

# living BUDDHISM

October • 2000 Vol. 4 • No. 10

"We must not become cowardly and craven people who become disheartened and critical of others and think only about protecting themselves when things get even a little bit tough. Those who can pull together in the direst of circumstances are true comrades. Faith is the spirit to give even our very lives for the sake of kosen-rufu and the happiness of the people, whether we gain from it or not." Page 33

## 4 General Director's Message

Founding Spirit Determines Everything

## 6 Buddhist Concept for Today's Living (18)

Practicing for Oneself, Practicing for Others

## 8 Living the Teachings (2)

The Good Medicine for All Ills

## 10 Dialogue Bridges Different Religious Traditions

President Ikeda's Message to the Sixth International Conference  
of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

## 16 What is Faith and How Do We Strengthen It?

Determination, Which Forms Our Strong Prayers, Reveals Itself in the Power of Faith

## 23 The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin Cross Reference to the Major Writings

A Handy Pullout for Converting Nichiren Daishonin's Works

## 28 Making a Difference

Opening My Heart

## 29 Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra #53

The Lotus Sutra Is a Teaching of the Oneness of Mentor and Disciple

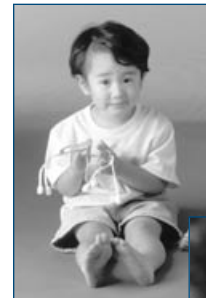
## 45 Recollections of My Meetings With Leading World Figures

Mayor Le Hoa Lam of Auburn, New South Wales, Australia

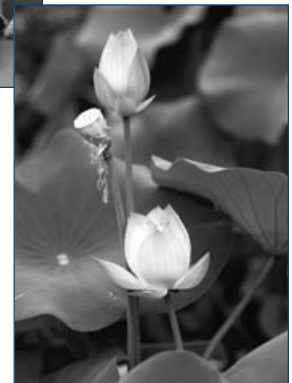
10



16



29



45



28



COVER: Photo illustration to commemorate the final installment of "Dialogue On the Lotus Sutra," Earth from space, Photo Library International/CORBIS; Lotus flower and leaves, Brian Vikander/ CORBIS; Sanskrit Lotus Sutra fragments, Lushan Museum and the Soka Gakkai.

LIVING BUDDHISM (USPS 385-750) (ISSN: 1093-5169)

Published monthly by SGI-USA Publications, 606 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401. Periodicals postage paid at Santa Monica, CA 90401, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster—send address changes and returns to *Living Buddhism*, SGI-USA Subscriptions, P.O. Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907. Copyright© 2000 SGI-USA. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rate: \$50.00 per year, \$90.00 for two years. RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED.

## To Our Readers

With this issue, we conclude the series "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra," a discussion among SGI President Ikeda, Soka Gakkai Study Department Chief Katsuji Saito and vice chiefs Takanori Endo and Haruo Suda that we started in April, 1995. (*Living Buddhism* was called *Seikyo Times* in those days.) In this dialogue, President Ikeda has opened the Lotus Sutra and the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin to the people of this century and the people of future centuries as well. This great achievement will be a source of study and encouragement forever. World Tribune Press is publishing the fifty-three installments in six volumes as *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*. Volume one is now available.

We are considering several new projects to replace "Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra," with our goal being to deepen our faith and

understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and President Ikeda's application of Buddhism to the modern age.

I would like to introduce a new staff writer for *Living Buddhism*, Alexis Trass. Alexis graduated from Indiana University and took a position with the East Chicago, Indiana public school district teaching English to eighth graders. But her desire has always been to be a writer. Both of her parents began practicing Buddhism while they were dating, so Alexis was born into the SGI-USA. She has three sisters who practice as well. When she left Gary, Indiana, to move to Santa Monica, California, she was the young women's leader for Great Lakes Region. We welcome Alexis to her new position.

*Ted Morino*  
*Editor in Chief/Managing Editor*

# living BUDDHISM

#### EDITORIAL STAFF:

**Publisher:** Fred M. Zaitso

**Assistant Publisher:**

Greg Martin

**Editor in Chief/Managing**

**Editor:** Ted Morino

**Assistant Managing Editor:**

Dave Baldschun

**Staff Writer:** Alexis Trass

**Publications Translation**

**Department:** Jeff Kriger,

Shin Yatomi

**Graphic Design:**

Stephanie Sydney

**Research:** Erica Ogihara

**Volunteer:** Mark Koral

#### WRITTEN/ARTISTIC

#### CONTRIBUTIONS:

Send all written, photographic

or fine art submissions

to Living Buddhism, 606

Wilshire Boulevard, Santa

Monica, CA 90401 or e-mail:

LivingB1@aol.com

Contributors assume liability

for all copyrighted material.

All written submissions

become property of SGI-USA.



## Subscribe today

#### Check One:

6 Months \$28  
(6 issues)

1 Year \$50  
(12 issues)  
SAVE \$22

3 Years \$125  
(36 issues)  
SAVE \$91

U.S.A. only

CHARGE MY VISA  OR MASTER CARD  PAYMENT ENCLOSED

CARD #

EXPIRATION DATE

SIGNATURE

*All credit card orders are subject to bank approval*

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

PHONE #

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Source Code (If known)

For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver

Subscriptions: (800) 835-4558 • email: sgisubs@aol.com

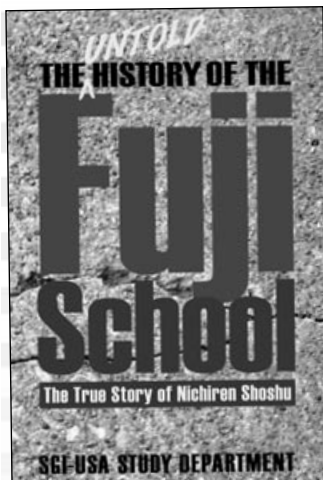
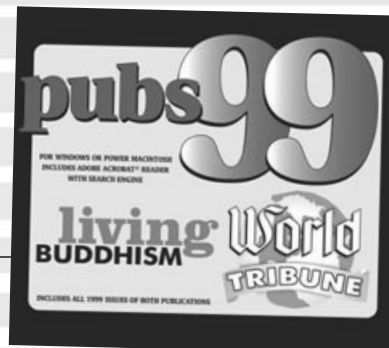
MAIL TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

# NEW from World Tribune Press

## Pubs99 CD-ROM

All 1999 World Tribune and Living Buddhism issues in searchable format.

\$25.00, M/O #: 4511



## The Untold History of the Fuji School

By the SGI-USA Study Department

Gain new insight into the current problems within Nichiren Shoshu.

