

# 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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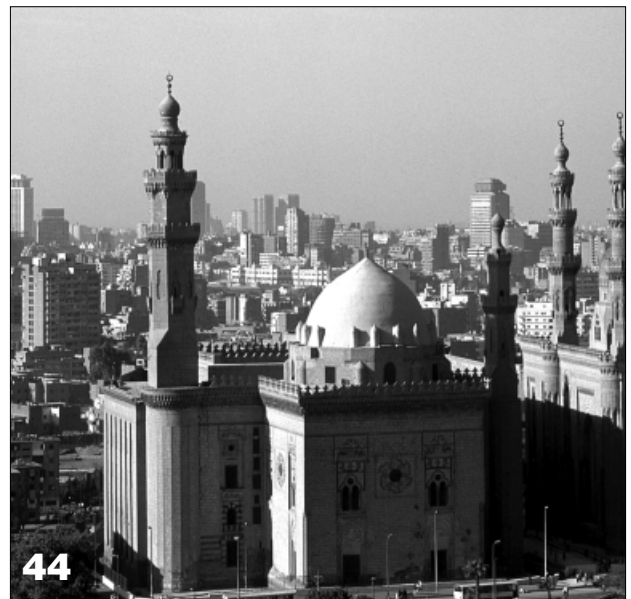
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COVER PHOTO *Sun Behind Clouds*, Courtesy D. Boone/Corbis

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## FROM OUR READERS

Due to the volume of letters we receive, not all can be printed, and all letters are subject to condensation. Letters printed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the SGI-USA or *Living Buddhism*. Please include signature, mailing address and telephone number with all correspondence. Mail to: Letters, Living Buddhism, 606 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401 or e-mail: [LivingB1@aol.com](mailto:LivingB1@aol.com)

### Facing North

(for my mother, residing in the Pacific Northwest)

The alder family gently sway,  
A dance unites with winter's wind;  
White bark stark against skies gray,  
That drift on by while facing North.

Dark green moss amidst the ferns  
Shroud the bearded old ones lie;  
Their lives gone now, not to cry,  
Give other little ones a turn.

Remembrance of the summer past,  
Results of parent energy;  
Not to hide among the leaves,  
The bird nests there for all to see.

There's no time left to criticize  
A nurtured past's maternal care.  
As I sit and contemplate  
Appreciation's all I have.

A mother's love still blesses me,  
As cold rain drops remind me of  
The wondrous days of childhood dreams  
That drift on by while facing North.

JOE CROOKS,  
San Diego

### Encouragement

IT is always amazing to me that encouragement comes out of the universe exactly when your life needs it the most. Thank you for publishing the article on Michael Goodman's experience with photography in the February 1999 issue of *Living Buddhism*.

Recently, I have been struggling with my own practice and which direction to take in a career transition. President Ikeda's guidance, "I have a mission, mine alone, You too have a mission only you can fulfill," has demonstrated to me the path that I need to follow. Thank you very much.

JEFF GUASCO,  
San Francisco

## Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Frequently Cited Sources

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

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

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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. In association with the SGI, the SGI-USA works in tandem with members around the world. On an international scale, the SGI centers its activities on the human potentialities for individual happiness and global peace and prosperity. Rooted in the life-affirming philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin, SGI members share a profound commitment to the values of peace, culture and education.

These values are expressed in the SGI Charter, which embodies core beliefs in the ideal of world citizenship, the spirit of tolerance and the safeguarding of fundamental human rights.

The SGI-USA applies Buddhist principles through a nationwide network of grass-roots activities centering primarily on neighborhood discussion groups. Learn more about the SGI-USA, or find a discussion group in your area by calling our national office in Santa Monica, CA 90401-1503: (310) 451-8811. Check out our Web page at: <http://www.sgi-usa.org>

# An Antidote to Violence

**A**S media images of bombing in Yugoslavia and of the misery of refugees in Kosovo were becoming part of our daily consciousness, new pictures of murder and mayhem assaulted us. This time, it was from closer to home: at a high school campus in Colorado, twelve students and one teacher were killed by two young men, who then took their own lives. It was a shocking and tragic event, that brought sudden horror and sadness to thousands of lives.

The national shock and intensive media focus on this incident at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, however, belies the fact that every day, on average, a dozen or more youths in America lose their lives to gun violence. Because it is not often covered by the media, the weight of this ongoing, mostly inner-city tragedy is lost to those who do not live in its midst. In any case, I hope we can all take this most recent event as a chance to reflect deeper than ever before on the problem of violence in our society.

Reports that followed the Colorado incident speculated that this killing rampage was a form of retaliation, an act of revenge. The two boys who did the shooting had been picked on or ostracized by other students at the school, it was said. It is not the first time in recent years that such motivation—being bullied, picked on or ostracized—has been reported as a factor leading to tragic displays of violence by students.

**President Ikeda  
equates the solution  
to this identity crisis  
to the formation of a  
new cosmology—a  
refreshed view of life  
and the universe.**

What could possibly make a young person, or anyone, for that matter, respond with such viciousness? What leads to the ongoing violence that has become epidemic in many of our communities? A wide range of causes have been cited—a society that increasingly glorifies violence; violence as entertainment; a general decline in empathy, the ability to respect or appreciate the feelings of others; and the easy availability of weapons.

I believe that a good part of the cause lies in the realm of self-identity, or sense of self-worth. In his peace proposal for 1999, carried in this issue, SGI President Ikeda addresses the identity crisis facing the world today.

Reading this, it occurred to me that when people base their identity, their sense of self, on something that is neither solid, permanent nor meaningful, they become vulnerable to any influence or change that might upset their self-image. When young people in the process of forming their self-identity begin to define themselves based on externals—image, acceptance by peers, status, possessions, etc.—they may be particularly at risk.

Having these things threatened becomes the same as having one's very life threatened. From the outside, there is no real threat. But from the inside, the perceived threat is catastrophic—the destruction or death of the "self."

Without a solid sense of self, people tend to feel vulnerable in social settings; they become withdrawn, close their hearts, and try to secure themselves in false courage or bravado. To bolster this superficial courage in the face of crumbling self-esteem, they resort to attitudes and behavior that are more and more disdainful of others, and finally destructive.

Violence does not always express itself physically. In an article recently published in the *SGI Graphic*, Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mohandas K. (Mahatma) Gandhi, refers to his grandfather's designation of two kinds of violence—physical and passive (nonphysical). Arun Gandhi goes on to comment: "The relationship between passive violence and physical violence is the same as the relationship between gasoline and fire. Acts of passive violence generate anger in the victim, and since the victim has not learned how to use anger positively, he or she abuses anger and generates physical violence."

Reading this made me feel once again how important it is to be vigilant against all kinds of violence—particularly, to be aware of and avoid our own use of passive violence against anyone. Open-hearted dialogue—efforts to break down the barriers of closed hearts—I feel, is the opposite of passive violence. It is the antidote to violence. The purpose of our Buddhist activities is to conduct dialogue that enables people to develop a solid self-identity, a sense of self-worth that is impervious to external conditions or the negative opinions of others. Buddhism calls this the "greater self."

In his peace proposal, President Ikeda equates the solution to this identity crisis to the formation of a new cosmology—a refreshed view of life and the universe. The view that is needed, he stresses, is that embodied by the Bodhisattvas of the Earth depicted in the Lotus Sutra.

He writes: "What the Lotus Sutra describes as a Bodhisattva of the Earth is a person committed to the work of restoring a sense of cosmology to contemporary society. In concrete terms, this means being a master of the art of dialogue and a standard-bearer of soft power."

I cannot help thinking that in the case of violent children, having had someone to talk to—someone they could trust deeply and open their hearts to—might have prevented a tragedy. Soft power means the determination, persistence and strength of compassion necessary to help people open their hearts. Violence, I believe, is the ultimate expression of a closed heart.

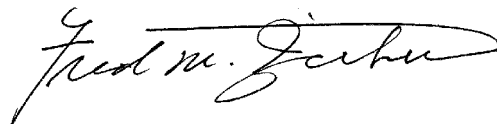
It may seem like a roundabout path, but striving to awaken this spirit of a bodhisattva within ourselves and others through discussion is the most direct solution to violence in our world. Nurturing real self-worth—a sense of self that is rooted in the life of the universe, rooted in eternity, and fully cognizant of its deep connection with the lives of others—is our aim as Buddhists.

As Nichiren Daishonin encourages us, "Once you realize that your own life is the Mystic Law, you will realize that so are the lives of all others."

And it is our strong and relentless prayer for the happiness of others, for the peace and betterment of society, that serves to strengthen and deepen this realization.

The Daishonin also states, "If you care anything about your personal security, you should first of all pray for order and tranquillity throughout the four quarters of the land, should you not?" (MW-2 [2nd ed.], 43). And President Ikeda comments on this passage in *The New Human Revolution*, saying, "The key to establishing peace and prosperity in our world, as expressed here, lies in the human heart—in people's prayer for order and tranquillity in society—and in each person establishing a solid self-identity through the process of human revolution."

Most crucial, I feel, is how we each respond to our awareness of the heightening state of violence in our world and in our communities. To what extent can we seek and grasp the spirit of a Bodhisattva of the Earth that President Ikeda speaks of? I pray that each of us will redouble our efforts to talk with and encourage others, particularly our younger friends, and together with them establish a firm self-identity that will serve as a fortress of peace for society and humankind. Nothing will match the joy and satisfaction we stand to gain by doing so. □



Fred M. Zaitso  
SGI-USA General Director

## Study Material for May • June

# “Letter to Lord Toki”

*The following text of Nichiren Daishonin’s “Letter to Lord Toki” and accompanying commentary are taken from SGI President Ikeda’s book, Learning From the Goshō: The Eternal Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 143–53.*

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**I** HAVE received one unlined kimono. Among the Buddha’s disciples there was one monk who, when the Buddha was in a place where there was famine and was restricted in his activities because of the shortages, sold his clerical robes and gave the money that he received to the Buddha.

The Buddha asked him where the money had come from. So the monk told him how he had acquired it, relating everything exactly as it had happened.

The Buddha then declined the offering, saying: “The surplice is the Dharma robe for the enlightenment of all Buddhas over the three existences. I do not have the power to requite such an offering.” So the monk asked, “Then what should I do with the money that I received for my surplice?” In response, the Buddha asked him, “Do you have a dear mother?” When the monk replied that he did, the Buddha told him, “You ought to offer this money from the surplice to your mother.”

The monk then said to Shakyamuni: “The Buddha is the most venerable being in the threefold world. He is the eye of all living beings. Even if it were a robe broad enough to wrap in itself the

entire universe, or a surplice large enough to cover the earth, the Buddha is certainly worthy of such an offering. My mother is as ignorant as a cow and more thoughtless than a sheep. How could she possibly be worthy of the offering of a surplice?"

The Buddha replied: "Who gave birth to you? Your mother did. Doesn't she therefore fully deserve to receive the offering of this surplice?"

This unlined kimono was a present given by a merciful mother, more than 90 years old, to you, her beloved son [Toki Jonin]. She must have strained her eyes and expended her life to make it.

As the son, you must have sent it to me knowing that it would be difficult for you to repay the debt for this robe. And it will also be difficult for me, Nichiren, to repay it. Even so, I do not think it would be proper for me to return it.

That's because if I wear this robe and report these matters in detail before the god of the sun, then they will without fail be known to Taishaku, Bonten and all the Buddhist gods. It is but one robe, but all heavenly deities throughout the universe will surely acknowledge your meritorious conduct. Like dew joining the ocean, or soil being added to the earth, your good fortune will not be lost in lifetime after lifetime, nor decay in world after world.

With my deep respect,

Nichiren

The fifth day of the second month (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 968)

## **Noblest Are Those Who Love Humanity**

**S**hakyamuni Buddha was a traveler. Throughout his life, he was continually active and on the move.

"I will visit that place—for there are people there." Spurring himself to action, he walked on, his gaze fixed on the distant horizon. Shakyamuni sincerely loved human beings.

As he made his way through each place, he must have thoroughly enjoyed encountering new

friends and discovering new qualities and virtues in old friends. Transcending all superficial differences, he drew out each person's goodwill and created heart-to-heart bonds of benevolence. Weaving such a spiritual fabric was undoubtedly his greatest joy. His

**Sickness is not merely a physical phenomenon; it invariably signals the presence of spiritual malady, too. In seeking to cure someone's illness, we should spare no effort, leave no stone unturned.**

spirit was that of a true champion of humanism.

A Buddhist text relates how Shakyamuni once came upon an abandoned sick man. Shakyamuni would not forsake him. He approached the man, who was filthy, and warmly comforted him. Helping him up, Shakyamuni led him outdoors and washed him. While the man was bathing, Shakyamuni even changed his bedding. Those observing this wondered why the Buddha was going to such lengths for the sick man. "If you wish to serve the Buddha," Shakyamuni told them, "then you should tend to the sick."<sup>1</sup> This is a well-known anecdote.

Sickness is not merely a physical phenomenon; it invariably signals the presence of spiritual malady, too. In seeking to cure someone's illness, we should spare no effort, leave no stone unturned. In the above instance, Shakyamuni's intention was probably to indicate that the path of Buddhism lies solely in working for and taking action among people.

Because Shakyamuni loved people, many gathered around him, drawn by his thoroughly humane conduct. And, naturally, the atmosphere around him was always lively and bright. The same was true of Nichiren Daishonin. In

his presence, people doubtless felt free to voice their innermost thoughts and feelings.

The Daishonin was of course a strict mentor and teacher. But at the same time, from his many letters, we can see that people felt absolute assurance in confiding in him. He knew everything about them.

In the Daishonin's presence, even adults would become as honest and open as children. Almost without realizing it, they would reveal their genuine, unaffected selves, their true faces.

Toki Jonin was one such follower. From the Daishonin's letters to him, we can infer that Toki Jonin must have been very concerned about his mother. And the Daishonin respected and treasured his feelings. He gave him the support and encouragement he needed to conduct himself with true filial devotion toward his mother.

In the letter we are studying this time,<sup>2</sup> we can sense the Daishonin's immense spirit of love and humanity.

**Among the Buddha's disciples there was one monk who, when the Buddha was in a place where there was famine and was restricted in his activities because of the shortages, sold his clerical**

**robes and gave the money that he received to the Buddha....**

**The Buddha replied: "Who gave birth to you? Your mother did. Doesn't she therefore fully deserve to receive the offering of this surplice?" (Go-sho Zenshu, p. 968)**

This episode vividly conveys the humanism of Buddhism. It portrays the spirit of a disciple who wants to assist his mentor, and the concern of the mentor for the disciple as well as the disciple's mother. It is a beautiful story.

It may be that, by rights, a monk was not supposed to sell his clerical robes under any circumstances. Still, the disciple took this action to support his mentor, even if it meant being reprimanded. While fully appreciating the spirit of his disciple, the Buddha tells him in effect: "I am not worthy to receive this precious offering. And, there is someone more suitable than I: that is your mother.

