

living BUDDHISM

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



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FROM THE EDITOR

THE whole world is gearing up for the new millennium, and we in the SGI-USA Publications office are no different. Embracing the inevitable changes that life continually offers, I am confident that we each will have a personal future that is abundant with ever-increasing joy and fulfillment.

As this year comes to a close, a dear colleague is taking over the helm of *Living Buddhism* as managing editor—Jeff Kriger, an SGI-USA Vice Study Department leader and long-time staff translator. As for myself, after two tremendous years with the magazine, I am heeding my “call to adventure” and taking on the job of managing editor of the *World Tribune*, our organization’s weekly newspaper. Before editing *Living Buddhism*, I had been on the *World Tribune* staff for more than two decades. I can’t thank enough all the writers, proofreaders, artists and photographers who helped bring *Living Buddhism* to fruition each month.



Marlea Welton

In this issue, in addition to our regular features, Marlea Welton contributed her essay on the power of dialogue (p. 6), explaining that when we engage in dialogue, we embark on a journey between ourselves and others that is life-changing for all. Curt Young delves into this theme as he writes about a peace journalism course held at England’s Taplow Court (p. 12). And Denise Snaer skillfully outlines the journey of a hero (as we each are) in “The Call to Adventure” (p. 28).

Great goals are always wonderful motivators and effective spiritual tools. So together with all our readers, I greet 1999 with new hopes and dreams to create a future full of opportunities for inner and outer exploration and transformation.

—MARGIE HALL, Managing Editor



Curt Young



Denise Snaer

SGI-USA Study Department Curriculum

“WE study Buddhism in order to live vibrantly and with eternal hope,” President Ikeda recently commented. With this purpose firmly in mind, we present on the following page the SGI-USA Study Curriculum through the year 2001.

The Entrance-level exam is open to all SGI-USA members who do not have a study department position. Passing the Entrance-level

exam qualifies them to take the Elementary-level exam. If they pass that exam then they qualify to take the next level, and so on. Those who fail an exam may take it again the next time it is held. Regions will schedule study meetings to prepare for each exam and the *World Tribune* will publish sample questions prior to each exam to aid in preparation.

Exam questions will be derived from the material on the pages listed.

continued next page

ENTRANCE-LEVEL

Entrance level exams will be held yearly in the spring based on the following material:

**1. SGI-USA Study Program
Entrance-Level Textbook**

- “On Attaining Buddhahood” (pp. 6–12; 20–29)
- “The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon” (pp. 32–43; 47–52)

**2. Learning From the Goshō: The
Eternal Teachings of Nichiren
Daishonin**

- “Happiness in This World” (pp. 223–246 — these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*)

3. The Life of Nichiren Daishonin

- Nichiren’s Daishonin’s life (pp. 11–18; 56–78; 83–115 — these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*)

**4. Questions and Answers on the
Temple Issue (pamphlet)**

- Introduction; Question No. 2; Question No. 4 (pp. 4–6; 9–10; 13–16 — these pages were reprinted in the December 1997 issue of *Living Buddhism*)

ELEMENTARY-LEVEL

The next Elementary-level exam to be held during the current curriculum program will be in the fall of 2000 based on the following material:

**1. SGI-USA Study Program
Elementary-Level Textbook**

- “Letter to the Brothers” (pp.

6–13; 22–5; 31–51; 57–61; 67–74; 80–84; 89–104)

- “The Person and the Law” (pp. 107–127)
- Ichinen Sanzen (pp. 128–160)

**2. Learning From the Goshō: The
Eternal Teachings of Nichiren
Daishonin**

- “One Essential Phrase I & II” (pp. 73–94)

**3. Vol. 1 of Lectures on the
“Expedient Means” and “Life Span”
Chapters of the Lotus Sutra**

- The “Expedient Means” Chapter. (pp. 5–43; 53–83; 133–140)

**4. Questions and Answers on the
Temple Issue (pamphlet)**

- The entire pamphlet.

INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL

The next Intermediate-level exam to be held during the current curriculum program will be in the fall of 1999 based on the following material:

**1. SGI-USA Study Program
Intermediate-Level Textbook**

- “Risshō Ankoku Ron” (pp. 75–136)

**2. Learning From the Goshō: The
Eternal Teachings of Nichiren
Daishonin**

- “The Opening of the Eyes, I & II” (pp. 49–72)

**3. Vols. 2 and 3 of Lectures on the
“Expedient Means” and “Life Span”
Chapters of the Lotus Sutra:**

- The “Life Span” Chapter
Vol. 2: Chapters 16–20;
Vol. 3: Chapters 28–30, 36–40,
42, 45.

**4. Questions and Answers on the
Temple Issue (pamphlet)**

- The entire pamphlet.

ADVANCED-LEVEL

The next Advanced-level exam to be held during the current curriculum program will be in the fall of 2001 based on the following material:

1. Selected Lectures on the Goshō

- “The True Entity of Life” (pp. 3–24; 30–38; 58–70; 87–89)
- “Heritage of the Ultimate Law” (pp. 95–109; 121–123; 150–155; 169–172; 192–195)
- “The True Object of Worship” (pp. 203–223; 240–281)

**2. “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra”
Series**

- The specific sections for the exam will be decided in the future. (Please begin studying the series, which began in the April 1995 *Seikyo Times* and continues in *Living Buddhism*.)

**3. Questions and Answers on the
Temple Issue (pamphlet)**

- The entire pamphlet.

Study Curriculum Exams

1994 Oct.: Entrance-level Exam
1995 Oct.: Intermediate-level Exam
1996 April: Advanced-level Exam
1997 April: Entrance-level Exam
1998 April: Entrance-level Exam
Oct.: Elementary-level Exam
1999 Spring: Entrance-level Exam
Fall: Intermediate-level Exam
2000 Spring: Entrance-level Exam
Fall: Elementary-level Exam
2001 Spring: Entrance-level Exam
Fall: Advanced-level Exam

A TRADITION OF DIALOGUE

THIS month we turn to the subject of dialogue, which lies at the very heart of Buddhism. Kumarajiva (344–409), widely known as the most outstanding translator of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese, completed an unexcelled translation of the Lotus Sutra and rendered the sutra's title and essence as Myohorenge-kyo. How did Kumarajiva accomplish this task? He engaged a great number of people in dialogue, patiently answering question after question about the meaning of each word or phrase of the sutra. Regarding this, SGI President Ikeda writes:

One would think he had devoted decades to these difficult translations, confined to his study with nothing but dictionaries around him, but that was

Dialogue is more than simple discussion or the assertion of our opinions. Rather, it is an exchange of ideas in pursuit of truth and knowledge.

not the way he worked. He worked with the people, acutely sensing their innermost feelings as he carried on discussions about Buddhism with them. His translation of the Lotus Sutra was the fruit of this broad and sensitive approach. I am convinced this is why Kumarajiva was able to produce such a smooth and still accurate rendition of the sutra's original meaning. No matter how important or valuable the teachings of Buddhism may be, if they cannot be correctly understood,

they will never become part of the lives of the people. Philosophy's true value can only shine through communication between people and in their daily experience [Kumarajiva] devoted himself to dialogue with the people, always remaining among them. (*Selected Lectures on the Goshō*, pp. 14–15)

IN reading this, I realize that dialogue is more than simple discussion or the assertion of our opinions in order to convince others of our views. Rather, it is an exchange of ideas in pursuit of truth and knowledge of our world and, consequently, of our own lives. It is a journey, a process of discovery that leads to a higher level of understanding between the participants.

Also when I talk with people, I try to keep in mind that listening comes first. Listening is an integral part of any good dialogue. While the format of this monthly column, for example, necessitates the presentation of my opinions, these are opinions I have formulated after listening to members' voices. I realize this commentary is an opportunity to respond to some of the questions of the many people I meet. My sincere desire is to respect their viewpoints, rather than feel that I have to *teach* them something. I believe this elevates knowledge and promotes learning. Through dialogue I want to walk away having gained something; at the very least, I try to see another point of view. We can always gain from others. Because of this, I am convinced that dialogue is the tool with which we will build the future.

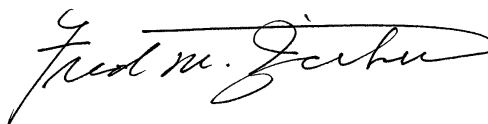
It is certainly easier to assemble in large auditoriums with hundreds of people to hear speeches. Such gatherings can, of course, be helpful in delivering a specific message, information or encouragement to sizable crowds at one time. And although it is often an important and necessary means of communication in a large and complex organization, given a choice, I'd much rather sit down and talk with others one to one. That is how trust is built. That's where the conversations that make lifelong memories take place. In that sense, dialogue is a powerful tool for peace and spreading the principles of Buddhism throughout the world. Both Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin relentlessly engaged in it. President Ikeda writes:

The truth is that Shakyamuni taught in the form of encouragement to poverty-stricken people—to an old woman afflicted with illness, as if he felt her pain as his own and carried her on his back, or giving warm encouragement to a youth gripped by deep spiritual suffering. All his sutras were the natural result of his lifelong devotion to the people, the accumulation of every compassionate word he spoke to alleviate the pain of people oppressed by the cruel caste system. That is why the sutras consist of questions and answers throughout. (Ibid., p. 16)

AND Nichiren Daishonin carried on with this very spirit. His many writings crystallize his continuous struggle to save the people. He fought for the people, among the people, talking with them and responding to their questions and concerns by writing them hundreds of individual letters of encouragement.

This is the eternal spirit of Buddhism. This is the heart of our SGI movement. When thinking about the efforts of our predecessors of Buddhism, as we continue in their stead, we can imagine what great accomplishments are possible through open dialogue. It is a tradition I earnestly hope never ends.

Finally, with this being the last issue of the year, I want to thank the many SGI-USA members who have worked so hard to contribute to *Living Buddhism* in 1998—all of you who subscribe to it, and all those who submitted articles, poetry, photographs and art. And of course all the staff, thank you from the bottom of my heart. I hope you all enjoy a safe and joyful holiday season and welcome an exciting new year, 1999!



Fred M. Zaitso
SGI-USA General Director

THE POWER OF DIALOGUE

BY MARLEA WELTON,
LOS ANGELES



**My practice of faith
means to create
the mutual understanding
between human beings
that is the fulfillment of truth
and amity.
All this is ultimately the product
of dialogue,
and again dialogue.
(Daisaku Ikeda)¹**

THE power of dialogue is immense. Since Shakyamuni's time, it has been the primary way in which Buddhism has spread. And today, with the individual seemingly dwarfed by mass media and technology, it is still the single most effective communication skill for creating a lasting impact on human lives.

The word *dialogue* comes from the Greek *dialogos*, the philosophical discussions between Socrates and Plato. Both philosophers considered dialogue as an ideal, as something not readily attainable. The

Greek word *dia* means through. *Logos* has the multiple meanings of language, count, tell, say, speak, definition and reason. Dialogue literally means to convey something through words and language. But it has always been more than just the communication of words. In many ways, it has been seen as the sharing of self with another in a very profound context.

The format of the original dialogues was a face-to-face encounter between teacher (Socrates) and students (Plato, among others), between mentor and disciples. Since dialogue



began from a theoretical basis, it has always been open to reinterpretation, and “consequently, no description is able to pin down its ultimate meaning.”

Since Plato’s use of it in the fourth century B.C.E., dialogue has been an actively discussed topic in many disciplines. There are current interpretations to be found in anthropology, especially in the school known as post-modern linguistics. This trans-disciplinary field is populated by physicists, linguists and philosophers who have concluded that an essential element of dialogue is the relationship between self

and other. Taken as such, dialogue could be viewed as the supreme act of a bodhisattva who is aware of dependent origination and the common relatedness of all humanity. Dependent origination is the Buddhist doctrine of the interdependence of all things. It means that all beings and phenomena in the universe exist or arise only by virtue of their relationship with one another. No one exists outside the influence of others; nothing arises of its own accord.

As a means of conveying ideas, dialogue has always been seen in relation to other modes of presentation. In Plato’s time, the effect of dialogue was contrasted to the impact of writing. In contemporary society, where the Internet, cell phones, e-mail, faxes and teleconferencing afford a variety of means by which we can instantly communicate, having a face-to-face talk with one human being may seem primitive and insignificant. But, I believe, precisely because of this overwhelming informational input, nothing is more powerful than dialogue.

Dialogue and Buddhism

HISTORICALLY, Shakyamuni lived around the fifth century B.C.E. Socrates and Plato lived during the fourth century B.C.E. You might almost say that Plato created a word that would help to explain Buddhism to the West, because Buddhism has spread almost exclusively through dialogue, through the contact of one human being to another. Viewed from a Buddhist perspective, dialogue is even more

than the Socratic ideal of an exchange of ideas; it is the sharing of one’s life with another. It is the expression of one’s entire being. When we engage in dialogue, we are embarking on a journey between self and other that changes our lives and the lives of others. We are learning from, by and about each other through this process.

In a collection of essays called *On Dialogue*,³ David Bohm, a physicist, says that “the picture or image that this derivation [from the Greek translation of *dialogos*] suggests is of a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding. It’s something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. It’s something creative. And this shared meaning is the “glue” or “cement” that holds people and societies together.⁴ If we utilize yet another metaphor and liken society to a ship and Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism to the ocean, we might say that this glue or cement only becomes strong when the ship is sailing on the steady ocean—our organization of faith.

To reiterate, dialogue is self and other, mentor and disciple. It is a process of creativity and discovery. Dialogue is human revolution and a process of human evolution as well. Evolution, unlike progress and development, is never predictable. When a child is born and develops, he or she becomes an adult—predictable. But evolution, like dialogue, is a process fraught with chaos

and excitement because we do not know where the journey will take us. The future of human evolution depends upon the process of enlightened dialogues—but that is a topic for another essay.

Because dialogue is the presentation of self, it is important that we share our best selves. Our quest for world peace is carried out by the seemingly simple act of talking calmly and patiently about Buddhism one on one.

THREE COMPONENTS OF DIALOGUE

THERE are three components of a true dialogue among human beings: physical presence, words and intent.

Physical Presence

BEING in the physical presence of another human being carries meaning and value not available through written or technological communication. The biggest plus is increased trust. Seeing how people react through their body language or hearing their voice enhances the overall effectiveness of communicating. It is now possible to transmit our voices across space through technological advances. Voices ultimately originate from our physical selves. And, as it says in the writings of Nichiren Daishonin, “The voice does the Buddha’s work” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 706). It is possible, for example, to have a dialogue over the telephone. However, the most effective dialogues occur in the physical presence of another

human being. Even on an instinctual level, being able to smell another can give us clues of what to expect. Have you ever noticed the first thing your pets do when they meet someone new? That person must pass the smell test. To them smell equals trust. Another advantage in meeting face to face in the trust department is eye contact. There is nothing that reveals as much about another as looking into that person’s eyes, which are often called the “windows of the soul.” All these factors make dialogue a physical moment.

Words

PRESIDENT Ikeda has said: “Why do I emphasize the importance of dialogue? Because I believe that dialogue and discussion are the main proof of one’s humanity. In other words, only when we are immersed in the ocean of language do we become truly human. In *Phaedo*, Plato astutely associates hatred of language (*misologos*) with hatred of man (*misanthropos*).”⁵ Of all the species on earth, only human beings have the gift of communicating through self-referential language. While other animals may be able to make sounds, we create meanings and convey these meanings through a variety of highly sophisticated systems known as languages. Edward Sapir, a linguist, has said that language is a “purely human non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotion and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.”⁶

Voluntarily producing symbols with wisdom is a further proof of our humanity. It is a measure of our wisdom when we use words in a way that creates value.

The process of dialogue is neutral. Although both the Socratic and Buddhist concepts are ideals, it is totally possible to manipulate, injure and slander another through dialogue. It is also possible to forever alter a relationship by refusing to engage in dialogue, testified by the 1991 incident in which the priesthood refused to engage in dialogue with the Soka Gakkai. Whether refusing to have dialogue, or whether deciding upon a positive or a negative dialogue, when we make any of these choices, it will become a life-changing moment. We need, therefore, to inform our choices and our words with wisdom.

Intent

WE commonly explain the impact of dialogue by speaking of what was “behind” the words. This is the intent, or the heart, of the people who are involved. A common term we hear is having a “heart-to-heart” dialogue, another way of expressing the sharing of one’s self or essence with another. In Buddhism, we might call the intent or heart the single-minded determination of the person engaged in the act. Whatever we call it, intent is the power behind dialogue.

