SET EXAMPLES OF NONVIOLENCE!

Dean Lawrence E. Carter, of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta, and Dr. George D. Miller, a philosophy professor of Lewis University in Illinois, discussed the life of Dr. Martin Luther King with SGI President Daisaku Ikeda. The dialogue took place on the evening of Sept. 7 at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall, following the 49th Headquarters Leaders Meeting, at which the SGI president was inducted into Morehouse College's Martin Luther King Jr. International Collegium of Scholars. The following is a summary of their discussion about the battle waged by Dr. King to establish human equality:

SGI President Ikeda: We have just concluded the ceremony. You must be tired. I appreciate your taking the time for an informal dialogue with me.

Dean Carter: Today, I feel that I have completely changed my life on its deepest level.

Ikeda: Many people want to learn about Dr. King. Could you, who carry his spirit, speak about his justice and truth?

Carter: Yes. I will speak about how he truly was as I knew him.

Ikeda: You really look like Mr. Mandela. I heartily respect the former president of South Africa. I understand he once visited Morehouse College.

Carter: He once came to Morehouse College on a goodwill trip to the United States. Ours was the only college in America that he visited in person. However, he received honorary doctorate degrees from as many as 38 colleges in 20 minutes. His entire visit to Morehouse was just over one hour.

Ikeda: I have heard that you personally met Dr. King when you were 17. What was your first impression of him?

Carter: I met him in 1959 when he was 30 years old. Our meeting took place at the Union Grove Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio. I saw him in the pastor's study room after the morning service. He was sitting there all by himself when I entered the room. I thought it was empty. I had asked permission to go into the pastor's study to look at his library. I began examining the books near the entrance. When I turned around to view the rest of the library, Dr. King was sitting on the opposite side of the study watching me. He asked my name and if I had considered going to college. When I said, "Yes," he recommended Morehouse College. However, I informed him that some people close to me opposed the idea of my going to Morehouse. I, therefore, decided to attend a different college. I met him for the second time in the second semester of my freshman year at Virginia University of Lynchburg. He delivered a speech titled "The American Dream." It was the most powerful address I had ever heard. I knew with certainty I was supposed to be at Morehouse College.

I called my mother, but her response to my idea of going to Morehouse was negative. I deliberately entered Boston University after graduating from college, where Dr. King had studied for his Ph.D. degree. My feeling was that I wanted to study under the very same professors who taught him. These professors were near retirement, already retired or deceased. I believe I was one of the last African American students to study with Dr. King's teachers at Boston.

In 1979, the president of Morehouse College, Dr. Hugh M. Gloster, offered me the

Title: Set Examples Of Nonviolence!
Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.6 WT001027p06 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00
Author: Daisaku Ikeda, George D. Miller, Lawrence E. Carter
Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Encouragement Examples Features Georgia Guidance Highlights Human Morehouse Nonviolence Organization Peace Relationships Special Tribune World

chance to be the first dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. I was thus finally able to become part of Morehouse College. It took me from 1959 to 1979 to complete my journey.

Ikeda: What do you think made Dr. King advocate nonviolence?

Carter: Generally speaking, Dr. King is believed to have inherited his nonviolent temperament from his mother. He also realized that oppressed African Americans could not win a violent confrontation against the larger American social order that was highly oriented to militarism. He did not want to attack people, but rather injustice. He believed that the "end" was pre-existent in the "means."

Ikeda: I see.

Carter: It is said that his robust, bullish courage came from his father, Martin Luther King Sr. whom everyone fondly called Daddy King. The senior King was extremely brave. In front of his son, he once challenged a prejudiced southern white police officer. When Dr. King was a child, one day he was riding in the family car with his father. A white police officer stopped their car and said to Daddy King, "Boy, show me your driver's license." His father, pointing to his son, said fearlessly to the policeman: "This is a boy! I am a man!" It was rare in those days for blacks to stand up to whites like that. Black people usually became frightened when intimidated by white people in authority.

Here is another story: It happened when Dr. King's father and he went to buy a pair of shoes for the younger King. When they were waiting in the front of the shoe store where only white people were generally served, a clerk requested them to move to the back of the store. Daddy King quickly responded, "I will buy a pair of shoes from this seat! Otherwise, I will take my business elsewhere!" After being rebuffed and holding his son's hand, the father stepped out of the shop and said to his son, "I have had enough of discrimination. You are no longer Michael. From this day forth your name shall be Martin Luther King Jr., and you will fix this situation."