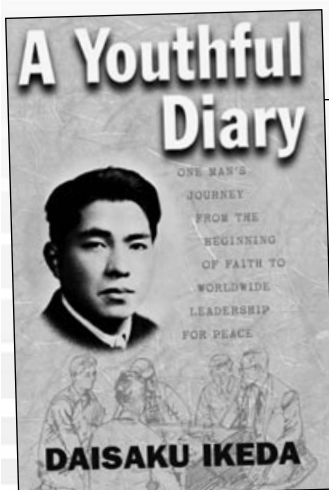
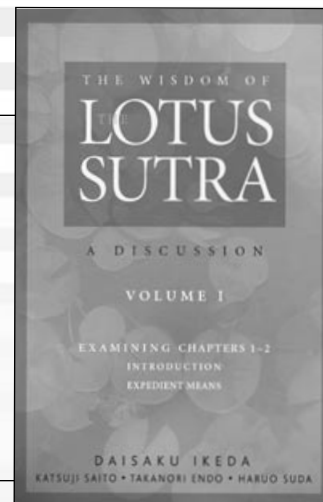
Paperback, \$9.95, M/O #: 4102

## The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra: A Discussion, Volume I

Daisaku Ikeda, Katsuji Saito,  
Takanori Endo, Haruo Suda

In clear, down-to-earth terms,  
this book explores the profound  
meaning of the Lotus Sutra.

Paperback, \$9.95, M/O #: 4281



## A Youthful Diary

Daisaku Ikeda

Youthful inspiration for all of us.

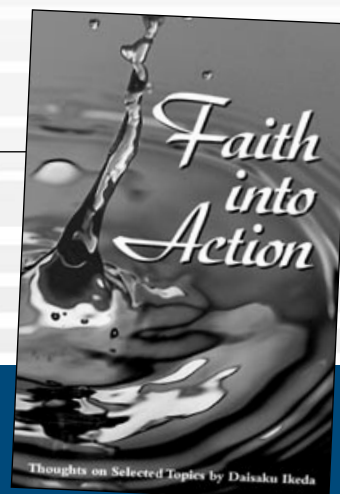
Hardcover, \$23.95, M/O #: 4101

## Faith into Action

Daisaku Ikeda

Guidance by subject. A great reference.

Paperback, \$12.95, M/O #: 4135



Available at all SGI-USA bookstores  
Or purchase your copies via mail order:  
1-800-626-1313; sgiusamoc@aol.com

# FOUNDING *Spirit* Determines *Everything*

F R O M   T H E   G E N E R A L   D I R E C T O R

**G**reetings to the readers of *Living Buddhism*: As you may have heard, twenty-two new Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo faculty members have begun their preparations for the school's historic opening. The eighteen buildings of the Aliso Viejo campus are rapidly nearing completion and the official dedication on May 3, 2001. The faculty members have gathered to develop the policies and curriculum for the first class of one hundred students, who will begin their education on August 24, 2001, in just eleven months.

I often speak of Soka University of America, and I am moved by the response. Everywhere I go, I meet young people with great passion and a strong desire to attend this magnificent new institution of higher learning, and I meet many parents with high hopes for this school. I am also moved by the enthusiasm of those who will not attend themselves or send their children. Yet have shared their excitement about the opening of the university. Pioneer members have tearfully expressed great pride that May 3, 2001 will be marked by the opening of Soka University in the United States. Throughout the country, people have expressed their determination through prayers, scholarship contributions and best wishes. I truly believe that the members of SGI-USA are united in their determination to assist in the success of this university.

In his recent poem to the SGI members in the United States, "Soar—Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!" President Ikeda expresses his hopes for this school. In one stanza, he referred to stu-

dents who will be entering this university.

*Gazing out upon the waves  
of a monarch Pacific Ocean,  
carrying the burden  
of the hopes and expectations  
of the centuries,  
its construction has been matched  
by innumerable voices  
raised brightly in song,  
by an unending array  
of young people ascending  
that vibrant hill in Orange County.*

In less than one year, one hundred young people will become the first class of this institution. Those students are the beginning of an "unending array" of humanity who will ascend "that vibrant hill in Orange County." This "unending array" refers to people from different cultures, ethnic and racial backgrounds, from the United States and from all over the world, who carry the "hopes and expectations of the centuries," charged with the task of becoming leaders of humanism and pacifism.

October 15 is the early admission deadline. It is hard to believe that this moment—the opening of this school and the arrival of these students—is actually about to happen.

SUA does not belong simply to Southern California nor is it being built solely for the sake of those who will attend. This university is a treasure for all of us in the SGI-USA, and its opening marks the beginning of a new era.

It also marks the completion of a dream that began

*Soka University of America is a dream passed on from mentor to disciple. And as the dream was passed from Presidents Makiguchi to Toda, from Toda to President Ikeda, I believe that he is now passing this dream onto all of us. We are the stewards of this great dream; we are the ones to whom the future of SUA, and its great future in American and for the world, is entrusted.*

forty years ago. It is no coincidence, I think, that the first application deadline for this new school—October 15—is also the fortieth anniversary of the formation of the first Soka Gakkai chapter established outside of Japan.

As you know, October is the fortieth anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first international journey. The first steps of the worldwide propagation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism were taken in the United States. I know that, throughout the country, many of you are commemorating this date with various events.

**O**ur American Buddhist organization is only forty years old. Many of those precious pioneer members who built this organization are still with us. In President Ikeda's recent poem, he discussed how the journey he undertook forty years ago was to fulfill a promise to President Toda. Establishing Soka University—in Japan and in the United States—was also a direct product of the relationship and collaboration between mentor and disciple.

I have been thinking of the spirit of new beginnings, the founding spirit and what comes from it. All great institutions had a beginning; all long and proud traditions were at one time new and unknown.

In the seventeenth century, the Puritans fled religious persecution and settled in Massachusetts. In 1620, about one hundred people arrived in Plymouth on the Mayflower and vowed to establish a shining "City on a Hill," an expression of their belief in God and the role of humanity on Earth. In 1636, sixteen years later, Harvard College was established to train a


new generation of ministers to serve as stewards of the vision that the original founders had.

Harvard University was based on Christianity. In the succeeding three-and-a-half centuries, this institution exerted tremendous influence on the life and culture of our nation and, indeed, the entire world. It far exceeded the hopes and expectations of the original Puritan founders. Yet it was their dream to raise successors that was the seed of this mighty institution. The spirit at the time of founding determines much.

We are fortunate to be here at the founding of another great educational institution. The Soka Gakkai International is gradually becoming known throughout society as an organization dedicated to the development of the individual and the establishment of a culture of peace and nonviolence. This is due to the efforts of each and every one of you.

President Ikeda has been preparing for this moment for the past forty years. Soka University of America is a dream passed on from mentor to disciple. And as the dream was passed from the Soka Gakkai Presidents Makiguchi to Toda, then from Toda to Daisaku Ikeda, I believe that he is now passing this dream on to all of us. We are the stewards of this great dream; we are the ones to whom the future of SUA, and its great future for America and the world, is entrusted.

Thank you all very much for your tremendous sincerity and effort.



Daniel K. Nagashima  
SGI-USA General Director

## *Practicing for Oneself* **PRACTICING for OTHERS**

Solomon Ibn Gabriol (1022—1058/70), Hebrew poet and philosopher, wrote:

In seeking knowledge,  
the first step is silence,  
the second listening,  
the third remembering,  
the fourth practicing,  
and the fifth —  
teaching others.

**T**oday, a number of educational programs emphasize the power of teaching others to facilitate one's own learning and mastery of the subject matter.

