threatened by the rapid increase in the number of these believers, influential priests of other schools instigated local officials to persecute them. Despite those persecutions, many believers courageously continued their faith.

On the other hand, the priesthood at Taiseki-ji, fearful of persecution and concerned about self-preservation, remained silent and kept its distance from the laity. While approximately 100 believers were directly subjected to government persecutions for their efforts to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism during the Edo period (1603–1867), only two priests in the remote Sendai area were persecuted for propagation. In view of the above events under the parish system instituted in this period, it is evident that the priesthood at Taiseki-ji had grown more concerned about its own survival than the spread of the Daishonin's teaching.

(Translated and edited by SGI-USA
Study Department)

To be continued

1. A monetary unit of thirteenth-century Japan.

DIALOGUE

on the *Lotus Sutra*

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

This is part one of the thirty-third 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 October 1997 issue of the *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai study journal.

This time, focusing on the concept of “mutual possession,” they discuss the true meaning of the teaching that the nine worlds contain the world of Buddhahood and that the world of Buddhahood contains the nine worlds.

33 The “Life Span” Chapter—Part Eight Enacting the Drama of Kosen-rufu on the “Earth” of Buddhahood: The Mutual Possession of the Ten Worlds <Part II>

Katsuji Saito: The advanced-level youth division study exam was recently held. Capable people who will raise the curtain on the twenty-first century have again emerged.

President Ikeda: Those who earnestly and thoroughly study the Daishonin’s writings—whether or not they pass study exams—are victorious; they are the champions, the treasures, of kosen-rufu.

I know that there are many people with a lot of experience in study who gave up their summer vacations in order to assist those preparing for the exam. Such selfless efforts are most noble.

Whether or not one is successful on a particular exam, it is what one does from that point on that determines victory or defeat in life. I hope all the youth will exert themselves wholeheartedly to sharing this great Buddhism with others.



GREGORY NAKASUJI

The purpose of study exams on Nichiren Daishonin's teachings is to learn to translate the principles of Buddhism into action. The first nationwide activity after the death of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda was an entrance-level study exam.

Takanori Endo: Practically speaking, failure to translate one's knowledge of Buddhism into action would defeat the whole purpose of study exams.

Ikeda: The very first nationwide activity carried out after the death of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda (on April 2, 1958) was an entrance-level study exam (held on April 6).

While the final memorial services (held on the eighth) had not yet been completed, and though we were still mourning the loss of our great mentor, it was decided that the study exam should be held as planned. Members sat for the exam at sites in some sixty cities across the country.

Critics of the Soka Gakkai, thinking that the organization would collapse without President Toda, seized upon the occasion of his death to intensify their attacks and ridicule. Even amid that storm of negative criticism, members single-mindedly continued advancing along the two paths of practice and study.

Haruo Suda: People in society predicted that the Soka Gakkai would "break up in mid-air." Priests of other Buddhist schools and certain

scholars said things like, "After his [President Toda's] death, the Soka Gakkai will no longer be cause for concern"; and, "It is inconceivable that the Soka Gakkai will be able to realize the kinds of strides it did while Mr. Toda was alive."

Endo: There were also some Buddhist scholars who confessed to a sense of "relief" at the death of this champion of propagation.

Ikeda: President Toda was recognized as a great leader by both the membership and society at large. I think that such reactions attest to this.

Saito: But far from "breaking up in mid-air," the Soka Gakkai in fact began propagating the Daishonin's Buddhism and growing even more vigorously. I believe that it was thanks to you, President Ikeda, that we were able to continue advancing full-speed in practice and study without missing a beat.

Ikeda: I think it was near the end of 1950. I was 22, and Mr. Toda's businesses were mired in great difficulties. This was of course before his

inauguration as the Soka Gakkai president. Even among the membership, there were many who distanced themselves from the Soka Gakkai when they saw how Mr. Toda was struggling under a mountain of debt.

Around that time, President Toda and I took a seaside train in Kanagawa to attend to some matter. It was just the two of us traveling together. A train ride was always a time to study. That day, we studied "The True Object of Worship." President Toda, citing twenty-sixth high priest Nichikan's exegesis on this writing, was explaining to me the vast and boundless benefit of the "true object of worship for observing one's mind," or the Gohonzon.

Gazing out the window at the vast Pacific Ocean that spread out before us, President Toda remarked: "The *Major Writings* should be read with a state of life of faith as broad and expansive as the Pacific. Otherwise, we ordinary beings cannot approach the spirit of the original Buddha." We can't understand the *Major Writings* if we read it using only our intellect. I think he was emphasizing that we have to read the *Major Writings* with our lives firmly grounded in faith.

Though Mr. Toda's business was in such dire straits that it was difficult to see how he would make it through the next day, his spirit was infinitely calm and composed. I have introduced this episode in order to encourage the members of the youth division and all those who are earnestly pursuing Buddhist study.

Saito: Thank you very much.

Only the Lotus Sutra Reveals the Doctrine of the Mutual Possession of the Ten Worlds

"I" in the passage "in truth the time since I attained Buddhahood is extremely long" (LS16, 226)¹ refers to Shakyamuni, who attained enlightenment in the remote past. However, according to the actual meaning of this ["Life Span"] chapter, "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)

Non-existence of birth and death [from the passage "There is no ebb or flow of birth and death" (LS16, 226)] means that all phenomena in the Dharma realm

are simultaneously functions of Myoho-enge-kyo. Existence indicates that Hell is in itself the total entity of the wonderful Law of the Ten Worlds. (GZ, p. 754)

Suda: We have so far discussed each of the Ten Worlds. This time, our focus is the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

Ikeda: Nichiren Daishonin says in the *Major Writings* that while the doctrine of the Ten Worlds is found in sutras expounded prior to the Lotus Sutra, only the Lotus Sutra explains their mutual possession.

[In one place he says: "This is precisely the doctrine of the Lotus Sutra. While the causes and effects of the Ten Worlds were revealed in the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings, only the Lotus Sutra establishes the mutual possession of the causes and effects of all Ten Worlds" (GZ, p. 401).]

It is the Lotus Sutra's most essential doctrine. For that reason, it is not something that can be adequately covered in a brief discussion. Today, therefore, why don't we center on trying to get at precisely what is meant by "mutual possession"; and then talk about how understanding this principle can change our lives?

Suda: Okay. Mutual possession of the Ten Worlds literally means that each world from Hell to Buddhahood contains all Ten Worlds. In other words, each of the Ten Worlds contains the other nine. This state of mutual possession is also described as the "hundred worlds," the product of multiplying ten times ten.

[The Daishonin says: "The mutual possession of the Ten Worlds means that each of the Ten Worlds contains within it the other nine. Since the Ten Worlds each contain all ten, we have the hundred worlds" (GZ, p. 400).]

Endo: The doctrine of the Ten Worlds is often used to explain state of life. One of the most frequently asked questions is: "If the Ten Worlds mutually contain each other giving us a hundred worlds, does this mean there are a hundred different states of life?" Within these hundred worlds we find, for example, the world of Buddhahood contained in



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(Above, left) The Andromeda Galaxy (M31) as seen by the 200-inch optical telescope at the Palomar Observatory. (Above, right) A paramecium (magnification 100X) undergoes asexual reproductive fission. A paramecium is a protozoan having cilia for locomotion, and lives in freshwater habitats. The individual is a microcosm. The microcosm is itself the macrocosm; the two can never be separated, so the self is in fact the universe.

the world of Hell or the world of Buddhahood found in the world of Humanity. This gives rise to the question, "If there are indeed a hundred worlds, then how does the world of Hunger contained in the world of Hell differ from the world of Hell in the world of Hunger?"

Suda: From one standpoint, we enter the world of Humanity when we are born as a human being. Thus, the state of life of a person who (1) is born human, (2) experiences the suffering of Hell on account of something like illness and (3) subsequently awakens to his or her mission as a bodhisattva, could be described as the world of Bodhisattva contained in the world of Hell contained in the world of Humanity. We would then have ten times ten times ten, or a thousand worlds.

Saito: That would mean that a single moment of

life contains not three thousand realms, but thirty thousand!

Ikeda: Something is amiss here! In this series of discussions about the Ten Worlds, we have tried to clarify each world using our own lives as a model. Though not explicitly stated, our talks have been naturally premised on the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, in particular, the existence of the Ten Worlds within the world of Humanity.

Suda: That's true.

Ikeda: In fact, such an approach to the Ten Worlds would be impossible without the teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

Saito: While the pre-Lotus Sutra teachings explain

the Ten Worlds, they conceive each of them as separate and independent. According to this understanding, those in the world of Humanity cannot reach the world of Buddhahood until they have discarded the world of Humanity. So according to these teachings one would have to practice for aeons, eradicating one lower state of life after another while being reborn into successively higher worlds, until one finally becomes a Buddha.

Alternately, to make Buddhism more accessible, some schools taught that after death one could be reborn in another land far away from this strife-ridden *saha* world, such as the Pure Land of Perfect Bliss (of Amida Buddha).

Ikeda: We tend to take it for granted that the world of Humanity contains the Ten Worlds, but this is in fact the key point of the teaching of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

The Ten Worlds also exist in the universe. The entire universe is a great living entity endowed with the Ten Worlds, and it is there that we were born in the world of Humanity. The world of Humanity existing in the universe also contains the Ten Worlds, as do the worlds of Animality, Hunger and Anger.