"Is there anyone more noble than your mother? You are carrying out Buddhist practice and will eventually become a Buddha. Therefore, to treasure the mother who gave you birth is itself Buddhism." Buddhism teaches such true filial virtue.

Elsewhere, the Daishonin tells another major disciple, Nanjo Tokimitsu:

One's debt to his or her father is so great as to make Mount Sumeru appear small. One's debt to his or her mother is so profound as to make even the ocean seem shallow. You should set your mind on repaying your debt of gratitude to your father and mother. (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1527)

I am reminded here of President Toda's "Precepts for Youth." Mr. Toda cried out to youth: "Stand tall! Join the battle with me!":

We must fight with love for the people. Today, there are many youth who don't even love their

parents, so how can they love others? Our struggle is for human revolution—to surmount our lack of compassion and develop in ourselves the mercy of the Buddha.<sup>3</sup>

President Toda was very strict with young people who were disrespectful toward their parents.

Shakyamuni cherished the image he had of his mother (who is said to have died when he was seven days old) and treasured his adoptive mother. The Daishonin also treasured his mother and successfully prayed for her life to be extended when she was ill.

In the above passage, the mentor teaches a disciple who thinks his mother is ignorant and worthless that this is far from the case.

The noblest person in the world is the one with the greatest love for the people. A truly wise person is not someone who orders others to treat him or her deferentially, but someone who teaches through words and actions that each person, as well as that person's mother, is vitally important. The disciple here, suddenly grasping the immense warmth of his mentor's spirit, must have felt he was gazing upon the sun's brilliance.

The heart of one person moves that of another. A Greek philosopher teaches that hatred of language and ideas leads to hatred of humanity.<sup>4</sup> If your heart is closed, then the doors to other people's hearts will also shut tight. On the other hand, someone who makes all those around him or her into allies, bathing them in the sunlight of spring, as it were, will be treasured by all.

A Buddhist's way of life has to embody such clear and natural reasoning. The Buddha transmits the heart's sunlight universally to all beings.

Even though we strive to treat everyone with love and compassion, since we are ordinary people, it is only natural that we will have likes and dislikes. There is no need for us to struggle to make ourselves fond of people we find disagreeable. In our work as emissaries of the Buddha, however, we must not let our thoughts or actions be colored by any discrimination or favoritism.

Through offering sincere prayer and conducting earnest dialogue, all of you are working to open the lives of people whose hearts are



If your heart is closed, then the doors to other people's hearts will also shut tight. On the other hand, someone who makes all those around him or her into allies, bathing them in the sunlight of spring, as it were, will be treasured by all.

closed tight like clams. Your actions are noble.

Why do you suppose the Daishonin brings up this episode to Toki Jonin, devoting two-thirds of this short letter to it? The reason becomes clear as we keep reading.

### No Effort Is Wasted

**This unlined kimono was a present given by a merciful mother, more than 90 years old, to you, her beloved son [Toki Jonin]. She must have strained her eyes and expended her life to make it....**

**Like dew joining the ocean, or soil being added to the earth, your good fortune will not be lost in lifetime after lifetime, nor decay in world after world.**

**With my deep respect,  
Nichiren**

**The fifth day of the second month**

**(Gosho Zenshu, p. 968)**

When the Daishonin saw the robe that Lord Toki had sent, he must have fondly recalled the face of his follower's mother. The Daishonin is said to have spent time at Toki Jonin's manor after the Matsubagayatsu Persecution in

1260. Probably he had grown close to Lord Toki's mother.

More than ten years had passed since then. In those days, a person over 90 would have been extremely long-lived. The Daishonin must have been concerned about how difficult needlework would have been for Toki Jonin's mother. His sentiments are expressed in the sentence, "She must have strained her eyes and expended her life to make it."

Toki Jonin was 60 at the time. But even after reaching an advanced age, the parent, as they say, is still the parent and the child is still the child. Toki Jonin no doubt wondered how he could reply to his mother's warm consideration.

"That's it," he probably thought, "I'll offer the robe to the Daishonin. Both he and my mother will be pleased." While there is no way of knowing whether this was his



intent, the unlined kimono was delivered to the Daishonin.

The Daishonin's sense of gratitude may well have been accompanied by some hesitation. He couldn't nonchalantly accept an item that was invested with such profound love. The tale that the Daishonin relates in this reply sheds light on his feelings.

Although he was reluctant to accept the garment, to return it would amount to rejecting the sincere spirit with which it had been offered. Under the circumstances, the Daishonin acknowledges Toki Jonin's sincerity and conveys the greatest thanks and encouragement to the latter's mother.

The Daishonin says that by wearing this robe, Bonten, Taishaku and all heavenly deities would know the ardent spirit of mother and son in making the offering. He says that the Buddhist gods in the ten directions would definitely protect them. And he concludes the letter telling them that their benefit in making such an offering would illuminate their lives in lifetime after lifetime, eternally.

What joy the mother and son must have felt on receiving this response! Toki Jonin, in his joy at conducting himself in the most dutiful manner toward his mother, must have felt the deepest gratitude to the Daishonin.

"What matters is one's heart" (MW-5, 289). Here we see a beautiful exchange take place: a mother who undertakes painstaking effort out of concern for her son; a disciple who is motivated by concern for his mother and his mentor; and the mentor who, out of his

concern for the mother and son, does his utmost to bring out the best in all their efforts. This is the world of Buddhism.

The year after this letter was sent, in February 1276, Toki Jonin's mother died as Jonin, his wife and other relatives watched over her. According to one account, she was 93 when she died.

Toki Jonin held an important position in society [as a vassal of Lord Chiba, governor of Shimosa province (present-day Chiba Prefecture), with a rank comparable to that of a steward] and was also a central figure among the Daishonin's followers.

Toki Jonin's wife also looked after his mother attentively.

One of his mother's grandchildren struggled for kosen-rufu at the Daishonin's side, and later two of her grandchildren were active under Nikko Shonin. Embraced by the mercy of the original Buddha, the life of Toki Jonin's mother was surely one of great satisfaction and victory. It was the drama of a woman who, though ordinary and without any special distinction, lived earnestly and realized victory. Buddhism exists to help such valiant individuals become happy.

When we base our lives on the great wish for kosen-rufu, regarding each effort "like dew entering the ocean, or soil being added to the earth," then our petty lesser selves give way to the greater self that shines with eternal victory. Our every effort turns into an ocean of benefit, an earth of good fortune.

I hope each of you will be confident that—just as Nichiren

Daishonin promises—you have already entered this path. And that, therefore, you will treasure your heart of faith.

"Letter to Lord Toki," while short, is pervaded with warmth. In it, we glimpse a warm heart-to-heart exchange between Nichiren Daishonin and his followers. Because of their bond with the Daishonin and the sense of inner security that this brought, his followers could endure ordeals and struggle for kosen-rufu with all their might.

"How can I help others experience joy? How can I help them practice in high spirits and exert themselves?" It goes without saying that someone who gives no thought to these questions and does not respond to members' needs is not qualified to be a leader in the humane world of Buddhism.

Our practice has to be based on strong prayer for the happiness of each person. Donning Toki Jonin's robe, which was imbued with sincerity, the Daishonin, too, prayed to the Buddhist gods.

When we sincerely pray, without fail the Buddha wisdom to know how to encourage others will well forth. Our movement of kosen-rufu is to expand this world of encouragement.

*Illustrations by Blair Thornley*

1. *Vinaya-pitaka*: One section of the *tripitaka*, a collection of treatises on discipline.
2. "Toki Dono Gohenji" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 968), written in February 1275 when the Daishonin was 54.
3. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Works of Josei Toda), vol. 1, pp. 59–60.
4. Plato, "Phaedo" in *The Portable Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, ed. Scott Buchanan (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 238.

# Toki Jonin: A Man Worthy of Trust

**T**OKI Jonin (1216–1299?) was a steward of the Chiba clan, a samurai family group that was influential in the shogunate government. He lived in Wakamiya, Shimosa province (present-day Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture, near Tokyo on Japan's eastern seaboard). Because Nichiren Daishonin sent Jonin many letters concerning important Buddhist teachings, he is thought to have been well educated and well versed in Buddhism.

Jonin probably met the Daishonin in Kamakura or Shimosa around 1254—one year after the latter declared the establishment of his Buddhism—and took faith shortly thereafter. Jonin was one of the earliest converts to the Daishonin's Buddhism.

On the night of August 27, 1260, about one month after Nichiren Daishonin submitted his thesis “Risho Ankoku Ron”<sup>1</sup> to Hojo Tokiyori, a retired regent and de facto ruler of the shogunate

government, a band of Pure Land (Nembutsu) school zealots ambushed the Daishonin's cottage in Matsubagayatsu in Kamakura. Upon hearing of the incident, Jonin invited Nichiren Daishonin to his estate, where he stayed until the following year, spreading his teaching in the area.

Around this time, other significant followers such as Ota Jomyo and Soya Kyoshin are said to have taken faith. Through the efforts of the Daishonin and his followers, many people began to practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, and Jonin became a leader of the Shimosa area.

In September 1271, the Daishonin underwent his greatest persecutions. He was taken into custody, nearly beheaded at Tatsunokuchi, then exiled to remote Sado Island. Around the same time, the government also started cracking down on the Daishonin's followers. At every important juncture during this turbulent

time, the Daishonin sent a letter to Toki Jonin.

After the failed execution attempt at Tatsunokuchi near Kamakura, the Daishonin was transferred to the estate of the Honma clan in Echi, Sagami province (present-day Atsugi City, Kanagawa Prefecture). The very next day, the Daishonin sent Jonin a letter titled “Letter from Echi,” the very first letter to be written by the Daishonin after the Tatsunokuchi Persecution.

In this letter he boldly shares his unflinching conviction and encourages his disciples: “The government's persecution of me has clearly demonstrated my faith in the Lotus Sutra. There is no doubt that the moon wanes and waxes and that the tide ebbs and flows. In my case, too, since punishment has already occurred, benefit must be forthcoming. What is there to lament?” (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 7, p. 17).

While the Daishonin was detained in Echi, some efforts were made to facilitate his pardon. However, the government decided to exile him to Sado. A concerned Jonin then dispatched an attendant to look after the Daishonin. After a long journey, the Daishonin's party arrived in Teradomari, Echigo province. From there, he sent Jonin another letter, known as "Letter from Teradomari," at the beginning of which he states: "Those resolved to seek the Way should all gather and listen to the contents of this letter" (MW-4, 97). The letter offers encouragement to the Daishonin's disciples who might have been shocked and confused by their teacher's exile. During this time, the government jailed five of the Daishonin's followers and harassed many others. Before departing from Teradomari, the Daishonin instructed the attendant Jonin had sent to return.

FROM Teradomari, the Daishonin was ferried to Sado. There, he was assigned to a small hut at Tsukahara on the northern part of the island, a place particularly exposed to winter cold. After arriving at Tsukahara, the Daishonin sent Jonin another letter, which he concludes by pointing out the importance of dedicating oneself to the spread of Buddhism despite great difficulties: "Life is limited, and we must not begrudge it. What we should aspire to, after all, is the Buddha land" (MW-5, 132).

During those difficult times, the Daishonin continued to write to Jonin. Clearly he entrusted Jonin

with the task of communicating to his followers their teacher's circumstances and, more important, of sharing the Daishonin's encouragement to them to maintain their faith despite relentless persecutions.

During the Daishonin's exile on Sado, many believers renounced their faith, and some openly criticized him. Under those difficult circumstances, Jonin remained steadfast and continued to support the Daishonin through offerings such as coins and clothing. The Daishonin sent many important writings to Jonin from Sado, such as: "The True Object of Worship" (MW-1, 45–83); "Letter From Sado" (MW-1, 33–42); "Shingon Shoshu Imoku" [The Errors of the True Word and Other Schools] (*Gosho Zenshu*, pp. 139–41); and "The Votary of the Lotus Sutra Will Meet Persecution" (MW-6, 77–83). No one among the Daishonin's followers received more letters than Jonin during the Sado exile.

The most noteworthy among those letters is "The True Object of Worship." In this writing, the Daishonin explains the Gohonzon as the fundamental object of worship that enables all people to awaken to their innate Buddha nature and points out that the direct path to enlightenment lies in embracing the Gohonzon.

Since the Daishonin reveals the object of worship in terms of the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in "The True Object of Worship," the letter is regarded as one of the Daishonin's most important writings. During his exile on Sado, he wrote another important letter called "The Opening of the Eyes,"

in which he explains the object of worship in terms of the Person. He sent this letter to another trusted lay follower, Shijo Kingo. The fact that Jonin and Kingo received those important letters from the Daishonin during his exile indicates that they were mainstays of the order at a time of great difficulty.

In the postscript of "Letter from Sado," the Daishonin states: "There is very little writing paper here in the province of Sado, and to write to you individually would take too long. However, if even one person fails to hear from me, it will cause resentment. Therefore, I want all sincere believers to meet and read this letter together for encouragement" (MW-1, 42). The Daishonin's life on Sado was made extremely difficult by severe weather as well as by the lack of basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and writing materials. Under these circumstances, he relied upon Jonin to communicate his encouragement to the other believers.

ON March 26, 1274, after the nearly two-and-half-year exile on Sado, Nichiren Daishonin was pardoned and returned to Kamakura. On April 8, he met Heino Saemon, the powerful deputy chief of the Office of Military and Police Affairs, and remonstrated with the shogunate government for the last time. On May 12, the Daishonin left Kamakura and, on May 17, he arrived at Mount Minobu. He penned a letter that same day to Jonin, describing his journey. And on May 24, he sent

**“It is the power of the bow that determines the flight of the arrow, the might of the dragon that controls the movement of the clouds, and the strength of the wife that guides the actions of her husband.”**

Jonin another important letter, “Hokke Shuyo Sho” [The Essentials of the Lotus Sutra] (GZ, 331–38). In this letter, the Daishonin clarifies that Nam-myohorenge-kyo of the Three Great Secret Laws is the correct teaching to be spread in the Latter Day of the Law.

**T**HUS it is clear that at every crucial turning point in his life—the Tatsunokuchi Persecution, the Sado exile and his arrival at Mount Minobu—the Daishonin made certain to write to Jonin. This demonstrates the great and consistent trust he placed in Jonin.

After the Daishonin moved to Mount Minobu in May 1274, Jonin continued to send offerings to his teacher. Every time the Daishonin received those offerings, he would write back, expressing his appreciation and explaining the great benefit that one receives from supporting the spread of Buddhism. For example, when Jonin sent the Daishonin a robe that his elderly mother had made, he wrote back: “This unlined kimono was a present given by a merciful mother, more than 90 years old, to you, her beloved son. She must have strained her eyes and expended her life to make it. As her son, you must have sent it to me knowing that it would be difficult for you to repay the debt you owe her for this robe.