In addition, the tangible benefits of helping others, of altruism, are coming to be recognized widely in scientific and other circles as well. In the book *The Healing Power of Doing Good*, one researcher chronicles the results of a study about the positive effects of helping strangers. In the introduction he writes:

Now, with the findings from my survey, it has become evident that the dramatic improvements in health produced by helping have specific, identifiable stages. They begin with a physical high, a rush of good feeling. What I now call helper's high involves physical sensations that strongly indicate a sharp reduction in stress and the release of the body's natural painkillers, the endorphins. This initial rush is then followed by a longer-lasting period of improved emotional well-being. (Allan Luks, *The Healing Power of Doing Good* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1991] p. 10)

It seems, then, that no matter how hard we try to be unselfish—to forget about ourselves in the service of others—we cannot avoid gaining something ourselves from the act. This is all the more so in the realm of Buddhism, the purpose of which is to enable human beings to perfect themselves while helping others to become happy. Buddhists work to help others at a most basic and essential level of life; hence the benefits to the helper occur on a deep and fundamental level.

The foundation of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism exists in the essentials known as faith, practice and study. The element of practice is further divided into "practice for oneself" and "practice for others."

"Practice for oneself" refers to Buddhist practice to obtain the benefits of the Buddha's teachings. For practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, it means to reveal Buddhahood from within through faith in the Gohonzon and exert ourselves diligently in the morning and evening ceremony of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and reciting the sutra. "Practice for others" means to enlighten or educate others. It is providing people with a means to refine, educate and develop themselves. In Buddhism it means efforts to enable others to receive the benefit of the Buddha's teachings, that is, to enable others to awaken their innate Buddha nature. For practitioners of the Daishonin's Buddhism, this means to share the great power and benefit of chanting daimoku to the Gohonzon.

Buddhist practice for others has its roots in the Buddha Shakyamuni's (or Gotama's) first public sermons. Immediately after his attainment of enlightenment, Shakyamuni wondered whether the Law or Dharma to which he had awakened was not too profound and inex-

plicable for people to understand, and so he hesitated to preach it. At that time, it is said, the Indian god Brahma appeared to Shakyamuni and beseeched him three times to teach the Dharma to the people. With this, Shakyamuni embarked on a lifetime of “practice for others.”

He called upon new converts to join him in walking among the various countries and provinces of India to teach the Dharma. From his first sermon on, Shakyamuni and his disciples devoted themselves to educating people about their potential for enlightenment and teaching the law of life to benefit others. The Buddha’s lifetime of teaching and practice thus set the original example of Buddhist “practice for others.” Shakyamuni’s teaching was not exclusivist like many Indian religious teachings of the time, but was open to all people. Regarding this, Buddhist scholar Hajime Nakamura writes:

It was unheard of in Gotama’s contemporary India to preach one’s teaching to all the people. This is obvious when we compare his situation with the various philosophers of the Upanishads, who limited their audience and often confined themselves to preaching to their own children, or distinguished individuals whom they deemed were qualified to receive instruction. Gotama Buddha broke this traditional restriction and doing so must have required considerable determination and courage. (Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha*. [Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1987] p. 69)

**A**fter Shakyamuni’s death, such open and active teaching gradually diminished. The Buddhist monastics began to focus more on individual practices and disciplines thought to lead to enlightenment and became less engaged with the non-practicing community. This form of self-focused Buddhism was later dubbed Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) by its critics, who felt the monks had lost the Buddha’s original spirit of “practice for others.” The reformist movement called Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) began to flourish and advocated a return to Shakyamuni’s original spirit. That spirit was expressed in the ideal of the bodhisattva—a practitioner dedicated to the enlightenment and happiness of others before his or her own happiness.

We can view the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin as a crystallization of Mahayana practice that contains within it both practice for oneself and practice for others. The Daishonin writes: “Now in the Latter Day of the Law, the

daimoku that Nichiren chants is different than that of previous ages. It is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo that entails practice both for oneself and others” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1022).

He is saying here that the practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the goals of one’s own happiness and that of others constitutes the correct and most effective Buddhist practice in this age.

A useful analogy in viewing the relationship between the basic elements of our Buddhist practice is that of an automobile. The running of the car’s engine is compared to faith, the turning of the wheels, to practice, and the driving of the car with knowledge of the directions and destination, to study. Further, the two wheels that transmit the engine’s power to the road are practice for oneself and practice for others. However much we rev the engine or how familiar we are with the route, if both wheels aren’t engaged and turning, we’re going to sit still. If one tire is flat (if either practice for self or practice for others is missing), then naturally we won’t arrive at the destination without repairing it.

Only when the power of faith (the engine) and the confidence derived from study (the ability of the driver) are strongly and consistently expressed as “practice for oneself” and “practice for others” (the wheels) will the car of our life make consistent progress toward the destination of enlightenment or happiness. From another perspective, while enlightenment is our destination, we are actually out to have a wonderful and enjoyable drive. When we harmonize these elements of Buddhist practice, our lives will be rich and enjoyable—even if there are bumps and hills to climb along the way.

We might also view “practice for others” as a lever, while our own problems and goals are like a large rock. If we try to move the rock directly, we may groan and strain against its weight without it budging. But if we use a good lever in the proper manner, we can move even an enormous rock with relative ease.

Agonizing and praying over our own problems alone may not give us the “leverage” required to move them in any meaningful way. By praying and acting for the sake of another person’s success, growth, and happiness, we can achieve the “spiritual leverage” to transform our own seemingly heavy burdens. Our own triumph then becomes “leverage” to encourage others. In this way, practice for self and practice for others are never separate. ☸

*By Jeff Kriger, SGI-USA vice Study Department chief, partly based on Yasashii Kyogaku (Easy Buddhist Study).*

# The Good Medicine for All Ills

In the July installment, Fred Zaitso explained how his despair over debilitating back pain spurred him to seek out the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. His decision to join the Soka Gakkai incurred the strong opposition of his father and was the first obstacle to his practice. In part two of the series, he recounts how his back pain enabled him to develop faith.

BY FRED ZAITSU, PUBLISHER

“It is not certain that, because one is ill, one will die.... Could not this illness...be the Buddha’s design, because the Vimalakirti and Nirvana sutras both teach that sick people will surely attain Buddhahood? Illness gives rise to the resolve to attain the way.”

*(The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, p. 937)*

Background: This letter by Nichiren Daishonin was probably written in 1278 to the lay nun Myoshin. The Daishonin explains that illness can be considered a manifestation of the Buddha’s compassion since it arouses the determination to seek enlightenment—a determination that one could have been lacking previously.



Illness played a crucial role in my seeking the practice of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. Shakyamuni was inspired to seek the truth because of his encounter with the four sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death. In my case, I was only receptive to the Daishonin’s teachings because I was suffering so much. Although my spirits improved because of my practice, my pain lasted for another four to five months.

When I joined the Soka Gakkai, one of my seniors in faith gave me several books to read on Nichiren Daishonin’s philosophy. As I was on spring vacation, I read them all and was impressed and inspired by the teachings of Buddhism. The concept of the ‘oneness of body and mind’ especially resonated with my own life experience. Before I practiced Buddhism, I was very depressed because of my back pain. I was without hope, and I even entertained thoughts of death. My physical condition was dominating my spiritual life—really bringing me down.