Endo: That is the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds in the life of the universe.

Ikeda: So why does the Lotus Sutra explain the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds?

Ultimately, it is to reveal that the world of Humanity contains the Ten Worlds, and, in particular, the world of Buddhahood. This means that ordinary people can reveal their Buddha nature just as they are—without having to be reborn in any other form or in another land.

Saito: To profoundly grasp this truth is called “observing one’s mind.” The Daishonin says that to “observe the mind” means to perceive the Ten Worlds within it. (MW-1, 49).

Suda: In “The True Object of Worship,” Nichiren Daishonin emphasizes the concept of the Ten Worlds, and in particular the world of Buddhahood in the world of Humanity.

Endo: Now that we have clarified the purpose of

the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, it seems that dwelling on the difference between the world of Hunger existing in the world of Hell and the world of Hell existing in the world of Hunger is actually moving away from its essence.

Suda: What about the issue of the “thousand worlds”?

Saito: That’s the question of the world of Bodhisattva existing in the world of Hell existing in the world of Humanity, and so forth.

Suda: I think considerable confusion surrounds this point.

Saito: If we say that the Ten Worlds exist in the universe, and that people, who are born in one of these worlds, are entities of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds (i.e., that they possess the hundred worlds), then the universe contains a thousand worlds. However, I think this interpretation reflects a basic misunderstanding about the Lotus Sutra’s intention in setting forth the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, which is primarily to elucidate the wondrous truth that all living beings, regardless of which world they happen to inhabit at any given moment, are endowed with the Ten Worlds.

Essentially, the Lotus Sutra explains the inscrutable, mystic truth of life—that the “part,” or just one of the Ten Worlds, in fact contains the “whole,” or all of the Ten Worlds; this is what is meant by “mutual possession.” Given this reality, it can be said that one’s life is endowed with a hundred worlds.

The Hundred Worlds Exist Both in the Universe and in Our Lives

Ikeda: Perhaps it is helpful to put it in these terms. The individual is a microcosm. The microcosm is itself the macrocosm; the two can never be separated, so the self is in fact the universe.

Since the entire universe is a living entity manifesting the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, it possesses the hundred worlds. At the same time, since our lives, too, are one with the universe, we also possess the hundred worlds.

We are entities of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds just as the universe is.

Suda: Certainly, to say that we (the microcosm) are the hundred worlds and that the universe (the macrocosm) is the thousand worlds is contradictory, because then it could not be said that we are one with the universe. This is clear now.

Endo: The universe itself is a single great life; we, too, are a single life. Both are life and are in that sense equal. The doctrine of mutual possession explains the mystic true aspect of this single great life.

Ikeda: Whichever of the Ten Worlds we are in, the true aspect of our life at that moment is a perfect microcosm just as it is. This is what we learned from our discussion of the principle of the true entity of all phenomena.

Nichiren Daishonin says regarding the Lotus Sutra's teaching of the true entity of all phenomena, "All beings and their environments in any of the Ten Worlds, from Hell at the lowest to Buddhahood at the highest, are, without exception, the manifestations of Myoho-enge-kyo" (MW-1, 89). In this passage, "all beings and their environments in any of the Ten Worlds, from Hell at the lowest to Buddhahood at the highest" refers to all phenomena in the universe, which are subsumed within the Ten Worlds. "All beings and their environments" points to the inseparability of the entity of people's lives and the entity of the universe, meaning, for example, if a person is in the state of Hell, then the person's environment will also be that of Hell.

"All beings and their environments in any of the Ten Worlds" indicates all phenomena in the universe. The Daishonin thus teaches that all phenomena without exception are "manifestations of Myoho-enge-kyo"; that is their "true aspect." In other words, every phenomenon is an expression of the great life of the universe which is Nam-myoho-enge-kyo.

Saito: From that perspective, the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds naturally follows from the principle of the true entity of all phenomena, since the teaching of the true entity of all phenomena reveals that all manifestations of life (all phenomena) are themselves expressions of the

universal life (true entity).

Applying this to the Ten Worlds, we find that living beings in any world are endowed with the entire universe, that is to say, with the Ten Worlds. This is the relation between these two doctrines.

Ikeda: It's a truly remarkable view of life, the world and the universe. Nichiren Daishonin says, "Grasses and plants, trees and forests, mountains and rivers, the great earth and a single speck of dust—each is endowed with all Ten Worlds" (GZ, p. 561).

Suda: I am reminded of a poem by the famous English poet William Blake (1757–1827):

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.²

Ikeda: A grain of sand and a wild flower—these are both entities of the Mystic Law; they contain the life of the universe in its entirety.

Endo: Such a view transcends superficial distinctions between phenomena, like whether they are large or small.

With regard to the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, Nichikan addresses the question: "How can we say that a single moment of life contains the vastness of three thousand realms?" In answer, he explains that the Lotus Sutra reveals the principle of "endowment and pervasiveness," saying, "The Dharma realm in its entirety is contained in each moment of life. And the moment of life in its entirety pervades the Dharma realm."³

The macroscopic exists in the microscopic. The microscopic encompasses the macroscopic. He continues: "To illustrate, a speck of dirt is endowed with all of the constituents making up the vast land that surrounds it. And when a drop of water is added to the ocean, it spreads out pervading the entire ocean."⁴

Suda: Without understanding the truth of non-substantiality, it is probably impossible to make sense of such mysteries.

By the way, another question I am asked fre-



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Satellite dishes gather electromagnetic waves that carry radio, television and other signals. Though these waves are invisible, their existence is apparent through the image or sound produced by the radio or television receiver. Similarly, the Ten Worlds permeate the entire universe in the state of non-substantiality, but manifest themselves in such phenomena as human behavior.

quently is whether saying that the Ten Worlds exist in the universe means that there are specific parts of the universe that correspond to specific worlds. Some suggest that the vicinity of the earth, for example, would correspond to the world of Humanity.

What Is “Non-substantiality”?

Ikeda: With regard to the Ten Worlds as they exist in the universe, President Toda would often use radio waves as a metaphor to explain the concept of non-substantiality. I imagine you may have heard this comparison before.

Endo: Yes. Radio waves transmitted from many different broadcast stations, including frequen-

cies sent from overseas, all reach a single room. Despite the proliferation of radio waves, you cannot see them. Yet, if you doubt their presence, by setting up a radio and tuning the channel you can readily receive any one of them. The room is never too small to hold any number of frequencies, nor do they impinge on one another. Mr. Toda explained that the Ten Worlds in the universe are also in such a state.

Ikeda: That’s right. But we need to remember that this is just a means of description. The condition in which radio waves exist does not itself signify non-substantiality. In the universe, the states making up the Ten Worlds neither pile up on one another, nor are they lined up side by side or individually concentrated in any particular place. They are thor-

oughly diffused throughout the entire universe, and manifest in accord with relations, or external causes. The same is true of the Ten Worlds extant in each person's life.

Saito: For instance, when our lives are manifesting the world of Hell, no matter how we might search for a way out, all we find is Hell. As we squirm about in Hellish suffering, we are unable to see the existence of any other state of life, such as Heaven. Yet, it may happen that at the next moment our sufferings will disappear and the world of Heaven will dominate. Where did this world of Heaven come from? Certainly not from anywhere outside us.

While we were suffering in Hell, the world of Heaven was in a condition of non-substantiality. When any one of the Ten Worlds appears—and they appear only one at a time—then the other nine worlds all recede into non-substantiality. The worlds become manifest in our lives as “temporary existence” in response to external causes. This seems to be more or less how it works.

Ikeda: Non-substantiality is a difficult concept. Why don't we try to probe a little deeper?

Strictly speaking, the term *Ten Worlds* means “ten Dharma realms.” What does “Dharma realm” signify?

Suda: Simply put, “Dharma realm” means the world of all phenomena; that is, the entire universe. “Dharma” itself points to all phenomena, which are revealed through various chains of causality. There are ten different kinds of causality corresponding to each of the worlds from Hell to Buddhahood.

“Realm” indicates the specific realm or domain as distinguished from the others. The ten Dharma realms, therefore, refer to the ten kinds of Dharma world—or universes—that appear according to ten kinds of causes.

Ikeda: Does that mean that there are ten different universes then?

Endo: There's only one universe. In terms of Dharma realm, “one Dharma realm” indicates the entire universe.

Ikeda: So “ten Dharma realms” does not suggest the existence of ten universes, which would be ten times as great as the space indicated by “one Dharma realm.”

Endo: That's right. I guess there's no way to describe it except to state that one Dharma realm (one world) contains the ten Dharma realms (Ten Worlds) within it.

Three Ways of Interpreting the Ten Dharma realms

Ikeda: That's truly beyond our ordinary scope of thinking. The Daishonin says, “The Dharma realm is neither broad, nor is it narrow” (GZ, p. 769). The Great Teacher T'ien-t'ai of China gives three ways of interpreting the term *ten Dharma realms*.⁵

Saito: Yes. These are “ten Dharma realms,” “the realms of ten Dharmas” and “the ten [Dharma realms] are themselves the Dharma realm.” These correspond to the three truths of non-substantiality, temporary existence and the Middle Way.