And it will also be difficult for me, Nichiren, to repay my debt” (GZ, 968). In the same letter, the Daishonin goes on to tell Jonin that his sincerity in offering the robe would elicit great protection from the heavenly deities—an allegorical expression that the Daishonin often uses to describe the protective workings of one’s environment.

In February 1276, Jonin’s elderly mother died. Though she lived a long life, her death caused Jonin great pain and sadness. Later he visited the Daishonin at Mount Minobu, bringing his mother’s ashes. He told his teacher that his mother passed away in peace, and that his wife had extended warm care to the ailing mother until her last moment. He also told the Daishonin that now his wife was also suffering from illness. After receiving much encouragement from the Daishonin and praying for his mother’s repose, Jonin left Mount Minobu.

On that occasion, the Daishonin wrote a letter to Jonin’s wife, praising her support in sending her husband to Minobu. He also tells her how much appreciation Jonin has for all her efforts to look after his mother. The Daishonin states at the beginning of the letter: “It is the power of the bow that determines the flight of the arrow, the might of the dragon that controls the movement of the

clouds, and the strength of the wife that guides the actions of her husband” (MW-7, 125).

The Daishonin goes on to state in the same letter: “Lord Toki has told me that, while grieved at his mother’s death, he was grateful that she passed away peacefully and that you gave her such attentive care. He said joyfully that he would never be able to forget this in any lifetime to come” (MW-7, 125). The Daishonin may well have sensed that Jonin was not sensitive enough about his wife’s efforts toward her mother-in-law. In this letter, the Daishonin attempts to nurture the affection between the husband and the wife and bring them closer.

**R**EGARDING her illness, the Daishonin writes to Jonin’s wife: “You also are a practitioner of the Lotus Sutra and your faith is like the waxing moon or the rising tide. Be deeply convinced, then, that your illness cannot possibly persist and that your life cannot fail to be extended! Take care of yourself and do not burden your mind with grief” (MW-7, 126). Those passages eloquently attest to the Daishonin’s detailed concerns and warm affection for his followers.

In another letter written to Jonin, the Daishonin states: “Since I think of your wife’s sickness as my own, I am praying to heaven day

and night [for her recovery]" (GZ, 978). The Daishonin's care and encouragement to his followers were not mere words. He sincerely prayed for the good health and happiness of his beloved disciples. This is precisely why his words of encouragement struck the deepest chords in the hearts of his followers. Prayer was the source and, at the same time, the expression of the Daishonin's compassion and humanity.

**W**HEN Jonin left Mount Minobu, he forgot his copy of the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin had it sent back to him along with a letter. In this letter, rather than taking him to task for such an important oversight, the Daishonin humorously and affectionately refers to Jonin as "the most forgetful person in Japan" after relating episodes about the forgetfulness of famous persons in India and China (GZ, 976). The Daishonin then goes on to state that when Jonin chants daimoku and brings forth his Buddhahood, his mother as well will eradicate her negative karma and attain enlightenment (GZ, 977–78).

In September 1278, two years after his mother's death, Jonin engaged in a debate about Buddhism with Ryosho-bo, a scholar of the Tendai School who resided in Shimosa province. In the debate, Jonin refuted the Tendai priest. Jonin's victory demonstrates that his understanding of Buddhism surpassed members of the Buddhist clergy.

When Jonin wrote to the Daishonin about this, the Daishonin

expanded further on the debated points. At the end of the letter, however, the Daishonin instructs Jonin not to have more debates with other priests: "From now on, you need not hold debates in Shimosa. Having defeated Ryosho-bo and Shi'nen-bo, were you to debate with others, it would only dilute the effect. I hear that these priests Ryosho-bo and Shi'nen-bo have been slandering me for some years now. These mosquitoes and gadflies, as it were, are such fools that they groundlessly revile Nichiren, who is like the lion king, when they have neither listened to nor seen him" (MW-7, 133).

In the wake of Jonin's impressive victory, the Daishonin probably sensed a potential pitfall that he may start regarding Buddhist debates as a primary activity while neglecting his basic practice of chanting daimoku and sharing Buddhism with others. Here once again we can see the Daishonin's exacting care and concern for Jonin.

Even after the Daishonin moved to Mount Minobu, he continued to send Jonin many letters containing his important teachings. For example, Jonin received, among others: "Hokke Shuyo Sho" [The Essentials of the Lotus Sutra] (GZ, 331–38); "On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice" (MW-6, 211–28); and "A Sage Perceives the Three Existences of Life" (MW-2, 257–60). Jonin received all together more than forty letters from Nichiren Daishonin.

While this fact may indicate that Jonin excelled in understanding Buddhist doctrine, it points to something more important. The

Daishonin probably thought that Jonin's stable social standing and his trustworthy character made him most suited to guarantee the safekeeping of those important writings for posterity.

**E**NTRUSTED by the Daishonin with this important task, Jonin made sure that these writings were kept safely, protected from humidity or other damaging factors. Prior to his death, Jonin even wrote a document concerning the safekeeping of the Daishonin's writings. In this document, Jonin strongly forbade the removal of the Daishonin's writings. Anyone who wished to read them, Jonin warns, should handle them carefully and read them in the building where they are kept. Jonin also strictly charges those responsible to take utmost care in preserving the writings after his death.

Jonin never forgot the importance of the Daishonin's writings for perpetuating his teachings. The existence and availability of many of the Daishonin's writings today are due to Jonin's sincere efforts to preserve them. □

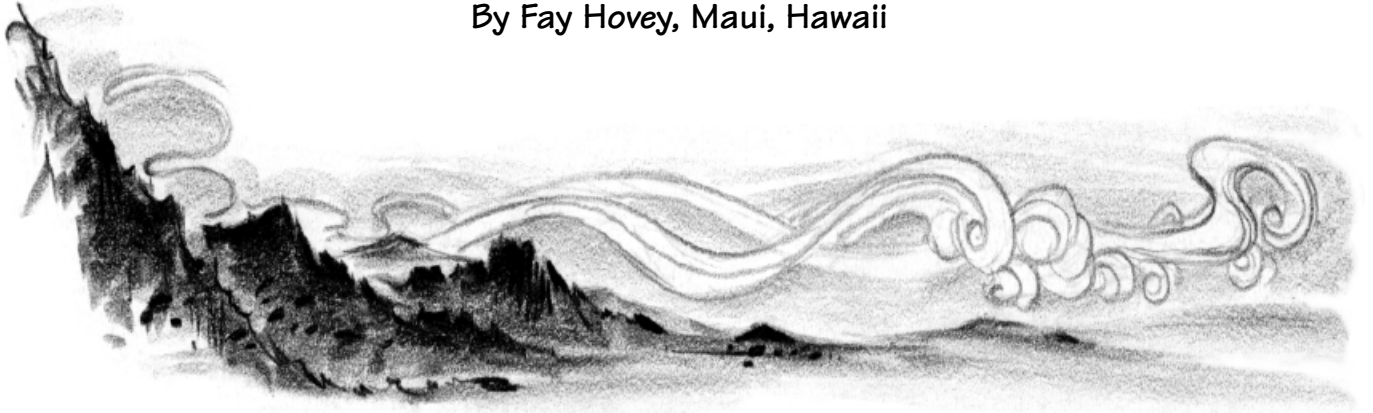
*Compiled by the SGI-USA  
Study Department*

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1. "Rissho Ankoku Ron": "On Securing the Peace of the Land Through the Propagation of True Buddhism," submitted to the government July 16, 1260. In this treatise, the Daishonin teaches that the people should abandon erroneous teachings and embrace the true Law, which is the basis for establishing a peaceful land.

# Toki Jonin: “My Story”

By Fay Hovey, Maui, Hawaii



*This is a fictionalized first-person account of the thoughts of Toki Jonin, recipient of “Letter to Lord Toki,” our study material for May and June.*

THE scented wisps of cedar incense rose aloft, captured by the sunlight, as we all knelt chanting. I saw clouds billowing up against the mountains. Another day, yes, but a day I would never forget. It was the day of Nichiren Daishonin’s funeral service. As I sat before each follower holding the tray with small flakes of cedar for their offering, my heart contracted inside my chest. He was gone. What would happen to us all? Did we have the strength and unity to carry on without him?

After the completion of the ceremony, I once again faced the Gohonzon, his great gift to humankind. I asked myself if I had really grasped everything he tried to teach us. So much of my life had been filled by his words, taken by this whirlwind of a man,

bound to this sage who spoke such unmistakable truth.

There are people who are like great lamps, great bonfires that draw us near, where things seem more real and, yes, even dangerous. There on the knife-edge of life and death, it is their certainty, their profound confidence that holds us, and when they are gone, it lies with each of us to keep the lamp burning.

Even though we knew that death would come for him as he grew weaker, the reality of his passing was finally upon us. No more would we journey to Minobu to see him. Truly, I would have given anything just to sit with him once again as in the old days. It is hard to describe in words the impact he had on my life. I felt the deep sorrow and solemn determination in the

room. We had been a part of history, and I was certain that in the distant future, people would look back on our times and say that Nichiren was not only a major force in Buddhist thinking, he was one of history’s most remarkable people.

I knew this with a certainty and felt that it was my important duty to protect the writings he had sent me over the years. I had taken great care with their storage, seeing that they were aired regularly and maintained with respect. Oh, what avid interest and urgency they had ignited in me when they arrived—letters written hastily from Teradomori before he left for Sado or long treatises from his freezing hut on that remote island, many times with instructions to read them with his other followers.

Even when he was separated from us, we felt his life force reaching out to us, every part of him striving to communicate the truth that was in him. He gave us everything he had, and the period after his death was like the silence that falls after a magnificent storm. For all my worldly success I felt uncharacteristically unsure.

I looked at my old friend Shijo Kingo, whose face was stern but eyes rimmed in red. I saw the backs of priests straight in prayer as they recited the Lotus Sutra. Two of them family members—my stepson and my son. What a journey we had made together. I remember when Nichiren stayed with us for a time after he narrowly escaped being taken or killed at Matsubagayatsu. It was then that we all became so close.

It was my great pleasure to walk with him around my estate, to pause together in some quiet spot and talk. It was good to know he was safe when he was there with us. I had a small temple built where he could preach. Those were good days, and all of us felt we would really change our world. The problem was that the more he was proven right, the more followers he attracted, and the more dangerous it became for him. I could not always protect him to my satisfaction.

I reflect often about how difficult it must have been for him to explain everything to us. How much easier it could have been for him to enjoy the fruits of his

enlightenment, installed in some comfortable temple in silken robes with an unlimited supply of writing materials and scribes to assist him. Instead he chose a hard road, fraught with real threats to his life, attacks by sword and the enmity of Hei no Saemon. He hid nothing from us. Even when he was eating snow at Minobu and pretending he was eating rice. Even when he was so sick he could barely hold a brush.

When Ota Jomyo, Shijo Kingo and myself were called before the High Court, accused of conspiring to create social unrest by following him, I thought I might lose my position, or worse be exiled myself. Yet, this was nothing compared to the privations of Sado and Minobu, to the ice that thickly layered his hut in winter.

That night, after the funeral, I sat late and the silence grew still yet more profound. Lighting fresh candles, I drew forth the letters he had written to me over the years, most of them on the humblest of papers. There were many letters to read, several large documents. Many nights, we had gathered in this very room. Quietly, followers would arrive so as not to draw attention. And we would sit together, reading his words, discussing them together. Following his directions, one of us would read it aloud, and somehow we found the courage to continue to chant, to face a ferocity of obstacles and live life afresh with a feeling we truly had something to live for.

Yet this night I chose to read one of the smaller, more personal letters he wrote me. I smiled down at his calligraphy, so strong and direct. It was a letter of appreciation he had written upon receiving an unlined kimono I had sent him. My mother had toiled long hours over it with her failing sight. Hundreds of small stitches, the fabric of the finest quality. For me, that robe was a symbol of all the attention she had devoted to raising and guiding her children. It was very precious to me, and it seemed proper to present it to the Daishonin. He would see it and know how much we cared for him. I felt him to be a part of my family.

Although he was gone, I felt his presence strongly, as if he were in the room with me still. Yes, there were many letters to read. And I would see to it that the ones in my possession would survive and be passed down for others to gather and read together.

I pondered into the night, imagining the followers to come in the future. Would they think of us and our rough and tumultuous age? Would they understand what it took for us to follow Nichiren and embrace his teachings? A man who could take on the entire military government of the nation with the courage of a lion. A man who would take up a brush and write with such tender consideration, seeing beyond the gift into the very heart of the giver.

*Illustration by Ed Lee*



1999 Peace Proposal

# Toward a Culture of Peace A Cosmic View

Daisaku Ikeda  
President  
Soka Gakkai International  
January 26, 1999

**T**HE door is about to open on the twenty-first century, the start of the third millennium of the Common Era. Will it witness a continuation of the war and inhuman cruelty that have devastated the twentieth? Or will it truly be a new age with expansive horizons of peace and hope for the future of humanity? We stand now at a major crossroads. What kind of light can dispel the deep gloom and illumine the expanses of the next thousand years? This is a question we must ask ourselves in all earnestness.



In November 1998, as autumn deepened, I discussed this topic with the Kirghiz author Chinghiz Aitmatov in Japan's ancient capital city, Kyoto. He sternly questioned the superiority of the twentieth century over the nineteenth. Nineteenth-century writers like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Pushkin created a framework of spiritual

standards that will remain valid into the twenty-first century. Mr. Aitmatov was asking whether writers of our century have equaled their achievements. Similar doubts may be entertained in connection with twentieth-century philosophers and artists.

Of course, as Mr. Aitmatov pointed out, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Pushkin never experienced the tumultuous events that determined the history of our century, events like World War II, communism, and *perestroika*. I was deeply impressed by what he had to say because, without bowing to the oppression of Soviet totalitarianism and through his own literary efforts, Mr. Aitmatov himself has consistently pointed out the way human beings ought to live and the path humanity must follow, issues that I have also grappled with for many years.

Undeniably, the twentieth century has benefited us greatly in the form of the many advantages of technological progress. In some instances, however, disregarding humanity, progress has launched on an arbitrary path with frequently tragic consequences.

Growing more pronounced as time passes, this tendency has stimulated increasing concern in some quarters. For example, the possibility of applying cloning technology to human beings has triggered intensifying debate about bioethics—the nature of life and human dignity.

In these and other connections, a sternly critical examination of the extent to which so-called twentieth-century progress has actually contributed to human happiness must form a large part of our efforts to pioneer a broad path of hope into the next century. My actions are founded on the belief that this is humankind's great responsibility.

Josei Toda, my mentor and the second president of the Soka Gakkai, passionately longed to eliminate misery from the face of Earth. His fervent wish is the basis of my

In a July 1998 meeting with SGI President Ikeda, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali describes the “new isolationism” of humanity at the end of the twentieth century. People, he says, must look beyond the border of their own countries and be aware of international conditions. We cannot afford the tendency to withdraw into an exclusionary view of our individual regions.