When I began chanting to the Gohonzon and attending Soka Gakkai activities, my spirits rose. There was a new infusion of positive energy into my spiritual and mental states. I developed hope I could overcome my back problem. Even though I still had the same pain, my spirits were so high, I experienced the pain differently. I felt so good, in fact, that I introduced college friends to the practice.

During spring vacation, I went to my hometown of Atsuhara in Fuji City. As I mentioned before, my family practiced in the Minobu sect of Nichiren Buddhism and my father was very much against my becoming a

**T**here is no reason to allow yourself to be controlled by illness, for it to fill your life with suffering and distress. From the standpoint of eternal life through the three existences, your fundamentally happy self is incontrovertibly established.

Soka Gakkai member. However, my newfound happiness was so evident that my mother couldn't help commenting. She said the change was even reflected in my complexion! It was proof enough for her to begin practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

There was an experience early in my practice that revealed to me the amazing spirit of the Soka Gakkai. A young men's leader invited me to attend a monthly leaders meeting just outside Tokyo. It involved a one-hour train ride that was a strain on my already painful back. Once we arrived at the auditorium, we found all the seats were filled and we had to stand at the back. As it turned out, I was behind several people and could not see anything. However, my friend said that I should not come all this way to just stare at people's backs and go home. He lifted me up and held me so I could see over everyone. He was concerned that I get something from the meeting. I was very impressed that he cared that much. He is also the one who pointed out the above passage from the Daishonin's writings to me. Today, he is a vice president of the Soka Gakkai, and we are still good friends.

Gradually my back pain subsided and after four or five months disappeared altogether. Just a few months earlier, I had been in such pain that I tried to drink myself to sleep. But that only gave me stomach problems and I still didn't sleep. After practicing the Daishonin's Buddhism I overcame my problem completely.

**W**e are all mortal flesh and blood and suffer from illness in one form or another. Through the power of the Mystic Law we can bring forth the strength to overcome the suffering of sickness with courage and determination. The Daishonin writes: "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is like the roar of a lion. What sickness can therefore be an obstacle?" (WND, 412)


Because I overcame this problem, I was asked to

relate my experience at a district meeting with more than a hundred people in attendance! I had never before talked to that many people.

Some may say that I healed naturally, but I know what I experienced. It was the power of chanting to the Gohonzon. I had found a priceless treasure without earnestly seeking it. Because of my back pain, I began chanting. And because the pain lasted another few months, I continued to seek a deeper understanding of Buddhism and strengthen my faith—a priceless treasure.

**A**s the passage says, "Could not this illness... be the Buddha's design?" I came to appreciate the role my illness played in my early stages of faith. I was very stubborn in my youth and, coming from a family that belonged to another Buddhist sect that opposed the Soka Gakkai, I never would have found this treasure. Because of my physical problem, I changed my karma. I came to understand the meaning behind problems. Years later, I was faced with another serious illness when I contracted tuberculosis. But I remembered this passage from the Daishonin and the lesson I had learned. I overcame my tuberculosis in six months. It is just as President Ikeda says:

It is only natural that sometimes we fall sick. But we must see that sickness as a sickness that originally exists in life, based on the principle of the Mystic Law. In other words, there is no reason to allow yourself to be controlled by illness, for it to fill your life with suffering and distress. From the standpoint of eternal life through the three existences, your fundamentally happy self is incontrovertibly established.

That realization will remove any obstacles or blocks you experience in life and will serve as a springboard for a leap to a more expansive state of being. (March 1990 *Seikyo Times*, p. 46) 

*Message to the Sixth International Conference of  
the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies*

# DIALOGUE BRIDGES DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

During the week of August 5-12, the Sixth International Conference of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies was held at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. Representatives from many different sects of Buddhism and Christianity gathered together for the conference with the theme, "Buddhism, Christianity and Global Healing." The following is SGI President Ikeda's message to the participants. He discusses his views on the importance of inter-religious dialogue in promoting peace and global healing and the role of religion in restoring the environment.



Mahatma Gandhi was insightful in his comment that "Earth has enough to meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed."

Gatherings such as yours, the Sixth International Conference of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, bring together Buddhist and Christian voices in sustained dialogue on the future of humanity. To provide the opportunity for this type of engagement is an important endeavor, and I offer my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for what you are achieving.

Buddhism, which reflects on the unity of cosmic and individual life, is central to the spiritual heritage of East Asian philosophy. Christianity, which reflects on the relationship between God and humanity, likewise has a central place in the spiritual heritage of Western philosophy. The encounter between these two streams

David Lees/CORBIS

of philosophy which have influenced peoples of South and North as well as East and West is perhaps one of the most important in any attempt to address the complex and tenacious problems afflicting humanity. I, among many concerned others, hold the greatest respect for each participant of this conference, as you open this forum of dialogue and continue to move forward in your exchange of views.

This year's assembly will deliberate on "Buddhism, Christianity, and Global Healing," a theme immediately relevant to the survival of the human species. In my view, restoration of the global environment is in the vital interest of all planetary inhabitants.

**THE FOREMOST OFFENSE TO LIFE IS WAR**

As we stand at the doorway to the 21st century and peer outward, we find no exaggeration in the claim that we are now faced with an ecosphere critically fragmented and disintegrating. We adjust our eyes to the light and our sight rests once again on global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, pollution of the seas and oceans, accelerating desertification, diminishing rain forests and the peril of extinction of certain species, to name a few of the fraying threads in the intertwined layers of the earth's ecosystem. By far the gravest threat, indeed, the foremost offense to life and environment, is war. Nor are the ill-effects to human and natural life limited to cases of outright conflict; these continue long after nuclear explosions, tests

or accidents are over, and long after biological and chemical weapons have been manufactured or used. At the same time, communal conflicts over ethnic, cultural, social and religious tensions give way to genocide and other crimes against humanity.



The discipline to control one's desires may be considered prescriptive to save us from our own subjugation to greed.

D. Boone/Corbis

Industrial progress and wealth, too, with the toll of worsening poverty and issues of waste disposal, have their problematic linkages to environmental degradation.

As a man of religion, I am compelled to look also inward to the human spirit that is a culpable piece of this mosaic. Here, too, we find evidence of debilitation in our social imperatives. Violence and greed

reign over ethical judgment; physical, psychological, mental and substance abuse are increasingly commonplace, in private and in public. The prevalence of drug abuse, violence in the home and in school, and growing numbers of mental disorders are symptomatic of what can only be termed an enervation of the human spirit. Indeed, violence and greed are at the root of desensitizing society to fundamental human rights and undermine efforts to curtail the exploitation of nature.

Our global experience with these issues urges us to re-examine our ideals of civilization, especially with regard to the course of life and living, to nature, to our system of values, and to life itself. Within this sphere of inquiry, religion that attends to the healing and revitalization of the human spirit points the way to the restoration of peace in society and of the natural ecosystem.