What is at the heart of a dialogue is what will be conveyed. It only takes one person to initiate a dialogue. Someone once asked President Ikeda how he conducts



dialogues with such a wide variety of world figures, regardless of their country, political inclination or culture. He said that he begins his dialogue with the person before he ever meets them by chanting daimoku to the Go-honzon as if he were starting the dialogue. In addition, he tries to learn all that he can about the other person's life, ideas and accomplishments. By the time he meets the person, it is as if he were continuing a thought they had begun before. After their talk is over, he will chant daimoku again so that the person will understand the true intent of what he was trying to transmit.

An Intimate Encounter

A DIALOGUE is an intimate, personal encounter. A dialogue must have elements of intimacy if it is to be effective; we are touching the life of another. It is a personal experience that will remain with you, and it is an encounter in the sense that it is a life-changing experience.

When I began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism thirty years ago, Eastern religions were being introduced in the United States via the media. In particular, I remember the Beatles promoting Eastern mysticism and the Maharishi's med-

itation. But I found out about Buddhism from a friend. I had never heard of it from any available media source.

Soon after joining, I was able to hear President Ikeda give speeches in large auditoriums. On many occasions, he would actually apologize for having to speak to such a large number of people. He would preface his talk by saying that he wanted to be able to speak to us individually and even to hug us, but because of time constraints, he was unable to do so. So he asked us to imagine that we were in a coffee shop with him, talking across a table. And his voice seemed to reach me in that exact way, very quietly and as if he were looking into my eyes. I have always remembered that and thought this was the essence of Buddhism and why I loved practicing so much. It would have been easy to become depersonalized in the large auditorium or to feel anonymous by hearing about Buddhism on television—just one person in a lonely crowd. But that wasn't my experience at all, and I believe that President Ikeda was demonstrating the power of talking one on one.

In order to write this article, I had many dialogues with friends and family, in groups at meetings and at salons (a kind of discussion meeting around a topic), on buses and at home. In doing so, I remembered that Shakyamuni traveled to so many places in India teaching Buddhism that he wore out his shoes. In my case, I could easi-

ly drive places (although I did have to get new tires!), but I saw the value in going out of my way to meet with people.

It was the effort required in seeking out the human connection, even though I did do my usual solitary research, which made this one of the most pleasurable articles I've ever written. I've gained so much from the experiences with others that I feel I should recognize all my partners in dialogue as the co-authors of this article. It was truly a collaborative event.

A dialogue is an encounter—it is a life-changing moment. A friend of mine at work described it in this way, and I thought it also perfectly expresses how you feel when you've had a dialogue. We will remember these encounters even after we forget the words that were spoken.

WHAT A DIALOGUE IS AND ISN'T

True dialogue is never the exchange of readily available knowledge, but also active organization of knowledge which was not in the world before.⁷ (Eric Jantsch)

IN addition to refusing to engage in a dialogue, there are a number of attitudes that prevent the process from occurring. Some obvious ones are an unwillingness to listen to another's opinion, a hidden agenda, or an authoritarian attitude. There are also subtle variations of these glaring problems. David Bohm,⁸ a physicist, believes one of the most important attitudes to bring to dialogue is the ability to suspend assumptions.

This means not only being open to what another has to say, but also being able to examine your own interpretation (including prejudices and pre-conceived ideas) about what the other person is *trying* to say. This is not always easy, especially when you are having a dialogue where there are gender, ethnic or age differences. Being totally open to another's ideas, as well as to your own new understanding, requires tremendous effort and patience. In some sense, we can even liken true dialogue to the process of human revolution.

Hidden agendas don't work in dialogue because a dialogue has no fixed goal. Peter Senge, in *The Fifth Discipline*, explains that Bohm contrasts dialogue to discussion by saying that, unlike other modes of face-to-face communication (meetings, discussions, lectures), dialogues are trying to "access a larger 'pool of common meaning.'"⁹ Discussions, he says, are more like Ping-Pong matches where ideas are analyzed and dissected, but where the idea is to win someone over to your way of thinking. Of course, no one can make a hard and fast distinction between discussion and dialogue—both are natural aspects of human communication.

Nevertheless, authoritarian attitudes don't work well in dialogues. No one has all the right answers. Anyone trying to impose ideas upon someone else will stop the free flow of association that is characteristic of dialogue. Senge¹⁰ says:

Dialogue can occur only when a group of people see each

other as colleagues in mutual quest for deeper insight and clarity. Thinking of each other as colleagues is important because thought is participative. The conscious act of thinking of each other as colleagues contributes toward interacting as colleagues. This may sound simple, but it can make a profound difference.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF DIALOGUE

One's desperate *ichinen* (determination) is strong enough to move another's heart, no matter how stubborn it may be.¹¹

THE key to dialogue is accessing that pool of common meaning through collaborative learning. We can incorporate aspects of dialogue into every form of human communication. If we have the desire to reach another human being, we will want to acquire attributes that lead to effective dialogues: learning to listen, being flexible and open, suspending assumptions and treating others as colleagues.

The obvious Buddhist uses of dialogue arise in giving encouragement and at discussion meetings. Success of either of these two events depends upon the attitude of mutual understanding. But there are some not so obvious ways that we use dialogue in our everyday practice.

We might say that even chanting to the Gohonzon is a kind of dialogue between ourselves and the universe. Although we know the Gohonzon does not respond directly, the answer to

our prayers is often reflected in our environment or in a change of attitude, which is our internal environment. If, however, we do not suspend our assumptions about the “correct” answer to our prayers, we may ignore the solution and miss the wisdom of the Buddha, which the environment has provided.

Dialogue is also invaluable when we truly want to introduce others to Buddhism. To clearly prove the validity of Buddhism in this country, we have to start with trust. Trust evolves out of dialogue. Genuine understanding likewise comes from dialogue.

Again, it is not about imposing our will upon others. Someone with a superior or domineering attitude will probably not generate real trust or understanding.

Only when we reach another’s heart will that person understand what we are trying to say.

We also need to be aware, that the people we talk to might be in denial about their own suffering and its cause. They may lack any insight into the true nature of life. There is a parable in the Lotus Sutra where a physician offers excellent medicine to his children, who have accidentally consumed poison. Deluded by the poison, they mistrust him and refuse to take the medicine, which would cure them. His compassion for his children moves him to fake his own death in order to bring them to their senses.

By being open and flexible, by chanting daimoku with a compassionate prayer to reach our friends’ hearts and then engaging them in dialogue, we

create an atmosphere of collaborative learning. We can spark in others a spirit to learn more, while at the same time learning more about them, about ourselves and about life.

Dialogue Today

IN businesses and corporations, dialogue and team leadership have led the way in creating a more democratic work environment. Peter Seng’s book *The Fifth Discipline* is a blueprint for organizations aiming to incorporate more dialogue and collegiality into their decision-making.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, dialogues have played an important part in global affairs. We often associate the word with international summit conferences or meetings between diplomats. There is even a Global Dialogue Institute that specializes in teaching religious and government organizations how to conduct what they call “deep dialogue.”

Our own SGI president, Daisaku Ikeda, has conducted scores of such dialogues with leaders and scholars from around the world, and a number of these have been published in book form.

It Starts With One Person

PERHAPS the most important feature of dialogue is that anyone and everyone can do it. Dialogue all begins with you. It requires no special talent, and all that is needed is a desire to reach the heart of another and to know the heart of another.

As President Ikeda writes in the preface to his novel *The Human Revolution*: “A great human revolution in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation, and further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind....”

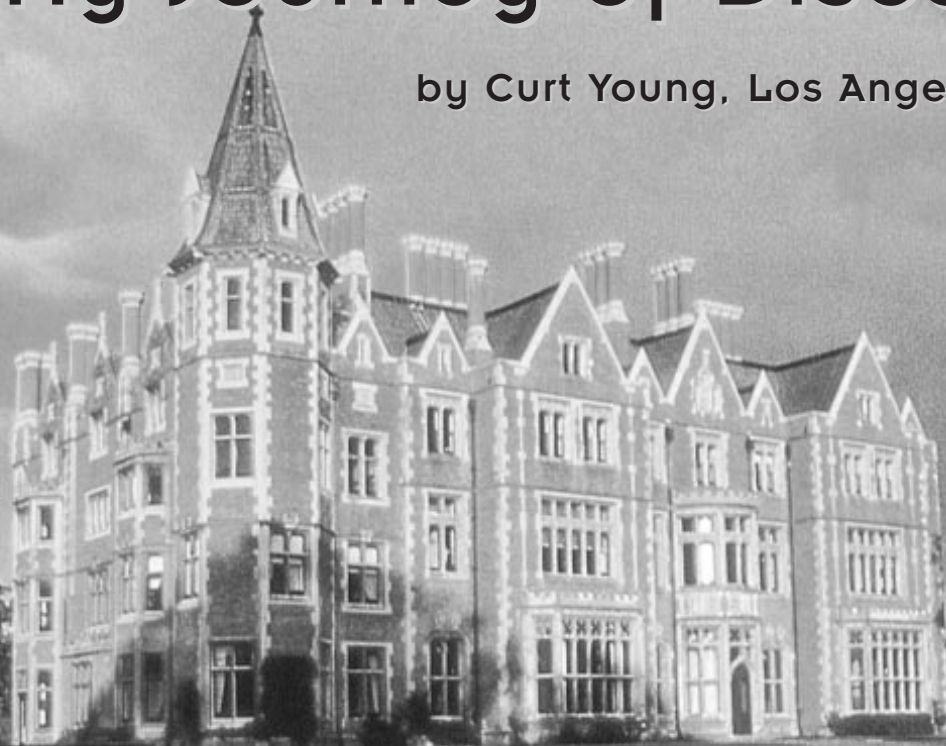
The power of dialogue is immense. One’s strong desire to reach the heart of another can change the destinies of the participants and society as a whole. Use it wisely. Use it often.

Marlea Welton has a bachelor of science degree from Northwestern University, and a master’s in anthropology from Purdue University. She has taught in colleges in Indiana and California. Marlea is past chairperson and acting secretary of the United Nations of L.A., an official SGI-USA association devoted to research and education about the United Nations.

1. January 2, 1998, *World Tribune*, p. 1.
2. Tullio Maranhao introduction in *The Interpretation of Dialogue*, p. 16, edited by Tullio Maranhao, Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
3. *On Dialogue* by David Bohm, edited by Lee Nichol; London and New York: Routledge Press; 1996 p. 6.
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5. *Buddhism in Action*, vol. V, 1991, p. 369.
6. Edward Sapir, *Language*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1921 — no page given in this citation.
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8. *op. cit.* p. 20.
9. Peter M. Senge, p. 240, citing David Bohm in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Doubleday/Currency: New York, London, Toronto; 1990.
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My Journey of Discovery

by Curt Young, Los Angeles



Taplow Court, England

PHILIP G. FINCH

ONE of the things I absolutely love about dialogue is what I discover in the process, about myself, about others, new ideas and fresh perspectives. It never fails, whether it is between myself and another or with a larger group. As I search for the words to express my thoughts about dialogue, I can imagine Socrates, Cephalus and the Sophist Thrasymachus going at it over a bowl of wine somewhere in ancient Greece. What came out of those dialogues has informed the Western mind until this day. As a student historian, dialogue, for me, is at the pinnacle of scholarly inquiry.

A couple of summers ago when my wife and I were in London, we visited Taplow Court where, among other delightful experiences, we

shared a lunch with Indra Adnan and her associate Annabel McGoldrick, both of the SGI-UK. That's when we learned that the first Peace Journalism Option Summer Course, an event sponsored jointly by SGI-UK, TRANSCEND Peace and Development Network and Amnesty International, was in the final stages of development. If we were to be in England another couple of weeks or so, we'd be able to attend. Unfortunately we couldn't, but accepted a kind invitation to attend the following year's course. My wife's schedule was such that she wouldn't be able to go, but she readily agreed that I should.

In the fifty-page booklet that was published after last year's course, I learned that not only had Professor Johan Galtung

played an active role along with Indra and Annabel in the success of the course, so had Jake Lynch, a correspondent for Britain's Sky News, the equivalent of Fox News here in America.

It was therefore with a great deal of anticipation that I attended the second Peace Journalism Option Course this past Labor Day weekend, a weekend of the most incredible dialogue I have experienced in quite awhile. There were forty-one of us from a dozen different countries at the SGI-UK's Taplow Court from September 4-7. Among us were journalists, media academics and students from Europe, Asia, Africa and the U.S. We divided our time between lectures, workshops and debate—debates that often extended late into the night over cocktails. We had come



(Left to right) Professor Johan Galtung, Dr. Jannie Botes, Danny Schechter and Sir Phillip Knightley on a panel addressing the question, "What are journalists for?"

from Ireland, South Africa, Costa Rica, Austria, Finland, Scotland, France, Turkey, Norway, Belgium, Macedonia, and three of us from the United States: Dr. Jannie Botes, a professor of journalism at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Virginia; Danny Schechter, author of *The More You Watch, The Less You Know*, and myself.

Other academics included Ninad Sheth with the department of politics at the University of Hull and Georgios Terzis with the Catholic University of Brussels; Gordon Adam with the International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting at Inverness; Cinthya Flores with the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica; Umit Ozturk of Amnesty International Journalists' Network in London; and of course Professor Johan Galtung of TRANSCEND Peace and Development Network, one of the founders of peace studies and the originator of the peace journalism concept.

Each day started with an

after-breakfast presentation and examination of some aspect of peace journalism. They were interactive and inevitably led to vigorous discussion and debate. We would then divide into groups of four and five to engage in a creative exercise allowing the participants to examine alternative journalistic strategies in the face of the voracious twenty-four-hour news cycle we all live with now.

This grand dialogue occurred in the intimate setting of a large sitting room full of cushy sofas and large chairs, a fireplace and an amazing view of the verdant English countryside from leaded glass windows that must have been hundreds of years old. Tea was served every afternoon and cocktails every evening. This was an idyllic setting for what was to be a rich and thought-provoking encounter.

THE first day's session began with a presentation of peace journalism and its meaning by Professor Johan Galtung, a co-sponsor of this event. He said: "In general

there seem to be two ways of looking at a conflict, the high road and the low road, depending on whether the focus is on the conflict and its peaceful transformation, or on the meta-conflict that comes after the root conflict, created by violence and war, and the question of who wins. Media events confuse the two; they talk about conflict when they mean violence. The low road, by far dominant in the media, tends to see a conflict as a battle and the battle as sports arena and gladiator circus. The parties, usually reduced to the number two, are combatants in a struggle to impose their goals.

"The high road," Galtung continued, "the road of peace journalism, would focus on conflict transformation.... As people, groups, countries and groups of countries seem to stand in each other's way (that is what conflict is about), there is a clear danger of violence. But in conflict, there is also a clear opportunity for human progress, using the conflict to find new ways, being imaginative, creative, transforming the conflict so that the opportunities take the upper hand—without violence." He said: "The first victim in a war is not truth, that is only the second victim. The first victim is, of course, peace."

Participants of the Peace
Journalism Option Summer
Course at Taplow Court.

The more I listened and participated, the more I realized how deeply concerned these people were with the state of media in today's world. We discussed the importance of looking at other than mainstream sources. The journalists among us shared examples of what they called their "script driven" cultures, where one is short of time and knows nothing. One example many in attendance were familiar with had to do with stories in the British papers following an accident at a soccer stadium in which many were injured and killed. I found the story in a critical book that was recommended to me—*Hidden Agenda*, by John Pilger, a highly regarded award-winning journalist.

Pilger writes:

The ancient turnstiles became a bottleneck as 5,000 Liverpool fans sought to gain entrance before the kickoff. When the police eventually opened the main gates, instead of directing the fans to the open terraces they sent them into the crowded pen. Eddie and Adam (a father and his 14-year-old son) were crushed in each other's arms. Adam was one of ninety-six fans who died.

AS I read this, I suddenly remembered the PBS television documentary I had seen about the incident and how it was reported that the main reason behind this disaster was



the failure of police control. But here's how journalism, with a scarcity of facts, a deadline and a bias, enflamed passions with untruthful reporting.

According to Pilger:

By the following Tuesday, the editor of the *Sun*, Kelvin MacKenzie, had convinced himself that the tragedy had been caused by Liverpool "football hooligans." ... [He wrote a story that] described how "drunken Liverpool fans viciously attacked rescue workers as they tried to revive victims" and "police officers, firemen and ambulance crews were punched, kicked and urinated upon" ... A Tory MP, whose sole source was the police, was quoted.