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thought and action. During the crucial middle part of this century, Mr. Toda advocated a Buddhist humanism and instituted actions designed to stem the flow of human unhappiness. He insisted that all progress must take into consideration forecasts of conditions two hundred years in the future. At the same time, he exhorted us to use dialogue as a way of creating an enduring solidarity that embraces all of humankind.

My own efforts to discuss the most vital topics with informed and concerned people from all over the world are my response to Mr. Toda's exhortation. I am convinced that plotting a course for the coming century must entail both learning lessons from our own time and uncovering lasting spiritual treasures from the subterranean currents of history. To accomplish this, I have refused to be deterred in my efforts to enter into dialogue with representatives of all peoples on the basis of our common humanity.

The Japanese titles of many of the dialogues I have published in cooperation with leading thinkers, like the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, contain references to the twenty-first century. This choice of words reflects the kind of concern for the future Mr. Toda advocated half a century ago. For the past fifty years, I have always tried to take into consideration the state of human affairs a hundred or two hundred years in the future.

### The New Isolationism

WE may talk of a third millennium, but the mere change in calendar dates will not bring about a sudden change in the nature of the age. Only human will and action can create history and open up new horizons.

As we enter the new century, several problems demand our most urgent attention. In particular, economic globalization today proceeds at a furious pace. We must have the vision to orient it in

such a way as to contribute to the creation of a truly rich and diverse age—a global civilization. I would like to offer some ideas about how the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) movement can contribute to and have meaning for the realization of this aim.

In this connection, I am reminded of some keen observations made by former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali when we met in July 1998. This is how he summarized the spiritual landscape of humanity at the end of the century: In light of the globalization of financial, environmental, and health issues, domestic problems cannot be solved without addressing international ones. People must be interested, he said, not only in their own countries, but also in international conditions. They feel uneasy when confronted with the tide of internationalization, and withdraw into their own small “village” (region or state) and traditions, tending to avoid

encounters with foreigners. He called this a “new isolationism.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Boutros-Ghali describes the identity crisis of which many other well-informed people are aware. Unable to keep up with the ferocity and speed of globalization, people withdraw deeper and deeper inward, becoming blockaded within themselves. Buffeted by the storms of dizzying change, they desperately seek solid ground—a firm basis on which to live their lives. Surely, at the transition into a new century, this bleak spiritual landscape deserves at least as much attention as the steadily mounting accumulation of global problems. As it states in the preamble to the UNESCO constitution, people who want peace must first build “the defenses of peace” in their own hearts.

Incidentally, I would like to mention two books—both philosophical fantasies—that have attained great popularity during the past few years and which address this issue. One is *Sophie’s World*, by Jostein Gaarder; the other is *Running from Safety: An Adventure of the Spirit*, by Richard Bach. Both books prominently feature young boys and girls. Their easy, non-specialized language and structure as fantasies gradually lead the reader into profound philosophical realms involving questions like “Who are you? Where does the world come from?” (*Sophie’s World*)<sup>2</sup> and “Who we are and why we’re here” (*Running from Safety*).<sup>3</sup> Both focus closely on the themes of the basis for living and the journey in search of the self. These are fundamental philosophical themes

to which, in times of identity crisis, human beings have returned time and time again ever since Socrates. Now, too, at the end of the century, when we are beginning to waken from the nightmarish destruction caused by repeated ideological clashes, we are once more compelled to try to answer them.<sup>4</sup>

### The Japanese Identity Crisis

JAPAN’S failure to deal creatively with its own identity crisis holds important lessons for the rest of the world. It is true that Japan was remarkably successful in its pursuit of modernization given its late start. In the process, however, the Japanese have all too easily thrown away their traditions. The price of success has been an ever-deepening identity crisis. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that this is how a bizarre cult like Aum Shinrikyo,<sup>5</sup> propounding a preposterous dogma, could have seduced so many young graduates of Japan’s best educational institutes.

The search for the self is an essential human endeavor, but it must be pursued with utmost caution, as undreamed-of pitfalls may be encountered before the true self is reached.

Identity crises create a kind of vacuum, which nature is said to abhor. I am most deeply worried by the possibility that, unless the Japanese identity crisis is overcome, a new isolationism—to borrow Mr. Boutros-Ghali’s term—or nationalism will rush in to fill that vacuum.

I sounded an alarm against resurgent Japanese nationalism

some years ago. The danger has increased, at least to the extent that the magazine *Sekai* (World) published a special issue on “Grounds for a New Ultrationalism.”<sup>6</sup> I am even more worried that the people fighting against the tide of nationalism fail to demonstrate a sufficiently coherent vision to oppose it.

Recent times have shown a disturbing loss of confidence in the political process and a regression of political culture witnessed by low voter turnouts, swelling numbers of people without party affiliation, and gradual reduction of support for political parties. Politics is an occupation requiring skill in the use of language. Principles and policies are the sources of its very life. But politicians today abandon these things and are concerned only with political maneuvering and short-term gain. At one time, a politician’s word was his irrevocable bond. The value of that word now is in free fall. The coded pronouncements of politicians in the inner circles of Tokyo cannot possibly have the power to break the current deadlock or penetrate the darkness there and stir chords of response in the minds of the young.

It must be remembered that Japanese ultrationalism—in the horrendous form of militaristic fascism—arose during the years preceding World War II from the same kind of crisis of party politics. In the early part of the century, Taisho Democracy (named for the Taisho period, 1912–26) seemed to be making headway toward a two-party system consisting of the Rikken Seiyukai (Constitutional Party of Political

Friends) and the Minsei-to (Democratic Party). At just about that time, however, a combination of international and domestic factors, including collusion among politicians, bureaucrats, and big business and a still immature election system, caused politics to lose touch with the popular will. The people grew cynical and mistrustful of politics in general. And, in 1940, all political parties were forcibly absorbed into the government-controlled Taisei Yokusankai (Imperial Rule Assistance Association). All traces of Taisho Democracy, which had an active life of only eight years, vanished.

Recalling the oppression the Soka Gakkai suffered at the hands of the militarists, I insist that we must do everything possible to stop Japan from following that path again. Current cynicism and indifference toward politics suggest an impasse. Powerlessness and passivity must be challenged as they create the environment in which totalitarianism germinates and grows.

Obviously, it is essential that people awaken and develop strength and discerning powers of criticism and judgment. My mentor, President Toda, encouraged us to remain engaged in public affairs, and this is the basis for our ongoing grass-roots endeavors to raise people's awareness.

In addition to transforming people's attitudes, there is a clear need for systemic reform, especially reform of the electoral system. For more than fifty years since the end of World War II, cozy intimacy among politicians, bureaucrats,

and big business has characterized Japanese politics. That arrangement is now wearing thin. In spite of the political reform slogans that have shrilled in our ears for the last five or six years, the problem has proven easier to talk about than to solve. The single issue of electoral reform has made this clear. The attempt was made, but I doubt that one person in ten thinks the post-reform situation is an improvement.<sup>7</sup>

As a way out of the stalemate, I propose democratizing the way Japan chooses its leadership, especially the prime minister, who should speak for the whole nation. The time has come to consider either strengthening the prime minister's position and authority, as is the case with the German chancellor, or introducing direct elections for the prime minister, closer to American lines.

In almost no other industrialized nation is the leading politician so powerless or replaced so often as in Japan. If this condition is allowed to persist, all attempts to restore trust in politics and politicians will be useless.

A pressing reason is the imperative need for strong leadership now, as Japan faces a period of unprecedented change.

For decades after World War II, Japan had no diplomacy to speak of. During the period 1948–54, the cabinets of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida (1878–1967) forged a security pact with the United States under which Japan was allowed light nonnuclear armament. Since that time, Japanese governments have been called

upon to make virtually no decisive diplomatic choices. As long as vigorous American anti-communist policies were adhered to, Japan could not go far wrong. Politicians felt no need to concern themselves with independent decisions that would determine the fate of the nation.

The collapse of the Cold War international structure invalidated this arrangement. No longer comfortable in considering only the wishes of the United States, Japan is compelled to deal with the whole world, especially near neighbors like China, Russia, the Korean Peninsula, India, and Southeast Asia. Under such circumstances, it has become impossible to guide an economic superpower, as Japan is now, without a sense of global balance and resolute decisiveness.

Nonetheless, Japan sends a new prime minister to each international summit meeting, thus hindering the development of mutual confidence with other global leaders and depriving Japanese policies of the consistency essential to the formation of bonds of trust. Henry Kissinger once told a Japanese journalist that extensive dealings with the Japanese had taught him the difficulty of finding someone willing to make decisions and take responsibility for them.<sup>8</sup>

Introducing direct elections for the prime minister, for example, could break the present stalemate and give Japan popularly chosen, empowered leaders with fixed terms in office. Now is the time for this kind of bold rethinking.

### Theme Park or Particularism?

**T**URNING from the specific example of Japan, let us return to the new isolationism described by Mr. Boutros-Ghali. At its heart is an identity crisis. By overcoming that, we can achieve a globalization that moves beyond hegemonic imperatives and toward the political, social, and spiritual imperatives of the global civilization of the future.

When we met in July 1998, Mr. Boutros-Ghali emphasized to me the importance of democracy on a global scale. These ideas were included in the report “Agenda for Democracy” which he issued just prior to completing his term as UN secretary-general.

Democracy must be extended to all the nations of the world over the next twenty or thirty years, he stressed. Without an international democracy created by citizens of the world, the international order is in danger of assuming a pyramidal form, in which, even if democracy prevails at the base, anti-democracy will occupy the pinnacle.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali was correct in setting a short time limit of twenty or thirty years because the rapid pace at which globalization is proceeding already poses thorny problems.

The twentieth century began in the midst of vicious power clashes for hegemony and colonial expansion among the great powers. In *A Geography of Human Life*, Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi, first president of the Soka Gakkai, described these competing powers as glowering at

each other, ready unashamedly and cruelly to snatch up other people’s land at the slightest opportunity.<sup>9</sup> Their struggle for hegemony spawned not only two world wars, but also the Cold War, which spread the threat of nuclear confrontation over the whole world.

Owing to the frantic Cold War arms race between Eastern and Western blocs, military might escalated beyond the reaches of human control. Arms intended to annihilate an enemy menaced the very survival of their possessors and drove humanity to the brink of imminent global destruction. Human destiny hung in a perilous balance.

Though Cold War walls have now tumbled, the struggle for hegemony still rages, albeit in a different mode. The drive for global unification through military might has given way to a new struggle for economic hegemony accompanying rapidly expanding globalization, under the banner of open markets and free competition.

The law of the jungle pervades. In what has been called the “casino” of global capital markets, huge sums of money surpassing the scale of the real economy change hands every day. All this takes place beyond the regulatory reach of national governments and under the slogan of market principles.

In a recent television appearance in Japan, Lester C. Thurow, professor of management and economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, remarked that, although economic regulation by individual states is no longer feasible, the regulatory

structures for a global economy are not yet in place.<sup>10</sup>

The current global economy has dangerous potential for instability. For example, certain aspects of the admittedly foreseeable Asian financial crisis, which started in July 1997, and of the subsequent Russian monetary crisis have already spread to other parts of the world.

**At the heart of the new isolationism is an identity crisis. By overcoming that, we can achieve a globalization that moves beyond hegemonic imperatives and toward political, social and spiritual imperatives.**

The heart of the problem is not capitalism per se but indifference to both global justice and ethical standards. Can we afford to reject everything alien to market principles and, without examination of particulars, to enforce ideas across the board in the name of global standards?

In *The Future of Capitalism*, Thurow writes: “The ideology of

inclusion is withering away, to be replaced by a revival of survival-of-the-fittest capitalism.”<sup>11</sup> While criticizing the social Darwinism (survival of the fittest) of capitalism and the market economy, he insists, “If it is to succeed, the capitalism of the future will have to shift from a consumption ideology to a builder’s ideology.”<sup>12</sup> I agree entirely.

At this time last year, with reference to President Makiguchi’s concept of humanitarian competition, I recommended that, instead of cutthroat competition, we should strive together to create value. In economic terms, this means a transition from a consumer economy—the mad rush for ownership and consumption—to a constructive economy—an economy where all human beings can participate in the act of creating lasting worth. Clearly, in the current financial crisis, something must be done to restrain or regulate the violent short-term shifts of capital, like those of often-pilloried hedge funds. Otherwise, we can never hope to realize what the futurist Hazel Henderson calls the “Win-Win World.”

Setting aside the economy, what interests me as a Buddhist is how we should address the problem of identity. This is because I believe the correct identity base for a true citizen of the world must be a global—even cosmic—awareness. Inevitably, a borderless economy results in homogenization and a standardized consumer culture. But the inability of the human spirit to be satisfied with an impersonal identity as a consumer

inevitably generates friction, which in turn engenders a kind of particularism—something akin to what Mr. Boutros-Ghali calls the new isolationism.

In his provocatively titled *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Benjamin R. Barber of Rutgers University describes this kind of opposition. According to him, the world today is divided into McWorld, a homogenous global theme park whose driving force is the “universalism of the profit motive (and its accompanying politics of commodities),”<sup>13</sup> and Jihad, whose driving force is the “parochialism of ethnic identity (and its accompanying politics of resentment).”<sup>14</sup>

I have profound doubts about the advisability of using the Islamic term *jihad* as a general synonym for particularism. For the sake of the present argument, however, I would like to adopt Professor Barber’s language, because I think it succinctly portrays two contradictory trends in our world.

The demarcations between McWorld and Jihad cannot keep each other out. As long as we look for meaning in our lives, human beings cannot be satisfied to live only in a sterile consumer world, whereas parochialism can never keep out worldwide environmental destruction or halt the tide of the global economy. We are therefore virtually fated to endure an identity crisis resulting from our inhabiting a mixture of the two.

More essentially, our world today is dominated by what Buddhism refers to as the three poisons: greed, anger and ignorance.

As long as we continue wandering about in the darkness of ignorance, we will be unable to discover the light to lead us out of crisis.

World-minded citizens are indispensable to the formation of global democracy. Barber puts great hope in citizens who do not remain shut up in their own private space but actively and independently participate in public affairs. He calls the space in which they participate a “public” and writes: “The creation of a public is the task of civil society. Only there are attitudes likely to emerge that favor democracy and counter the siren song of McWorld. Only there are communities possible that answer the human need for parochial interaction in ways that remain open to inclusion and to cosmopolitan civic sentiments.”<sup>15</sup>

The public space—the citizens’ field of endeavor—is an intermediate zone between the government and the private sector. But, in the sterile atmosphere of contemporary urban society, developing this kind of vital linguistic space is extremely difficult. Barber offers no clear solutions, though he finds a hint in the lively debate of the early New England town meetings which represent the ideal of American democracy.