Let me here share my thoughts from a religious view of restoring the global environment.

It is my belief that there is a necessary premise from which to proceed: namely, that humankind is a constituent member of the earth's ecosystem; that there exists an interrelationship between the inner nature of the human ego, or "lesser self," and the outer nature of the human environment, or "greater self," and through the interactions

between inner and outer nature, they are able to evolve with maximum creativity. From the dynamics of humanity and ecosystem arise all cultures and social environments. Put another way, the ecosystem, comprised of humanity and nature, is recognizably the basis on which develop all language, science, technology, politics, economy, telecommunications and all other systems and organizations.

In accepting this precondition, we are naturally led to the following observation: that humanity and nature are independent on the phenomenal plane, yet mutually sustaining constituents of a living system, or universal life, itself the common denominator and sustaining medium. The interaction internally and externally with this universal life literally enables both humanity and nature to create and to self-develop.

As we broaden our locus of identity and interaction from human society to ecosystem, it becomes clear that all development in human society — culture, science, technology, politics and economy — must be directed to enhance the symbiosis of humanity and nature.

Naturally, the effort to heal activates the restorative power within. Our attention turned “inward” toward healing the natural environment — damaged by abuses justified as a matter of human survival — we must utilize all our available resources to reactivate the inherent power of self-healing. If we are to fully experience renewal, in my opinion, there is a need for a shift in focus from a consumption to a recycling model of economy: whereby science and technology can be utilized in resource conservation, for example, leading to breakthroughs in energy-efficient technologies.



Kirk Combyles

Industrial progress and wealth, too, with the toll of worsening poverty and issues of waste disposal, have their problematic linkages to environmental degradation.

This would also have to be supported by reforms in present political and judicial structures.

## **A WORLD WITHOUT WAR MUST BE ROOTED IN RESPECT FOR LIFE**

Moreover, to enhance the symbiosis of humanity and nature, I believe a commonly held system of values to be highly contributive. While the recognition and pursuit of diverse values are vitally important, at the same time, it is necessary to identify those common values that are shared by all, and upon which all other values rest. The values that I think most necessary to human survival all have as their common denominator: respect for the dignity of life, whether on the level of human individual, community, or society. From here issue forth the symbiosis of all life-forms in the ecosystem and, by extension, the creative diversity of ethnicity, culture, gender and religion. If it is

to be successful, any movement toward the ideal of a world without war, in my opinion, should be rooted in the primacy of respect for the dignity of human life.

The subject of self-control, specifically as concerns one's desires, needs introduction here. Postmodern society has freed its citizens to take part in the borderless pursuit of material desires. If there is to be a privilege of contemporary living, its enjoyment exacts self-control. Mahatma Gandhi was insightful in his comment that “Earth has enough to meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed.”

The discipline to control one's desires may be considered prescriptive to save us from our own subjugation to greed. On the opposite end of the spectrum, basic human needs must be met. As we have witnessed in countries unable to provide for these basic needs, citizens suffer from extreme poverty, a condition that can lead directly to further environmental degradation. For this rea-

son, sustainable development rests on two prerequisites, the symbiosis of humanity and nature and the satisfaction of basic human needs.

Greed, the impulsive drive to achieve one's goal even at the cost of harming others or the environment, is not the compulsory outcome of satisfying one's physical and spiritual needs. It can be restrained and sublimated. In this regard, religion can be instrumental in redirecting desire and encouraging its most elevated expressions: the yearning for self-identity, for values, for service to others; the desire for knowledge, for artistic and cultural creativity, and for religiosity.

Nurturing one's moral sense naturally requires an elevation in one's standards as well as an acceptance of a system of values. These two impetuses are an indispensable couple. "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" and "Do not do to others as you would not have done to you" are perhaps examples of ethical standards shared across civilizations.

Such moral imperatives that speak of service and no harm to others are importantly beneficial when they take root in the depth of one's heart. Therein is to be nurtured the most profound linkage to religious precepts.

### "WHY DO I LIVE? WHO AM I?"

Probing further, we arrive at the quintessential quest for life's purpose, fulfillment, and mission. More directly, we ask what every age before us has asked: Why do I live? And who am I? In last year's (1999) proposal for peace, I wrote of spiritual crisis, a deepening of the identity crises that plague contemporary society and threaten our very survival.



Greed, the impulsive drive to achieve one's goal even at the cost of harming others or the environment, is not the compulsory outcome of satisfying one's physical and spiritual needs. It can be restrained and sublimated.

Overwhelming fear, anxiety, repulsion, isolation and despair characterize the most common of responses to what people perceive as their world crumbling around them. Reviving and restoring the spirit of contemporary humanity and our meaning of existence are perhaps the most urgent roles religion today must fulfill.

F.S.C. Northrop, writing in 1945, intuited: ". . . when the scientific knowledge of these times has captured a man's mind, so that his intelligence tells him one thing and pushes him one way, and his emotions and habits attached to outmoded, incompatible scientific, philosophical and theological doctrines push him another way, then he is a frustrated man divided against himself. Such a man does not need to wait until after death to know what hell means" [*The Meeting of East and West: An Inquiry Concerning World Understanding* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946) p. 485]. The requi-

site task before us is the coordination of cosmologies proffered by religion on the one hand and by science and philosophy on the other. A concerted effort is called for, to modernize the various views on the workings of the universe, in response to contemporary needs. This, I am convinced, is the duty of all those who work toward non-violent, peaceful co-existence, toward symbiosis of humanity, the great cosmos and Mother Nature. The key, then, to resolving the fundamental issues humanity faces today is clarity and depth of feeling with which people awaken and commit to this mission.

Having shared some general observations on global healing or restoration of the global environment, I would like now to focus on ways Buddhism and Christianity might interface on this issue.

While noting many differences between Buddhism and Christianity, I find also a number of similarities.



Kirk Conroy/istock

We are now faced with an ecosphere critically fragmented and disintegrating from global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, pollution of the seas and oceans, accelerating desertification, diminishing rain forests and the peril of extinction of certain species, to name a few of the fraying threads in the intertwined layers of the earth's ecosystem.

It is my belief that the object of dialogue — in this case, interreligious dialogue — is not merely to agree on differences but, more importantly, to find commonalities that bridge these traditions. Of course, one important outcome of dialogue may be found in understanding and learning from each other's differences. Equally important is the diligent effort to find as many points of convergence that outline a working partnership in challenging the global problematic, as Aurelio Peccei termed it. In this regard, this conference precisely illustrates the processes of dialogue I have sought here to outline.

Allow me to elaborate on what I see as the converging points that contribute to restoring the global environment.

First, in terms of cosmology, both Buddhism and Christianity have the breadth of scope that can help an individual resolve problems includ-

ing the identity crisis. The cosmic view of East Asian philosophy, as represented in Buddhism, is grounded in the principle that the microcosm of the human or ego, or "lesser self" mentioned earlier, and the macrocosm, or "greater self," are fused in a single living entity. Put succinctly, Buddhism postulates the mutual existence of cosmic life and individual self. Christian cosmology conceives world, cosmos and humanity as creations of the Supreme Being, their interactions thus governed by the omnipresence of God.