Ikeda: These are indeed precious stories. What a wonderful father! By the way, what words of Dr. King do you like most?

Carter: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." And, "You should be judged by the content of your character and not by the color of your skin."

Ikeda: Great! What is your greatest memory of encountering Dr. King?

Carter: When I was a freshman at Boston University, Dr. King came to Harvard University to preach. The service was supposed to start at 11 a.m. but because he was trapped answering the questions of newspaper reporters at the Boston International Airport, he arrived at Harvard two hours late. No one left Harvard Memorial Church before his arrival. The entire congregation was patiently waiting for his arrival. On that occasion I had a chance to speak to Dr. King after the service. I asked him if he remembered me. He stared hard into my face as I reminded him of our encounter in Columbus, Ohio when I was an eleventh grader, the time he recruited me to go to Morehouse College. A light came on in his head and he said, "Oh yes, I remember you."

Ikeda: Is that right?

Carter: Not only that, he was very happy to know that I was a student at Boston University, School of Theology, his alma mater. He then signed a book for me.

Ikeda: That must be unforgettable for you. By the way, Dr. King is famous for the historic "I Have A Dream" speech he gave. Through it, he touched so many people's hearts and motivated them to stand up in the battle for freedom. What in his address captured his listener's hearts?

Title: Set Examples Of Nonviolence!
Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.6 WT001027p06 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00
Author: Daisaku Ikeda, George D. Miller, Lawrence E. Carter
Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Encouragement Examples Features Georgia Guidance Highlights Human Morehouse Nonviolence Organization Peace Relationships Special Tribune World

Carter: As is well known, Dr. King was a powerfully eloquent speaker. And he made use of wonderful metaphors. Beautiful sounding words naturally gushed from his heart and his expressions were very poetic and picturesque. Here is a good example: When he referred to the lips of the governor of Alabama who opposed the integration of the public schools of that state, he said, "The Governor of Alabama with his lips dripping with interposition and nullification."

I am afraid that our interpreters may not get what he meant by that expression. Dr. King's large words were probably not understood by the large crowd who heard him referencing the Governor of Alabama. They knew Dr. King was criticizing the Governor for being an obstacle to African American freedom. And the polysyllabic sound of the words, "interposition" and "nullification" appealed to the highly developed sense of tone color in the ear of African American culture. Hence, the 250,000-member crowd before the Lincoln Memorial roared their approval and laughter.

Ikeda: You are a wonderful storyteller for Dr. King. By the way, where were you when Dr. King was assassinated? How did you first hear of his death? [Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on the evening of April 4, 1968.]

Carter: When he was killed, I was at Boston University watching a play with my fiancée. It was a play about the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. During the intermission, the dean of the School of Theology, Dr. Walter G. Muelder got the attention of my preaching professor, Dr. Robert E. Luccock, who was seated in front of us and invited him out of the auditorium. Dean Muelder was one of the signatories on Dr. King's degree and later on mine. I saw the two men standing outside having a serious talk. Concerned about what might have gone wrong, I went outside and asked was everything all right. Dean Muelder, in a very stern voice, told me, "Dr. King has been shot." After I caught my breath, I asked him if he was all right.Dean Muelder replied, "He died a few minutes ago."

Hearing this news sent a shock throughout my body. I instantly decided to leave the theater with Marva, my fiancée. Walking hand in hand very slowly, we started down Commonwealth Avenue toward the center of the university to Daniel Marsh Chapel. We entered the darkened sanctuary and sat on the last pew in the rear of the nave looking up at the rose of sharon stained glass window of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. With tears flowing down my face, I prayed out loud, "Help me dear God to do something great for Martin Luther King Jr. before I die!"

Ikeda: Your words are indeed profound. I understand that you will be giving a sermon and a lecture at Harvard University Jan. 14 and 15, 2001, for the anniversary of Dr. King's birthday. What will be your theme?

Carter: I have not clearly decided upon a theme yet, but I will share with you what is on my mind now. I may address Dr. King's awareness of the importance of affirmative action. He always believed like his mentor, Benjamin Elijah Mays, that when you start behind in the race of life, you have to run faster to catch up. I have been concerned that politicians are trying to exploit the use of Dr. King's name to abolish affirmative action programs. Dr. King believed that affirmative action was necessary to realize equal competition between blacks and whites, since whites have been more advantaged for several centuries in the United States.