This kind of linguistic space is the cradle of world citizens. Generating it is the foremost task of religion, especially of a world religion that would provide the core ethos for the twenty-first century. I believe that religion, when it promotes unremunerated action, represents the essence of public volunteerism, for it provides

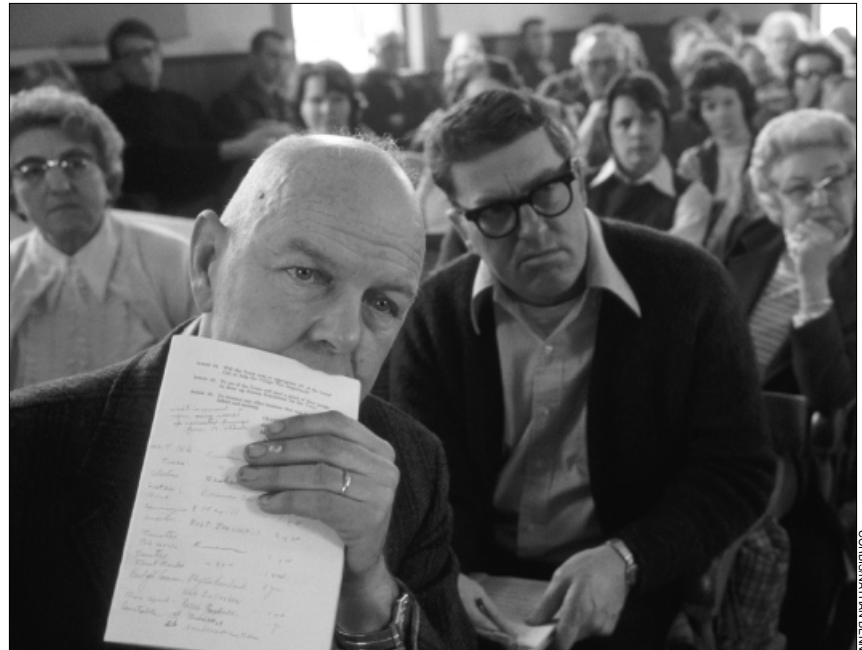
Lively forums, like this town hall meeting in rural Vermont, can help to revitalize society and lead it out of its present doldrums, as well as foster world citizens who will be the mainstays of global democracy.

meaning, motivation and a solid framework for that action.

As we approach the twenty-first century, the SGI has named 1999 the “Year of Victory in the Community for the New Century.” In this context, local communities are intended to be just the kind of vital linguistic space I have been talking about. Sponsored throughout Japan and around the world, lively talk-encounters can revitalize society, lead it out of its present doldrums, and foster the world citizens Mr. Boutros-Ghali insists are essential supports of global democracy.

There is no greater good than empowering humanity and revitalizing society. Like politics, economics, and education, religion is devoid of meaning unless it contributes to this process. Tsunetsaburo Makiguchi identified the value of “good” with benefiting society and called this the true mission of religion. One could almost interpret the initials SGI as standing for, not only Soka Gakkai International, but also Social Good Institution—as I suggested to a gathering of SGI members at the Florida Nature and Culture Center in June 1996.

The good and bad that religion has wrought in human history has



CORRISNATHAN BENN

been strictly evaluated by Bryan Wilson, reader emeritus in sociology at Oxford University and former president of the Conférence Internationale de Sociologie des Religions. He is a man of great erudition and impartial opinions, who fully understands the role of religion in the world and has attentively followed the development of the SGI. In our dialogue, he described the role of religion as follows:

“If the link were ever to be made and the gulf ever bridged between, on the one hand, numerous diverse local concerns and, on the other, general, over-arching goals of global civilization and the culture(s) of all humanity, perhaps only religion would be capable of doing it.”<sup>16</sup>

I am profoundly moved and encouraged by these words, which simultaneously reflect cool analysis and passionate concern about the future of humanity.

In August 1998, Dr. Wilson contributed an article to the *Seikyo Shimbun* newspaper in which he described the Soka Gakkai International as a religion that is “in tune with the times.”<sup>17</sup> Not remaining shut up in a purely religious framework, it expends great effort in many fields, including peace, culture, and education. He accurately describes how, in this way, the SGI movement seeks to transcend sectarianism.

Part of the mission of a religious organization like ours is to provide a place of shelter, healing, and comfort for the weary. But that is not all. Religion should also help people discover themselves anew, find liberation, reform their consciousness, and elevate their souls. Fulfilling these functions constitutes the real worth of religion in relation to reforming the times. Only then can it contribute to overcoming the identity crisis and bridging



In this Italian fresco, Dante stands holding his work *La Divina Commedia* (The Divine Comedy) surrounded by representations of hell, heaven and civilization. By cultivating a sense of divine will at work—whether justifiable or not—Dante’s writings created a well-ordered spiritual hierarchy in which people could live their lives.

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the gap between “local concerns” and the “over-arching goals of global civilization.”

### Toward a New Cosmology

ALTHOUGH the method may seem roundabout, I suggest that for the sake of overcoming the identity crises undermining the soul of modern humanity we must attempt to discover a new cosmology. Unless we raise our sights this high, hopes of nurturing true world citizens must inevitably prove illusory.

In the European Middle Ages, people lived within the framework of a clearly defined and widely accepted cosmology. This was most eloquently portrayed in

*La Divina Commedia* of Dante Alighieri. He imagined the world as consisting of the circles of the Inferno descending to the center of the Earth, then the mountain island of Purgatorio, and finally to the celestial Paradiso, where God dwells. Whatever the merits of the cosmology set out in Dante’s masterpiece—and history showed that it could not stand up to scientific verification—it did give answers to the fundamental questions “Who are we? Where did the world come from? Why are we here?” discussed earlier. In this way it provided a framework for human identity. By cultivating a sense of divine will at work in times of happiness and unhappiness, pain and pleasure, prosperity and decline, it created a

meaningful and well-ordered spiritual hierarchy in which people could live their lives.

However, the change from the Middle Ages to the modern period, it has been said, represented, not a shift from an old to a new cosmology, but the abandonment of any cosmology at all.

The modern scientific-mechanistic worldview has been built on a refusal even to address these fundamental human concerns and has thus sacrificed any pretense to being a cosmology.

Unaware of this and determined to remain so, modern humanity mistakes knowledge for wisdom and pleasure for happiness. After having run headlong down the path of modernization,



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D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930), English novelist and poet, espoused a renewed cosmology. “Start with the sun,” he writes, “and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.”

we find ourselves reduced to mere consumers—the slaves of commodities. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the crisis of human identity continues to deepen.

In *Apocalypse*, the British writer D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930) called for a renewal of cosmology, with an urgency that suggests he foresaw the conditions of our own time.

“What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.”<sup>18</sup>

At the heart of the SGI movement is the effort to develop a new cosmology and to address the identity crisis head-on. The starting point for this undertaking is

the awakening my mentor Josei Toda experienced in 1944, while imprisoned for his opposition to Japan’s war effort. Having determined on January 1 of that year to read the Lotus Sutra<sup>19</sup> with his whole being, he was able, through deep prayer, to experience two epiphanies, one in March and one in November.

On the first occasion, he was enlightened to the reality that what the sutras refer to as the Buddha is nothing other than life itself. On the second, he realized that he too was among the “Bodhisattvas of the Earth” described in the Lotus Sutra, who symbolize the inherent capacity for enlightened and compassionate action that exists within all people irrespective of education or social status. In the solemn gathering on Eagle Peak during which Shakyamuni expounded the Lotus Sutra, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth receive responsibility to carry on this legacy of compassion into the future regardless of the obstacles they encounter. In other words, Toda realized the gathering on Eagle Peak and the Bodhisattvas of the Earth were not just a myth, but a present reality.

The Lotus Sutra contains many dramatic scenes that have often been dismissed as mere fantasy. Josei Toda’s two realizations—especially the second one—accord perfectly with Nichiren’s<sup>20</sup> own reading of the Lotus Sutra and restore it to full life as a vibrant cosmological panorama. In this connection, those awakenings represent a singular event in the spiritual history of humankind.

While different perhaps from the facts of empirical science, they nonetheless represent experiential psychological facts and, even more important, a universal religious truth. We of the SGI take the drama of cosmological restoration that unfolded in Mr. Toda’s heart as our starting point and as the basis of the eternal, immutable identity of the SGI movement.

This cosmology provides answers to fundamental questions inherent in our very humanity. Moreover, it provides a framework—accessible to all—for resolving the identity crisis and transforming our *fin-de-siècle* chaos into a world where all human beings can find meaning for their existence.

The cosmology to which Toda had awakened made so tremendous an impression on me when I—only 19 at the time—first met him that I spontaneously expressed my feelings in the following verse.

Traveler!  
where have you come from?  
where are you going?

The moon has set  
the sun not yet risen  
in the chaos before dawn  
searching for the light  
I press onward

To drive back the dark clouds  
of the mind  
I seek the great tree unshaken  
by the storm—  
will I spring up from the great  
earth of life?<sup>21</sup>

The United Nations has designated 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The UN General Assembly also designated the first ten years of the century as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.



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Although ignorant of the deep meanings of the Lotus Sutra at the time, I nonetheless sensed the cosmic vision behind the mighty personality and life force emanating from Mr. Toda's whole being.

The essence of Mr. Toda's enlightenment can perhaps be expressed as a profound faith in the infinite worth and potential of human life coupled with a strong determination to awaken people to this. Thus, it provides the basis for the SGI's efforts to grapple with the global identity crisis.

Mr. Toda radiated astonishing magnetism and inspirational power. In the early days of our organization, we young people felt this especially strongly when he compared us to the youth of Shakyamuni's and Nichiren Daishonin's times.

All of you must realize that you share a path and goal with

these splendid youths of the past. You must be determined to emulate them. Never behave in such a way as to earn criticism for slackness from Shari-putra<sup>22</sup> and the other Bodhisattvas assembled on Eagle Peak. To do so would be unworthy of your rank as bodhisattvas of the Earth.

Arise, young people. Do your part in the struggle!<sup>23</sup>

This call passed from one heart to the next until now millions of people from all over the world have responded to this vision.

What the Lotus Sutra describes as a Bodhisattva of the Earth is a person committed to the work of restoring a sense of cosmology to contemporary society. In concrete terms, this means being a master of the art of dialogue and

a standard-bearer of soft power. The Lotus Sutra summarizes the characteristics these bodhisattvas must have as follows:

Firm in the power of will and concentration, with constant diligence seeking wisdom, they expound various wonderful doctrines and their minds are without fear.<sup>24</sup>

They are clever at difficult questions and answers, their minds know no fear. They have firmly cultivated a persevering mind, upright in dignity and virtue.<sup>25</sup>

Fear builds barriers of aversion and discrimination in the forms of national boundaries or of exclusion and discrimination on the



The cosmology to which Josei Toda had awakened provides answers to fundamental questions and a framework for resolving the identity crisis and transforming our *fin-de-siècle* chaos into a world that cherishes life.

sometimes like an awakening peal, and sometimes like a sword that slashes through delusion. Their efforts at dialogue are supported by their firm conviction in the fundamental equality of all people—that all people possess the potential for enlightenment.

Another way of describing the Bodhisattvas of the Earth in contemporary terms is as the standard-bearers of soft power. This was a theme I took up in a speech entitled “The Age of Soft Power” that I gave at Harvard University in 1991.<sup>26</sup> Responding, Prof. Joseph S. Nye described the quintessence of soft power as the power of cooperation. I would add that it is a profound faith in humanity that inspires the Bodhisattvas of the Earth to constantly dedicate themselves to dialogue in the effort to find common ground and harmonize different perspectives.

The following three traits summarize the character and mentality of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth:

- To be rigorously strict toward oneself, like a sharp autumn frost.
- To be warm and embracing toward others, like a soft spring breeze.
- To be uncompromising when confronting evil, like a lion monarch.

Only a person embodying all three can be a master of dialogue,

the importance of which has been recognized by many thinkers, like the widely respected German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969). Just after the end of World War II, during the winter of 1945–46, he sparked a controversy by conducting a course of lectures at Heidelberg University that were later published as *Die Schuldfrage* (The Question of German Guilt). At the opening of the book, Jaspers wrote: “We want to learn to talk with each other and we mutually must understand and accept one another in our extraordinary differences.”<sup>27</sup>

As he made clear, dialogue is the key. It is also the most reliable tool with which the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, the standard-bearers of soft power, can lay firm foundations for lasting peace.

### Toward a Culture of Peace

TO lay the foundations for a lasting peace, we must deinstitutionalize war. We must effect a transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. With the end of the Cold War, for the time being at any rate, the threat of an all-out nuclear conflict has been averted. Unfortunately, however, local and ethnic conflicts grow in number year by year all over the world. To cite only two examples, fighting in Kosovo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have already taken high tolls in dead and

bases of race, religion, gender, social class, financial status, or merely personal preference. To shore up and gloss over their prejudices, people with closed minds often stereotype others. This attitude reflects a mental indolence that stops us from cultivating mutual understanding and trust or developing the perseverance and determination required to engage in dialogue. As history teaches, it is only a short step from mental laziness to violence.

In praising the Bodhisattvas of the Earth for their total lack of fear, therefore, the sutra is commending their efforts to transcend all discriminatory barriers and their readiness to engage in dialogue without hesitation. The tone of this dialogue is modulated to suit the moods and needs of the occasion. Sometimes, their words can be like a healing breeze, sometimes like a rousing beat,

wounded and have resulted in refugees numbering many tens of thousands. Mercilessly swept up in a tempest of hatred and madness, once peaceful citizens now maim and kill each other.

Through the annals of history, ordinary citizens have lamented the destruction and misery of war. The cause of that lament must not be allowed to persist into the new mil-

Assembly designated the first ten years of the century the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. For some time, leading thinkers and various organizations have called for designations of this kind, including UNESCO and many of the people whom I have met in my pursuit of dialogue, such as former president

The resolution making this designation states: "To save future generations from the scourge of war requires transformation towards a culture of peace."<sup>28</sup> The designation aims to encourage the cooperative efforts of member states, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) toward ensuring the



(Photo above: A group of children drill with rifles in Seychelles. Center: Afghan boys unload rocket-propelled grenades. Right: Boy soldiers at rifle practice in Burma.) Children are always the greatest victims of war, horrifyingly typified by the use of child soldiers. A 1998 UN report estimates that 300,000 children under the age of 18 currently serve as combatants. Each day, some 800 of them are killed or wounded, often by land mines. It is estimated that children suffer from the trauma of war in approximately fifty countries. The SGI is committed to transforming the culture of war into one of peace.

lennium. The time has come for humanity to raise its voice in a paean to peace and the richness of life.

Echoing a similar sentiment, the United Nations has designated 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. And in November 1998, the UN General

of the Soviet Union Mikhail S. Gorbachev, president of South Africa Nelson Mandela, Argentine sculptor and human-rights champion Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, and Arun Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi's grandson), founder of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence.

happiness of children, who are always the greatest victims of war.