First, “ten Dharma realms” reflects the view that, differences in the Ten Worlds notwithstanding, each of these worlds is a Dharma realm, a world of the true entity as perceived by the Buddha, which is identical with the entire universe. From this standpoint, every world, whether Hell or Humanity, is equally a “Dharma realm,” an entity of the universal life or the Mystic Law.

Endo: This is the perspective of non-substantiality.

Saito: That's because, despite differences between the worlds of Hell and Humanity, for example, these differences are not viewed as substantial.

Ikeda: In other words, each world is seen as itself representing the sum total of the universe. This is the perspective of “all phenomena are themselves the true entity,” and “the part is itself the whole”; that a single grain of sand reveals the entire universe.

The corollary to this view is that since the true entity is all phenomena, the whole is the part. This is the standpoint that the life of the universe

manifests through all phenomena with their myriad differences.

Suda: That is the idea of the truth of temporary existence. While all phenomena are equally manifestations of the Dharma realm, they still exhibit the differences of the Ten Worlds. This brings us to the interpretation, “the realms of ten Dharmas.” In this case, “realm” is synonymous with “difference.”

Ikeda: Why do such discrepancies exist?

Endo: It has to do with how the Dharma realm is perceived. Phenomena are perceived and sensed differently by different people. It would seem, therefore, that there are ten ways of seeing things, according to one’s life condition.

Ikeda: That sounds correct. In that sense, the ten Dharma realms (i.e., Ten Worlds), rather than being objective aspects of the universe, can be understood to express worlds of subjective perception—how we view things—or states of life.

While the ocean itself is the same, the amount of water people can draw from it will vary depending on the size of their ladles. The same is true of the “water” of wisdom.

Fundamentally, living beings, whichever one of the Ten Worlds they inhabit, are themselves the entire universe. That is the true aspect of life and the universe that the Buddha perceives. But living beings, unable to realize this, suffer in Hell and Hunger, contend with one another in the world of Anger, and once they reach the higher worlds of Learning and Realization, feel satisfied that they have achieved all that they need to achieve.

Even if one is in the world of Hell, the world of Hell is endowed with the Dharma realm in its entirety. This is the perspective of the truth of the Middle Way, the third interpretation that T’ien-t’ai provides.

Saito: Yes, that’s the interpretation, “the ten are themselves the Dharma realm.” This means that the world of Hell, just as it is, is the Dharma realm. There’s no need to move from the world of Hell to another world; Hell contains all phenomena. Since “all phenomena” indicates all

beings of the Ten Worlds and their environments, the world of Hell contains the Ten Worlds. The same of course holds true for each of the Ten Worlds.

Endo: That’s the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. It seems very difficult to grasp this concept correctly, but I feel that it is gradually becoming clearer.

Suda: Probably what makes it hard to understand is that it is so far beyond our ordinary linear way of thinking where we assume that a collection of parts makes up a whole. But this assumption does not hold true in the profound Buddhist view of life which holds that the part, or the individual fragment, is itself the whole.

Kosen-rufu Lies in the Happiness of the Individual

Ikeda: That’s why I’m always saying that the individual is so important. The life of one person is as large as the entire universe, and is supremely worthy of respect. This is something that people have a hard time comprehending.

It’s important that we go out of our way to encourage not only those in our immediate surroundings, but those who are struggling inconspicuously behind the scenes. To only pay attention to those who are in the fore is no different than bureaucratism. A Buddhist first and foremost seeks to shed light on those who tend to go unnoticed. We need to make efforts to inspire each person and help them become happy. That is what is meant by kosen-rufu. To deviate from this fundamental path and try to run the organization top-down is completely backwards and counterproductive.

In any event, the concept of the true aspect of life, from the standpoint of which the part is itself the whole, certainly transcends our ordinary way of thinking. That’s why it is called inscrutable or “mystic.”

Endo: T’ien-t’ai used the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds to express “the region of the unfathomable”⁶ to which he had awakened. It may well be that it is impossible to fully comprehend the truth of life intellectually.

Ikeda: But this “region of the unfathomable” does not exist somewhere apart from the reality of people’s lives. Rather, the lives of ordinary people are themselves mystic. The Lotus Sutra proclaims that the human being is sublime. We must never forget this. There isn’t some “mystic place” or wondrous “mystic being” existing apart from the reality of our lives.

In terms of our Buddhist practice, we must decide that faith is the only way. We have to resolve: “I will win basing my actions on faith!” “I will forge a path through faith!” The “region of the unfathomable” ultimately is none other than the Gohonzon and the realm of faith.

As the Daishonin says, “What matters is one’s heart” (MW-5, 289) or “Faith alone is what really matters” (MW-1, 245). Someone who just goes through the motions of praying to the Gohonzon will eventually succumb to inertia or doubt; someone who merely complains or tries to avoid difficulties will not receive true benefit. The Daishonin says, “Whether or not your prayer is answered depends upon your faith; [if it is not,] the fault in no way lies with me, Nichiren” (MW-5, 305).

There is no realm more wonderful than that of faith. The Gohonzon is the supreme storehouse of treasures. This is itself the inscrutable mystic realm; in our faith in the Gohonzon we have the most wonderful treasure. When we practice with such an overflowing sense of joy and conviction, we receive boundless benefit. If, however, we believe that there may be a more wonderful place in some other world, or that there may be some method superior to that of faith in the Mystic Law, it will greatly undermine our ability to manifest the world of Buddhahood.

When we reveal the world of Buddhahood within our lives, we can truly validate the principle that Buddhahood contains the nine worlds and the nine worlds contain Buddhahood. Only

then do we embody the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

Saito: Without faith, the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds is nothing but words.

Endo: A little earlier you cited the passage, “‘Observing one’s mind’ means to observe one’s own mind and to find the Ten Worlds within it.” Nichikan explains that from the standpoint of the Daishonin’s teaching, the phrase *observing one’s mind means to observe one’s own mind* indicates belief in the Gohonzon. That’s why the Gohonzon is also called the “Gohonzon for observing one’s mind.” He further says that “to find the Ten Worlds within it” is to chant the Mystic Law.

Ikeda: That’s right. We who invoke the Mystic Law correspond to the nine worlds, and the Mystic Law corresponds to the world of Buddhahood. Through chanting the Mystic Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the nine worlds and the world of Buddhahood become one; that is, we actualize the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. This is what produces a great transformation in our state of life.

Unless we actually manifest the world of Buddhahood, the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds will remain nothing more than a theoretical potential. It is through faith and practice that we can actualize this principle in reality. In that sense, while the theory of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds is very subtle and complex, there are countless people in the SGI who have demonstrated actual proof of it. I think we can go so far as to declare that only in the SGI are such people to be found.

To be continued

1. 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.

2. *The Portable Blake*, ed. Alfred Kazin (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 150.
 3. “Sanju Hiden Sho” (The Threefold Secret Teaching).
 4. Ibid.
 5. “Hokke Gengi” (Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra).
 6. “Maka Shikan” (Great Concentration and Insight).

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Value Creation: Toward Humanistic Education

By Dr. M. Satish Kumar,
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(Dr. Kumar shares his experience practicing in the SGI on pp. 34–35.)

The following is based on a speech given at a workshop on “Value Education,” held in New Delhi, India, sponsored by the Ministry of Human Resources Development for fifty school principals on May 27–28, 1994.

TSUNESABURO Makiguchi (1871–1944) was one of the leading educational reformers of prewar Japan, a brilliant teacher who introduced the concept of value-creating education. He was passionately dedicated to reforming the Japanese educational system, which emphasized rote learning over critical, independent thinking. His ideas are now coming into recognition the world over, and scholars are introducing them in their own respective areas.

Makiguchi was born into poverty on June 6, 1871, in the village of Arahama in northwestern Japan. By the age of 3, his father had abandoned the family; then his mother unsuccessfully attempted suicide by jumping into the Japan Sea, holding Makiguchi in her arms. When she later abandoned the boy, he was raised by an uncle.

Upon graduating from elementary school, Makiguchi helped in his uncle’s business until his teens. Thirsting for a higher education, at age 14 he traveled to Hokkaido, where he stayed with another uncle. There Makiguchi worked for the police department and studied to pass the qualifying examination for teachers. He entered normal school in 1891 and graduated in 1893. From 1913 onwards he worked as a principal

and primary school teacher throughout the Tokyo area.

To fully appreciate Makiguchi’s educational theories, we need to understand Japan’s education system at the time. The goal sought by the nation’s political and bureaucratic masters was clear: public education must fulfill national interests. Makiguchi totally disagreed. He advocated that education does not exist for the government but for the people.

One of the basic themes in Makiguchi’s educational thought is the perception that human beings are creative by nature. According to him, it is the essence of humanness to be creative. Human beings will express their creativity in their behavior unless that creative potential is destroyed.



The party celebrating the 1930 publication of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's *The System of Value-Creating Education Theory*. Makiguchi and his wife, Kuma, are seated in the center. Josei Toda is at extreme left in the second row.

IN 1930, he wrote: "We begin with recognition that humans cannot create matter. We can, however, create value." Creating value is in fact our very humanity. When we praise people for their strength of character, we are really acknowledging their superior ability to create value. This we can practically demonstrate in our interactions with students.