I may also address Dr. King's view of Christianity. It was not a narrow-minded perspective on religion. Dr. King had a big heart for embracing everybody irrespective of their faith tradition. He accepted everyone regardless of their religious creed. He took

Title: Set Examples Of Nonviolence!
Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.6 WT001027p06 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00
Author: Daisaku Ikeda, George D. Miller, Lawrence E. Carter
Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Encouragement Examples Features Georgia Guidance Highlights Human Morehouse Nonviolence Organization Peace Relationships Special Tribune World

seriously Jefferson's words that ". . . [A]ll men are created equal.

Ikeda: That is a very important viewpoint.

Carter: Let me give a concrete example. At one time Dr. King was asked, "Who is the greatest Christian of the 20th Century?" His answer was, "Mahatma Gandhi," a Hindu. He was able to transcend institutional religion and to deeply understand the spirituality of all people.

Ikeda: Dr. Benjamin Mays, the sixth president of Morehouse College and your own mentor, was a great educator. He developed your college into an international institution. He is also known as Dr. King's mentor. What is the most important thing that you learned from President Mays? By the way, the other day you sent me a book on President Mays that you wrote. I am deeply grateful.

Carter: You are most welcome. President Mays would often stress the point that we should see the humanity of our oppressors. He taught us not to hurt others for any reason. He thus taught us to help others to get rid of the injustice that exists in their hearts. In this way he taught us to put a stop to unjust activities.

Ikeda: Dr. Mays was selected as one of the 53 most influential African Americans in United States history. What do you think was the biggest role Dr. Mays played in human history?

Carter: Dr. Mays resolved to become a person of integrity and made every effort to do so in an age when segregation was rampant. In so doing he planted the seeds of revolution in the hearts of Morehouse students. Many of them acknowledged him as their mentor and went on to become social engineers. He helped these students from his famous Tuesday morning Chapel talks to become the still, small whisper of the mighty wind that blew down the walls of segregation. He said to Morehouse men that even if they had to ride segregated buses, that after they deposited their money in the front and took their seat in the rear they should keep their minds in the front of the bus.

Ikeda: What a wonderful spirit! His words touched my heart deeply. Nowadays in Japan there is a serious cry for reformation in education. So many cases of youth violence have been reported in recent years. How do you think adults should deal with children who are compelled to resort to violence?

Carter: This is a very important question.

Ikeda: It is the most serious issue in Japan today.

Carter: Arun Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson says, "Anger is a form of passive violence." I believe that the best way to solve the issue of violence among the children is for adults to demonstrate nonviolence through their concrete actions. Children learn more from what they see us do than from what they hear us say. Gandhi is right, "We must be the change we wish to see."

Ikeda: You are right. These words are very enlightening and provocative. In a nutshell, what do you think is the purpose of education?

Carter: It is to empower children with the capacity to emancipate themselves. Put another way, education is supposed to show students how to become mature, civil, humane, ecumenical, and the importance of being able to learn from members of the opposite sex.

Ikeda: You founded the Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation in April of this year.

Carter: Yes, we founded it to cope with the very issue that we are talking about, violence.

Ikeda: What is the part of Morehouse College's history you are most proud of?

Title: Set Examples Of Nonviolence!
Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.6 WT001027p06 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00
Author: Daisaku Ikeda, George D. Miller, Lawrence E. Carter
Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Encouragement Examples Features Georgia Guidance Highlights Human Morehouse Nonviolence Organization Peace Relationships Special Tribune World

Carter: I have the deepest pride in the fact that our College has produced many great individuals such as Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King Jr. President Hugh Gloster used to say that if we had only graduated these two men our existence would be justified.

Dr. Thurman, who graduated in 1923, was the first African American to meet face to face with Mahatma Gandhi in 1936 and to interview him on the relevance of nonviolence for ending American segregation. Thurman interviewed Gandhi for half a day when he and his wife returned to Howard University where Thurman was the first Dean of Chapel. He reported to Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, a Morehouse College graduate of the class of 1911. President Johnson was so impressed with the report on Gandhi by Thurman that he called an unscheduled meeting of the faculty in Andrew Rankin Chapel for Thurman to give his report. In the audience was Benjamin Mays. Thurman urged both Johnson and Mays to go to India to confirm his findings with Gandhi. President Johnson was already busy turning the Howard University Law School into the West Point of the Civil Rights Movement. He chose a Morehouse man, James Madison Nabrit Jr., class of 1923 and the roommate of Howard Thurman, to teach the first course ever taught in the United States on civil rights law. Nabrit's most famous student was Justice Thurgood Marshall who won the famous 1954 Supreme Court case of Brown vs. the Board of Education that desegregated all American schools.