Second, both religions expound on mission and purpose in life. In Buddhism, compassion is the manifest expression of cosmic life; in Christianity, it is the reverence for God and the resultant love of neighbor. Both aspire, in sum, to relieve humanity of its miseries and lead to a life of fulfillment.

There is an important corollary

that should be noted. Despite the many obstacles and persecutions he himself suffered, Shakyamuni Buddha dedicated his life to the salvation of all people. Acceding to his legacy of devotion, disciples took up his work as their own mission, braving adversity as they professed his teachings. Jesus Christ and his apostles also endured persecution and privation as they journeyed to preach and minister to the people.

### **BOTH RELIGIONS PROMOTE NONVIOLENCE, FAIRNESS AND INTEGRITY**

Third, both Buddhism and Christianity teach regard for human life and indeed all forms of life in the belief that life is born from that which is "sacred." In Buddhism, the dignity of human life derives from the existence of cosmic life within, which is cradle to and essence of the individual self. And since the dynamics of cosmic life play out in all living beings, Buddhism teaches reverence for all life forms. In Christianity, human life's dignity derives from its creation in the image of God. Adoration for the divine in all its forms of expression is then the genesis of love and respect toward all living beings, the products of his creation.

Both religions posit the sanctity of human life, indeed all life. This, I believe, can serve as the bedrock commonality for other diverse values, and can shape a philosophical framework for coexistence and the symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature.

Fourth, both Buddhism and Christianity elevate ethics to a new horizon by opening it to the unbounded dimension of eternity and furthering its application in the

sublimation of greed. The wider vista leads us to confront the issue of death and, in turn, stirs our awareness of the individual human being as a finite entity whose preoccupation with material desires leaves us trapped in the dimension of the fleeting and transient.

Buddhism stresses a way of life based on compassion. Mahayana Buddhism, in particular, stresses the Bodhisattva Way which empowers the individual's command over the inner resources to control personal desires and aspire to a higher personal standard of ethics. The Bodhisattva Way holds out the promise not only of a life that is morally fulfilling but also of great personal happiness now and in the future. Along a Christian parallel, eternal happiness is opened to a life of truth, that is, a life lived in accordance with the will of God.

The ethical standards imparted by both religions translate into general precepts such as those toward nonviolence, fairness (as in not stealing from others), and integrity (as in not lying or seeking to deceive).

Fifth, the historical tracts in Buddhism and Christianity give testament to saints and sages who relieved suffering. Through the ages, bodhisattvas possessed of the spirit of compassion extended themselves to humanity and all living beings, and saints like St. Francis of Assisi bestowed their love of God on all living beings as God's creations.

We may consider these numerous saints and sages, who have made invaluable contributions to peace, as progenitors in the healing of the human spirit. What we inherit spiritually and philosophically from these benefactors, Buddhist and Christian alike, has been the wellspring for our contemporary movements to abolish



Picture Press/CORBIS

Postmodern society has freed its citizens to take part in the borderless pursuit of material desires.

nuclear weapons, to promote human rights, to envision a world without war, and to protect the environment. Similarly, efforts along these aims are burgeoning into activities on private and community levels promoted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other volunteer movements and associations. One hallmark of these collaborative endeavors is the broadening involvement in and commitment to the Earth Charter.

Let me conclude here by expressing my hopes and expectations for

all participants in this year's international conference to be the good teachers of humanity who will be the source of light in the new era — an era emanating the brilliant hues of symbiosis between humanity and nature and of non-violent, peaceful coexistence.

*August 5, 2000*

*Daisaku Ikeda*

*President*

*Soka Gakkai International*

# WHAT IS FAITH?

## and *How* *Do We Strengthen It?*

### How important is faith in our practice of Buddhism?

According to the writings of Nichiren Daishonin, faith is the basic requirement for entering the way of the Buddha. He also writes that our happiness depends on the strength of our faith. If you were ever told—or have somehow concluded—that faith is not necessary in the practice of this Buddhism, please begin the difficult task of changing your point of view.

By Geoff Rohde,  
Sacramento, Calif.



#### *What is "faith"?*

*While many people equate faith with belief, a specific church or religious doctrine, its Latin origin is much simpler: faith means "to trust." Over the past 500 years, due in part to the atrocities committed in the name of religion, the word faith is often associated with adjectives like "unthinking," "fanatical," "unscientific" and "ignorant". The current prevailing view seems to be that faith and intelligence do not mix. Our modern bias against [blind] faith makes real or genuine faith difficult to comprehend. We do not need blind faith, but a faith rooted in true reason. According to second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, all human action is based on some form of belief, be it a specific doctrine, or in scientific technology, consumerism, nationalism, racism, etc. Even a man who flaunts his atheism continues to live and act on the basis of some belief. Toda went so far as to state that all human affairs are a sum of actions rooted in faith, albeit a faith which is too often unexamined, if not dysfunctional.*



JEAN PRITCHARD

The first stage of faith in early childhood is when children are imitating their parents as part of the bonding process. This is what author James W. Fowler describes in the six stages of faith described in his book.

Since strong faith is important to our practice of Buddhism, and since the word faith has been so devalued, I've spent years reading, chanting and trying to find other words, metaphors or terminology to convey its significance and importance.

## HOW DOES FAITH DEVELOP?

**P**rofound, strong and unshakable faith, faith that moves mountains and alters the course of history, does not just happen. Faith develops in stages, much like morality, cognitive skills and psychosocial development. James W. Fowler, author of *The Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, describes the stages of faith.

**1. Early Childhood** (ages 1–6) Children imitate their parents. This indicates a bonding with the parents, with fantasy and imagination working in a developmentally appropriate way. Picture an infant clinging to a

parent or gleefully jumping into a swimming pool and the waiting, trusted arms of a parent. Nichiren Daishonin sometimes uses analogies like this to illustrate how faith should be. However, most of us graduate from such instinctive, natural trust very early in life. It is all but impossible to rediscover this quality of faith.

**2. Late Childhood** (ages 6–12) Children are characterized by concrete, literal thinking. Authority rests outside the person and the reference group includes teachers, religious leaders, friends, relatives and media images. Belief that there is “one right way” brings a sense of security.

**3. Early Adolescence** (ages 12–15) This stage is distinguished by a desire for belonging, loyalty, harmony and conformity. People at this stage enjoy belonging to a group of individuals that hold the same beliefs. Authority [still] rests outside of the individual believer in the doctrine (or clergy) of their belief sys-

tem. According to Fowler, a majority of church members in the United States operate at this level of faith.

**4. Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood** (ages 16–20s or even 30s) This stage is characterized by experimentation and a growing inner awareness, often leading to disillusionment, doubt and probing questions that challenge the established order. This quest is not the same as losing one's faith for it represents a positive effort by the believer to take responsibility for his or her faith. This willingness to put up with doubt and uncertainty is crucial to the internalization of a secure faith. External authority gives way to internal integration.

To doubt the truths of Buddhism is only natural, as we are constantly exposed to news and advertisements, public and private tragedy and sufferings. But it is important to ask questions and resolve those doubts, as the following passages suggest.

