

## 'SPRINGING FROM THE EARTH'

**A prolific poet, Daisaku Ikeda wrote 'The Sun of "Jiyu"' in 1993. The excerpt below expresses, his hopes for the American people to advance the cause of human rights.**

*Ah, America, land bringing  
together  
so many different peoples!  
A republic of ideals  
born beneath the lofty  
banners,  
the uniting principles of  
freedom and equality.  
As this century draws to  
its close,  
the soul of your idealism  
grieves, at the stark realities  
of racial strife.  
What is to become of the  
spirit of your nation  
fostered by so many people of  
wisdom and philosophy?*

*My treasured friends,  
There is no question that  
your multiracial nation,  
America,  
represents humanity's future.*

*Your land holds secret stores  
of unbounded possibility, transforming  
the energy of different cultures  
into the unity of construction,  
the flames of conflict  
into the light of solidarity,  
the eroding rivulets of mistrust  
into a great broad flow of  
confidence.*

*On what can we ground  
our efforts to open the  
horizons of such  
a renaissance? ...*

*Seek out the primordial “roots” of humankind.  
Then you will without fail  
discover  
the stately expanse of jiyu\*  
unfolding in the depths  
of your life.  
Here is the home,  
the dwelling place  
to which humankind traces  
its original existence—  
beyond all borders,  
beyond all differences  
of gender and race.  
Here is a world offering  
true proof  
of our humanity.*

*If one reaches back to these fundamental roots,  
all become friends  
and comrades.  
To realize this is to  
“emerge from the earth.” ...*

*Buddhism describes  
the connective threads of  
“dependent origination.”  
Nothing in this world  
exists alone;  
everything comes into being and continues  
in response to causes  
and conditions.  
Parent and child.  
Husband and wife.  
Friends. Races.  
Humanity and nature.*

*This profound understanding  
of coexistence, of symbiosis—  
here is the source  
of resolution for  
the most pressing and  
fundamental issues  
that confront humankind  
in the chaotic last years  
of this century.*

*The Buddhist scriptures  
include  
the parable of “Two Bundles  
of Reeds,”  
aptly demonstrating  
this relation  
of dependent origination.  
Only by supporting each other  
can the two bundles  
stand straight—  
if one is removed,  
the other must fall.  
Because this exists,  
so does that;  
Because that exists,  
so does this.*

*For several brilliant centuries  
Western civilization  
has encouraged  
the independence of  
the individual,  
but now appears to be facing  
a turbulent twilight.  
The waves of egoism  
eat away at the shores of  
contemporary society.  
The tragedy of division  
wraps the world in a thick fog.  
Individuals are becoming  
mere scraps, mere fragments,  
competing reed bundles of  
the lesser self  
threatened with mutual  
collapse.  
My friends!  
Please realize that you  
already possess  
the solution to this quandary.  
First you must break  
the hard shell  
of the lesser self.  
This you must absolutely do.  
Then direct your lucid gaze  
toward your friends.*

*People can only live fully*

*by helping others live.  
When you give life to friends  
you truly live.  
Cultures can only realize  
further richness  
by honoring other traditions.  
And only by respecting  
natural life  
can humanity continue  
to exist.  
Now is the time for you  
to realize  
that through relations  
mutually inspiring and  
harmonious,  
the “greater self” is awakened to dynamic action,  
the bonds of life are restored and healed.  
And blossoms in delightful multitude  
exude the unique fragrance  
of each person,  
of each ethnicity,  
in precise accord with  
the principle of  
“cherry, plum, peach  
and damson.”...*

*Translated from the Japanese by Andrew Gebert*

\* *Jiyu* is a Japanese expression denoting “Bodhisattva of the Earth,” or a condition of compassion and consideration.