The basic question then remains toward what ends and in the interest of what values human creativity is to be directed. Makiguchi contends that with proper education, human beings will choose to

use their creative capabilities both to enhance their own lives to the fullest and to create maximum benefit for the community. This is what he means by value creation. In his thinking, a fully alive, happy, fulfilled person is a person whose existence centers in creating value that enhances to the utmost both the personal life and the network of independent relationships that constitute the individual's communal life. Value-creating education is education that provides guidance toward that end.

Makiguchi described the special nature of value-creating education using the analogy of

the indigo plant, which leaves a deep blue hue. That means anything dyed in indigo would become bluer than the plant itself. In the same manner, he believed a teacher must give his whole being to producing students who are greater and more excellent than himself.

I have adopted this as a motto in my life and profession. Education, I think, must never be coercive or forced. The heart of education lies in the process of teacher and pupil learning together, the teacher drawing forth the pupil's potential and raising the pupil to surpass the teacher in ability.

One of the basic themes in Makiguchi's educational thought is the perception that human beings are creative by nature.

I would like to relate one experience I had in inculcating values of trust in students as master of arts and master of philosophy program coordinator in my department at Jawaharlal Nehru University. A student came to me asking permission to submit a forged form for a railway ticket to go home for vacation. He is a brilliant student, among the top five students of our center. He pleaded that he lost his father last year and that it was not possible for him to get any monetary assistance to come back to Delhi after vacations. My heart went out to this student, and at first I felt helpless. Then I thought about Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi's relationship with students. I told him that adopting unfair means will not create any value. He may be poor monetarily now, but by cheating he would be even poorer in spirit. He cannot walk with his head held high even if he were to break all academic records.

I then shared my own struggles as a student with no money. He was totally taken aback with my experience and determined never again to think of unfair means. I encouraged him never to be defeated by his circumstances. He promised not to give in to such weakness in the future. It was a great sense of achievement that I could bring forth value in my environment. I

offered him a summer job to earn money to pay for his fare.

At a time when the economy and society are undergoing rapid transformation, values tend to erode. We as teachers must inculcate values that not only we must cherish, but that others can appreciate and follow.

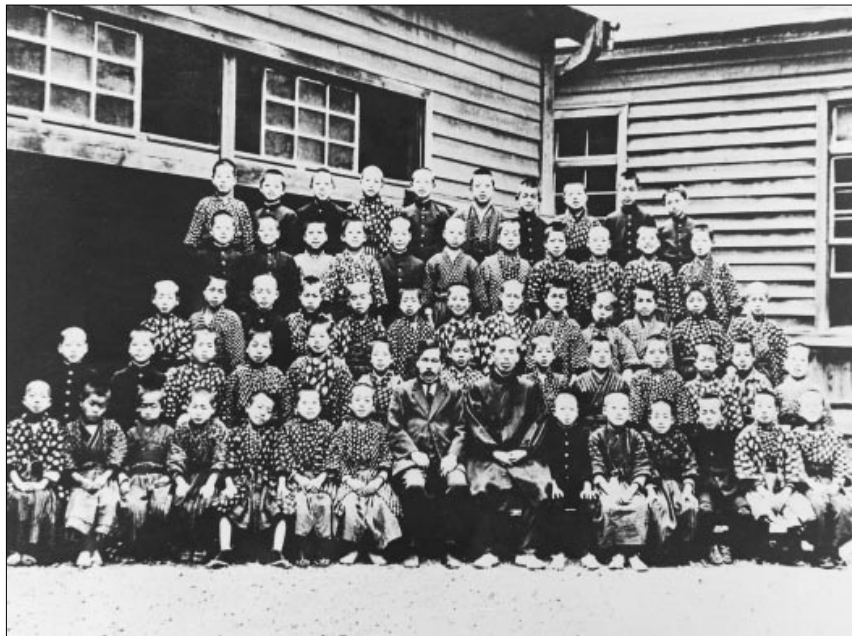
WHEN asked the purpose of his education theory, Mr. Makiguchi said—to create value. He believed that “school ought to remedy the moral ills of society.” His lifelong goal of unifying study with life was achieved in 1930, when *The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy* was published. The four-volume work contains the essence of his forty-year career in the field and is intended as a guide for teachers in their attempt to nurture children in the proper attitude and skills to live life to the fullest. Central to this is the theory of value, found in the second volume. In it Makiguchi elucidates a system of values consisting of beauty, gain and goodness. This was an alternate to truth, goodness and beauty embraced in the West. Makiguchi replaced truth with gain. For him gain was a more concrete attribute. Whether we gain or lose in terms of our own lives and the lives of those in our society is observable and is connected to the actions we take. Do we move

toward harmony or discord? Do we move toward destruction or construction? Do we move to make ourselves complete human beings?

Makiguchi believed “that an education securing a child's lifelong happiness is fundamentally significant in that it fosters the child's intuition and allows for the development of the child's potential to create value.” Thus, such a humanistic education would foster in students the ability to take action with a spirit of challenge. It would also generate self-discipline with a desire toward continual improvement. Based on enthusiasm, devotion and a wholehearted approach, such individuals can respond with flexibility in a variety of situations. Rather than being cold-hearted, they would profess faith in humanism with a heart that is readily moved by youthful spirit. In order to ensure the perpetuation of humanistic value-creating education, the need is for a regular reaffirmation of the principles of values.

Mr. Makiguchi's spirit lives on, both in Japan and abroad. Daisaku Ikeda, the current president of the Soka Gakkai International, established a wide range of schools predicated on the value-creating education envisioned by the society's first president.

I feel that the main features of humanistic education as



Makiguchi with pupils of Shirokane Primary School, 1922.

embodied in the Soka educational institutions founded by Daisaku Ikeda may be summarized as:

- **Trust:** Emphasis being on the restoration of trust. As teachers can we generate trust with our students? Whether we can establish relationships of trust in the classroom would to a great extent depend on whether we ourselves believe in our students.
- **Fusion of knowledge and wisdom:** Any pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake does not lead to the happiness of humankind. Progress can be defined only by social purpose and social ends based on human values. While knowledge generated by individuals for collective purposes may not lead to happiness, it leads to the creation of knowledgeable and immature, cold-hearted individuals. However,

wisdom, whether collectively generated or individually identified, can create more value, which is long-lasting.

- **Ahimsa, or nonviolence:** Daisaku Ikeda, citing Gandhi, suggests that the spirit of *ahimsa*, or nonviolence, is the only way to restore a sense of totality to human existence. He quotes Acharya Vinobha Bhave, the renowned Gandhian, who said that now is the time for us to integrate correctly *vigyan* (scientific knowledge) with *atmavigyan* (self-reflection). This would usher in a scientific ethic of responsibility, where, according to Mr. Ikeda, the point of control is less over the individuals and more over scientific institutes, research foundations, governments and industry, which are the generators of mass knowledge.

- **Global citizens:** Humanistic education also desires to

foster internationally minded individuals among children. This is possible by bringing them in contact with the spirit of leading literary figures of the world. The aim is to produce full-fledged global citizens who are sensitive to international issues on the environment, refugees, armaments and the quality of life. This is possible, according to Mr. Ikeda, only if educators play close attention to the small endeavors of their students. This builds trust, so vital to education. □

For further reading:

☞ Dayle M. Bethel, *Makiguchi the Value Creator* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1973).

☞ *Education for Creative Living: Ideas and Proposals of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum, ed. Dayle M. Bethel (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1989).

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An Educator and a World Citizen

DR. M. SATISH KUMAR, Cambridge, England



Cambridge University

Adam Woolfit/Corbis

THROUGH my research and in my role as an academic, I have been able to forge strong bonds of friendship all over the world. Through my writings I have been able to share with my friends and students the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. This sixteenth year of my practice has become a landmark for showing actual proof in my life.

In 1997, I secured the prestigious Commonwealth Academic Award to Cambridge University. I was also recently elected to a Visiting Fellowship at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University, for another year to pursue my research. I became the first geographer from India to get this recognition. All of this has

come about because I never compromised my mission as an educator and my responsibilities as a world citizen.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi used to say the purpose of education and human life are the same—to be happy. While science declares that everything is replaceable, poetry on the other hand insists that each and everything is unique. Indeed, my encounter with Nichiren Daishonin's life philosophy began when I read Daisaku Ikeda's humanistic poems and essays.

In one writing Mr. Ikeda declared that a great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of all humankind. With these words deeply etched in my heart, I began my Buddhist practice on

July 23, 1983. At that time I had embarked on my Ph.D. program at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

As a student my aspirations were limited. I was an atheist, but by this time I was yearning for a philosophy as an anchor. Through the writings of Mr. Makiguchi, I understood that the creation of value in life was fundamental not only to achieving happiness for oneself, but also for the sake of others. I had a dream, a blueprint, a painting in my heart of what I wanted to achieve. Part of this dream was realized when I finished my Ph.D. and secured a job at the premier Asian university, Jawaharlal Nehru University, in 1991. I taught, conducted research and was also responsible for much administration at this early stage in my career.



Couples ride along the River Cam during May Ball festivities at Cambridge University.