- Ask him any questions you may



In late childhood, Fowler's second stage of faith, authority rests outside the person in teachers, religious leaders, friends, relatives and media images. Above, Magic Johnson teaches kids at a basketball camp in Los Angeles.

They pay no attention to threats or danger to themselves. They act without malice toward those who may thwart their efforts. For example, within hours of the failed attempt on his life, Nichiren Daishonin ordered sake for the very soldiers who had tried to execute him!

"I might be compared to a summer insect that flies into a flame, or a mouse that dashes in front of a cat. I am like an animal that knows it is in danger and yet pays no heed. But I risk my life as a matter of con-

scious choice; therefore, I am a perverse person" ("The Swords of Good and Evil," WND, 451).

They become a disciplined incarnation of activism. They are wholly committed to transforming this present world of suffering and injustice into God's Kingdom—or a Buddha's land—of transcendent harmony. Life is loved, but they are not overly attached to it. Their indifference to self-preservation and their ability to help others perceive the transcendent in themselves and others gives their actions extraordinary power and effect.

In their devotion to universal compassion, they may offend our narrow views of justice. Their ability to see through mundane and self-defeating desires often threatens our sense of purpose. Their enlarged vision of universal community reveals limited tribal and nationalistic thinking for the meager notions they are. Their leadership initiatives, often utilizing nonviolence and

have about the doctrines. If you do not question and resolve your doubts, you cannot dispel the dark clouds of illusion, any more than you could travel a thousand miles without legs. Have him read this letter again and again, and listen attentively. ("Letter to Niike," WND, 1031)

- There are very few who ask about the meaning of the sutra in an effort to resolve their doubts and thus believe in it wholeheartedly. No matter how humble a person may be, if his wisdom is in the least bit greater than yours, you should ask him about the meaning of the sutra. ("The Fourteen Slanders," WND, 757)

5. **Integrated, Expansive Faith** (ages 30+) This stage of faith is gained from serious reflection, spiritual "homework" and assimilation of the lessons of the four previous stages. There is a deep sense of internal rightness, lightness and joy when believers [re]construct for themselves the pillars of their faith. Values and

behavior become centered around honesty, responsibility, service and honoring the spirit within others. People at this stage can identify with people of different races, socioeconomic status or ideological conviction. The Golden Rule is deeply felt; people are rarely threatened by differences and seldom see others as enemies because all people are sacred.

If we understand that our life at this moment is myo, then we will also understand that our life at other moments is the Mystic Law. ("On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime," WND, 4)

respect for opponents, disturb us. No wonder that such people frequently become martyrs to the visions they incarnate.

People at this stage are rare. They have become both living examples and creators of an all-inclusive, fulfilled human community. Others are drawn to gather around and support such a person because they create zones of liberation from the social, political, economic and ideological shackles we endure. They possess a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple and somehow more fully human than the rest of us. Their community is universal in extent and they cherish diversity because it further expresses the universal oneness. They are ready for fellowship with people at any of the other stages of faith or from any other religious tradition.

Fowler believes that people do not set out to reach stage six, Wisdom and Universalizing Faith. He writes that these people are “selected by the great Blacksmith of history, heated in the fires of turmoil and trouble, and then hammered into shape on the hard anvil of conflict and struggle.”

Many of his writings show that Nichiren Daishonin was this type of person. So were each of the presidents of the Soka Gakkai. In fact, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda is constantly praising deeply compassionate individuals from all nations and faiths who exemplify the best of humanity. Let’s never forget that we, too, can reach this state of life. We need to have confidence that it exists nowhere else but within us. We must summon up profound courage, compassion, endurance and forbearance and unlock the powerful forces of the Buddha and the Law by strengthening the powers of our faith and practice.



Genevieve Naylor/COBBIS

Belonging, loyalty, harmony and conformity characterize the third stage of faith according to Fowler.

## IN WHAT DO SGI MEMBERS— THE DISCIPLES OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN—ACTUALLY HAVE FAITH?

**H**ow many of us find ourselves at a loss for words when a friend or relative remarks: “You’re a Buddhist. What do you believe in?” For years I was unable to say much more than the standard, “We chant for world peace and individual happiness.” Here are adaptations of the Daishonin’s writings that describe what we have faith in.

- I can free myself from the sufferings of birth and death I have endured throughout eternity and attain supreme enlightenment in this lifetime by awakening to and having profound faith in the mystic truth that has always been within my life.

- Chanting Myoho-rence-kyo with strong faith and total confidence in its power will enable me to

grasp the mystic truth within me. (cf. “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime,” WND 3)

- Shakyamuni . . . the Lotus Sutra . . . and I, an ordinary human being, are in no way different or separate from one another. In fact, everything without exception is a manifestation of Myoho-rence-kyo. (cf. “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” WND, 216)

- If my mind is impure (controlled by the poisons of greed, anger, delusion, fear, hate), so is my environment (physical, social, psychological). Conversely, if my mind is pure (total trust in and perception of myoho within my life), so is every aspect of my world. In other words, there are not two lands, pure or impure in themselves: The difference lies solely in the good or evil of my mind (cf. “On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime,” WND, 4).

- The stronger my faith, the greater the protective forces of the universe.

- The blessings gained by practicing the true Law are so great that I



David Turnley/CORBIS

Late adolescence is the fourth stage of faith when young adults are experimenting, developing an inner awareness and questioning the established order.

## WHAT FAITH IS NOT—OR, HOW TO PRACTICE HARD AND CHANGE NOTHING.

Even though we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, if we think that enlightenment or the power to change our life is somewhere outside ourselves, we are not embracing Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings but some cheap imitation. We should never seek happiness and benefit outside ourselves. Our mastery of the Buddhist teachings—even hours and hours of dedicated chanting and going to meetings—will not relieve us of mortal sufferings in the least unless we perceive (sense, know, feel) the nature of our own life. This is why the relationship between faith and perception is stressed above. If we seek enlightenment outside ourselves, any discipline or good deed will be meaningless. What’s worse, unless we perceive the true, mystic and infinite nature of our life, our practice of this wonderful Buddhism will become an endless, painful austerity (cf. “On Attaining Buddhahood,” WND, 3).

Another major stumbling block to enlightenment and true human revolution is to disconnect our practice and faith from our thoughts, words and behavior. Here is what Nichiren Daishonin wrote:

There are various stages in the practice of this sutra [and various forms of slander exist accordingly]. . . . “One scholar enumerates . . . ‘fourteen evil causes: (1) arrogance, (2) negligence, (3) wrong views of the self (4) shallow understanding, (5) attachment to earthly desires, (6) not understanding, (7) not believing, (8) scowling with knitted brows, (9) harboring

can change my karma to suffer terribly in the future by meeting relatively minor sufferings in this life. By strengthening my faith in the Lotus Sutra, I will rid my life of heavy sins from the past. (cf. “Letter to the Brothers,” WND, 497)

• No sickness can be an obstacle to my happiness if I believe in this mandala with all my heart. Because I embrace the daimoku of the Lotus Sutra I will be protected by Mother of Demon Children and her ten daughters, enjoy the happiness of Aizen and the good fortune of Bishamon. (cf. “Reply to Kyo’o,” WND, 412)

President Ikeda wrote that our faith is like a force of nature and that the greater our conviction that our prayers will be answered and the stronger our faith, the more powerfully the universe responds to our prayers. What we bring to the table is the power of our practice, that is, the strength of our daimoku and the energy with which we work for kosen-rufu for the happiness of all people and the prosperity of society (December 11, 1998 *World Tribune*, p.