None of it was true. There was no hooliganism. People were vomiting and behaving strangely because they had been crushed and traumatized. Others died because senior police officers failed to understand that the fans inside the pen were fighting for their lives, not trying to "invade"

the pitch. The TRUTH was the opposite.¹

That evening we had an informal question-and-answer session with Sir Phillip Knightley, world-renowned author of the classic history *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist and Myth-Maker from Crimea to Vietnam*. Sir Phillip spoke of how war correspondents unwittingly become voluntary participants in the wars they cover. He said they tend to choose sides and push their side's agendas, warning us that it would be naive to think otherwise. He said, "We must maintain skepticism about what we read."

On a subsequent day, we had a morning session led by independent producer and film maker Sebastian Cody, creator of the precedent-setting British talk show *Afterdark*. Imagine a talk show with no recognized host that is allowed to continue until the dialogue has exhausted itself. A facilitator rather than a media star at the helm. It was modeled after an Austrian show, *Klutz Vie*. Immensely

popular with the viewing public, *Klutz Vie* had a working method and a set of very clear ground rules. There was no title sequence. The participants arrive just as the show is to go on air. The same format was adopted by *Afterdark*.

THERE is no makeup. The guests are allowed to sit where they want. Rather than tethering people with those microphones you see sticking out of someone's shirt, a boom mike is used so they can move around, get up or leave if they want. The show was not taped, but live. It ran from 1987 until 1991. It was taken off the air, not

do when photography made their work redundant? That afternoon, we broke up into small groups where each group was given a current news story to examine. Based upon the information in the stories, and our knowledge of current affairs, we set about reconstructing the stories. We stripped them of sensationalistic jargon, bias and demonizing expressions such as "Arab Terrorists" (which paints an entire civilization as demons, rather than human beings).

Once done, we represented the stories where we looked at other sides and supplied historical perspective. One of the

she brings to her work. Her job often has her going places alone, sometimes into dangerous situations, with a hidden camera in her hand bag, at times posing as a tourist or a minor official, to tell the world of the horrors people are facing from oppressive governments.

And the dialogue continues. I've received a birthday message from Macedonia, an invitation to a Turkish wedding, as well as an invitation to participate in a similar experiment at the United Nations University in Costa Rica. One recent Sunday I was driving to a discussion meeting, listening to one of my local Public Radio stations when I

In conflict, there is also a clear opportunity for human progress, using the conflict to find new ways, being imaginative, creative, transforming the conflict so that the opportunities take the upper hand—without violence. The first victim in a war is not truth, that is only the second victim. The first victim is, of course, peace.

because it wasn't enormously popular with the viewing public, but because the network managers couldn't control the output. Everyone who appeared was on an equal footing.

Cody's presentation led to a lively discussion about the media as an instrument of change. How to connect with the agents of change outside of the official agenda-making mechanisms. How too often vested interest are described as public interests. What must we do, we asked ourselves, to encourage our audiences to question perspective? What, someone asked, did realist painters

news outlets provided us with a camera and sound equipment. With the help of Jake Lynch, who does this sort of thing for a living, we recorded "two-ways," those events we see on local TV where an anchorperson in the studio is asking questions of a reporter on location. When we played the results over tea later that afternoon, it was amazing how much more information and balance we were able to provide.

The award-winning BBC news correspondent Sue Lloyd-Roberts talked about her experiences as a woman in journalism and the unique perspective

heard the familiar voice of Danny Schechter. He was being interviewed about the Peace Journalism Option.

I couldn't help but smile as I could feel the energy that Indra Adnan and Annabel McGoldrick expended to have this event happen at Taplow Court spread out, across the oceans, around the world, and find its way to a radio station in Southern California. I smiled because I know deep in my heart that this is only the beginning. □

1. John Pilger, *Hidden Agendas* (London: Vintage Press. 1998) p. 446.

The Untold History of the Fuji School: The Origins of the Temple Issue (10)

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. Last month's installment chronicled three incidents of persecution suffered by lay believers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lay believers faced these persecutions without the support of the priesthood.

Chapter 10: The priesthood renounces celibacy

(1) The emergence of married priests in the nineteenth century

IN December 1866, the restoration of imperial rule was declared in Japan. The following January, the imperial army defeated the army of the Tokugawa shogunate at Toba and Fushimi near Kyoto. In September, the era name was changed to Meiji after the reigning emperor, and the imperial palace moved from Kyoto (whose name means “capital city”) to Edo, which was then renamed Tokyo (“eastern capital”). During this tumultuous time of civil war leading to the inauguration of the imperial Meiji government, the Fuji School at Taiseki-ji was headed by Nichiden, its fifty-second high priest.

On April 25, 1872, the Meiji government issued

a decree that would drastically transform the Buddhist clergy of Japan. It states in part: “Priests may eat meat, get married and grow their hair.” The decree also allowed priests to wear regular clothing instead of Buddhist robes and surplices when they were not attending religious services. From this time on, the majority of priests in Japan openly renounced the time-honored monastic tradition of celibacy and began to marry.

Concerned about the demoralizing effect this might have on the Buddhist community, some priests strongly protested the decree and demanded that the government retract it. In February 1878, the government issued a notice clarifying that its decree was intended to lift the ban on the eating of meat, marriage and hair growth by priests instituted by the shogunate government, but not to force Buddhist schools to



Fifty-seventh High Priest Nissho (front, second from right) poses for photo with priests of other Nichiren sects to commemorate the emperor's decree to bestow the title of "Great Teacher" upon the Daishonin, issued on October 13, 1922.

change their own monastic rules. In other words, the government maintained that it was up to the priests themselves to decide if they were to eat meat, have wives and grow hair. But this notice came too late to reverse the trend. Most Buddhist priests at that time gladly took the government decree as an excuse to renounce celibacy, because they saw the rules on sexual conduct as oppressive government restrictions on their private lives rather than as self-imposed rules derived from the Buddhist monastic tradition.

During the Edo period, the shogunate government monitored the activities of priests in order to maintain strict control of the Buddhist clergy and thereby ensure the effectiveness of the parish system. When priests were found to have had a sexual relationship with a woman, they were severely punished. If those guilty of breaking celibacy were chief priests of a temple, they were exiled to a remote island. In the case of student priests, they were placed in stocks for public viewing and later expelled from their temples. The shogunate government frequently punished priests in this way so that Buddhist clergy could keep up the necessary appearance of religious authority and

discipline since they were considered to be government agents responsible for maintaining the parish system.

Because of the strictness of the government-imposed controls, once the restrictions had been lifted by the new regime, priests gladly started to marry. This is a clear indication that the Buddhist community had lost the integrity to decide on matters of Buddhist tradition. Instead, priests regarded the government as having legitimate authority over their traditions. Put simply, the years of strict government control had made the Buddhist clergy entirely dependent on political authority. Some contend that the Meiji government issued the decree in order to enfeeble the morale of the Buddhist community and thereby elevate Shinto, which was viewed as a chief means to extol the imperial authority.

Nichiden, who was the high priest at that time, criticized priests of various Buddhist schools for being elated by the government decree and regarding it as an expression of imperial mercy. He stated that despite the trend in the Buddhist community, the priesthood of the Fuji School should uphold the precepts of the Daishonin and

Nikko Shonin and remain celibate. But eventually the priesthood at Taiseki-ji also succumbed to the trend.

The priesthood's renouncement of celibacy had a significant effect on the future development of the Fuji School. It gave rise to nepotism and the hereditary succession of priesthood positions and temple properties within the school. Various factions of related priests formed, vying with one another for control. Instead of regarding the spread of the Daishonin's Buddhism as their goal, many priests became increasingly bound by family ties and personal interests.

Celibacy was the norm of Buddhist clergy that essentially set them apart from the laity. Priests were known by the Japanese term *shukke*, meaning, "those who have left home," as distinguished from the laity, which was called *zaike*, "those who remain at home." Without remaining celibate, therefore, priests essentially became lay believers who dressed like priests.

Regarding the monastic tradition of celibacy, the Daishonin writes to Sairen-bo as follows:

Now that you have discarded the provisional teachings such as Nembutsu and others and taken faith in the true Law, you are truly a pure sage among those who uphold the precepts. In any case, when one becomes a priest, even though he is from one of the provisional schools, he should be a priest [who remains celibate and eats no meat]. How much more should this be true of practitioners of the true Law? (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1357)

On the same subject, the Daishonin states: "Probably because the world has entered into the latter age, even monks who have a wife and children have followers, as do priests who eat fish and fowl. I, Nichiren, have neither wife nor child, nor do I eat fish or fowl. I have been blamed merely for trying to propagate the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 6). Following his teacher in this regard, Nikko Shonin also states in his "Twenty-six Admonitions": "My disciples should conduct themselves as saintly priests, patterning their behavior after that of the late master" (GZ, 1619). "Saintly priests" indicates those who remain celibate and eat no meat. Judging from these passages, it is clear that the Daishonin and Nikko Shonin viewed celibacy as an essential requisite for

those who enter the priesthood and never allowed their priestly followers to disavow that monastic rule.

Regarding the condition of the priesthood at Taiseki-ji after the government decree of 1872, Nichiko Hori, the fifty-ninth high priest and noted historian of Nichiren Buddhism, comments that "the recent conduct of priests, which makes them indistinguishable from lay believers," is "a temporary anomaly." He also expressed hope that priestly conduct within Nichiren Shoshu "be restored to the normal state of the period of the founder of the school as well as of the founder of the head temple" (*Detailed Accounts of Nikko Shonin*, p. 437).

Concerning sexual misconduct by priests, Nikko Shonin states in his "Twenty-six Admonitions," "However, even if a high priest or a priest striving for practice and understanding should temporarily deviate from sexual abstinence, he should be assigned among the ranks of ordinary priests" (GZ, 1619). Ordinarily, when priests of any Buddhist school were found to have engaged in sexual misconduct, they were expelled from the priesthood and returned to the laity. In this article, however, Nikko Shonin suggests that if the offense constitutes a temporary lapse, those found guilty should be demoted to the rank of ordinary priests. As Nichiko Hori comments on this passage, "There is no other way to interpret [this passage] than as indicating demotion from the eminent position of high priest to that of low rank" (*Detailed Accounts of Nikko Shonin*, p. 438). It is clear that Nikko Shonin saw the possibility of even a high priest committing sexual misconduct, which was normally punishable by expulsion from priesthood. Once again this passage completely refutes the idea of the infallibility of the high priest.

(2) The Fuji School's merger with erroneous Nichiren schools

IN September 1872, five months after it issued a decree to lift a ban on priests' celibacy, the Meiji government decided to organize various denominations of Buddhism into seven schools, each of which was to be headed by one chief executive priest. They were: Tendai, True Word, Pure Land, Zen, True Pure

Land, Nichiren and Ji schools. Later, however, the Nichiren School was divided into two schools. One of them held that the essential and theoretical teachings of the Lotus Sutra are equal in merit. It was, therefore, called the Itchi (Oneness) School. The other asserted that the essential teaching is superior to the theoretical teaching, and was thus referred to as the Shoretsu (Superior-inferior) School. In May 1874, Taiseki-ji joined the Shoretsu School of Nichiren Buddhism, which consisted of the Nikko branch, the Myoman-ji branch, the Honjo-ji branch, the Eight-chapter branch and the Honryu-ji branch. The Fuji School headed by Taiseki-ji was considered a sub-branch of the Nikko branch.

In February 1876, Taiseki-ji, Hon'mon-ji in Kitayama, Yobo-ji in Kyoto, Myoren-ji in Fuji, Kuon-ji in Koizumi, Myohon-ji in Hota, Hon'mon-ji in Nishiyama and Jitsujo-ji in Izu seceded from the Shoretsu School and formed the Nikko branch of the Nichiren School. The head priests of those eight temples took turns in assuming the one-year term of chief executive priest of the school. During this period, Taiseki-ji was officially merged with other Nichiren schools and placed under temples whose doctrines it considered as slanderous of the Daishonin's teaching. Furthermore, when Nippu and Nichio of Taiseki-ji became the chief executive priests of this combined school, they never even attempted to refute the errors of the other temples.

Later, the Nikko branch renamed itself as the Hon'mon or "True Teaching" School. Although the eight temples of the Nikko branch descended from Nikko Shonin, their historical background and doctrines differ significantly from one another. So the alliance of various Nikko denominations was short-lived. In September 1900, Taiseki-ji's request to become independent of other Nikko branches was granted by the government, and the temple named itself the Fuji branch of the Nichiren School. But in June 1912, Taiseki-ji decided that it was inappropriate to call itself a branch of the Nichiren School, which it considered doctrinally deviant. So, following its claim to the orthodoxy of the Daishonin's Buddhism, a group of temples led by Taiseki-ji renamed itself Nichiren Shoshu or "the true school of Nichiren." Taiseki-ji's history as Nichiren Shoshu, or an independent school of Nichiren Buddhism, in this sense is relatively short.

Taiseki-ji's merger and associations with other erroneous Nichiren schools during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were chiefly motivated by concern for its own survival. The Fuji School led by Taiseki-ji then was a diminutive sect. According to research conducted in 1904, the Fuji School had eighty-seven temples with only forty-seven chief priests, and approximately 58,000 parish members. Its relatively small size motivated the head temple administration to seek to ally itself with other larger schools for the purpose of gaining prestige and security.

One consequence of its merger with other Nichiren schools was that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Fuji School had grown desensitized to the doctrinal errors of those schools, which were descended from one or another of the five senior priest disciples of the Daishonin, who had misunderstood his teaching, or from among the dis-

Celibacy was a norm of the Buddhist clergy that essentially set them apart from laity. Without remaining celibate, priests became like lay believers who dressed like priests.

ciples of Nikko Shonin. The Fuji School's disregard for its own doctrinal integrity is particularly apparent in an incident that took place in the early twentieth century concerning the bestowal of an imperial title upon Nichiren Daishonin.

On September 11, 1922, the high priests of various Nichiren schools submitted a petition to the emperor requesting that he bestow the title of "Great Teacher" upon the Daishonin. Nissho, then the fifty-seventh high priest of Taiseki-ji, also signed the petition. In response to this joint petition, the emperor declared that the Daishonin should be called Great Teacher Rissho (The establishment of the truth). Eight representatives of the various Nichiren schools who submitted the petition went to the ministry of the imperial household and received the imperial decree. These included the high priest of the Nichiren School, Nichien Isono, the high priest of Nichiren Shoshu, Nissho Abe, and the high priest of the Kempon Hokke School, Nissho Honda. This party of high priests then moved to the Suiko-sha, a clubhouse for high-ranking naval officers. There they recited

the "Life Span" chapter of the Lotus Sutra and chanted daimoku, led by Nichien Isono, high priest of the Mount Minobu-based Nichiren School. After reciting the sutra, congratulatory words were exchanged. Nissho, the high priest of Taiseki-ji, then delivered a closing speech. After the event, all the high priests from the various Nichiren schools posed together for a commemorative photo (see p. 17).

In order to encourage his future disciples to uphold the spirit to protect the integrity of the Daishonin's teaching, especially against the erroneous doctrines of the five senior priests, Nikko Shonin wrote in his "Twenty-six Admonitions": "You should not sit together with slanderers of the Law for fear of suffering the same punishment as they" (GZ, 1618). Nissho's action indicates that he was completely oblivious to this admonition from Nikko Shonin. Not only did he seat himself with other priests from erroneous Nichiren schools in a religious ceremony, but he recited the sutra and chanted daimoku with them. Although the priesthood at Taiseki-ji called itself Nichiren Shoshu or "the true school of Nichiren," its actions, as this incident indicates, completely contradicted its claim of orthodoxy.

Nichikan, the twenty-sixth high priest, asserted that Nichiren's honorific title should be the "great sage" [Jpn Daishonin], for he is the Buddha who revealed Nam-myoho-enge-kyo as the seed of enlightenment for all people of the Latter Day (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 3, p. 306). Furthermore, Nichikan explains that Nichiren called himself a great sage, citing a passage from "A Sage Perceives the Three Existences of Life," which states, "I am the foremost sage in the entire world" (MW-2, 259).

In this regard, Nichikan criticizes those who refer to Nichiren in a way that fails to indicate the importance of his being a Buddha. He states: "Why does everyone in the other schools refer to Nichiren as the 'Great Bodhisattva'? This is because of an imperial edict... They rely on the decree of an emperor of the secular world. But we rely on the decree of the Lord of the Law from the enlightened world" (Ibid., pp. 306-07). Here Nichikan refutes those of the other schools who profess to be followers of Nichiren for basing their understanding of their founder on the interpretation of political authority. Nichikan explains

that Nichiren's title "Daishonin" expresses the religious significance of his life. So it must be treated as a doctrinal issue and decided based on his own writings, not on secular authority.