Michael S. Yamashita/Corbis

I never begrudged the efforts I made for the sake of others' happiness, and this benefited me, in turn, by rooting me firmly in reality. Working to enhance a sense of compassion and humanism became the focus of my practice. This was a difficult exercise since I have always had to deal with my ego and often suffered greatly from its ill effects, but by breaking through my lesser self, I find I am able to reach out to more people. I believed with my whole heart that prayers based on the Mystic Law would definitely be answered. Josei Toda said once: "Youth ceaselessly strive for self-improvement. You must cultivate dignity and intelligence in order to establish an even greater self." True to my conviction, working to support President Ikeda in the

kosen-rufu movement had already brought me instant recognition in every sphere of my life.

I felt greatest pride when my Ph.D. student Kalyan Das, also a practicing member, was awarded the President of India Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma Gold Medal Award for the most outstanding student at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. I learned to apply Mr. Makiguchi's firm belief in the capacity of an individual to transform his or her inner life. Along with my students, I, too, have learned to remove the passive, observer attitude in favor of a vision-based, hopeful future.

I now have a strong philosophy by which I can judge my actions and thereby create value and I feel I have achieved waves



Dr. M. Satish Kumar

of victory in my daily life. I am more confident and optimistic than ever before. I am appreciative of others' efforts and instinctively reach out to them. I am constantly goaded by a clear sense of purpose in my daily life. I am keen to become a source of hope and happiness to all I meet. □

SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, ALISO VIEJO

The educational philosophy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi as envisioned by Daisaku Ikeda finds its expression in Soka University of America. The school opened in Calabasas, California, in 1987. An undergraduate campus is being built on a 100-acre site in Aliso Viejo, California. It will accept its freshman class in September 2001.

What the world most requires now is the kind of education that fosters love for humankind, that develops character—that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace and empowers learners to contribute to and improve society.—*Daisaku Ikeda, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation lecture, New Delhi, India, October 21, 1997*

HELPING students learn how to create value in their lives, their communities and the world is a central tenet of the Soka Schools founded by Daisaku Ikeda. The Soka Schools, which range from kindergartens to the 8,800-student Soka University of Japan, have established a tradition of humanistic learning and scholarship where the focus is on each student's growth and development. *Soka* means "to create value."

The mission of Soka University of America includes pro-

viding students with an outstanding education, preparing them for the workplace and responsible, effective citizenship in the multicultural world of tomorrow. SUA Calabasas currently offers a graduate program in Second and Foreign Language Education. When the Aliso Viejo campus opens in 2001, it will offer an undergraduate program of Eastern and Western perspectives taught across a traditional liberal arts curriculum.

The uniqueness of the school's approach lies in the comparative teaching of international perspectives, the Core Curriculum, Learning Clusters and an emphasis on language, art and culture. The Core Curriculum is a series of four sequential courses taken by all undergraduate students, introducing them to the major issues of self and society. The Core courses will examine in comparative perspective such areas as the self; the roles that science, myth and religion play in formulating how we view the world; the complexities of human rights in a pluralistic society; and issues of war, peace and non-violence.

The Learning Clusters are courses in which students and faculty, working in small teams, research and propose solutions to socially significant themes. Acquiring the critical tools of investigation and analysis will be integral to the Learning Cluster experience. In addition, the pro-

gram will require three years of study of a foreign language and internship abroad.

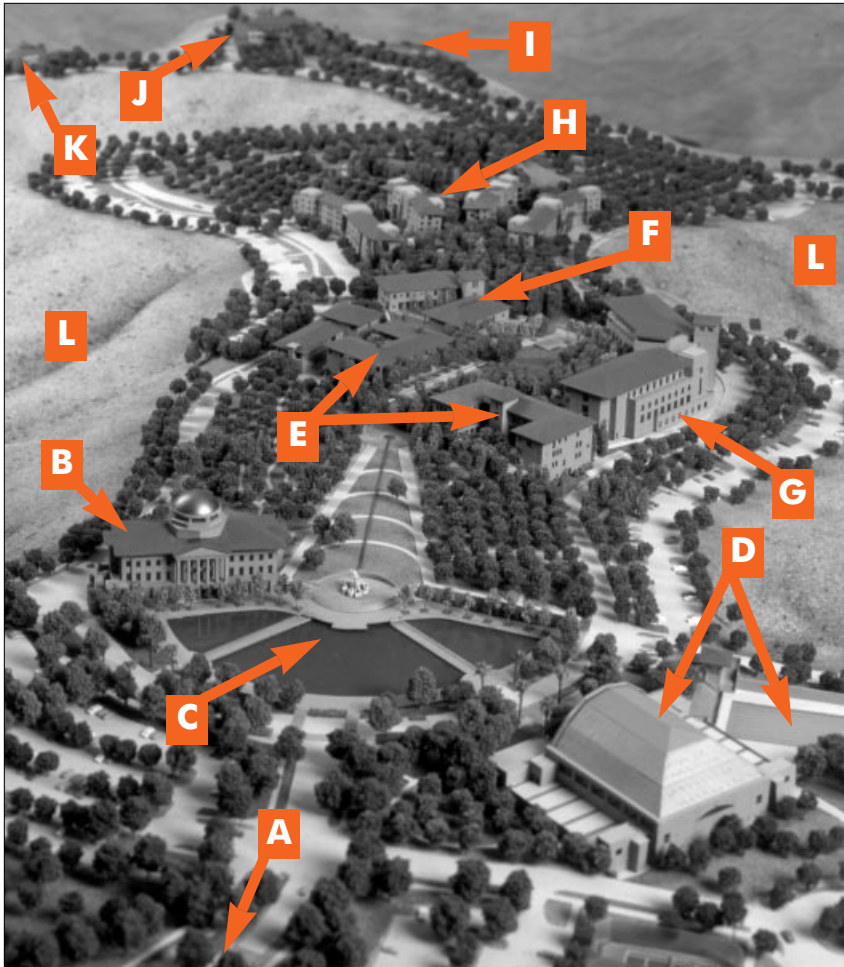
SUA, Aliso Viejo at a Glance

- An independent, selective, four-year liberal arts college opening September 2001
- Outstanding faculty dedicated to bringing out the best in students
- 12-to-1 student-faculty ratio
- Open to students of all nationalities and beliefs
- Comparative study of Eastern and Western perspectives across the curriculum
- Unique Core Curriculum and three years required study of second language (Chinese, Japanese and Spanish offered initially)
- Required semester of internship abroad
- Library with 225,000-volume capacity, reading rooms, rare book facility
- Computer access in classrooms, library, residence halls and outside gathering areas
- Beautiful 100-acre campus in Southern California two miles from the Pacific Ocean
- Campus surrounded by a 3,400-acre wilderness park

Who Can Attend?

The college will be open to highly motivated students of all nationalities and beliefs who have excelled in a range of academic courses, as well as other talents, skills and achievements. The successful applicant will:

- Typically be in the top fifteen



- A. Campus Entrance**
- B. Student and Community Services**
- C. Fountain and Lake**
- D. Recreation Center and Pool**
- E. Academic Buildings**
- F. Student Commons**
- G. Library**
- H. Residence Halls**
- I. Alumni Center**
- J. Athenaeum (Reception Center)**
- K. Guest Residence**
- L. Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park**

- percent of their senior class
- Take the SAT/ACT (scores will be one of many factors considered)
- If English is not your native language, take TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and possess strong English listening, comprehension and speaking skills
- Complete an essay in English regarding personal goals, interests and accomplishments

Sports and Activities

The Aliso Viejo campus expects to be an NCAA Division III com-

petitor and will apply for admission to the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. In time, the college expects to field men’s and women’s intercollegiate teams in basketball, soccer, volleyball, cross country/track and field, swimming, golf, tennis, water polo, baseball (men) and softball (women). Also, the community of Aliso Viejo offers excellent recreational opportunities.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Aliso Viejo expects tuition to be comparable to similar private liberal arts colleges in Southern

California. In addition to providing other sources of financial aid, the college is conducting an International Scholarship Drive to provide scholarships for students who would not be able to attend without financial assistance. □

For Information:

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Web: www.soka.edu
 (Watch construction on our SUA Web Cam!)
Write: Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo
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Discovering My Mission Through Creating Value

By Stephanie Tansey,
Chengdu, Sichuan, China



Real Education and the New School of Collaborative Learning

OVER the last six years, my life has taken off. What led to the rather astounding confidence I now have in myself? How did I go from someone who was accomplishing little to establishing a school in China based on value-creative ideas? The answer lies in studying and applying the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, developing my confidence in the Gohonzon and finding my mission—which can be traced to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. When

he died, I think he knew the world was going to be okay. He had helped to restore it.

When I arrived in Beijing in the summer of 1993, I had no intention of starting a school. I put my children, Alena (now 16), and David (now 14), into the existing international school, planning, myself, to study Chinese and do doctoral research. When I was invited to present a paper at a Neo-Confucian conference in Shanghai that October, I wrote on the relationship between the Buddhist teacher T'ien-t'ai and Neo-Confucianism.