Ikeda: Your story tells of truly respectable people's great efforts to establish equality. Dr. King received an honorary doctorate from Morehouse College when he was 28. It was right after his courageous, wise leadership in the famous bus boycott movement in Montgomery, Ala. On the occasion of awarding Dr. King's first honorary degree in 1957, Dr. Mays said the following with deep emotion: "Your alma mater, Morehouse College, is very happy to become the first College to bestow an honorary doctorate degree upon you in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of our founding." I sense the existence of an immortal spiritual heritage in your college.

Carter: Yes, you're right. Another individual I want to mention is President Emeritus Hugh M. Gloster, who founded the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel, established the Morehouse School of Medicine and built 13 buildings on our campus. Dr. Gloster was the first American to teach in Japan after World War II. He is now 92 years old and is in good health and high spirits. He was the seventh president of Morehouse and was mentored by Howard Thurman and Dr. Mays. Thurman was the College Chaplain to Morehouse when Dr. Gloster was a student in the early 1930s. The spiritual heritage of our College is based on the view that the highest form of spirituality is cooperation. It has been a salt and pepper cooperation that has helped Morehouse College to become a profound contributor to the building of our nation.

Ikeda: I am told that Professor Miller is an excellent philosopher. Professor Miller, who would you name as the five greatest philosophers in the history of humankind?

Professor Miller: I would first mention Socrates. Also, Brazil's Paulo Fraire had a strong influence on my life. He taught the poor how to read and write. He aimed to develop their interest in politics. In his masterpiece, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he stresses the importance of dialogue as you, Dr. Ikeda, do. He contends that education should be an opportunity for both teachers and students to enlighten and learn from one another. More than half a million copies of this book have been sold. It triggered a wave of educational reformation in the United States. I personally met him before he died.

I also would say that Hegel and Sartre were great philosophers. Lao-tse of China also deserves our attention. A trend of organizational reformation is growing today in the

Title: Set Examples Of Nonviolence!
Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.6 WT001027p06 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00
Author: Daisaku Ikeda, George D. Miller, Lawrence E. Carter
Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Encouragement Examples Features Georgia Guidance Highlights Human Morehouse Nonviolence Organization Peace Relationships Special Tribune World

United States, advocating a transition from a pyramid-style structure to a reverse-pyramid style. Leaders exist to spontaneously serve their constituency in this new organizational structure. Lao-tse provides a philosophical basis for this organizational reformation.

What is common to excellent philosophers is the fact that they are not mere ideologists but men of action. They always work among the people.

Ikeda: Professor Miller, how did you come to know Morehouse College?

Miller: I became connected with Morehouse through Dean Carter, whom I dearly respect. I was invited to the King International Chapel last year to give a lecture. I spoke about hope at that time. As I am an avid reader of Dr. King's books, I feel an upsurge of hope simply by being at a place that is crowned with his name.

Ikeda: Dr King says to the effect that "People move leaders, not vice versa."

Miller: It is no good, even on campus, if professors always act as professors and students always as students. Everybody should be both a professor and a student.

Ikeda: Chancellor Mays of Morehouse College states to the effect that "Materials, power, fame, house, property, stocks and securities may maintain us physically and give us economic and social stability. But only with a great ideal can we truly live our lives." I see truth in these words. Buddhism teaches, "The treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 851). Where do you think we can find the key to enabling young people to understand such an ultimate principle for living?

Miller: We can compare our own existence to a piece of cloth and our ethics to threads that make up that cloth. We should not fall into the error of hypocrisy. We should always etch in our minds that we must show a great example to others through our actions.

Ikeda: The world of academia and the world of education are supreme worlds for the human species. I hope we will carry on a lasting friendship. Thank you very much for your precious time.

Title: Set Examples Of Nonviolence!
Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.6 WT001027p06 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00
Author: Daisaku Ikeda, George D. Miller, Lawrence E. Carter
Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Encouragement Examples Features Georgia Guidance Highlights Human Morehouse Nonviolence Organization Peace Relationships Special Tribune World