Like the title "Great Bodhisattva," the title "Great Teacher" in Japan had been bestowed by the emperor upon founders and eminent priests of various Buddhist schools. For example, Kukai, the founder of the True Word (Jpn Shingon) School, received from the emperor the title of Great Teacher Kobo; Shinran, the founder of the True Pure Land School (Jpn Jodo Shinshu), Great Teacher Kenshin; Honen, the founder of the Pure Land School, Great Teacher Enko; and Dogen, the founder of the Soto branch of the Zen School, Great Teacher Shoyo. To request such a title from political authority on behalf of the Daishonin expressed these priests' ignorance of the true meaning of his identity and of his life's work, an act contrary to his defiant spirit toward political authority for the spiritual freedom and empowerment of the people. High Priest Nissho's acceptance of the imperial title for the Daishonin is testimony to the priesthood's ignorance of its founder's teaching.

Cooperation among various Nichiren schools, as evidenced in their joint petition for the imperial title of "Great Teacher," actively began in the twentieth century. In November 1914, at Ikegami Hon'mon-ji, a temple of the Minobu Nichiren School, a conference was held to discuss the reunification of Nichiren Buddhism. The high priests of various Nichiren schools attended the conference including: the Minobu Nichiren School, the Kenpon Hokke School, the Hon'mon School, the Hon-Myoho-Hokke School, the Hokke School, and the Hon'mon Hokke School. On behalf of Nichiren Shoshu, High Priest Nissho attended the conference, accompanied by Houn Abe, who was later to become the sixtieth high priest, Nichikai, and was also the father of the current high priest Nikken Abe.

At the conference, the participants discussed the reunification of the various Nichiren denominations, setting up intercommunication, the establishment of educational institutions and the election of members of a committee to negotiate the reunification process. Without any attempt to point out the errors of the other Nichiren schools, who failed to view the Daishonin as the original

Buddha, Nissho joined the conference and posed for a group picture afterward. Nissho and the rest of the priesthood at Taiseki-ji, who looked up to the high priest as a master, grew forgetful of the Daishonin's admonition: "Both master and disciple will surely fall into the hell of incessant suffering if they see enemies of the Lotus Sutra and fail to reproach them" (MW-1, 165).

At this point, Nichiren Shoshu had distanced itself from the Daishonin's teaching to the degree that there was no clear distinction in terms of behavior between Nichiren Shoshu and other Nichiren schools. The reunification of various Nichiren schools never materialized, but the movement created a momentum leading to the joint petition for the imperial title of "Great Teacher."

One consequence of its merger with other Nichiren schools was that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Fuji School had grown desensitized to the doctrinal errors of those schools.

Nichiren Shoshu's doctrinal compromise with other Nichiren schools did not end with its petition for the imperial title. In April 1931, Nikki Okada, chief priest of Kuon-ji, the head temple of the Nichiren School at Mount Minobu, submitted a petition to the Ministry of Education, a government agency responsible for religious organizations, requesting that the emperor present Kuon-ji with his calligraphy of the word *Rissho* to commemorate the 650th anniversary of the Daishonin's passing. In response, the ministry asked the Nichiren School to obtain consent from other Nichiren-related Buddhist schools concerning Kuon-ji's receiving this imperial calligraphy on the founder's behalf. A memorandum was then circulated among the schools acknowledging that Nichiren's tomb exists at Kuon-ji at Mount Minobu and thus consenting to the emperor's bestowal of his calligraphy upon the head temple of the Nichiren School at Minobu. Nichikai Abe, the sixtieth high priest of Taiseki-ji, was among those who signed the memorandum.

On October 1, 1931, the emperor's calligraphy was bestowed on Kuon-ji, and it was displayed at

a memorial hall on the temple grounds. Based on its claim that Nichiren's tomb exists at Minobu, the Nichiren School attempted to unify the other Nichiren schools around it by taking advantage of imperial authority. Taiseki-ji's acknowledgement of the Daishonin's alleged tomb at Kuon-ji, however, contradicts the intent of Nikko Shonin, who left Mount Minobu with the Dai-Gohonzon and the Daishonin's ashes due to the slanderous acts of the steward of that province. By yielding to Kuon-ji's claim, Taiseki-ji compromised once again its doctrinal integrity as a school descended from Nikko Shonin.

(3) The factional infighting for the seat of high priest

DURING the first half of the twentieth century, Taiseki-ji was plagued by fierce factional struggles for the seat of high priest. In order to resolve disputes over who should succeed to the post, elections were held. But fraudulence and corruption interfered with elections for high priest, eventually prompting government intervention, both by the police and the Ministry of Education.

On August 18, 1923, Nissho, the fifty-seventh high priest, died at Okitsu, Shizuoka Prefecture, where he had been convalescing from an illness. Before his death, however, he did not directly transfer the highest office of Nichiren Shoshu to his successor, Nitchu, then grand study master, the position then stipulated by the school's rules to be filled by the candidate for the next high priest. Instead Nissho invited two lay believers to Okitsu where he was staying and entrusted them, as temporary custodians, with the heritage of the Law, the formal lineage of the Fuji School. Later these two lay believers transferred the heritage to Nitchu at Renge-ji, a branch temple in Osaka.

The reason behind this unusual method of transferring the office of high priest was that Houn Abe, who later became the sixtieth high priest Nichikai, was trying to interfere with the appointment of Nitchu as the next high priest at all costs. Houn Abe, then leading a faction against Nissho within the priesthood, schemed to keep Nitchu away from Nissho so that the former

might not receive the heritage. He also applied various forms of pressure to Nitchu, attempting to force his resignation from the position of grand study master. After his attempt failed and Nitchu became high priest, Houn Abe started scheming to force him out of the office.

On November 18, 1925, Nichiren Shoshu held a council meeting at Taiseki-ji. Originally, they met to discuss their stance toward the Nichiren School at Mount Minobu. But two days later, the council suddenly passed a resolution calling for the impeachment of Nitchu. Following the resolution, the council issued a recommendation to the high priest that he resign. Prior to their meeting, the majority of council members had entered into a secret agreement to impeach Nitchu, the plan masterminded by Houn Abe.

Abe's scheming was chiefly motivated by his personal grudge against the high priest, and his own ambition for the school's highest office. Four months before the council met, Nitchu had

The corruption within the temple administration spread throughout the priesthood during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Taiseki-ji suffering from a series of scandals.

demoted Abe from the position of secretary general, as well as from his executive standing within the priesthood, for the errors that he made in an article critical of the Nichiren School at Minobu. Abe's article, published in *Dai-Nichiren*, the priesthood's official magazine, was intended to refute the tenets of the Nichiren School but instead became an object of ridicule in religious circles for its elemental mistakes.

In accord with its plan, the council successfully coerced Nitchu into writing a letter of resignation and reported to the Ministry of Education that the next high priest would be Nichiko Hori. However, leading parish members of Taiseki-ji started to campaign on behalf of the deposed high priest and decided to stop their financial contributions to those priests who supported Nitchu's impeachment. The two factions fought bitterly against each other.

The bureau of religious affairs under the

Ministry of Education, which exercised enormous control over religious organizations, saw no possibility of arbitration in the dispute and instructed Nichiren Shoshu to hold an election to determine the high priest. At that time, there were about ninety priests who were qualified to vote under the school's rules and regulations. On February 17, 1926, ballots were taken. Supported by the leading faction and widely respected for his character and scholarship, Nichiko Hori won a landslide victory. Nitchu received only three out of eighty-seven votes. Before the election, Nitchu declared that he would not transfer the office of high priest to anyone, no matter who was elected. Despite his threat, he received only two votes besides his own.

After the election, however, some parish members lodged a complaint with the local police department that the leading faction, led by Houn Abe, had threatened Nitchu into writing his letter of resignation. Many priests were summoned to the police station for questioning. The turmoil was finally settled on March 8 when Nitchu transferred the high office to Nichiko.

Nichiko, who was more respected for his scholarship and integrity than Abe, was persuaded by Houn Abe's faction to run for the high office against Nitchu. As soon as Nichiko assumed that position, however, Abe began working to isolate Nichiko and force him out of office. While in office, High Priest Nichiko tried to revise the school's rules and regulations in order to do away with the rampant infighting characteristic of that time. But the committee overseeing the revisions, the council and the staff of the administrative office successfully sabotaged Nichiko's efforts. Lacking any support, Nichiko decided to retire, and did so in November 1927, little more than a year after taking office. Upon his retirement, Nichiko expressed his desire to work on a compilation of the complete works of the Daishonin and of the Fuji School. Besides being disappointed at the subterfuge he had faced from other ranking priests, Nichiko was also dissatisfied with the contents of what was known as the heritage of the Law—the supposedly secret transmission passed from one high priest to the next—which he had received from Nitchu. After becoming high priest, Nichiko met with the two lay believers who had received the transmission of the heritage from Nissho to reconfirm its

contents. It is said that Nichiko's dissatisfaction with those contents contributed to his decision to retire.

Upon Nichiko's resignation, another election for high priest was held. Two candidates, Houn Abe and Koga Arimoto, ran for the office. The ballots were counted on December 18, 1927, with Abe receiving fifty-one votes, and Arimoto, thirty-eight. Abe had defeated his opponent by a margin of thirteen votes. This election, however, turned out to be tainted by corruption. Charges of various forms of fraud, including extortion, bribery and obstruction of votes were brought by Arimoto's supporters. Furthermore, after the election, Abe was investigated by police and charged with embezzlement. He allegedly had cut down trees on the head temple grounds and illegally used the profits gleaned from the sale of the wood to fund his election campaign.

Because so many allegations were made concerning the election and its results, Nichiren Shoshu had no choice but to seek help from the bureau of religious affairs of the Ministry of Education. In June 1928, after six months of arbitration, the ministry finally acknowledged the election result, and Houn Abe, now called Nichikai, became the sixtieth high priest of Nichiren Shoshu. Meanwhile, the faction led by Koga Arimoto continued to attack Nichikai, still accusing him of election fraud, lack of scholarship and sexual misconduct. (Houn Abe, when he was assigned to Josen-ji in Tokyo, had an illicit affair with Suma Hikosaka, a young servant, and had a son out of wedlock. Five years later Abe legally recognized his son. That son, Shinno Abe, went on to become Nikken, the sixty-seventh high priest.) In an open letter dated March 13, 1928, Arimoto's supporters declared that Nichikai's appointment as high priest would be "an ignominy of the priesthood."

The factional infighting in the early 1900s also attracted much attention from the media. For example, the March 16, 1926, edition of the local paper, *Shizuoka Minyu Shimbum*, reported: "Nichiren Shoshu Taiseki-ji continues its ugly infighting. Priests and parish members have abandoned their proud tradition of the transmission of the heritage of the Law handed down from the founder 700 years ago, and are fighting one another over the election of a high priest,

causing public embarrassment to their school."

If what was known as the heritage possessed by the high priest had been sacred and absolute, the factional infighting and elections for the office of high priest would have been regarded as a grave sacrilege. In reality, however, many priests did not regard it as such, and thus caused a drawn-out internal conflict over the seat of high priest. This is further evidence from the recorded history of the Fuji School that the doctrine of the infallibility of the high priest is no more than a makeshift dogma. It is a position invoked by the priesthood whenever it is convenient for the purpose of silencing criticism toward the high priest.

The corruption within the temple administration spread throughout the priesthood during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Taiseki-ji suffering from a series of scandals. In the late nineteenth century, some priests who were residents at Taiseki-ji deceived Nippu, the fifty-fifth high priest, and replaced the copper roofing of the five-storied pagoda on the head temple grounds with much cheaper tin roofing. They sold off the expensive original roofing and embezzled the profit, most of which was spent on entertainment. In April 1941, it was found out that eight valuable swords had been stolen from the head temple's treasury. One of them was a famous sword that had been forged by the renowned swordsmith Sanjo Kokaji Munechika and given to the Daishonin by Hojo Yagenta. This sword was one of the most treasured articles belonging to the Daishonin kept at Taiseki-ji. It was suspected the theft was an inside job—committed by someone within the priesthood. But the temple administration neither reported the incident to the police nor did it launch its own internal investigation. No suspect was identified, and the crime remained an unresolved mystery.

During the seventeenth century, Kyodai-in, an influential patron of Taiseki-ji, cautioned the temple officials in a letter: "Many of the high priests have sold off the treasures [of Taiseki-ji] for their own selfish gain, though some have tried to repair items so that no inconvenience will result from their being damaged" (*Essential Writings of the Fuji School*, vol. 8, p. 59). Despite her warning, misuse and theft of temple property by priests continued well into the twentieth century. □

NANJO TOKIMITSU — UENO THE WISE

By Fay Hovey, Maui, Hawaii

The following is a fictionalized first-person account of Nanjo Tokimitsu's thoughts. Born in Kamakura, he was the second son of Nanjo Hyoe-Shichiro, a follower of Nichiren Daishonin and lord of a village called Ueno in the Fuji area. Nanjo Tokimitsu began practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism at a young age and received many personal letters from him, including "The Person and the Law," "Good Fortune in this Life" and "The Story of Ohashi no Taro." Following the Atsuhara Persecution, Nanjo Tokimitsu earned the title "Ueno the Wise" for the valiant role he played in protecting believers.

THERE are those whose path is unknown to them and their lives are a journey of discovery; every twist and turn a mystery; every victory or defeat peels away another layer and they come to know themselves anew. For me, the road was different. From the beginning, the way was made clear. I grew up knowing who I was, what my duties must be and most of all, with the sound of Nam-myoho-enge-kyo as part of my everyday life. When I was little, I thought that my mother



was chanting all night long while I slept because she would be chanting when I went to bed and, when I awoke, I could still hear her chanting.

My mother and father practiced Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, no small matter in our turbulent and fearful age. I remember how my father, a warrior and imposing man, who nonetheless possessed a warmhearted manner, would gently guide me to sit and chant together with him, saying to me: "One day, Tokimitsu, you will help lead this family. You must know what to do, how to take care of everyone here. You will need great wisdom, so chant, my young son."

Many people think that young children don't remember very much of their early years, but I don't think that is so. Even though my father died when I was 7, I hold a very deep impression of our moments together. I also recollect the Daishonin's visit to our home when my father lay cold and still in our hall. How my mother bowed deeply and tried not to weep and the dignity and the concern in his face as he expressed his admiration for my father. He walked

through the entrance to our manor house and touched each of us on the shoulder or head, saying soft words. Like any child, I was curious about him, and felt myself drawn to him. But I was hesitant to approach him as the occasion was so solemn and the whole household in an uproar over his visit.

Life without my father was difficult. I had modeled myself after him, re-enacting his battle tales in the woods near our home with my brothers and sisters. With his death, it was like the roof had blown off above our heads and my mother was left alone to guide and protect all of us, five sons and four

daughters. So, I guess you would say, I had to "toughen up" and, as we were a respected family of the samurai warrior class, there was still much to learn and the years passed quickly. Yet, I missed my father and would often visit his grave to chant and talk quietly of my youthful dreams and concerns. As I grew to manhood, the future loomed on the horizon and I wondered if I would be able to live up to my family's expectations of me. In truth, there were a few times that I felt it might be better to run away and pretend to be someone else. Perhaps every young person feels this way: if only life could remain carefree for just a while longer.





So it was that at the age of 16, after the death of my elder brother, that I was officially acknowledged the head of our family in the eyes of the Kamakura government. My mother and I spoke of it one night in the dim candlelight after our evening prayers. While she softly spoke, I heard my father's words: "Someday you, Tokimitsu, will have great responsibilities..." Where had the time gone? That night after my mother retired, I walked through our garden and gazed up at the stars and the new sliver of moon. I looked out over our estate and I felt a great weight slip onto my shoulders.

Two days later, I was packed and ready to

leave for Mount Minobu. I had determined after chanting long about it that I would go to visit the Daishonin. I wanted to bring him offerings, yes, but more than that, I sought his wisdom. I wanted to know the man whose philosophy had shaped my life. My mother didn't say much. Like any wise mother, she knew that to suggest I go would make it seem her idea so she had been chanting for me to know what to do myself. Smiling, she patted my boot in the stirrup and I was off.