I discovered in doing the preliminary research for the paper

that the Confucian “Doctrine of the Mean” (which became part of China’s educational system) had ideas very similar to the “Mean” in Greek philosophy and that both were related to the Buddhist Middle Way. I further realized that the Western Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” was similar to the Confucian Golden Rule, “Don’t do unto others that which you do not want done unto you.” And that both “golden rules” expressed ideas similar to the “practice for oneself, practice for others” we have been taught in our practice of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. It struck me that Eastern



Gate of Heavenly Peace, Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China.

and Western thought both tried to teach people to be true to themselves and to others—to be *real* human beings.

As an intercultural educator, I quickly perceived that there was much frustration and anger between the Chinese and the foreign community in Beijing. I wanted the Chinese and the Americans to become friends and understand one another. When an opportunity arose to promote a new international school, I saw my chance. It ultimately became a school based on my curriculum and method design. I wanted children to become wise citizens of the world, to know the

satisfaction of doing quality work and to pursue their happiness. The only meaningful way was for them to learn to create value for their lives—to become real people.

INTERNATIONAL schools tend to be isolated from the host community even if they try to teach its language and culture. (I had such an experience in Japan when I was growing up.) Despite the fact that my children were in China and studied Chinese every day in school, I was dismayed to see that they were neither using their Chinese nor liking the Chinese or Chinese culture.

I took two weeks away from China to design the school. First I went to Japan to research the Soka High School in Tokyo. I asked the principal how to develop self-motivated students. He said that he and President Ikeda had just discussed this and concluded that self-motivated learning sprang from the relationship between the teacher and the student—the teacher treasuring the student and the students asking themselves who they were, where they were going and why they were studying.

Next I met with educators from the excellent Sidwell Friends School of Washington,

I called it the New School of Collaborative Learning (NSCL) because we need the wisdom from all cultures and peoples to build a peaceful world.

D.C., which has a ten-year history of education exchange with China. Together we infused the Chinese language and culture throughout a quality curriculum of Sidwell's design and added the self-motivated learning ideas. Self-motivated learning became the essence of the school and the American and Chinese curricula became the spiritual and material elements. The school could not have come to exist without the profound relationship I was able to develop with my Chinese colleagues.

A school that promoted mutual respect between Americans and Chinese was a twenty-first century concept that was fundamental to Chinese culture. I learned this from President Ikeda's wonderful book, *The Human Revolution of China*, which he wrote in 1974 after his first visit to that country. The Chinese have little trust of foreigners because of their long history of invasion and recent history of isolation. Most Americans try to understand China from a Western point of reference. Trust rarely comes into the picture.

Fortunately, one of my colleagues had a trusting relationship with a friend involved in the establishment of a high technology development zone called Shangdi, located in the northwest section of Beijing. His

friend grasped the educational importance of our school, and was willing to work to get it established. It is this relationship that has been at the foundation of the school, and without it, the school would not have survived the first year. I called it the New School of Collaborative Learning (NSCL) because we need the wisdom from all cultures and peoples to build a peaceful world.

PRACTICALLY speaking, we teach in both English and Chinese, using team teachers at every level. Both languages are used to teach math, science, social studies, music and art. We use three teaching strategies to develop self-motivated learners—active learning, the Chinese steady incremental and systemic approach, and the learner-centered method.

Our first year, 1994, was very rocky. We had twenty-six students and several teachers. Differences in culture, management styles and teaching methods and training were major obstacles. But every obstacle was turned into a building block of the school. By the end of the first year, I noticed a transformation in myself from someone with some good ideas into the head of a school and founder who was a confident, valuable human being.

The second year was also

hard. One teacher left at the beginning of the year and I had to help teach 6-year-old students; we also had deep problems on the Board of Trustees. By the end of the year, I felt burnt out. I realized a fundamental mistake, however, that I corrected with great success. I realized I was trying to teach how to be a real person. I realized no one can teach another how to be real. The great teachers are not teachers—they are guides. The Gohonzon has always been a guide to me. My practice of the Daishonin's Buddhism guided me through my victories and mistakes by enabling me to develop my wisdom. I don't have any of the credentials for starting a school, but I do have the wisdom I've developed through my Buddhist practice and the encouragement of my fellow SGI members.

So the next year, the faculty and I learned to be guides. We wanted the students to be in the driver's seat of their education. To be global citizens, we need to care for others as much as for ourselves. We have had some splendid results in the school. Parents feel that we are bringing out the best in their children; our math scores are extremely high; and we have done well on national standard tests. Students write papers on who they are, where they are



TOM NEBBIA/CORBIS

A man rides his geese and chickens to the market in Chengdu, Sichuan, China.

going and why they are studying. They are learning what it means to be real, to be self-reflective and have sparked their own human spirit.

The fourth year after coming to China, my family and I moved to Chengdu, Sichuan. Jon Zarkin, an American, is now at the helm of NSCL. He speaks Chinese fluently, truly understands our mission and is dedicated to steering the school in that direction.

This year will be my final year in China, so I am spending one week of every month up in Beijing training teachers how

to incorporate the “Makiguchi Method” of guiding students to create value. But already, the level of teaching and commitment to the school’s mission is so high I am thrilled.

NSCL is one of the models for the educational reform of China. We have made friends with officials at all levels—district, municipal and state—all who believe in the school. Both the Chinese and American educators know NSCL is a twenty-first century school concept. We are also winning the respect of the business community. In this way NSCL is succeeding in its

mission to become a bridge between cultures, as well as to nurture self-motivated learners.

My Mission

THANKS to my practice of Buddhism, I am the founder of an international bilingual school in China—a new concept in education. I have also created a global education program for Chinese students, and have just started work on establishing an international culture center in Chengdu, Sichuan. I could not have done any of these things if

When I see the students become conscious of their own potential, I know I am doing a good job at accomplishing my mission both as an educator and as a Buddhist.

I did not realize what my mission was. I discovered my mission by seeking for it—by studying President Ikeda, Makiguchi, Nichiren Daishonin and others to see how they discovered theirs.

I deeply wanted to contribute to world peace but was unable to find my niche. I was taught to use the Daishonin's writings to solve my problems, to believe in them. When I did this, all my problems changed—including a supposedly incurable disease, hypoglycemia, which I conquered through my practice of Buddhism.

In 1990, President Ikeda came to the United States and talked about being "on the open road," like Walt Whitman. I decided to go on the open road to my own mission and I have been on it ever since. A big breakthrough occurred through contemplating the following quote from Nichiren Daishonin: "There are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves. The difference lies solely in the good or evil of our minds.... While deluded, one is called a common mortal, but once enlightened, he is called a Buddha" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 4). This passage made me realize that my happiness (and I was really unhappy at the time) was right in front of me.

I realized my dissatisfaction

with my lack of direction lay in the fact that I didn't really believe I was going to realize my mission, or be in the great rhythm of kosen-rufu with the SGI. That was a lack of faith. I realized that the difference between suffering and joy is my state of life. If I completely believe in my potential, my ability to solve my problems, my ability to believe in the Gohonzon with absolute faith, then I can tap my Buddhahood.

IN January 1992, I decided to pursue a Ph.D. in education. In the same month, along with others, I founded "The Alliance for International Collaboration and Development" (now renamed as the Society for International Friendship and Understanding), which eventually became the parent non-profit educational corporation for NSCL.

I have accomplished a lot, suffered a lot, laughed a lot, been in agony a lot. But my joy is having found what I can do—my particular contribution to kosen-rufu—to help presidents Ikeda, Toda, Makiguchi and Nichiren Daishonin in this task. I am very happy educating—finding ways to express Buddhism and the world's wisdom so that students can understand and apply it in their own lives. It is

not Buddhism that I teach, since it is a school and not a religious center, but it is learning to live wisely. When I see the students become conscious of their own potential, I know I am doing a good job at accomplishing my mission both as an educator and as a Buddhist.

Each person needs to discover his or her mission. I think President Ikeda gives us a clue in his 1998 peace proposal where he says, quoting Umberto Eco, that the third millennium will be like "a constellation—a society based on respect for the value of cultural pluralism" (May 1998 *Living Buddhism*, p. 23). In the same way, each person's discovery of the mission only he or she can fulfill will bring into the night sky another brilliant star to add to the glorious night.

Only I can be in the driver's seat of my own enlightenment. I need to behave like a Buddha. A Buddha is very strict with herself and compassionate to others. I need to be growing continually myself if I want my teachers and students to be growing.

This is the real learning that is going on at NSCL and Chengdu. This is where the Gohonzon has guided me so far. President Ikeda is really the best living example of such a guide and I want to be as exem-

plary as he. He always says that we each have a mission only we can accomplish. NSCL is the mission that only I could accomplish. It gives me great joy to contribute concretely to kosen-rufu and do my part in helping President Ikeda create a renaissance.

Makiguchi and the Creation of Value

TSUNESABURO Makiguchi's book, *Education for Creative Living*, is truly profound. It is not just about teaching how to teach. It is also a concrete example of Buddhist humanism. In it he states: "A life without learning is a life groping in the dark. At the same time, learning divorced from life is empty theory. We must check our knowledge against our own experience, especially if we ourselves are not the source of the knowledge. Somewhere we must make the intuitive leap, shifting our eyes from scant details of immediate familiarity to a more comprehensive picture" (p. 68).