Nowhere is this victimization more extreme than in the case of child soldiers. According to a report issued in October 1998, by Olara Otunnu, the special representative of the secretary-general

for children and armed conflict, up to 300,000 children under eighteen years of age are now serving as combatants in on-going conflicts. Every day, some eight hundred of them are killed or wounded, often by land mines. Between 1987 and 1997, two million were killed outright; another six million disabled or injured; and ten million psychologically traumatized. It is also

impressed into the army and forced to fight to stay alive.

Exposure to violence affects children deeply. Forcing them into battle is a heinous violation of their rights. It perpetuates war and creates an unbreakable cycle of hatred and revenge. That is why the world community must move quickly to adopt and ratify the optional protocol to the Convention on the

scheduled to begin in February at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, an SGI-affiliated peace research institute.<sup>30</sup>

Transforming the culture of war requires severing the chain of vengeance. How can we accomplish this when, as is dramatized in Aeschylus' Oresteian trilogy, human fate appears to be an endless series of crime triggered by



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estimated that children are suffering the effects of war in approximately fifty countries.

To quote Mr. Otunnu's report: "In today's internecine conflicts, children are specifically targeted in strategies to eliminate the next generation of potential adversaries."<sup>29</sup> A report issued by Amnesty International in January 1999 estimates that forty-four countries enlist combatants under eighteen. Many, having already lost their families to war, have been

Rights of the Child prohibiting the military recruitment of anyone under eighteen.

Looking forward to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, the SGI is determined to expand its efforts for the creation of a culture of peace through various activities in cooperation with international organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF. In addition, a series of conferences on the same topic is

crime and violence triggered by violence?

In *Philosophy of Rights*, the German philosopher Georg Hegel (1770–1831) writes: "Thus revenge, as the positive action of a particular will, becomes a new infringement; because of this contradiction, it becomes part of an infinite progression and is inherited indefinitely from generation to generation."<sup>31</sup>

Hegel proceeds to show that a subsuming justice can halt the



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UNESCO, shown here at its international headquarters in Paris, aims to promote collaboration and cooperation among nations through education, science and culture. The SGI is determined to expand its efforts toward a culture of peace through joint activities with UNESCO and other such organizations.

process. This must be a justice that, though capable of imposing sanction, is not vengeful.

In July 1998, at long last, there was an international agreement to create an International Criminal Court (ICC) establishing a venue for the kind of justice that can break the chain of revenge referred to above. First proposed more than half a century ago, the ICC is to be a standing court to try grievous assaults on international society such as genocide and war crimes. Whereas the International Court of Justice (ICJ) adjudicates legal disputes between and among states, the ICC is to pursue individual criminal responsibility.

International courts of the past—the Nuremberg Military

Tribunal and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East following World War II, and international criminal tribunals established by the United Nations Security Council in connection with the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda—have been ad hoc and limited in jurisdiction to specific conflicts. In addition, they have often been criticized as instances of victors' justice.

Spurred by the intensifying violence of local conflicts, the desire for a permanently standing court to cope with a broader range of crimes and criminal procedures led to the agreement to create the ICC. Its provisions place within the court's competence: (1) genocide, (2) crimes against humanity,

(3) war crimes, and (4) the crime of aggression. Even acts committed in the context of internal conflicts—previously considered outside the scope of international law—may be tried as war crimes. Maximum punishment stops short of the death penalty. This is especially noteworthy because, as is demonstrated in rising worldwide opposition to its use, the death penalty is unacceptable from a humanitarian and human-rights perspective, or as a means of severing the chain of vengeance.

To be sure, there are still many details to be worked out regarding the ICC's jurisdiction, relations with the UN Security Council, and enforcement powers. Nonetheless it has great significance as a key

The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, headquartered in Boston, was founded in 1993 by SGI President Ikeda. The BRC brings together scholars and activists in dialogue on common values to support an evolving global ethic for a peaceful twenty-first century. Focal points have included human rights, nonviolence, ecological harmony and economic justice.



part of the systemic framework for overcoming the culture of war on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is outside the current competence of the court. I sincerely hope that this issue will be reexamined to improve the court's effectiveness.

### Conflict Resolution—the Power of Dialogue

**W**AYS of resolving international problems and conflicts peacefully must be devised if we are to break successfully from the culture of war. Too often in the past, military intervention has been considered the only way. Recent examples include possible NATO air strikes in the conflict in Kosovo, American retaliation for terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and British and American air strikes against Iraq for refusing to permit arms inspections. Although we cannot afford to overlook problems that pose a major threat to the international community, we must always

be extremely cautious in opting for military force as a solution.

In the final analysis, since they usually leave scars that continue to fester, forcibly imposed “hard power” solutions are not real solutions at all. As Hegel suggested, no matter how much we try to justify or rationalize them, as long as the opponent regards them as unfair, such measures will always lead to an intractable cycle of conflict or revenge.

Instead of resorting to hard-power solutions, we must first clarify the nature of the problem and then employ dialogue—the essence of soft power—to remove, one by one, the obstacles to solution.

Deeply battle-scarred Northern Ireland is already beginning to accept this challenge. After nearly thirty years of terrorism and bloodshed, the conflict there had come to seem irremediable. Then,

in April 1998, thanks to the resolute pursuit of dialogue, a historic compromise agreement was reached. Finally, fed up with the fighting and bloodshed that had cost the lives of three thousand, voters on both sides of the border endorsed the peace accord.

The newly established North/South Ministerial Council, a real political breakthrough, undertakes cross-border efforts to develop consultation and cooperation for the entire island, both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Transcending the framework of national borders and stressing the will of the local residents, this council attempts to deal creatively with the psychology of group-identification that lies at the heart of the conflict. If it stays on track, it can provide a valuable model for resolving other regional conflicts. Indeed, its influence has already opened the way to a cease-fire

The Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research operates under its motto: "Dialogue of Civilizations for World Citizenship." Toward that end, it is looking ahead to an international conference in February 2000 on the "Dialogue of Civilizations," an exploration into an agenda of peace in the third millennium.



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between Spain and Basque separatists.

Issues like weapons decommissioning remain. Still, as both sides become increasingly trustful of each other, the international community must support their efforts to reach agreement.

As these events in Northern Ireland have shown, even the most entrenched conflicts are not beyond resolution. The important thing is not to cast the other party in the role of enemy but to determine the nature of the problem and the cause of the disagreement. The first step toward peace is recognizing the other party's humanity.

The UN General Assembly resolution designating 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations expresses the will of the international community when it welcomes the collective endeavor "to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue

among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium."<sup>32</sup>

This theme is reflected in the motto of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research: "Dialogue of Civilizations for World Citizenship."<sup>33</sup> In February 2000, the Toda Institute will be holding an international conference on the topic "Dialogue of Civilizations: A New Peace Agenda for a New Millennium" to celebrate the centennial of the birth of second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda after whom it is named. As founder of the institute, I am engaged in discussions with its director Professor Majid Tehranian of the University of Hawaii in an attempt to promote dialogue between two of the world's major religious cultures, Islam and Buddhism. Professor Tehranian has written that the world today is "endowed with expanding channels of communication yet sorely

in need of dialogue."<sup>34</sup> Undeniably, in our information-saturated society, we are being inundated by ready-made stereotypes obscuring the truth of people and situations. This is why person-to-person dialogue—always the basis of dialogue among civilizations—is more than ever in demand.

Even at the height of the Cold War, confident that we all share the same humanity, I worked hard to build bridges of friendship by frequently visiting the Soviet Union, China, and other communist countries. Similarly I have engaged in dialogue with people from many different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. I am convinced that we can solve any problem as long as we keep our minds open and stand firm in our belief in our common humanity.

No one really wants war. Unfortunately, however, isolation breeds mistrust, and mistrust



The Pacific Basin Symposium, hosted biennially by Soka University, is a series of conferences intended to create a network of scholars and specialists that will advance an appreciation and study of the Asia-Pacific region. Such person-to-person dialogues—always the basis of dialogue among civilizations—are more than ever in demand.

breeds conflict. Convinced that humanity cannot afford to isolate any country or ethnic group, I have traveled the world over and, sometimes through dialogue, sometimes through educational and cultural activities, have striven, step by step, to strengthen bonds of friendship and to build bridges of peace.

The Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung emphasized that real and fundamental change in individuals can come only from direct personal interaction.<sup>35</sup> The effort of each individual to pursue dialogue today will lead to a culture of peace and a global community of harmonious co-existence tomorrow.

**Deinstitutionalizing War:  
Three Urgent Tasks**

**T**O make the new millennium an age of peace and hope, we must explore means of deinstitutionalizing war.

The first step in the process is to enhance and expand the network of regional forums to contribute to confidence building. By “regional forums” I am not talking about defense organizations directed against external threats, but about forums that evolve as venues for dialogue promoting trust and forestalling conflict among neighboring states.

The European Union (EU) is fulfilling such a role. Europe has already experienced two global wars in this century, and the urgent desire to prevent further conflict provided important impetus for the EU project. After many ups and downs, on January 1, 1999, the long-sought goal of a common European currency was achieved. The decision of eleven EU states to introduce the euro marks a large step toward full economic integration.

In July 2002, when the switchover to the euro is scheduled to be

complete, the national currencies of participating states will cease to be legal tender. For sovereign states to stop printing and minting their own money has great political as well as economic significance. When all financial policies, like the issuance of currency, are concentrated in the hands of the European Central Bank, member governments will no longer be able to raise war funds unbeknownst to their fellows.

Countries outside Europe have formed regional organizations, too: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and MERCOSUR, the South American “common market.” Efforts in these regions to promote trust and contribute to stability and peace inevitably



The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, headquartered in Brussels, was established in 1949 with sixteen member nations, including the United States. It grew to twenty-seven members by the mid-'90s with its so-called Partnership for Peace. Its original purpose calls for members to settle disputes by peaceful means.

impress us with the need to create forums for regional dialogue wherever they are lacking, most notably in Northeast Asia and the Middle East.

### 1. A Northeast Asia Peace Community

Establishing standing forums for discussion is an effective way to prevent the outbreak of military conflict among neighboring states, which history shows constitutes the majority of wars; hence, the urgent necessity for a Northeast Asia Peace Community.

During a visit to South Korea in May 1998, I discussed the Northeast

Asian problem with Dr. Young Seek Choue, chancellor and founder of Kyung Hee University, who said “If, after all those years of war, Europe can manage to create the EU, why can’t Northeast Asia do the same kind of thing? Europe is already becoming a single state. Japan and Korea must join with China to create a single community.”<sup>36</sup> As one who has long been concerned about the prospects for peace in Northeast Asia, I concur entirely with this sentiment. Dr. Choue and I agreed that Kyung Hee University and Soka University should take the initiative in carrying out this historic mission.

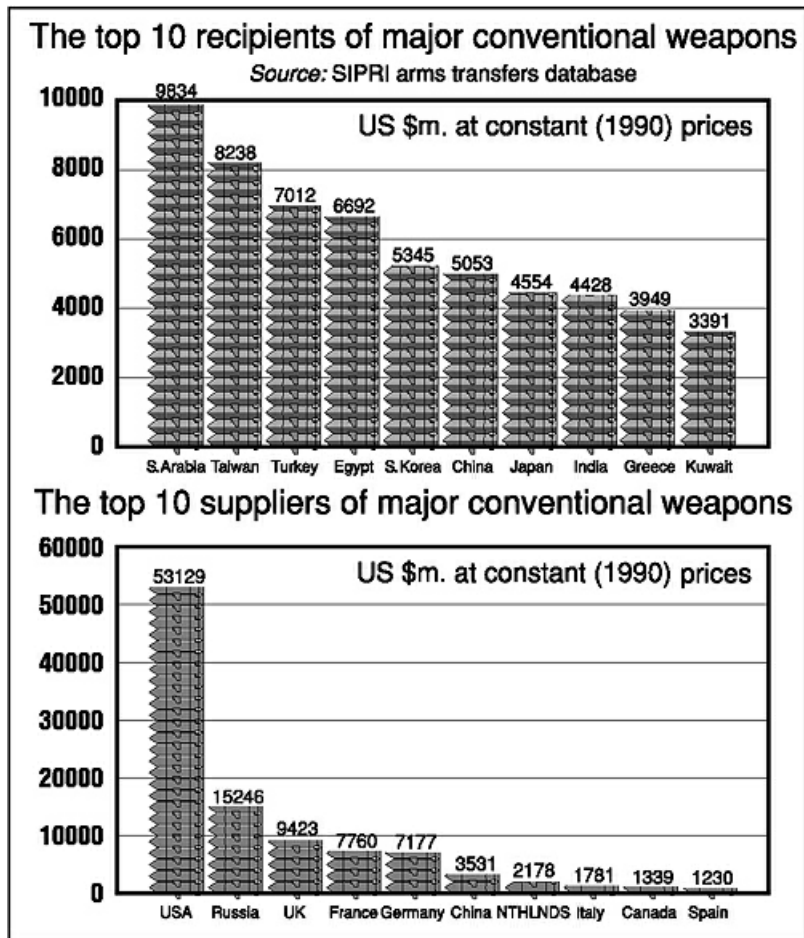
The most promising way to start is to encourage dialogue and

exchange among the region’s academic and research institutions. This is the purpose of a proposed conference to be held in 2000 on the theme of developing such partnerships for peace. Building on the experience of the Pacific Basin Symposium held biennially since 1986, I would like to call on Soka University to cooperate with Kyung Hee University in planning the project. Ideally, it will entail the support of universities and academic institutions in the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Mongolia, Japan, and elsewhere.

In addition to a Northeast Asia Peace Community, I would like to support similar projects in the Middle East as well. To launch this process, in March 1999, the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research is to hold the first International Commission for Security and Cooperation in West Asia (SACWA) in Istanbul. The aim of the meeting is to consider ways of devising a sustainable security structure for the Gulf region.

In its planning, the Toda Institute is cooperating with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, and the Centre for Mid-East and Central Asian Studies of the Australian National University. In addition to representatives of eight Gulf littoral states—Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—specialists and policy makers from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and representatives of UN agencies will take part.

At this forum, discussions of a regional cooperation organization, a regional non-aggression pact, and an arms control agreement are expected to have an important impact on regional stability and world peace by cultivating trust and lessening tension and the threat of war.



**2. The Arms Trade**

The second factor required for the deinstitutionalization of war is the reduction of the international traffic in arms.

The arms trade intensifies and protracts warfare. Lamentably, far from decreasing, the international arms trade increases year after year. According to “The Military Balance 1998/99,” the annual report of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, arms transactions rose by twelve percent in 1997. The increase was especially great in the Middle East and East Asia. Total arms transfers amounted to \$34.6 billion in 1997. Other

research confirms that areas experiencing regional conflict continue to be the major export market for the arms trade. There is even a thriving market for secondhand weapons in Africa, scene of numerous regional and internal conflicts.

In his April 1998 report, “The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa,” UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed grave concern about this issue. He requested governments of member states to adopt legislation making the violation of a Security Council arms embargo a criminal offense under

their national laws. In addition, he requested the Security Council to bring to light the covert operations of international arms dealers.