I journeyed several days and the people I met and the things I saw along the way would make another story in its own right. Beggars, thieves, dead

bodies of people and animals lined the roadways. The wealthy hurried here and there with their hired bodyguards. Priests of every description offered to pray for me for a price. Soldiers, harsh and powerful, stopped people whenever they liked and demanded money and goods. To see a smiling face or a person of good intention was rare indeed. It was with great relief that I left the villages of the plains and entered into the mountain vastness where I followed the directions I had been given to a deep ravine where the Daishonin dwelled.

A stream cascaded and sang along the narrow pathway as I approached and I could smell the wood smoke of a fire. Through the trees as I slowed, I saw a movement, a glimpse of a robe, a hand holding a bucket to fill with water. Stopping, I announced my presence, and soon a monk with a broad smile and crinkling eyes climbed the bank to the path, saying: "Ah, so there you are! We thought you might come! Right this way, right this way. The master will want to see you!" And he took the reins of my horse and we made our way

to a clearing at the back of a ravine where there stood several small huts and a main hall. There were other monks going about the daily business of gathering wood, preparing food.

All about the place there was such a feeling of peace and happiness. The singing of birds, the wind sighing through the trees, the sound of the running water. The priest that met me on the path, Nikko, came for me and we entered a small hall where the Daishonin waited. He was a good deal older, it seemed, and thinner than I remembered. He was so big in my memory, yet I had become taller than him. Kneeling, I bowed low to the mat, "Sir, I am so happy to be here." The Daishonin laughed and warmly said: "You must be 16 now, yes? I have been feeling for some time now that I might see you riding down my path! How do you like our new home? This is where I will live out the remainder of my life."

I was impressed with his ease of speech, his informality and I felt that I could confide in him and in the earnest young priest who served us tea and sat nearby. I told him of my loneliness after my father died

and how I wanted to fulfill my responsibilities well. He told me that I would have to face trouble for embracing his Buddhism, that I would have to hold steadfast. He also said that I had a great mission to fulfill and that many people would look to me for wisdom and protection in the future.

I stayed a few days, resting my horse and attending the lectures the Daishonin gave to the monks. I helped re-thatch the roof of the main hall, hauled water, and did what I could to help. I had brought rice, warm quilted clothing for the Daishonin, some rice wine and some miso. It wouldn't be nearly enough. I was deeply concerned about how they would fare once the freezing winter lay a mantle of white across the mountains. I could see that the snow would drift in over the tops of the structures there. They would need help to make it through.

Before I left, I spoke with Nikko apart from the others and told him he must send a message if there was anything I could do for them. He looked at me and said: "You have already done so much, Tokimitsu, just coming here. One day I will come to visit you."

We felt the great bond that only two people joined in faith can feel. The Daishonin came out to say farewell when it was time for me to leave. I had my life to return to, all of my new obligations. "Look at that stream there, Tokimitsu, make your faith like that flowing water. Some people have faith like fire that quickly flares and is gone. But to have faith like flowing water means to believe continuously without ever regressing. It is worthy of great respect!"

It was difficult for me to leave, yet I departed with renewed confidence and hope. I felt a new excitement about my life and no longer felt burdened. Part way down the path, I turned in my saddle and looked back to see them both standing there. What a profound honor it was to know them. "I'll be back! Please be well!" "Go now, my young friend!" the Daishonin replied, "and please give my regards to your brave mother!" As my horse and I made the journey back to Ueno, I thought of them up there in the mountains thinking of me. And I found the courage to take up the reins and face my life. □

The Call to Adventure



By Denise Snaer, Santa Monica, California

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

WHAT if you were told that right now, as you are, you could be the star of your own movie? And what if your role was the lead, the hero in the greatest adventure story ever told? Through our practice of Buddhism in the SGI, we find that is just the case.

Harrison Ford once said the reason he continues to make movies is because moviegoing is one of the last remaining activities of community—the one place where many people of different ages from all walks of life gather in a darkened theater and together embark on the journey of a hero. I thought about this concept further. The movies that are huge box-office successes are the ones that portray true

heroes. For example, Rose and Jack in *Titanic*, Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* with Harrison Ford starring as Indiana Jones, and Linda Hamilton playing Sarah Connor (risking her life for her child whose destiny is to save the world) in *Terminator 2*.

The reason for this is that human beings, no matter what their differences, all share the same feelings, struggles and triumphs. Studies have shown that people go to movies to worry. They want to see the hero put to the test, and then triumph in the end! Audiences easily identify with the universal themes attached to any hero's journey. They feel a sense of hope, freedom and mission in their own

lives when the hero overcomes all obstacles and gains the treasure. Treasure is portrayed as both inner and outer gain, as in our Buddhist concept of “oneness of life and environment.” The hero may start out rushing off to rescue the lady of his dreams. Or she may be on a quest to find the Holy Grail, but ultimately what our hero gains is a sense of freedom and self-esteem from having faced all obstacles and won!

To prove my point, most screenwriters, as I am, have studied the works of mythologist Joseph Campbell. It has been said that the universe loves symbolism, so let us look at Campbell's ideas regarding heroes. In his work *The Hero*

With a Thousand Faces, Campbell outlines the hero's journey for us: The Ordinary World, The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Meeting the Mentor, Crossing the First Threshold, Tests, Allies and Enemies, Approach to the Inmost Cave, Ordeal, Reward (Seizing the Sword), The Road Back, Resurrection and Return with the Elixir.

ACCORDING to Campbell: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

After mastering mythology and thoroughly delving into the complexities of human nature, you may ask, "Who was Campbell's favorite hero?" According to the author, "A majestic representation of the difficulties of the hero-task, and of its sublime import when it is profoundly conceived and solemnly undertaken, is present-

ed in the traditional leg-

end of the Great Struggle of the Buddha" (p. 31). The adventure of this hero goes like this: Shakyamuni, the young Prince, passes through the palace gates and assumes the life of a monk. His journey toward enlightenment is filled with obstacles, challenges and an iron will to chart areas within the life of man that no one had been able to conquer successfully. His journey takes him to the Bodhi tree, where he does battle with the devil and all his forces. The final defining moment of his journey results in his attainment or revelation of enlightenment.

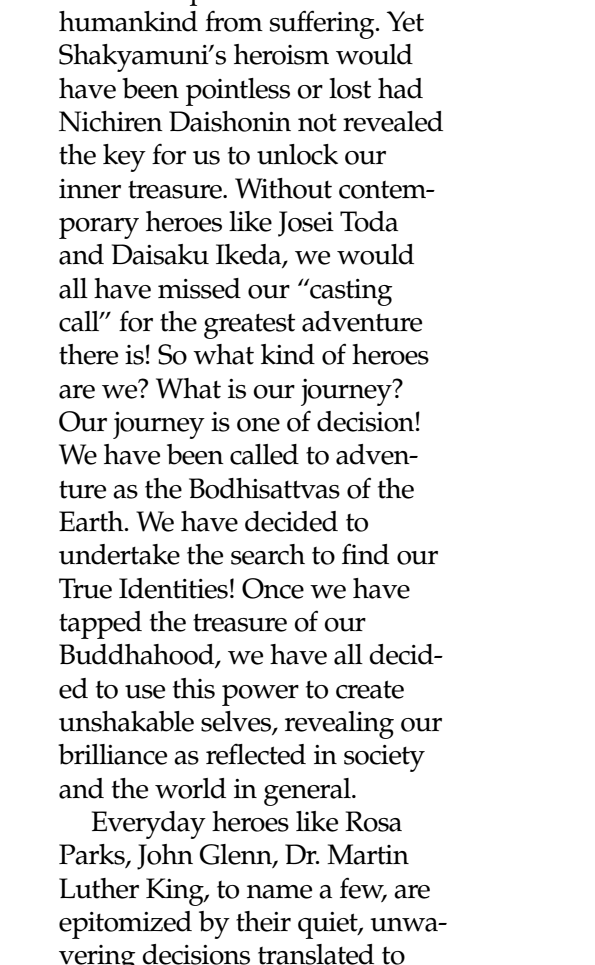
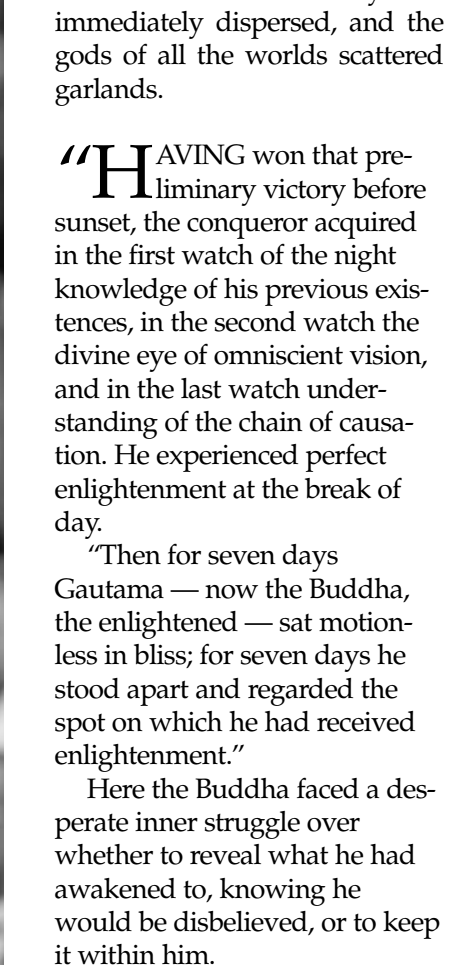
The famous story of the "Temptation of Mara" follows. As Campbell recounts it, the dangerous god Mara appears mounted on an elephant and carrying weapons in his thousand hands.

"He was surrounded by his army, extending twelve leagues before him, twelve to the right, twelve to the left, and in the rear as far as to the confines of the world; it was nine leagues high. The protecting deities of the universe took flight, but the Future Buddha remained unmoved beneath the Bodhi tree. Mara then assailed him, adamant about breaking his concentration.

"WHIRLWIND, rocks, thunder and flame, smoking weapons with keen edges, burning coals, hot ashes, boiling mud, blistering sands and fourfold darkness, the Antagonist hurled against the Savior, but the missiles were all transformed into celestial flowers and ointments by the power of Gautama's ten perfections." Mara, annoyed, sent forth his daughters, Desire, Pining and Lust, surrounded by voluptuous attendants (think, "James Bond"), but the mind of the sage was not distracted.

"The god finally challenged his right to be sitting on the Immovable Spot, flung his razor-sharp discus angrily, and bid the towering host of the army to let fly at him with mountain crags. But the Future Buddha only moved his hand to touch the ground with his fingertips, and thus bid the goddess Earth bear witness to his right to be sitting where he was. She did so with a





Clockwise from above: Michael Jordan, John Glenn, Rosa Parks, John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Florence (Flo Jo) Griffith Joyner, Amelia Earhart.

hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand roars, so that the elephant of the Antagonist fell upon its knees in obeisance to the Future Buddha. The army was immediately dispersed, and the gods of all the worlds scattered garlands.

“HAVING won that preliminary victory before sunset, the conqueror acquired in the first watch of the night knowledge of his previous existences, in the second watch the divine eye of omniscient vision, and in the last watch understanding of the chain of causation. He experienced perfect enlightenment at the break of day.

“Then for seven days Gautama — now the Buddha, the enlightened — sat motionless in bliss; for seven days he stood apart and regarded the spot on which he had received enlightenment.”

Here the Buddha faced a desperate inner struggle over whether to reveal what he had awakened to, knowing he would be disbelieved, or to keep it within him.

Campbell concludes his account: “The Buddha was finally persuaded to proclaim the path. He went back into the cities of men where he moved

among the citizens of the world, bestowing the inestimable boon of the knowledge of the Way.”

Shakyamuni’s mission was one of compassion to free all humankind from suffering. Yet Shakyamuni’s heroism would have been pointless or lost had Nichiren Daishonin not revealed the key for us to unlock our inner treasure. Without contemporary heroes like Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda, we would all have missed our “casting call” for the greatest adventure there is! So what kind of heroes are we? What is our journey? Our journey is one of decision! We have been called to adventure as the Bodhisattvas of the Earth. We have decided to undertake the search to find our True Identities! Once we have tapped the treasure of our Buddhahood, we have all decided to use this power to create unshakable selves, revealing our brilliance as reflected in society and the world in general.

Everyday heroes like Rosa Parks, John Glenn, Dr. Martin Luther King, to name a few, are epitomized by their quiet, unwavering decisions translated to action that benefits and changes the world.

As practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, we are fully engaged in the drama of



our lives moment by moment, re-writing our personal script to create a collection of stories of victory. Buddhism is win or lose, therefore, with each challenge we undertake and win, we have earned ourselves a standing ovation from humanity, and the “Academy Award” of the universe. We are real-life heroes, explorers in the business of destiny-changing, charting new courses in our various fields as humans who practice Buddhism, using our well of boundless compassion to transform the world.

THE Journey of a Hero is our journey of human revolution, of realizing our most personal dreams. We are the heroes of our own stories—our lives. We are the heroes of our children, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our neighbors, every life we touch. Every action we take is important because just like the audiences who flock to theaters to see the hero win, the eyes of the world are on us. We are not just members of a value-creation society. *We are this society.* By nature, we are compelled to create value by taking the hero’s run again and again, tapping the source and returning with new treasure every time. Unlike the movies, we have the

absolute assurance that armed with the sword of faith in the Gohonzon, constantly evoking the Mystic Law, we will achieve consistent victory in adventure after adventure, within the expansive universe of our lives! No dream is outside the realm of our faith. No experience or struggle wasted, and our ultimate treasure is twofold: our gift to humanity, and the treasure we find within ourselves—our Buddhahood! What could be a more worthy adventure than this?

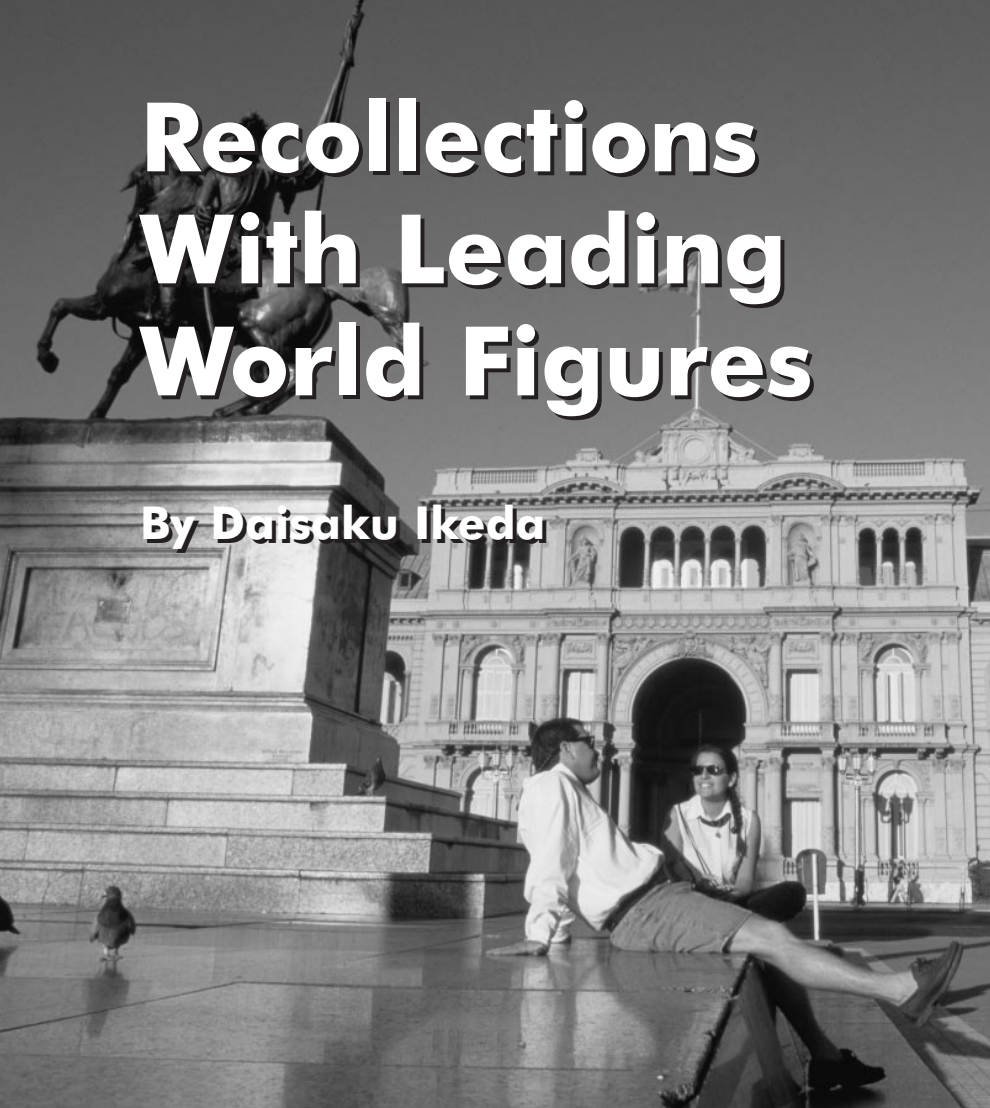
For us to be the heroes may be an uncomfortable prospect. To be a true hero, we must challenge our way of being in the world. In Maureen Murdock’s book *The Heroine’s Journey: A Map for Every Woman’s Quest*, she quotes Kathleen Noble: “Awakenings require you to respond consciously, to accept the invitation to create yourself anew, and to undertake the challenge no matter how frightened or inadequate you may feel. Thus, each awakening call demands not only that it be heard, but that you find the courage to trust and affirm the call whenever it arises, wherever it takes you, and however much it challenges your way of being in the world” (p. 8). □



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Recollections With Leading World Figures

By Daisaku Ikeda



A couple sits at the base of the equestrian statue of General Belgrano in the Plaza de Mayo near the Casa Rosada. Built in 1894, these buildings are the center of the Argentine government.

driven by the hope of finding his mother.