What is value? Makiguchi says: "Water in and of itself has no value. It often goes unregarded. Nonetheless, as soon as someone wants a drink of water, it has bearing. Then water is seen to possess the capacity to quench thirst, just as the person is able to be satisfied with water. At other times, water means nothing but disaster to people, as when a flood strikes. The value is not inherent in the subject (person) nor in the object (water) but is manifest in the attracting or repelling force between them" (Ibid., p. 72).

What does it mean to create value? We need first to assess our personal values correctly, we need self-awareness and other-awareness working in unison. This is the personal value of oneself as a whole engaged in the greater whole of society. Human living, Makiguchi explains, is conscious behavior. "The human personality is a whole entity that is unified for its purpose. The person is that union, that something, able to orchestrate various elements together into a space-time continuity we know as life..." (Ibid., p. 87). We must also awaken to consciousness of an underlying order and a commitment to a rule by law. Education is a key factor responsible for guiding human beings in developing this growing awareness and consciousness.

At the moment we realize that we possess this powerful consciousness, like a sunrise outshining the stars, "the focus of that consciousness driving our very being shifts from persons related to our own individual loss and gain to the natural order and social laws that work equally for all without favor or discrimination" (Ibid., p. 85).

We can then create value ourselves through creating benefit, good or beauty as part of life itself. "Mature core beliefs and a clear life purpose lead to a sense of mind-body unity—a harmony of part to part and whole to whole. The depth and degree of this unification in a given individual's life are the most important elements of personal character. Such a person is empowered to



Stephanie Tansey

create value. It is the task of education to provide guidance toward this end" (Ibid., p. 88).

President Ikeda said: "President Makiguchi defined the 'value of good' as benefiting society and maintained that this is also the *raison d'être* of religion. Social contribution is the fundamental spirit of the SGI. The dynamic pulse of kosen-rufu lies in our energetic efforts to contribute greatly to society and to expand our network of trust and friendship" (*SGI President Ikeda's Addresses in the United States*, pp. 116–17). As his disciple I believe it is my responsibility to affect others' lives as he does, to guide others to their own realization that they can create value. In this way I can show Mr. Makiguchi how much I appreciate his efforts on my behalf and that of my precious students. □

The Power of Faith, The Power of Dreams

By Emiko Rohde,
Davis, California,
as told to Geoff Rohde



GREGORY NAKASUJI

Sequoia Park Preschoolers Get a Head Start on Learning

As a child growing up in rural Japan, I knew that life must have more to offer than the poverty and small-mindedness all about me. From my earliest years, I was absolutely determined to create a better life for myself. Shortly after leaving the countryside for the big city, I joined the Soka Gakkai. Even at my first meeting, I sensed that here was the environment and the philosophy that would allow me to build a solid, happy life. Now, after thirty-seven years of passionate practice, my very first dream—a rock solid, happy life—has been thoroughly realized. No person, no obstacle, no situation can defeat me!

My second dream, that of leaving Japan and learning the real meaning of freedom and democracy took seventeen years to come true. When I started practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I was poor, under-educated and without direction. Yet I boldly asked a leader how to realize my dream of going to America. He responded by saying: "Yes, without a doubt you can do it. Stick with the Gakkai. Practice hard. And you will definitely realize your dream." I had no idea exactly how this might ever become possible, but with total confidence in this wonderful practice, I poured my heart into every activity.

Eventually, I realized that I needed to establish a career, a mission in society. What could I do? In what field could I con-

tribute? In the mid-'70s, while reading of SGI President Ikeda's travels to France, I saw a picture of him encouraging a young child. This wonderful, heart-to-heart exchange between Mr. Ikeda and a little French boy touched me deeply and changed the course of my life. From that moment on, I was determined to become an educator. How, where and when this might occur were "minor details" to be worked out over time through prayer and effort. Even though my new mission seemed truly unobtainable, my Buddhist practice and respect for President Ikeda's accomplishments with the Soka Schools gave me all the confidence I needed.

Meanwhile, I was so busy with activities as a young woman in Osaka that I had very little time to worry about mar-

riage. President Ikeda had always told us to put faith first and create the good fortune to attract the right person. I was confident in his advice and did not worry about remaining single well into my 30s. Other than my daily Buddhist activities, my three big goals of establishing a rock-solid life, of becoming an educator and leaving Japan were my top priorities.

In 1978, my years of prayer and effort paid off as I was invited to visit a friend in California. How shocked I was on the drive from the Sacramento airport to the small town of Davis—the sights, sounds and unique smell of farms brought back memories of my childhood. What had I gotten myself into? My fears quickly vanished as I made contact with the local SGI organization and began attending exciting discussion meetings. But in a totally unexpected development, the young Davis District chief found me as attractive as I found him. This year we celebrate our twentieth wedding anniversary.

Despite realizing two major goals and marriage, too, I had not yet established myself as an educator. To this end, and to improve my English, I enrolled at Sacramento City College and graduated less than three years later with an A.A. degree in early childhood education. Those years of long days, long nights and very little sleep were difficult, but now they are a treasured memory. I'm truly grateful that America offers such rich educational opportunities for immigrants or late-bloomers like me.



For the next eight years, I worked as a teacher at local preschools and day-care centers. It was not easy. At times it was the school management itself that created unnecessary problems. Often I told myself: "That's not right! I could do a better job as director." Over time, a powerful urge to establish my own preschool developed. I wanted to demonstrate how the power of Buddhism and "applied humanism" could transform early learning. I was also determined to prove to President Ikeda just how much I had learned during my years of practice. Once again, exactly how this might happen were "minor details" to be worked out through prayer so strong "as if to draw water from dry sand or set fire to wet tinder."

Starting in 1988, my husband and I visited many preschools for sale. Most were too far away in Sacramento and none seemed "just right." To complicate matters, we had very little money for a down

payment and initial operating expenses. We also had none of the business experience a responsible bank would require for a loan. What else could I do but chant many hours for weeks, months and even years to realize my impossible dream? It's hard to describe the intensity of my prayers or the painful ordeal of human revolution I went through. Over and over I chanted passionately to subdue my cowardly tendencies, my anger and my lack of confidence. My continuous campaign to chant as much as I could each day solidified my resolve to the point that I began to identify with Nichiren Daishonin's closest disciples.

After so much chanting, guidance from my seniors and study of the Daishonin's writings, I understood why the Daishonin demanded support from Bodhisattva Hachiman on the way to Tatsunokuchi or the god of the moon while at Ichi. I, too, began demanding answers in my prayers: "Gohonzon, show me



what I must change within myself to achieve victory! Show me what strategy to follow in society to realize my dreams.”

One day my oldest sister told me that she might be able to help me start the preschool. This unexpected news only deepened my resolve to succeed. We tried, but failed, to buy a plot of vacant land in downtown Sacramento, near its many State Office buildings. We next called upon our city’s Director of Children’s Services. She mentioned that a nearby facility might soon be on the market. Five months later, we bought that property. Not only did my sister provide much of the down payment, but the seller

was eager to carry the financing and help us avoid a bank loan.

On April 15, 1991, we became proud owners of an empty preschool. In what must be a record, we were issued a Child Care Center License by the State of California after only six weeks of vigorous work and inspired prayer. Sequoia Park Preschool was now open and could enroll children! My career as a professional educator began.

Caring for children proved easy compared to the many unexpected complications of running a business. Finding employees, navigating the complexities of labor law and government regulations, con-

vincing parents to entrust their child to a new, unproven preschool—it’s been much more difficult than I ever imagined when I was “just a teacher.” But despite all the difficulties, we’ve overcome each one, worked very hard and operated in the black every month for the past seven years.

Even while working so hard to make my preschool a success, I’ve not cut back on my practice of Buddhism in the slightest. Every week I make the time to encourage members in Sacramento, in Stockton, and even as far away as San Francisco. When I begin to complain that my life is too hard, I reinvigorate myself by

Developing Social Skills—From Sequoia Park Preschool Parent’s Handbook

LEARNING to live happily within the constraints of society’s formal and informal rules (laws, customs, and manners) is a big part of social development and successfully “growing up.” For this reason, no matter what activity your child is engaged in, be it playing with others, painting a masterpiece, or building a house of blocks, we will always be helping him/her learn how to:

- Be friends; to develop trust, patience, kindness, and a desire to help.
- Take pride in his/her accomplishments and appreciate those of others.
- Behave with common courtesy and respect the property of others.
- Be responsible, follow directions, and clean up after him/herself.