To profit from warfare and carnage in other countries, to use it to enhance one's own national influence and prestige, to callously sacrifice

**To make the new millennium an age of peace and hope, we must explore means of deinstitutionalizing war. The first step in the process is to enhance and expand the network of regional forums...promoting trust and forestalling conflict.**

human life for one's private gain.... The arms trade is evil. Murderous and morally unforgivable, it is an assault on humanity and human security. It epitomizes the worst that humanity is capable of.

When one country in a region strengthens its military might through arms imports, this heightens regional tensions and instabilities by inciting its neighbors to

acquire new weapons systems of their own. Likewise, increasing supplies of arms to the factions in an internal conflict prolong and intensify the fighting.

Breaking this vicious circle requires a two-pronged approach. The first step is to reduce demand, through efforts to defuse suspicions and build mutual confidence, and the second is to block the supply of weapons flowing into conflict areas.

About half of U.N. member states now report arms transfers under the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms initiated in 1992. Significantly, although the system is voluntary, the major arms exporters—the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany—submit reports. As these six countries account for more than eighty-five percent of total arms transfers, their information gives a good idea of the overall situation. To further promote transparency, I propose that a treaty be negotiated that would expand this system to cover more kinds of armament and make reporting mandatory for all U.N. member states. If implemented, such a treaty would promote world stability by generating trust among member states and by providing an early-warning system about sudden arms buildups.

I have two other proposals to make relative to inhibiting the arms trade. First, we must restrict illicit arms transactions. As is mentioned in Secretary-General Annan's report, anyone providing arms or covert aid to conflicting parties—especially if such aid

violates a U.N. Security Council arms embargo—should be strictly punished under national law. We should also seek consensus within the international community to expand the competence of the International Criminal Court to cover the crime of illegal arms trafficking.

Second, major arms-exporting nations should take the initiative in drawing up guidelines to limit the trade. Talks to this end that started after the Persian Gulf War of 1991 among the five permanent members of the Security Council have now broken down. To get them back on track, I suggest that a G-9 (G-8 plus China) meeting should be held this year to address this topic. I suggest using G-9 as the proper setting since it includes Germany, a major arms exporter, and because it would give Japan and Canada the chance to mediate.

Organizations such as UNICEF and various NGOs jointly urged the 1998 G-8 summit to support a U.N. resolution calling for a treaty restricting arms transfers. The difficulty involved in concluding a treaty only shows how important it is for the major arms exporters to draw up voluntary guidelines. Implementing these guidelines will enhance trust and encourage restraint on the part of other arms exporters.

### **3. Disarmament**

The third key point in terms of the deinstitutionalization of war is to address the issue of disarmament and, more than anything, nuclear disarmament.



CORISINIE VSPRENT

This year, at The Hague in the Netherlands, the seat of the International Court of Justice, a conference marking the hundredth anniversary of the first International Peace Conference will launch The Hague Agenda. SGI President Ikeda proposes that the SGI be actively involved in this peace initiative, particularly its outreach and public education aspects. He further proposes that at the fourth UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament (SSDIV), scheduled for 2001, this agenda be adopted as the Universal Renunciation of War.

The international community has already adopted treaties and conventions banning such weapons of mass destruction as biological and chemical weapons as well as antipersonnel land mines. As of yet, however, no international disarmament regime is in place for restricting, on the one hand, small arms such as automatic rifles and small-caliber artillery or, on the other end of the scale, nuclear weapons.

There are too many small arms everywhere. Following up on the

proposal I made last year, I again urge the creation of suitable restrictions. Some progress has been made. In December 1998, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution urging that an international conference to restrict the availability of small arms be held by 2001.

But little progress has been made in nuclear disarmament. Nearly ten years have passed since the end of the Cold War, but more than thirty thousand nuclear warheads still

exist on the face of the Earth. No progress has been made either in the ratification of the American and Russian Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) or in negotiations to reduce other kinds of nuclear armament.

Since the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995, the only additional progress has been the August 1998 decision by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiating a treaty



CORBIS/MALLY KIMMAGE

The United Nations General Assembly in New York. In June 1998, non-nuclear countries called on the five nuclear powers and nuclear-capable countries to implement disarmament and nonproliferation measures.

cutting off production of weapons-grade fissile materials.

In May 1998, India and Pakistan shocked the international community by conducting nuclear tests, thereby signaling their decision to develop their own nuclear arms. In doing so, they rocked the regime founded on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to its foundations. The international community's failure to convince India and Pakistan to refrain from such testing exposes the limitations of a one-sided deterrence doctrine that can be used only by the nuclear weapons states. There is

now a clear danger that other countries may rush to join the nuclear club.

The United States has recently announced its intention of using a civilian nuclear energy plant to produce tritium for the military. Tritium is one of the materials used in nuclear warheads. By taking this step, the United States has abandoned its once hard-and-fast principle of separating military from civilian uses of nuclear energy. This, it must be said, demonstrates the arrogance of nuclear weapons states and casts doubts on the sincerity of American disarmament rhetoric.

Against this background, in June 1998, eight nonnuclear states

—Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, and Sweden—issued a joint declaration calling on the five nuclear powers and nuclear-capable powers like India, Pakistan, and Israel, to take disarmament and nonproliferation measures. These same eight nonnuclear countries submitted to the U.N. General Assembly a draft resolution entitled “Toward a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Time for a New Agenda,” which was adopted in December 1998. This resolution makes proposals more concrete than anything yet adopted by the United Nations. For example, it emphasizes the nuclear powers’

responsibilities in the area of disarmament and calls for the elimination of all nonstrategic nuclear weapons, the lifting of the state of war-readiness, and the issuance of a no-first-use pledge.

The eight countries which are often referred to as the New Agenda Coalition have renounced the possession of nuclear weapons and reliance on the defensive umbrellas of nuclear powers. For this reason, their agenda has earned the support of many other nonnuclear weapons states. In particular, Sweden, Brazil, and South Africa have the experience of having abandoned nuclear weapons development programs. The coalition's proposal is rooted in the realistic assessment expressed in the words of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, president of Brazil: "We do not want an atomic bomb. It only generates tension and distrust in our region and it would annul the integration process which we are permanently strengthening for the well-being of our people."<sup>37</sup>

In July 1998, six South American countries—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia—signed a protocol renouncing the right of belligerency within their region and outlawing weapons of mass destruction. They agreed never to resort to military force to resolve tensions such as border disputes. They renounced the possession of or research on nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and promised to expel militaristic or totalitarian states from the South American common market (MERCOSUR).

By forming "a zone of peace," these countries are taking steps to increase trust and confidence within their region, thus reducing the temptation for any of them to go nuclear or to place itself under the "umbrella" of a nuclear weapons state. This is in keeping with the point I made earlier when I said that generating regional trust is the surest way to halt weapons proliferation.

Nuclear-free zones have been established in Latin America, the South Pacific, Africa, and Southeast Asia, demonstrating the way a growing number of regions are renouncing their reliance on nuclear weapons.

The time has come for countries like Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, and Japan, which have strongly advocated nuclear disarmament, to declare their departure from the nuclear umbrella and to support the New Agenda Coalition, which already enjoys popular support such as that which NGOs have mustered behind the Middle Powers Initiative. I believe that if popular movements and governments supportive of disarmament join together—as they did in the Ottawa Process responsible for the realization of the land-mine treaty—great strides can be made toward ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

In 1957, in his declaration against nuclear weapons, Josei Toda described them as an absolute evil that deprives humanity of its right to exist. Since that time, the Soka Gakkai has consistently worked for the abolition of

nuclear weapons. In 1997 and 1998, thanks mainly to the efforts of our youth membership, we combined efforts with NGOs like the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in collecting signatures for the Abolition 2000 petition. Abolition 2000 has drafted a model nuclear weapons conven-

**I believe that if popular movements and governments supportive of disarmament join together... great strides can be made toward ridding the world of nuclear weapons.**

tion setting forth step by step, verifiable methods for prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons. It is my sincere hope that this draft convention, now an official United Nations document, will serve together with the proposals of the New Agenda Coalition as the basis for evolving an "Ottawa Process" for nuclear weapons abolition.

Disarmament negotiations must not be left entirely in the hands of the nuclear weapons states. It is vitally important for all such plans

to reflect the popular will and the views of the nonnuclear-weapons states. To support such efforts, the Toda Institute has conducted international conferences dealing with concrete policies and schedules for nuclear abolition.

The criticism may be advanced that no mechanism for the process can be meaningful without the participation of all the nuclear-

**Joining efforts with people of goodwill everywhere, the members of the SGI are determined to forge a great path that people one hundred, two hundred, or even a thousand years hence will be able to tread with surety and serenity.**

weapons powers. On the other hand, only some of the nuclear-weapons powers were involved in the initial stages of formulating the nonproliferation treaty, but consistent effort eventually resulted in the participation of all five nuclear powers plus states thought to be nuclear-capable, as well as

those that had tested but later renounced nuclear weapons. As this process suggests, taking the initiative in working on a treaty can encourage nuclear-weapons powers and their allies to free themselves from their dependence.

### **A Millennium of Harmony**

**T**HE American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) wrote: “It is really a thought that built this portentous war-establishment, and a thought shall also melt it away.”<sup>38</sup> If we make Josei Toda’s assertion that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil the guiding principle of our age, we shall overturn the idea that they are, as a deterrent, a necessary evil. The SGI will cooperate with other NGOs to achieve this aim and to make the twenty-first century free of nuclear arms.

To view the future as an extension of the present is passive and defeatist. The future is something we ourselves must shape and create. We must not passively wait for things to change, but must step forward and throw open the doors to the new century. We must make 1999 a historical turning point in which the people themselves rise to the challenge of ushering in a new age.

In May of this year, representatives of civil society will gather for the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference. The SGI is committed to actively supporting this people’s peace conference, notably in the areas of public information and education. Also this year, in commemoration of the First International Peace Conference which

took place at The Hague in 1899, there will be inter-government conferences in The Hague and in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The Hague Appeal for Peace is a campaign and conference to delegitimize armed conflict and create a culture of peace for the twenty-first century. It is built around the following four thematic strands: (1) strengthening international humanitarian and human-rights laws and institutions, (2) advancing the prevention, peaceful resolution, and transformation of violent conflict, (3) developing and linking disarmament efforts, including nuclear abolition, and (4) identifying the root causes of war and developing a culture of peace.

As one who has long called for a global conference renouncing war and the adoption of a Declaration for the Renunciation of War, I have tremendous expectations for the Hague Appeal for Peace and for the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century that is to be finalized and adopted. I am confident that this will be a powerful and eloquent expression of the universal human desire to live free from the threat of war and will serve as a universal renunciation of war. I hope and expect that the U.N. General Assembly will promptly adopt this agenda as a concrete program of action toward the realization of a world without war. The international community should vigorously implement this through, among other things, the Fourth Special Session on Disarmament scheduled for 2001.

Another significant project, and one the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century has supported in a variety of ways, is drafting the Earth Charter to be presented for deliberation by the Millennium NGO Forum at the United Nations in 2000. Many people hope that, in 2002, ten years after the Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the U.N. General Assembly will adopt the Earth Charter.

These two movements—to renounce war and to establish a charter for our planet—are expressions

of global solidarity and the pooling of human wisdom. With these as our guides, we must make the twenty-first century an era free from nuclear weapons, the start of a new millennium of harmony and peaceful coexistence founded on respect for the sanctity of life. We can and must create a global civil society that is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Courage and hope are essential; we must never lose these vitally human qualities. Each of us must awaken to our unique mission as

protagonists in the transformation of history. And we must unite in a shared human struggle to confront and resolve the pressing problems facing our planet.

Joining efforts with people of goodwill everywhere, the members of the SGI are determined to forge a great path that people one hundred, two hundred, or even a thousand years hence will be able to tread with surety and serenity. We must lay it well, confidently accepting the great challenges at hand, our eyes trained on the towering peaks of the new millennium. □

1. The dialogue was covered in the *Seikyo Shimbun*, July 30, 1998.
2. Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*, trans. Paulette Moller (London: Orion Books Ltd., 1995), p. 8.
3. Richard Bach, *Running from Safety: An Adventure of the Spirit* (New York: Bantam Double Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1994), p. ix.
4. According to the calculation of Zbigniew Brzezinski, special adviser to President Jimmy Carter, during the twentieth century alone, revolutions and other wars have taken the lives of 167 million human beings.
5. The Aum Shinrikyo sect has been implicated in a number of violent attacks on individuals and institutions, the most grievous being the March 1995 sarin nerve gas attack in the Tokyo subway system in which twelve people died.
6. *Sekai*, December, 1998 issue.
7. In March 1994, the Japanese Diet passed legislation replacing the multi-seat electoral district system with a mix of single-seat and proportional representation.
8. Yoshiki Hidaka, *Nihonkoku ni daitoryo ga tanjo suru hi* (When Japan Has a President) (Tokyo: Shuei-sha, 1998), p. 214.
9. Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo zenshu* (The Complete Works of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Daisan Bunmei-sha, 1983), pp. 14–15.
10. "Shihonshugi wa doko e yuku no ka?" (Where Is Capitalism Headed?), NHK, January 1, 1999.
11. Lester C. Thurow, *The Future of Capitalism: How Today's Economic Forces Shape Tomorrow's World* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1996), p. 18.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
13. Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), pp. 219–20.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
16. Bryan Wilson and Daisaku Ikeda, *Human Values in a Changing World: A Dialogue on the Social Role of Religion* (New Jersey: Lyle Stuart, 1984), p. 179.
17. Bryan Wilson, contributed text, *Seikyo Shimbun*, August 24, 1998.
18. D.H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931), p. 104.
19. The sutra, widely venerated in East Asia, that is said most fully to reflect Shakyamuni's original intent of enabling all people to attain enlightenment.
20. The thirteenth-century Japanese Buddhist priest who, having carefully examined all of the sutras attributable to Shakyamuni, identified his true intent in the Lotus Sutra and expressed its essence in the phrase *Nam-myoho-enge-kyo*.
21. Daisaku Ikeda, *Songs from My Heart*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1978), p. 65.
22. One of Shakyamuni's ten major disciples; considered foremost in wisdom.
23. Josei Toda, *Toda Josei zenshu* (The Complete Works of Josei Toda), vol.1 (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbun-sha), pp. 58–59.
24. *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 220.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
26. Daisaku Ikeda, *A New Humanism: The University Addresses of Daisaku Ikeda* (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1996), pp. 203–12.
27. Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), p. 11.
28. *A/53/25* 19 November 1998.
29. "Malnutrition claims lives of 7 million children a year, Third Committee told," M2 Presswire, October 23, 1998, M2 Communications Ltd.
30. See the center's website [www.brc21.org](http://www.brc21.org).
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32. *A/RES/53/22*, 16 November 1998.
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# Recollections of Leading World Figures

By Daisaku Ikeda



CORBIS/MICHAEL NICHOLSON

The past and present merge in the skyline of Cairo, Egypt, Dr. Boutros-Ghali's native land.