Arriving in Córdoba, and learning his mother was not there, he said to himself: "I've come this far. I must keep going!" It is only after he has traveled yet another 400 miles or more and arrived in a tiny village in the foothills of the Andes that his hope is finally answered. There, his mother, who has lost all hope and the will to live, is lying gravely ill. Suddenly and unexpectedly, she is reunited with her son. As she embraces Marco in her arms, the will to live is rekindled within her.

"My parents immigrated to Argentina. They were poor farmers who originally came from Croatia," related Dr. Francisco J. Delich, then rector of the National University of Córdoba, at our meeting in Nagoya in April 1994. The sky visible through the window was dyed with the lovely colors of the sunset.

Dr. Delich is the youngest of eight children. "My parents always worked very hard. The sweat of their brows taught us the rigors as well as the nobility of hard physical labor. My mother was illiterate, but she had a wisdom all her own," he said.

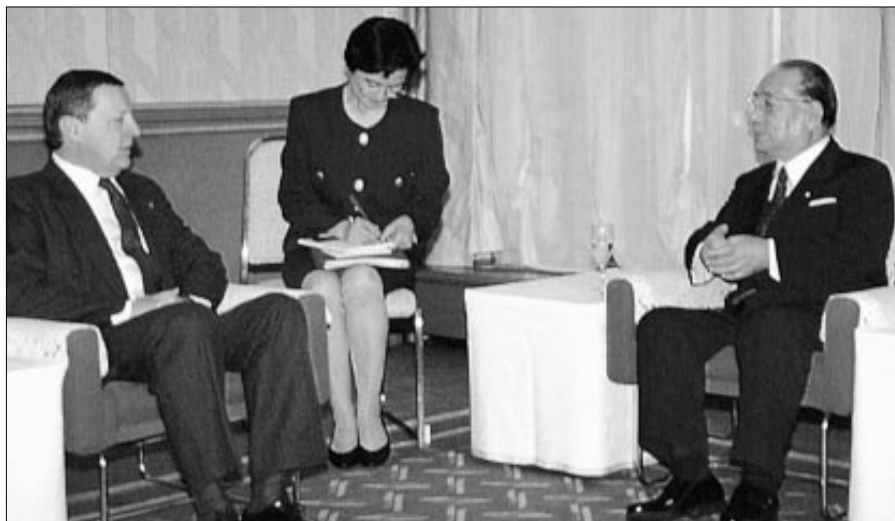
His mother taught him two things: first, it is wrong to make money without working for it; and second, it is important to

Francisco J. Delich — Former Rector of the National University of Córdoba, Argentina

WHAT is an important prerequisite for happiness? I would have to say that it is "to be without regrets."

Many of you may not be very familiar with the Argentine city of Córdoba. It appears in the famous children's story "The Heart of a Boy" by Edmondo De Amicis (1846–1908). In the story, Marco, a 13-year-old Italian boy, crosses the Atlantic to find his mother who has gone to Argentina in search of work and has not been heard from for some time.

The monthlong sea voyage is a lonely and trying experience for the boy. When he arrives at last in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires and thinks he will finally be able to meet his mother, he is told that she has gone to Córdoba, a city more than 400 miles further away. Though at first he is dismayed, he urges himself to continue on his journey and sets out up the La Plata River. In spite of many hardships — weariness, hunger and fear as well as the cold-hearted indifference of the adults around him — he presses on,



Rector Francisco J. Delich of the National University of Córdoba, Argentina meets SGI President Ikeda in Nagoya, Japan, April 1994.

show respect for others by never telling lies. Such ethics were once taught in Japan, but today we are confronted by the bold-faced lies of our national leaders. How sad that we have become a nation without a soul!

Dr. Delich has heeded his mother's words; he exemplifies true decency and integrity as a human being. His battle with the leaders of the military dictatorship in his country is also well known.

In early 1976, Dr. Delich was in Peru, having been driven into exile from his homeland; he had been forced out of his teaching post at the National University of Córdoba. Argentina had seen an alternate succession of military and democratic rule since World War II, and at that time, democratic rule was again in jeopardy as the country headed rapidly toward a state of totalitarianism.

In fact, during this period, South America came to be known as "the continent of military dictatorships." Many scholars were robbed of their liberty and forced into exile

from their homelands as a result.

Despite the volatile situation in Argentina, Dr. Delich decided to return because he had been elected to serve as chairman of the Latin American Sociologists Committee, based in Buenos Aires. The purpose of the committee was to lend various forms of assistance to exiled scholars, including providing refuge, and protection, and financial support for studies at academic institutions abroad. It was a noble purpose, and because of that, dangerous work.

IN Argentina, meanwhile, extremist factions on both sides were engaged in terrorist activities, and society was in an uproar. Yet terrorism has never changed the course of history. "I had a wife and four small children. What would happen if we returned? Of course, I was afraid," he admitted. "But I was elected by the others, who had faith in me. I couldn't let them down."

After Dr. Delich returned, the

situation in Argentina took a turn for the worse. In March 1976, the military staged a coup for the alleged purpose of "reestablishing the nation." Under the military dictatorship, people's freedoms were completely stifled. "Thinking was forbidden, speaking out was forbidden. How painful this is for human beings!" said Dr. Delich recalling those days. "I think that Soka Gakkai members, who have also been oppressed by military authorities in the past, understand what I am talking about."

When a military government was formally installed, Dr. Delich lost no time in springing into action. The committee wrote letters to intellectuals all over the world, some 2,000 in all. One letter, which was reprinted in an international magazine, informed people what was going on in Argentina. Soon the committee's office was raided, and Dr. Delich was placed under constant surveillance by the military.

"Once the oppression began,

people were revealed to be one of two sorts. The first opposed the oppression but remained silent. The second opposed the oppression and fought back by speaking out. I chose to join the latter. Why? Because it is the right way to live," explained Dr. Delich. When one believes something is right, one acts to realize it. This Dr. Delich learned from the writings of the French author André Malraux (1901–76). When he was only 19, the Argentine scholar was deeply moved upon reading the novel *La Condition Humaine* (Man's Fate). He so admired Malraux that he decided to go to Paris to study. He is familiar with the fact that I had held a dialogue with André Malraux shortly before the latter's death.¹

As human beings, we are faced with constant decisions: Which of the many paths before us should we take in order to approach true humanity? Which road will enable us to feel proud of ourselves and to become better, more noble individuals? We create the distinctive shape of our lives from the infinite choices we make each day. As human beings, we must keep advancing toward the goal of true humanity. The moment we stop moving forward is the moment when that which is most human within us dies. Moreover, when an individual seeks to become more than a human being and succumbs to the lust for power in order to achieve this, he or she falls into a state that is less than human.

The early period of the military dictatorship, which lasted from 1976 to 1983, saw a reign

of terror that was called the "dirty war." Not only those who opposed the military regime, but many others who had never been politically active were taken into custody, accused of being terrorists. Military authorities suddenly burst into people's homes and led them away at gunpoint. Even if the police were called, they didn't come. The victims were taken to secret prisons where they were tortured and killed. Some were thrown, still alive, from airplanes. Some high school students were killed simply for seeking the introduction of student-discount train passes. The *desaparecidos* ("those who disappeared"), as they were known, numbered from 20- to 30,000.

THE Plaza de Mayo lies in the very heart of Buenos Aires. Even after the establishment of democratic rule in Argentina, several hundred middle-aged women with white scarves wrapped around their heads would gather there and demonstrate every week. They demanded that their missing sons, daughters and husbands be returned to them alive. They called on the government to let them know, at the very least, what had become of their loved ones. They hung pictures of their children around their necks and wore the names of their missing loved ones embroidered in blue thread on their scarves. No matter how fierce the rain or cold the wind, "the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo," as they came to be known, persisted in their protest.

I saw the Plaza de Mayo from the window of a car as I was driving through Buenos Aires in February 1993. It smote my heart when I imagined those desperate mothers demonstrating there. During the military dictatorship, the authorities jeered at them, calling them crazy women. But who was really crazy? And certain business people in Japan made statements to the effect that Argentina would be better run under the dictatorship, facilitating economic recovery so that the country could pay back its loans from Japan. How can people be so unaware of their own inhumanity?

"The seven years under the dictatorship were very long," says Dr. Delich. "Once democratic rule had been restored, many who had kept silent came forth with all sorts of excuses. I have no wish to criticize them or paint myself a hero. But can they be satisfied with how they acted? Fortunately, I can. I stuck to my convictions. That is why I am happy."

The process of democratization proceeded under President Raúl Alfonsín, and when I spoke with him in July 1986 during his trip to Japan, I congratulated him on this.

DR. Delich was soon elected rector of the National University of Buenos Aires and set about reestablishing the university. While rector, he invited me there. Two years later, he was appointed Vice Minister of Education, and he worked to make education at all levels throughout Argentina more democratic. Having been driven



Columbus Statue in front of Rosada Palace, the presidential palace, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

from the lectern by the government in the past, Dr. Delich is very deeply and personally aware of the evil of allowing government to control education. He wants to build a society in which political leaders respect educators. Education, he believes, is the very foundation of the nation.

From 1989, he served twice, for a total period of six years, as rector of Córdoba National University. His most earnest wish is that there will never be another tragic time when mothers and their children are rent asunder, when people are persecuted for their beliefs and the entire nation divided. It is his belief that, in order to forge ties among people, we must promote a “new humanism” that will stimulate and encourage the humanity in each individual.

Since we were unable to arrange our schedules for my

acceptance of an honorary degree from the National University of Córdoba with a trip to Córdoba, the ceremony was held in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, and Dr. Delich returned specially from Bologna, Italy, where he was visiting at the time, to take part. The summer sunlight of the southern hemisphere shone down brilliantly on the young people gathered for the conferral ceremony. What should our generation leave to these young people?

Dr. Delich recounts how one of his children asked him why he chose to fight the dictatorship. His reply was, “It was the right thing to do.”

We can leave future generations no more valuable legacy than the spirit to fight for what is right.

The words of a Chinese exchange student in Japan come back to me painfully: “It appears

to me that the Japanese are always only concerned with what is in their own interest. Japanese leaders seem to be lacking any fundamental sense of ethics, of what is right and wrong.”

To have no regrets because one has done what is right — surely this is the prerequisite for happiness and, at the same time, a precondition for genuine humanity. It is also an essential requirement for Japan’s internationalization and for the twenty-first century.

The world and history are calling out to Japan: Liberate yourselves from materialism, free yourselves from lies! □

1. André Malraux and Daisaku Ikeda, *Ningen Kakumei to Ningen no Joken* (Changes Within: Human Revolution vs. the Human Condition) (Tokyo: Ushio Publishing Company, 1976). Currently published in Japanese only.

DIALOGUE

on the *Lotus Sutra*

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

This is part two 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>

Transforming One’s State of Life— A Mother’s Drama

TAKANORI ENDO: The other day I heard the experience of a Ms. Chan Boksoon of Hiroshima, and was extremely moved. Ms. Chan is a Korean national living in Japan who was a victim of the atom bomb. Having overcome anti-Korean discrimination from the Japanese and the painful aftermath of the bombing, she is now active as a volunteer spokesperson for peace.

Ms. Chan, whose parents had immigrated to Japan, was born in Osaka. Her family had run an extensive agricultural operation in Korea. However, militarist Japan invaded the country, and the family lost its land as a result of Japan’s colonialist policies.

They had no choice but to come to Japan. In making their decision, they had placed their



UPI/COBIS/BETTANN

The city of Hiroshima in the aftermath of the dropping of the atomic bomb, August 6, 1945.

trust in advertisements promising that a wonderful life awaited them there. But after being sent to one dangerous construction site after another, they finally arrived in a small village deep in the mountains. They were put in a tiny room in the corner of a cocoonery that was partitioned off by only a straw mat, and were made to work as assistants to a tenant farmer.

Moreover, they were assigned to work a swamp-like field. There was no way they could get a satisfactory harvest from this poor piece of land. They reportedly lived in a constant state of hunger, surviving on a meager allowance and what plants and fruit they could collect.

HARUO SUDA: That’s terrible. At the time, a great many Koreans were similarly duped into coming to Japan.

ENDO: They later moved to a site near Hiroshima. A year later, on August 6, 1945, the rumor spread that the city had been totally destroyed by a new kind of bomb. And so Ms. Chan and her mother, concerned about the safety of relatives and friends, entered the city of Hiroshima immediately after the blast. As a result, Ms. Chan became a victim of secondary radiation

from the bomb. She was 12. When they finally located Ms. Chan’s aunt and her son, they found them so badly burned that there was nothing they could do for them.

Her aunt cried: “There are too few doctors and too little medicine ... not enough to go around for Koreans. All we can do is wait for death to come!” At this, her mother wailed: “Our country was taken and we were brought all the way to Japan to be mercilessly worked like cows and horses. They don’t even make death easy for us; instead they force us to die in excruciating flames. What offense did we commit? Will they continue to discriminate against us even after we are dead?” Even now Ms. Chan vividly recalls how her mother sobbed and lamented, pounding the ground with her fists.

Later, when she was 16, Ms. Chan married. She married so young because her family had limited means and there were too many mouths to feed. From around the time she gave birth to her first child, she was afflicted by severe anemia and various internal disorders—probably as a result of her exposure to the atomic bomb—and had to undergo many operations. She was told

by her doctor that she had no chance of recovery, and when she was transferred to a hospital in Hiroshima, she was reportedly in a coma.

Her husband stopped coming to see her, and she and her two small children had to share her hospital meals. Since she had no money, she was forced to leave the hospital and wound up living in a tiny hut without running water or utilities. They had to go to a neighborhood park to use the toilet. It was a pitiful existence.

The local women of the Soka Gakkai were the ones who extended a helping hand to Ms. Chan and her family. They would warmly encourage her, saying things like, "Let's become happy together!" and would sometimes bring over dishes of hot noodles for her and her children. What a profound impression this must have made on Ms. Chan, who had lost all trust in people!

When she joined the Soka Gakkai, Ms. Chan was told by the person who first introduced her to the Daishonin's Buddhism, "You will become unimaginably happy."

In 1964, at age 32, she began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Through earnestly exerting herself in faith, she succeeded in recovering vibrant health. Upon witnessing this, her husband also took faith.

Ms. Chan had a concern that had been on her mind for a long time. She wondered why she had to suffer so much in her life—she had endured not only discrimination as a Korean in Japan, but had also suffered the effects of the atomic bombing. When she learned about the Buddhist concept of deliberately creating the appropriate karma, meaning that one undergoes suffering in order to help other people in similar circumstances, she found herself at last able to make sense of her predicament.

"I see," she exclaimed. "So I have a mission that only I can fulfill. And my situation is my responsibility." Through reading President Toda's "Declaration for the Abolition of Nuclear

Weapons" and studying your guidance, President Ikeda, Ms. Chan developed a strong determination: "There must be some unique way that I, as a Korean A-bomb victim living in Japan, can contribute to peace. I will put more effort into fulfilling my mission! I will study harder!"