Socialization starts soon after birth and continues through the teen-age years. The preschool years, however, are especially important since this is the period in which inter- and intra-personal skills are most effectively learned. Children who arrive in kindergarten with little self-control or underdeveloped social skills will be much more “behind” than children who haven’t learned to read. We believe strongly that after assuring your child’s safety and happiness, helping him/her learn how to get along with others and how to behave in groups (especially in a school-like setting) are the most important responsibilities we have to you, the parent(s), to your child, and to society. By providing this assistance to your precious child, we will contribute greatly to his/her suc-



GREGORY MAKASILI

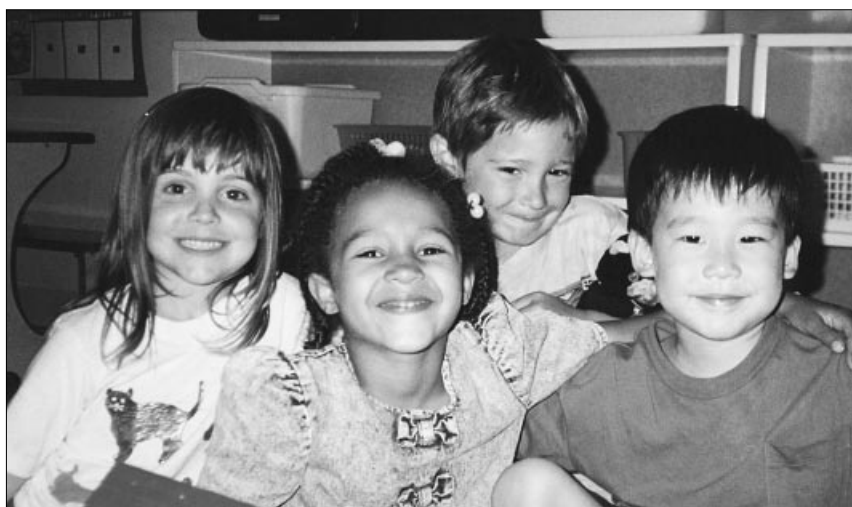
cess not only in school, but in life itself! For all these reasons our program is not an unstructured free-for-all, where “kids can be kids.” Such an approach does NOT help children learn interpersonal skills, but rather postpones these vital lessons until later in life when behavior becomes [much] more difficult to change. On the other hand, excessive control is also ineffective. Constantly correcting or chastising a child for every misstep, no matter how minor, makes it difficult for a child to develop self-control. Too much strictness creates a fearful environment that robs a child of self-confidence and discourages the adventure and happy joy of discovery that is the best part of growing up. Therefore, we seek a healthy middle ground between these two extremes at Sequoia Park Preschool. With patience, love, and consistency, we convey not only the standards of good behavior, but also the important principles which underlie the rules, e.g., consideration of others. We do our utmost to help every child develop impulse control, empathy, and self-esteem. □

reflecting on the amazing efforts and accomplishments of President Ikeda. In fact, the very name we selected, Sequoia Park Preschool, was inspired by his 1990 speech about California’s giant sequoia trees:

Incidentally, the [giant] sequoia trees here in California are very famous. Some of them grow as high as 130 meters and their stumps can reportedly hold over forty people; some of these trees also live more than 3,000

years. Even such giant redwoods sprout from a single tiny seed. One seed contains unlimited potential. (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 64)

Here is how we captured



COURTESY SEQUOIA PARK PRESCHOOL

President Ikeda's vision in our preschool's philosophy: "The early childhood years are the foundation of life. While that foundation is seldom visible after we grow up, what (and how) we learn before the age of 6 will influence our lives forever. Sequoia Park Preschool will strive to help each child build a strong foundation of self-esteem, character and competence. The Giant Sequoia, after which our school is named, is the largest living thing. It is massive, strongly rooted, drought-, disease-, and fire-resistant. It lives for thousands of years and inspires all who see it. Yet it grows from a very tiny seed. Sequoia Park Preschool is dedicated to the principle that every child has the potential to grow into a magnificent human being who inspires others, triumphs over adversity, contributes greatly to society, and lives a long, happy, fulfilling life."

The one phrase that best describes our day-to-day program is "well-balanced" since we strive to nurture all aspects of a young child. Building emo-

tional intelligence is very important at this age. But so is learning to enjoy learning, making and being friends, and developing both fine and gross motor skills.

In 1997, readers of our local newspaper voted us "Best Preschool" in Yolo County. This honor is deeply satisfying, as it is recognition of my success in creating the best possible learning environment for the young children of Davis. As grateful winners say on Oscar night, "This award would not have been possible without the tremendous support and encouragement from many others." In that spirit, I'd like to express my heartfelt appreciation to:

- President Ikeda and the many SGI leaders here and in Japan who have taught me so well how to manifest the power of faith and practice.
- My extended family in Japan. About ten years ago, shortly after my brother-in-law died, his 35-year-old daughter was diagnosed with stomach cancer. As this vivacious young woman lay

dying, what was she most eager to talk about? Not the great memories of our past three decades, but how she and her mother could help finance my preschool! She insisted on devoting her remaining days to the achievement of my dreams. When others have literally given their life to help you, how can you ever let them down?

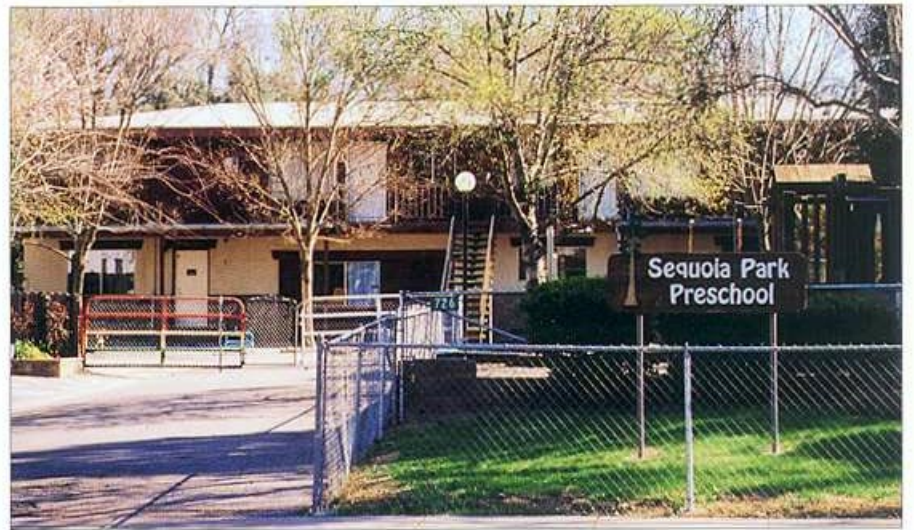
- My family in America. My husband and his mother have provided indispensable help. Geoff built most of our preschool furniture and still repairs the plumbing, processes the payroll and writes correspondence for my signature. My dear mother-in-law filled in as an occasional substitute during our early years. More recently, she has taken it upon herself to prepare hot meals for us. What a delight to enjoy her excellent, international cuisine after a fourteen hour day!

- The teachers, children and parents of Sequoia Park Preschool. How lucky I am to have such dedicated support. In a field famous for rapid turnover, my teachers have stayed with me for years and contributed their unique skills, talent and enthusiasm for teaching young children.

I have proven especially to myself what the power of faith and practice can accomplish when it is animated by a great wish and inspired dream. I believe in the depths of my life that every individual has equal or greater ability to win whatever race he or she may choose to run and enjoy the deep satisfaction of victory. □

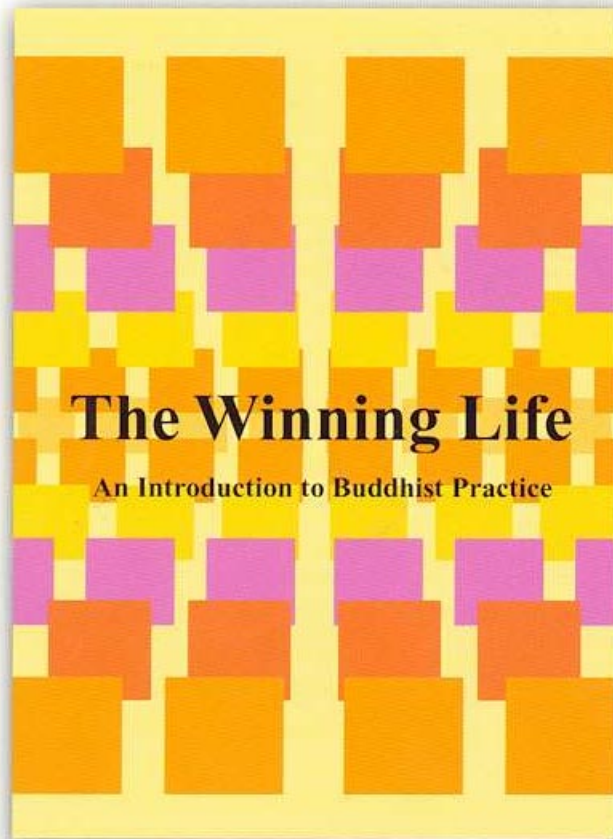


“Sequoia Park Preschool is dedicated to the principle that every child has the potential to grow into a magnificent human being.”



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FEATURE: SCHOOLS BASED ON MAKIGUCHI'S IDEALS

MAKIGUCHI MEMORIAL HALL



TRICOLOR SGI flags wave triumphantly in front of the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall. The stately eight-story building emerges from a hilly area in Hachioji, a suburb of Tokyo, near the campus of Soka University. Officially opened on October 24, 1993, the building honors the founder of the Soka Gakkai, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. The hall was built to perpetuate his memory and thus eternalize his ideals and achievements for humanistic education

and peace.

Clarifying the fundamental purpose and intent behind the Makiguchi Memorial Hall in the opening ceremonial address, SGI President Ikeda stated: "It is a castle fostering those who will fight for the Soka Gakkai and a place where they may come together. This hall is a gathering place for those who selflessly dedicate their lives to spreading the Law," just as Nichiren Daishonin, Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda did.