“THIS is my honest opinion, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali: I'd like to see you make greater opportunities to meet with ordinary people, with youth, with students. Many, many young people want to contribute to world peace and support the efforts of the United Nations in some way. The key is how to make the best use of their enthusiasm and allow their voices to have an impact. This

is the responsibility of all leaders, I think. And private citizens in various fields are saying that they would like to talk with you.” This is what I said to the UN secretary-general at our second meeting, which took place at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo in 1994.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali assured me that he agreed one hundred percent with my view. During the Cold War, he explained, the United Nations could not freely communicate or

interact with private individuals or organizations. That had changed now. He wished to promote exchange and communication with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, workers and other private organizations. This was a new experience for the United Nations, he added, but it was now trying to put into practice precisely what I had just articulated. And he heartily supported this new direction, he said.

# A Builder of World Peace:

## Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali Former United Nations Secretary-General

Certainly, it is necessary to meet with the political leaders and government officials of the member nations as well, but in this age when the world is growing increasingly smaller and becoming more inter-linked, the crucial challenge the United Nations faces is to transform itself into an organization that is not controlled by the narrow interests of individual member nations. It must represent the world as a whole.

The United Nations must become a parliament of all humanity, which places human interests before national interests. Indispensable to this end is opening avenues of communication, of input and feedback from people of goodwill around the world, people who look beyond their national interests. The benefits to be derived from the UN head engaging in direct communication with the people are surely immeasurable.

“It may be presumptuous of me to say so,” I continued, “but when we look at things from above, we can only see about thirty percent of the whole picture. From below, we can see the other seventy percent or so. When we look at issues and problems from the standpoint of

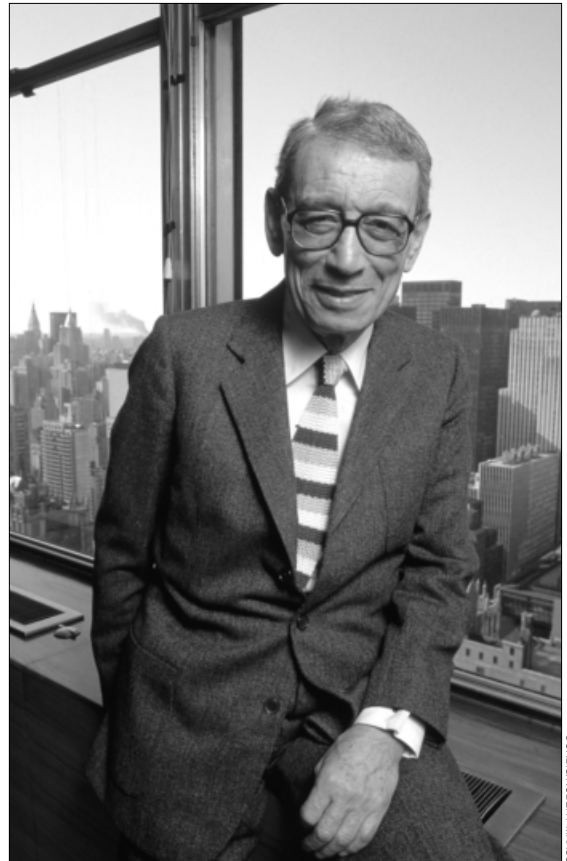
the people, much more becomes visible.”

By “from above” I meant the viewpoint of bureaucrats and government officials, the face the nation presents to outsiders, and that, instead, we needed to highlight the views of the people, to focus on the human face behind the nation.

I was most happy to see that on his next trip to East Asia, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali gave talks at Korea University in Seoul, South Korea, and Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan, and after both lectures, conducted question-and-answer sessions, engaging in just the sort of dialogue with youth that I feel is so important.

ON our third meeting, in 1996, in addition to expressing my appreciation for his efforts to meet with young people, I also took the liberty of suggesting that the United Nations solicit donations from the public to help solve

its financial problems. The United Nations is finding itself with ever-expanding duties on the one hand and a shrinking budget on the other. Many countries find some excuse to criticize the ineffectiveness of the United Nations while at the same time withholding their due financial contributions, which are necessary for the world organization to be effective. Dr. Boutros-Ghali noted that if just one ten-thousandth of the funds that had been spent for military purposes during the Cold War were spent on the United Nations instead, its financial difficulties would be over.



CHRIS/ROBERT MAASS

Dr. Boutros-Ghali at the UN Headquarters in New York

Though this is the biggest practical problem we face in the quest for world peace, no one is willing to confront it. I suggested that the United Nations adopt a policy of soliciting donations from private benefactors and organizations around the globe: "The people of the world are serious. They are honest. They sincerely want peace. Their commitment to peace can be trusted. Their goodwill can become a source of true strength for the United Nations. I hope you will find a way to summon and focus their goodwill. If you do, you will not only restore the UN financial base, but you will change its structure so that it can no longer be dominated by the interests and policies of the governments of member nations."

Dr. Boutros-Ghali promised to think seriously about my suggestion. He also voiced appreciation for the SGI holding commemorative events around the world to celebrate the United Nation's fiftieth anniversary.

**D**R. Boutros-Ghali became the UN secretary-general in January 1992. The Cold War was over, and there were high expectations for a renaissance of the international body as the world moved from an age dominated by the two superpowers to a new world order, centered on the United Nations. Dr. Boutros-Ghali shouldered a very heavy burden, facing as he did utterly unprecedented circumstances. He was on the threshold of a new time in history, of the sort that humanity had never yet to experience.

After his inauguration, he took up the challenge of streamlining

U.N. bureaucracy, and presented a report titled "An Agenda for Peace," consisting of various concrete proposals and recommendations for making peace a reality. In his paper, he declared that the time of absolute and exclusive national sovereignty had passed.

He was right. It is people, it is life that deserves our true respect. Nations are no more than a social convention; they are a means to serve people, not an end in themselves. The absolute authority of the nation is nothing more than a myth designed to establish the absolute authority of the leaders of nations.

"The world is still in some ways in its 'Middle Ages' when it comes to international organizations and cooperation,"<sup>1</sup> Dr. Boutros-Ghali wrote. He was criticizing the overwhelming tendency of nations to put their own interests far, far ahead of the interests of the world as a whole. As international exchange and communication increase, there is a danger that countries, peoples or small groups who are unable to keep pace with the speedy process of globalization will close themselves off.

Buddhism teaches that if you light a lamp for another, it will also brighten your own way. Dr. Boutros-Ghali stresses that we need to teach people that, by helping oppressed peoples in other parts of the world, we also help our own nation. Only when people all around the world are concerned with the suffering of others, no matter how far away they may be; only when the tide of the awareness of global citizenship rises, can the United Nations, the ship of peace, make real progress.

We cannot close ourselves off from the world. This is the tradition of Dr. Boutros-Ghali's native land of Egypt. Born in 1922, Dr. Boutros-Ghali recalls that he spent half of his life with a view of the Nile. His present home in Cairo is near the river, too. When we first met, in 1993, he told me that he had read my dialogue with Arnold Toynbee and other of my writings. He said that as a result, he felt as if we had already met. On that occasion, he told me about his family and his early life.

His grandfather, Boutros Ghali Pasha, was prime minister and foreign minister of Egypt when the country was under British rule. Two of his uncles also served, respectively, as foreign minister. His cousin was a government minister as well. His was a political family. Just as a child born into a doctor's household often tends to become familiar with things medical even before going to school, Dr. Boutros-Ghali learned naturally about the world of politics from childhood so that it became second nature to him, he said. What did he learn? The spirit of devoting oneself to the public good. His grandfather was assassinated by extremists. One of his uncles was persecuted and imprisoned.

**W**HEN Dr. Boutros-Ghali was fourteen, Italian forces under Mussolini invaded neighboring Ethiopia and the Ethiopian emperor fled into exile. Dr. Boutros-Ghali was on his way to Switzerland at the time, and as he crossed the Suez Canal, he saw the flag of the Italians flying, symbolizing their



Feluccas on the River Nile, at Aswan, which flows through Egypt, the seat of one of the world's oldest civilizations.

victory. He knew he would never forget that terrible injustice.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali's lifelong goal has been to help the oppressed nations of the Third World. In the 1952 Egyptian Revolution, his family was considered "feudal" and "enemies of the people," and some ninety percent of his inherited wealth was confiscated or nationalized. He was also stripped of his political rights, but they were later restored because he was a professor at Cairo University, and the authorities assessed that he might be a valuable asset to the country. His two brothers, however, were forced to leave Egypt in order to have any hope of successful careers.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali obtained a doctorate in international law from the University of Paris before becoming a professor of law at Cairo University. At the Egyptian university, his lectures gained such renown for their high quality that students came all the way from Europe just to take his courses.

At the end of October 1977, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat suddenly appointed him Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. At the time, President Sadat had decided to take the historic step of visiting Israel, but he was not able to win the support of his cabinet, and the foreign minister and others resigned. He chose Dr. Boutros-Ghali to take over as foreign minister.

SINCE its founding, Israel had been in conflict with its Arab neighbors, and much blood had been spilled on both sides. President Sadat declared that no more young people must die, that Egypt needed no more such "heroes." Nor did he wish to see more wounded Israeli young men and women. Three weeks after he became foreign minister, Dr. Boutros-Ghali visited Israel with President Sadat.

It was no easy task to bring down the thick wall of mutual distrust that divided the two nations, and in fact President Sadat was later assassinated for his efforts. Dr. Boutros-Ghali's

life was in danger as well, but he came from a family that knew that giving one's life for a great and just cause is the duty of those in public service. Enduring attacks from both the Israeli and Arab camps, Dr. Boutros-Ghali was responsible for all of the behind-the-scenes negotiations that led up to the Camp David peace accords and the 1979 signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt at the White House.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali is a man of powerful convictions, who has proudly declared that there is no problem that cannot be solved. One must be an optimist to achieve world peace, he says. It is just like being a doctor who saves lives. You will never succeed unless you have a positive attitude.

It is certainly true that once we start listing the difficulties, there is no end. But to achieve great things, we must find a starting place, something that we can do, and then do it. Giving up is the enemy of progress and eventual success.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali says that peace is not something we can sit around waiting for; it is something we must build ourselves. □

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1. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Empowering the UN" *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1992/93.



“Josei Toda, my mentor and the second president of the Soka Gakkai, passionately longed to eliminate misery from the face of the Earth. His fervent wish is the basis of my thought and action. My own efforts to discuss the most vital topics with informed and concerned people from all over the world are my response to Mr. Toda’s exhortation. I have refused to be deterred in my efforts to enter into dialogue with representatives of all peoples on the basis of our common humanity.” (SGI President Ikeda’s 1999 Peace Proposal, page 19)



SGI President Ikeda greets Casimiro B. Juarez and Fe R. Juarez at the Okinawa Training Center, February 17.

**T**HE SGI president’s efforts have been recognized by scores of nations and institutions throughout the world. On February 17 at the Okinawa Training Center in Japan, the SGI President, and founder of Soka University, received the Philippines’ Cagayan Capitol College’s first Persona Integra “Total Person” Award. The school’s president Casimiro B. Juarez and his wife and executive vice president Fe R. Juarez made the presentation. The honor was established to recognize exemplary individuals who have actualized the school’s ideal of the well-rounded person who makes outstanding contributions to society.

Mrs. Juarez is the daughter of the school’s founder, Madame Laureana S. Rosales, who today at 73 is the

president of Iligan Capitol College. Madame Rosales is a survivor of the infamous Bataan Death March, the forced march of 70,000 American and Philippine prisoners of war captured by the Japanese in the Philippines in 1942 in which seven to ten thousand died.

Expressing indignation at the savage treatment that Madam Rosales had received at the hands of the Japanese military, Mr. Ikeda offered his heartfelt apologies as a Japanese citizen. He later handed an SGI Peace and Culture Award to Mrs. Juarez saying, “I wish to humbly present this award to your mother as a small recompense for Japan’s atrocious conduct in the past.” □

*Photos Courtesy Seikyo Press*

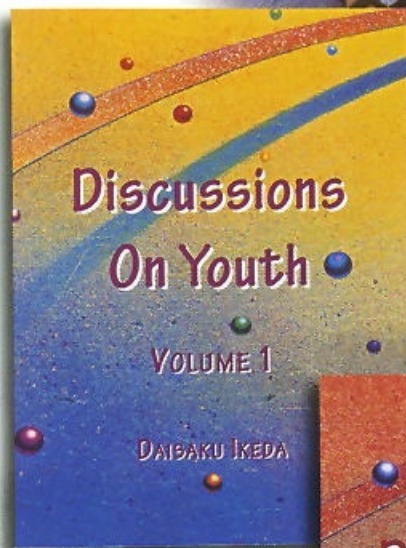


(Above) Chinese Central Television interviews the SGI president at the Okinawa Training Center (Okinawa, Feb. 19).  
(Below left) SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda visit the Kyoto International Culture Center (Kyoto, Nov. 19, 1998).  
(Below right) SGI President Ikeda greets members at a prayer meeting to celebrate the completion of the Okinawa Peace Memorial Park (Okinawa, Feb. 16).



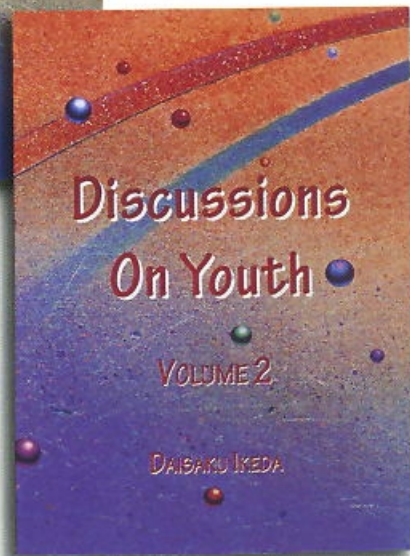
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MAY 1999

TOWARD A CULTURE OF PEACE — A COSMIC VIEW: 1999 PEACE PROPOSAL  
LETTER TO LORD TOKI — STUDY MATERIAL FOR MAY•JUNE



## DENVER CULTURE CENTER



THE Denver Culture Center is located in the heart of downtown Denver on the east bank of Cherry Creek, where cherry trees once thrived until they were destroyed by floods at the beginning of the century.

When the culture center opened in 1989, SGI-USA members initiated a plan to reintroduce cherry trees to the creek. On April 2, 1998 the City and County of Denver recog-

nized the efforts of SGI-USA members in Denver by establishing the Ikeda Cherry Tree Garden in Jacobs Park. A bronze plaque in the garden carries the opening words from SGI President Ikeda's *The New Human Revolution*: "Nothing is more precious than peace. Nothing brings more happiness. Peace is the most basic starting point for the advancement of humankind."