At the age of 52, she enrolled in night middle-school classes. She later attended night high school, where she maintained a grade point average at the very top of her class. At 57 she was admitted to the night school of the University of Hiroshima.

KATSUJI SAITO: To undertake one's education at that age is no small feat. It must have been very arduous.

ENDO: She comments that she cannot recall having once gone to sleep in her bed while she was attending classes, nor being aware of when she fell asleep and when she awoke. Through such tenacious effort, in the spring of 1995, at the age of 62, she succeeded in getting her diploma.

At present, while teaching part-time in the night high school that she herself attended, she is participating in lecture meetings and symposiums near and far as a spokesperson for peace. She has tirelessly given her support to schools for adult literacy, and has carried out volunteer activities to promote education programs in many countries of Asia, including Nepal and the Philippines.

When she joined the Soka Gakkai, Ms. Chan was told by the person who first introduced her to the Daishonin's Buddhism, "You will become unimaginably happy." She says that she recalls thinking at that time, "Rather than unimaginable happiness, I would be satisfied with happiness that I can readily imagine. It would be enough if my husband would just quit drinking and get a job." She has in fact constructed a state of life that is truly far beyond anything she could have then imagined.

Ms. Chan says emphatically, "Making the spirit of the 'Monument of Prayer for World Peace' that President Ikeda established in Hiroshima my own, I am determined to exert every ounce of strength I have to fulfill my mission for the peace and happiness of people throughout the world."

Freely Enacting the Ten Worlds

DAISAKU IKEDA: That's a wonderful experience. A wonderful life. A wonderful example of victory through faith.

In the "Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings" (Ongi Kuden), the Daishonin says of Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound (who appears in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Lotus Sutra): "He manifests thirty-four different bodily forms, illustrating the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and preaching the Law so as to bring benefit to others" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 801).

To lead people to enlightenment, this bodhisattva appears in various guises (thirty-four bodily forms) and widely propagates the Lotus Sutra in accord with people's capacity and their worries. This, the Daishonin says, is "illustrating the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds."

Ms. Chan's life had sometimes revealed the suffering of the world of Hell and, at others, the sadness of the world of Hunger. But through faith in the Mystic Law, she realized that these were the effects of karma that she herself had willingly created in order to show actual proof of faith. She developed the confidence that, for the sake of kosen-rufu, a Bodhisattva of the Earth readily undergoes even the most abominable suffering. While revealing various states of life, in the end the bodhisattva demonstrates victory, and so teaches others about the greatness of the Mystic Law. Those who do so are great actors in the drama of the Ten Worlds. Such a life could well be described as "revealing thirty-four bodily forms" and "illustrating the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds."

SUDA: "Illustrating the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds" refers to the idea that people, though originally Buddhas or bodhisattvas, manifest the various states of life of the Ten Worlds.

SAITO: In "The True Object of Worship," Nichiren Daishonin, commenting on the passage in the "Life Span" chapter that reads, "Sometimes I speak of myself, sometimes of others; sometimes I present myself, sometimes others; sometimes I show my own actions, sometimes those of others" (LS16, 226), says that it expresses the

truth that "the world of Buddhahood contains the Ten Worlds" (MW-1, 51). Here, he interprets "myself" as pointing to the Buddha's life, or the world of Buddhahood, and "others" as meaning the various states of life that the beings of the Ten Worlds manifest.

IKEDA: The Daishonin elucidates that, since the remotest past, the Buddha, while appearing in various states among the nine worlds, had been continually taking action as the Buddha. This was possible because the nine worlds continued to exist in the Buddha's life even after the attainment of supreme enlightenment. This is the meaning of the phrase, "All beings of the Ten Worlds are essentially Buddhas."

There are those who give up when things get tough and consequently fall into despair. Therefore, having a strong life force is important. When our life is strong, we can turn all of our toils into a source of spiritual nourishment.

Also, in contrast to the "theoretical" mutual possession of the Ten Worlds found in the "Expedient Means" chapter, the "Life Span" chapter explains the "actual" mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. The Buddha revealed the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds through his own actual conduct. This is the meaning of "Sometimes I speak of myself, sometimes of others..."

Just as Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound leads people to enlightenment through freely manifesting thirty-four bodies, we advance kosen-rufu while carrying out various roles and activities, whether it be, for example, through education, business or taking care of the home. And, whether revealing the pain-filled world of Hell, the joyous world of Heaven, or the world of Anger, through it all we continue progressing.

Based on our activities as SGI members to promote peace, education and culture and to reach people through words and actions grounded in Buddhism, we continue moving forward while revealing all aspects of life. This surely



Based on our commitment to promote peace, education and culture and to reach people through words and actions grounded in Buddhism, the SGI-USA sponsors activities such as the opening of the “Treasuring the Future: Children’s Rights and Responsibilities” exhibit in Colorado Springs, Colo.

corresponds to the “thirty-four bodies” and represents the practice of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

Changing Life on a Fundamental Level

SUDA: There is one last point that I would like to confirm.

The purpose of the doctrine of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds lies in helping people manifest the Ten Worlds inherent in the world of Humanity, in particular, the world of Buddhahood. And human life is the entity of the one hundred worlds, just as the universe is. This much I can understand. But I’m still not completely clear on the significance of the hundred worlds contained within the world of Humanity.

SAITO: The Daishonin discusses the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds focusing on the Ten Worlds existing in the world of Humanity. I think what you’re asking is what, exactly, does it mean to say that each person is an entity of the hundred worlds, or if there is even any sense in discussing it at all.

IKEDA: One way we can approach this problem is from the perspective of basic life tendency.

While all people belong to the world of Humanity, there are some who, in terms of their basic life tendency, act mostly from the world of Hell, for example, and others who act mostly from the world of Bodhisattva.

SAITO: Someone whose life clings to the world of Hell will become downcast and discouraged at the slightest setback. That is the kind of trend I think we’re talking about.

IKEDA: We could term this the habitual tendency of the person’s life. This tendency has been built up by the cumulative causes that a person has made up until the present.

SAITO: That would include one’s personality.

ENDO: It’s the basic course of the person’s life, the base or home to which they always retreat.

IKEDA: Just as a spring returns to its original shape after it has been extended, we return to our own basic tendency. Even if the world of Hell is someone’s base, that doesn’t mean that the person remains in that state all the time. Rather, their state of life will shift from one world to another, sometimes entering the world of Humanity and sometimes the world of Anger.

Even a person who strives to be superior to others (a characteristic of the world of Anger)

will sometimes manifest the worlds of Bodhisattva or Heaven, for example.

SUDA: Bodhisattva or Heaven is contained in the world of Anger.

IKEDA: But even if someone who has the world of Anger as his or her fundamental tendency momentarily produces the world of Bodhisattva, they will quickly revert to the world of Anger.

It is doing our human revolution, transforming our state of life at the deepest level, that enables us to change this basic tendency, to change our fundamental state of mind.

Our basic tendency in a sense determines our life. To illustrate, a person who tends to act from the world of Hunger is as though on board a ship called Hunger. While proceeding along the course of Hunger, they will sometimes experience joy and sometimes suffering. Though there are many changes and fluctuations, the boat unerringly continues to advance along that track. Consequently, that person's viewpoint is always colored in the hues of the world of Hunger; after they die, his or her life melds with the world of Hunger existing in the universe.

Making the world of Buddhahood our basic life tendency is called attaining Buddhahood. Of course, even if Buddhahood becomes our basic tendency, we still have the nine worlds; and, consequently, we still have worries and suffering. But the foundation of our life becomes one of hope, and we acquire a rhythm of peace of mind and joy.

President Toda once explained this as follows:

Even if we should become sick, we should have the attitude: "I'm all right. I know that if I chant to the Gohonzon, I will get well." Doesn't Buddhahood mean living with total peace of mind? Now, because the world of Buddhahood contains the nine worlds, we might still sometimes become angry or perplexed; enjoying total peace of mind doesn't mean that we cease to experience anger, for example. A worry is still a worry. Yet, underneath everything, we feel profound peace of mind. Someone in this state is a Buddha.

He also said:

Isn't a Buddha someone for whom to be alive is itself an overwhelming joy? Isn't this what it means to attain the Daishonin's state of life? Even when facing the prospect of being beheaded, the Daishonin was calm and composed. In a similar situation, any one of us would be ready to give up. And when he was exiled to Sado, the Daishonin continued instructing his disciples on various matters and produced such writings as "The Opening of the Eyes" and "The True Object of Worship." Without peace of mind, he could never have written such great treatises.¹

SUDA: Referring to what you said earlier, I can see how President Toda enjoyed a state of life as vast as the Pacific Ocean even while facing great adversity. It seems that this is just the kind of peace of mind that he was talking about.

Struggles in the Nine Worlds Strengthen the World of Buddhahood

ENDO: The practice of doing gongyo and chanting daimoku is the means for establishing the world of Buddhahood as our basic life tendency.

IKEDA: Gongyo is a solemn ceremony in which we fuse our lives with the life-state of the Buddha. By steadfastly and continually carrying out the practice of gongyo and daimoku, the world of Buddhahood in our life becomes solidified, just as firmly packing together a pile of earth will produce a strong foundation. On this foundation, this stage, at each moment we freely enact the drama of the nine worlds.

Kosen-rufu is a struggle to make the world of Buddhahood the basic tendency of society. Fundamentally this comes down to forging ties of friendship with increasing numbers of people.

At any rate, when we base ourselves on Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, absolutely no effort is wasted. When we make the world of Buddhahood our basic life tendency, we can advance toward a future of hope while making the most of all our activities in the nine worlds, both past and present. In fact, our efforts in the nine worlds become the nourishment that fortifies the world of Buddhahood.

In light of the principle that earthly desires are themselves enlightenment, sufferings (i.e., earthly desires, or the nine worlds) all become the “firewood” or fuel for attaining enlightenment (the world of Buddhahood). This is similar to how our bodies digest food and turn it into energy.

SUDA: Without wood there would be no flame, and without food our bodies would have no energy. Similarly, without the nine worlds, the world of Buddhahood would be diminished.

IKEDA: That’s right. A Buddha who has no connection to the actual sufferings of the nine worlds is not a genuine Buddha—a Buddha of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds. That is the essential message of the “Life Span” chapter.

There will be times when we want to cry, times when we want to laugh, times when we want to be angry,... Though we are ordinary people who are subject to such frailties, when we make kosen-rufu our prime focus, the world of Buddhahood becomes our basic life tendency.

In a sense, the world of Buddhahood is expressed in the inclination to take on even the hardships of Hell. This is the world of Hell contained in the world of Buddhahood. It is suffering for the sake of others, suffering willingly taken on as an expression of responsibility and compassion. Working to spread the Daishonin’s teaching and encouraging friends has the effect of strengthening the world of Buddhahood in our lives. Faith means gladly taking on hard work. Manipulating others to do things is not faith; that’s organizationalism and authoritarianism.

SAITO: To enthusiastically and joyfully go into the midst of suffering—that’s analogous to the spirit of bodhisattvas to take on karmic suffering out of compassion for others.

IKEDA: You cannot grow as a human being without great effort. Those who avoid the struggle can neither manifest true faith nor carry out their human revolution.

President Toda once said:

A sea bream of the Inland Sea is born in an inland body of water, grows up in the rough waves of the outlying Sea of Genkai, and then once again returns to the Inland Sea. Since it has withstood the fierce currents of the Sea of Genkai, its flesh is firm and its bones strong, and it has a wonderful taste. Similarly, battling the rough waves of the world enables young people to grow into outstanding individuals.²

According to a certain chef, the muscles that a fish has used most, such as those near the tail or the fins, taste best.

SUDA: Those areas aren’t usually eaten.

ENDO: It seems that people leave the best parts behind!

IKEDA: In terms of people, those who have really struggled possess the “flavor” of profound character and humanity.

There are those who give up when things get tough and consequently fall into despair. This is comparable to how you will undermine your health if you eat too much at a time when your power to digest and assimilate food is weak. Therefore, having a strong life force is important. When our life is strong, we can turn all of our toils into a source of spiritual nourishment.

On the other hand, no matter how much one may believe in the Mystic Law and carry out the practice of gongyo and daimoku, it is impossible to strengthen and solidify the world of Buddhahood in one’s life if one avoids the hard work necessary for advancing kosen-rufu.

Live True to Yourself

SAITO: In terms of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds, attaining Buddhahood does not mean eradicating the nine worlds. Rather, it means making the best use of all of them. This gives us a sense of the broad-mindedness of this teaching.

IKEDA: To live based on the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds means to live thoroughly true to oneself based on faith.

Buddhist teachings that do not explain the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds treat the nine worlds with scorn, postulating that one can only enter the world of Buddhahood by eradicating the nine worlds. Their approach is essentially to try to

carve away those parts of human existence that they regard as bad. They impose restrictions and condemn shortcomings. This ultimately leads to the idea of “annihilating one’s consciousness and reducing one’s body to ashes,” in other words, ridding oneself of earthly desires and attachments.

While self-reflection is of course important, if not done in a positive, growth-inspiring way, a person’s life may become closed off and rigid, causing them to lose all sense of purpose.

A Japanese saying goes that trying to straighten the horns of a cow could kill the cow. Instead of nit-picking over another’s weaknesses, it is far more valuable to encourage them, giving them hope and enabling them to find goals. Through doing so, we can help someone who is impatient, for example, become someone who can’t wait to take positive action.

This applies to one’s personal growth as well as that of others. We can be completely ourselves; there is no need to try to make ourselves appear to be what we are not.

Since we are human, there will be times when we want to cry, times when we want to laugh, times when we want to be angry, as well as times when we are confused. Though we are ordinary people who are subject to such frailties, when we make kosen-rufu our prime focus, the world of Buddhahood becomes our basic life tendency.

Once this happens, then when anger is appropriate we get angry. When suffering is needed we suffer. When laughter is due we laugh. We enjoy what there is to enjoy. The Daishonin says, “Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy” (MW-1, 161). By leading such a vigorous and vibrant life, we are able to advance each day by leaps and bounds toward absolute happiness, and help others do the same.

SUDA: That must be what it means to live based on the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

Make Kosen-rufu the Prime Focus

IKEDA: It’s vital that we possess a strong sense of responsibility for kosen-rufu. If we have the lackadaisical attitude that “Someone will take care of things” or “Somehow things will work out,” then we do injury to the world of

Buddhahood within our own life. For instance, when the schedule for the month is decided, if we merely write down the dates in our appointment book, we may not be roused to action.

Our mind and energy should be concentrated on the tasks we must accomplish. Our prayer is then directed, and, through the principle of three thousand realms in a single moment of life, the entire universe will move toward our victory and success. We need to make kosen-rufu our prime focus. We need to fix our attention on our friends and fellow members. We need to pray wholeheartedly for kosen-rufu, for the prosperity of the SGI, and for the happiness of all; and we have to take action. This is what it means to be a true champion of kosen-rufu.

The Lotus Sutra says, the “evil demons will take possession of others” (LS13, 194). We, however, must become people of whom “the Buddha takes possession.”

Kosen-rufu is what constantly occupies the thoughts³ of the Buddha. When we are determined to accomplish this goal by working with our fellow members, Buddhahood will flow from our lives and we will begin to actualize the principles of true mutual possession of the Ten Worlds and three thousand realms in a single moment of life.

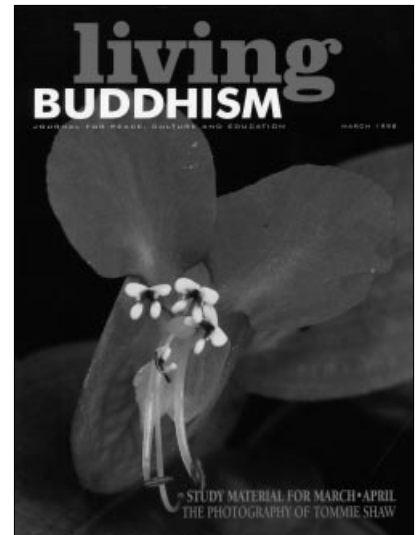
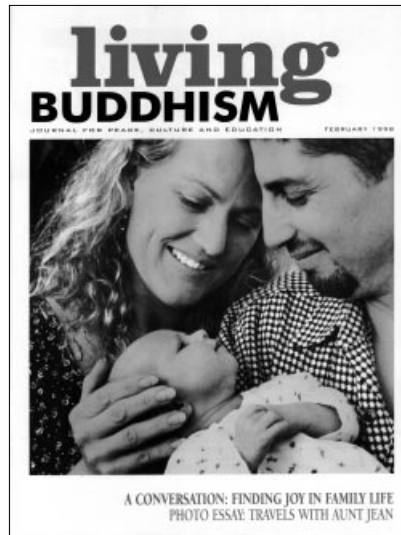
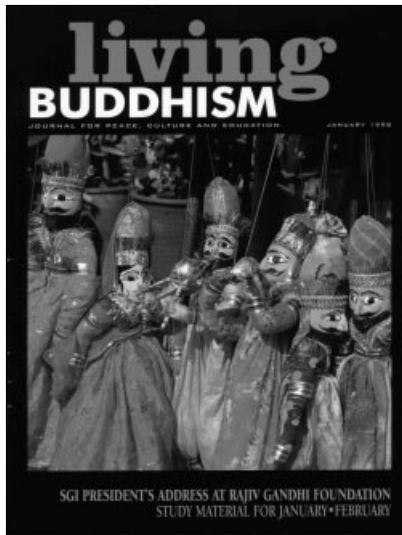
The life of the Buddha wells forth in the nine worlds of an ordinary person. This is the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

The Daishonin says, “If you exert a hundred million aeons of effort in a single moment of life, the three enlightened properties of the Buddha will appear within you at each moment” (GZ, 790). We need to exert “a hundred million aeons of effort.” When we work to the utmost for kosen-rufu, Buddhahood shines like the sun in our lives. This passage expresses the essence of the principle of the mutual possession of the Ten Worlds.

To be continued

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1. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 446–47.
 2. Daisaku Ikeda, *Zuihitsu Ningen Kakumei* (Essay on the Human Revolution), (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1978), p. 145.
 3. This is a paraphrase of the line near the end of the “Life Span” chapter, “*mai ji sa ze nen,*” which translates as, “At all times I think to myself...” (LS16, 232).

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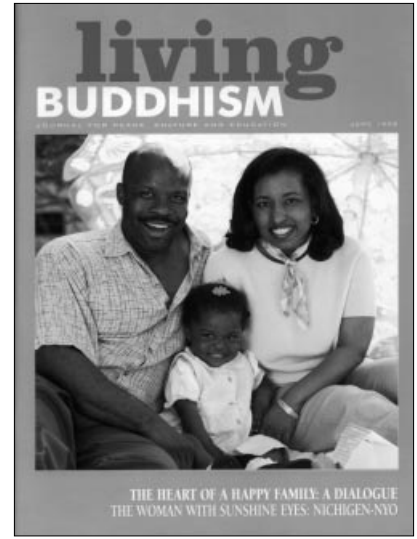
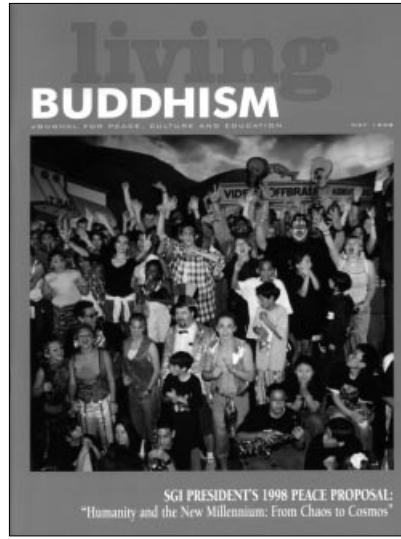
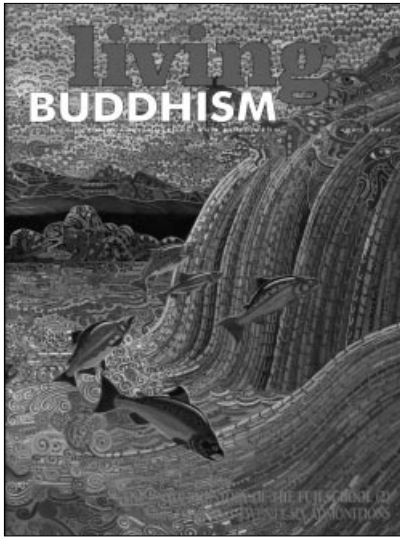
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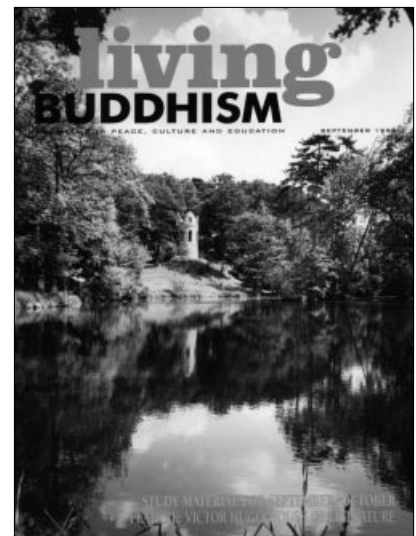
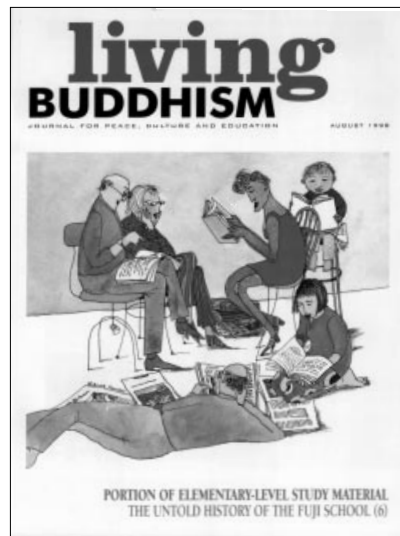
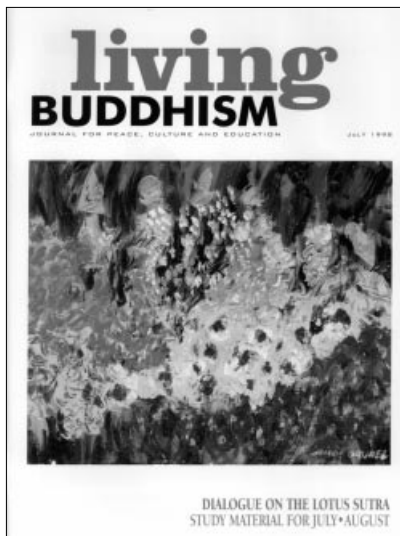
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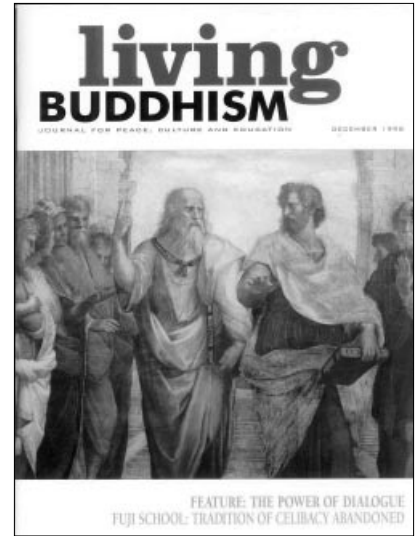
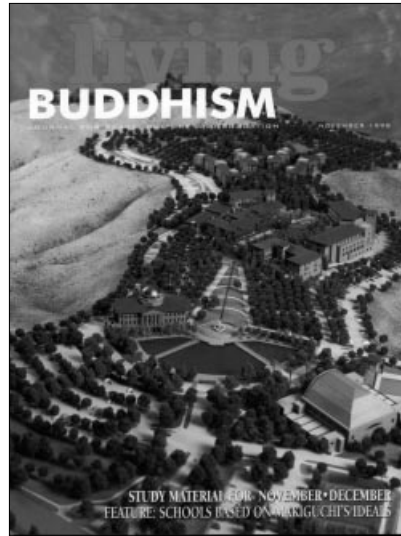
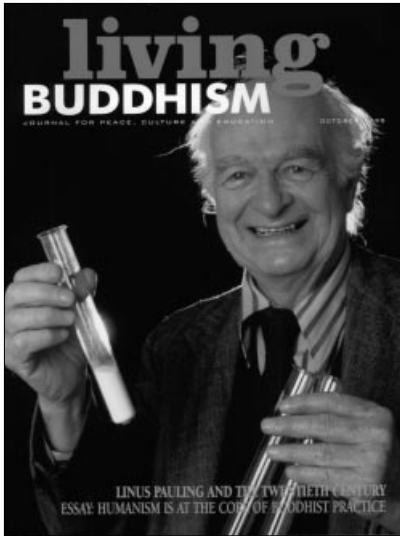
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GLOBAL FRIENDSHIPS FOR PEACE

SGI President Ikeda Meets With Mrs. Elsie Tu— Champion of the Common People

MRS. Tu, an 85-year-old Englishwoman living in Hong Kong for almost fifty years, became known as the “mother of democracy of Hong Kong” for her dedication to the people of China, first as a Christian missionary, and later as an educator and social servant. She risked her life by standing up to criminal gangs and the corruption in the police force of Hong Kong, and established the now famous Mu Kuang English School in the slums of Hong Kong.

SGI President Ikeda first met with Mrs. Elsie Tu at the Urban Council Public Library in Hong Kong in January 1974. Then an urban councilor, she expressed her thanks in receiving a gift of 4,500 books donated to the library by the Soka Gakkai. They met on two more occasions, in December 1983 at the Hong Kong SGI Culture Festival, and again in February 1991 at the opening of the World Boys and Girls Art Exhibition, also in Hong Kong.

As an example of a true humanitarian, Mrs. Tu was once noted as saying: “If you wish to find happiness, do good. Life is a one-way street with no turning back. Therefore, if there is something you can do for others, step forward and volunteer. If you put off that opportunity, you are letting your own chance for happiness slip away from you.”

Plaque of Commendation From Bolivia’s Del Valle University

IN a ceremony held on October 1 at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, President Ikeda was honored by Del Valle University of Bolivia in recognition of his unflagging efforts to promote peace, culture and scholarship.

Founder and rector of the university, Gonzalo Ruiz Martínez, and his wife, Julia Ostria de Ruiz, met the SGI leader in Japan to present him with a Plaque of Commendation, as well as an official invitation to visit the city of Cochabamba, where the university is located. The invitation commends the SGI for the relief activities it carried out in the aftermath of an

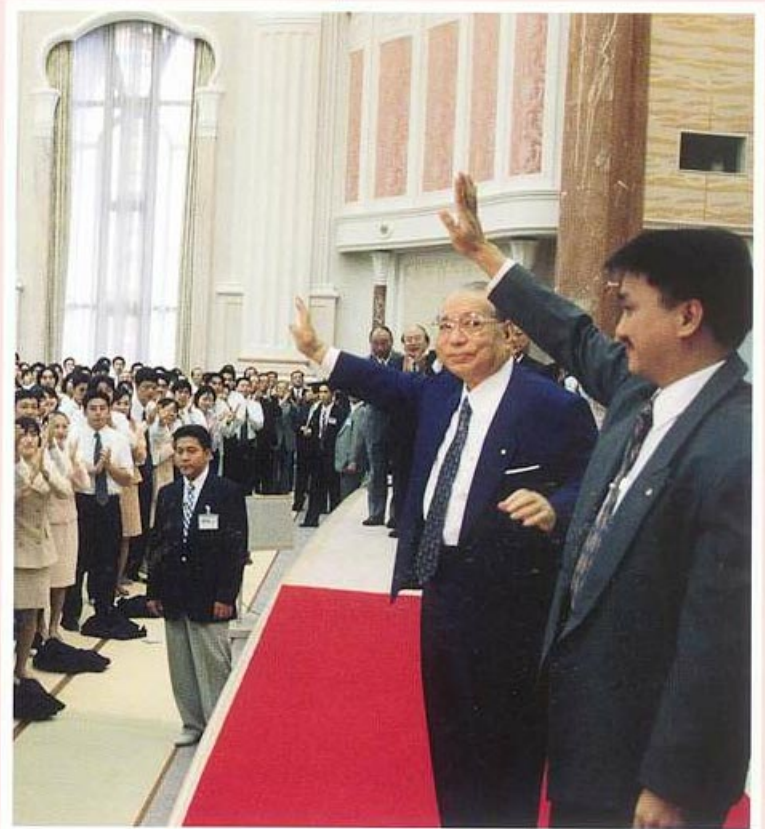
earthquake that struck the Cochabamba area in May of this year.

On this occasion, they discussed topics such as education, the ancient civilizations of Bolivia, and Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), the heroic leader of South American independence. Dr. Ruiz also expressed his desire to have President Ikeda lecture at Del Valle University in the future.

Honors From Philippine Province

GOVERNOR Juan G. Frivaldo of the Province of Sorsogon in the Philippines conferred honorary citizenship on SGI President Ikeda on September 25 at Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall.

The SGI leader was presented with a certificate naming him the “Adopted Son of Sorsogon,” along with the keys to the province in recognition of his efforts in pursuit of peace, freedom and justice. He commended the for courageously carrying on the mission of his predecessors, presidents Makiguchi and Toda, not only in Japan but throughout the world. □

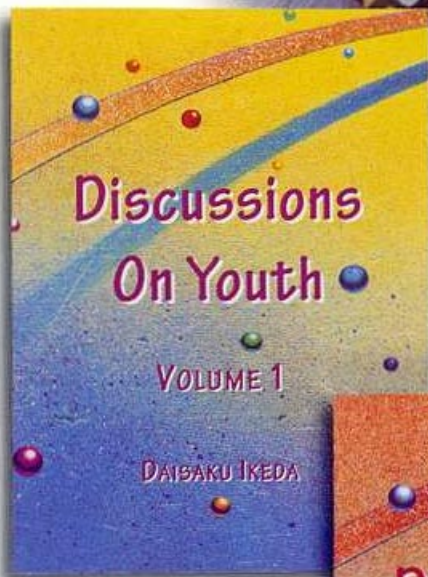


(Top) SGI President Ikeda with Mrs. Elsie Tu, "the mother of democracy in Hong Kong," at the opening of the World Boys and Girls Art Exhibition in Hong Kong, February 1991.
 (Above) Receiving the Plaque of Commendation conferred by founder and rector, Gonzalo Ruiz Martínez, of Bolivia's Del Valle University, Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, October 1, 1998.
 (Right) Sorsogon Governor Juan G. Frivaldo confers an honorary citizenship award from Tagaytay City, the Philippines, at Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, October 11, 1998.

Photos courtesy of Seikyo Press

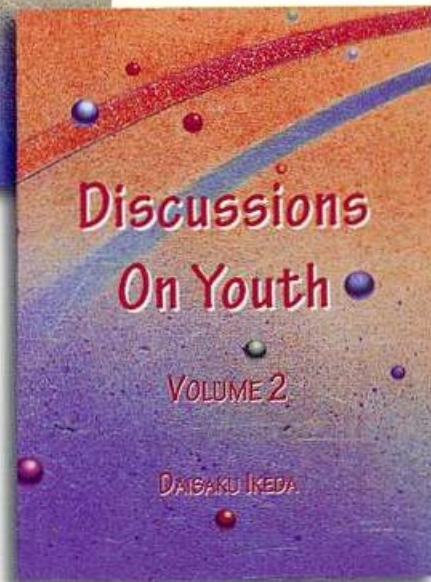
Discussions On Youth

Vols. 1 & 2



VOL. 1
MAIL ORDER # 0110

VOL. 2
MAIL ORDER # 0111



In *Discussions On Youth*, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda shares his thoughts on a variety of topics from love and friendship to the worries and hopes of youth.

"Happiness is not something that someone else, like a lover, can give us. We have to achieve it for ourselves. And the only way to do so is by developing our character and capacity as human beings; by fully maximizing our potential."

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BUDDHISM

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DECEMBER 1998



FEATURE: THE POWER OF DIALOGUE
FUJI SCHOOL: TRADITION OF CELIBACY ABANDONED

NORTHERN EUROPE CULTURE CENTER

THE Northern Europe Culture Center is located in a quiet residential area of Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. Originally constructed in 1865, the building was used as the official residence for a Danish prime minister and as a private educational institute before World War II. The Danish SGI members renovated the interior of the historic residence, as well as its garden, for the official opening in the summer of 1988.

Denmark was the first country SGI



President Ikeda visited in Europe in 1961, a time when there were few, if any members. Today, indicative of its growth, the culture center

serves as the hub of manifold SGI activities for the members of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland.



Members gathered for the summer training course in the outskirts of Copenhagen, 1997.