8). The intense spiritual force or determination, which forms our strong prayers, reveals itself in the power of faith. These two powers induce the powers of the Buddha and the Law latent in our lives to function. The responsibility for results, however, rests upon each person, not upon any outside agent or Buddhist gods.

Effective, honest and sincere prayer changes something in the depths of the human heart. While that change may be invisible, it is never confined to one individual or even one community. Meaningful improvement and reformation of our social institutions begin with the change that takes place in the heart of one individual (cf. May 1995 *Seikyo Times*, p. 14).

Strong faith is like high voltage. While we cannot see electricity or prayer with our human eyes, steadfast prayers will transform our lives and surroundings, just as electricity has transformed our society. . . . Faith means having confidence in this invisible realm (cf. *Learning from the Goshu*, p. 90).

doubts, (10) slandering, (11) despising, (12) hating, (13) envying and (14) bearing grudges.” Since these fourteen slanders apply equally to priesthood and laity, you must be on guard against them.” (“The Fourteen Slanders,” WND, 756)

The letter “Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra” explicitly warns us about three major problems on the path of human revolution: a) lack of faith, b) anger and arrogance, c) preoccupation with fame and profit.

Lack of faith is the basic failing that causes a person to fall into hell. Therefore, the sutra states, “If with regard to this sutra one should harbor doubt and fail to believe, one will fall at once into the evil paths.” (“Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra,” WND, 60) “Now, if you wish to attain Buddhahood, you have only to lower the banners of your arrogance, cast aside the staff of your anger, and devote yourself exclusively to the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. Worldly fame and profit are mere baubles of your present existence, and arrogance and prejudice are ties that will fetter you in a future one. Ah, you should be ashamed of them! And you should fear them, too!” (“Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra,” WND, 58–59).

What does “lack of faith” mean? It means doubting, giving up and not fighting against the undertow of discouragement. It also means pre-judging the blessings of the Gohonzon or linking our happiness to the immediate satisfaction of our non-negotiable demands of the moment. While we may want events to go as we wish, they sometimes do not. Should we abandon or slacken our faith on such



Kevin R. Morris/COBBIS

Riding a horse is not always smooth and easy. It takes practice and skill to learn how to move with the animal and absorb the unavoidable bumps and shocks in your legs rather than your bottom and backbone. President Ikeda uses this analogy to illustrate faith in our Buddhist practice.

occasions? This would be a terrible mistake. As Nichiren Daishonin advised Shigo Kingo:

It is the nature of ordinary people not to know what awaits them in the future. . . . You have only your two fiefs. This life is like a dream. One cannot be sure that one will live until tomorrow. However wretched a beggar you might become, never disgrace the Lotus Sutra. Since it will be the same in any event, do not betray grief. . . . Even if your fiefs should be confiscated or you yourself driven out, you must think that it is due to the workings of the ten demon daughters, and wholeheartedly entrust yourself to them. (“A Warning against Begrudging One’s Fief,” WND, 824)

President Ikeda has also given us many recommendations and admonitions regarding how not to practice. For example, he said, “If you practice faith, yet have an attitude of complaint, you will destroy your good fortune in direct proportion. Others do not respect those who are full of complaint. From both Buddhist and secular perspectives, their behavior does not benefit a wise or worthy person” (*Faith into Action*, p. 11).

He also said: “Much human misery arises from people despairing over things that despair cannot help. We should not worry about things that no amount of worry will resolve. The important thing is to build a golden palace of joy in our hearts that nothing can disturb—a state of life like the clear blue sky above the storm” (*ibid.*, p. 134).

Here is an example that illustrates President Ikeda’s point. Riding a horse is not always smooth and easy. It takes practice and skill to learn how to move with the animal and absorb the unavoidable bumps and shocks in your legs rather than your bottom and backbone. It makes no sense at all to whine about the horse; it moves as it will. How you carry yourself in the saddle determines your comfort. It’s the same on a ship in rough seas. It rolls, pitches and heaves . . . and so do you. Whining about the constant movement of the boat is futile. That’s just how ocean travel is. Wisdom is learning to walk in rhythm with the ocean.

Once our prayers are broadcast into the universe and our powerful, appropriate actions begin, let’s not



“Allegory of Faith” by Laurent de la Hyre, 1645. Our faith colors our perceptions—the way we see the world. By strengthening our faith, we develop the eyes of the Buddha to see the world as it really is. As we strengthen our faith we manifest the life and behavior of the Buddha.

Francis G. Meyer/CORBIS

one can avoid problems, not even sages or worthies. Drink sake only at home with your wife, and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Suffer what there is to suffer, enjoy what there is to enjoy. Regard both suffering and joy as facts of life, and continue chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, no matter what happens. How could this be anything other than the boundless joy of the Law? Strengthen your power of faith more than ever” (“Happiness in

obsess about [immediate] results. Keep going joyfully until you succeed. Letting go of impatience and fear is an essential step toward our happiness. It is also what real faith is all about. Since our thoughts, words, and deeds will, and in fact, already have, altered the course of events, we can move on and be happy no matter what. Developing such profound trust in the four powers is a big part of letting go of an unhealthy and unproductive desire to micromanage the world around us. I believe this is what Nichiren told Sairen-bo when he wrote:

“Be resolved to summon forth the great power of your faith, and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo with the prayer that your faith will be steadfast

and correct at the moment of your death. Never seek any other way to inherit the ultimate Law of life and death, and manifest it in your life. Only then will you realize that earthly desires are enlightenment, and that the sufferings of birth and death are nirvana. Even embracing the Lotus Sutra would be useless without the heritage of faith” (“The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” WND, 218).

Indeed, to face death without fear or anger, to endure sickness or misfortune and maintain a healthy, happy countenance takes very strong faith. Here are portions of two letters written to Shijo Kingo:

“Though worldly troubles may arise, never let them disturb you. No

This World,” WND, 681).

Nichiren Daishonin was joyful despite the hardships he endured. When things went well, he encouraged his followers, and when things went badly, he did exactly the same thing. Even when in exile or suffering life-threatening persecutions, he considered himself the richest, happiest man in all of Japan and continued to work tirelessly for the happiness of others. That was his faith.

Our faith colors our perceptions—the way we see the world. By strengthening our faith, we develop the eyes of the Buddha to see the world as it really is. As we strengthen our faith we manifest the life and behavior of the Buddha. ☸

# THE WRITINGS OF NICHIREN DAISHONIN CROSS-REFERENCE



In response to requests from our readers, we are providing this cross-reference to *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* and the previously published seven-volumes of *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*.

In cases where the title of the thesis or letter dif-

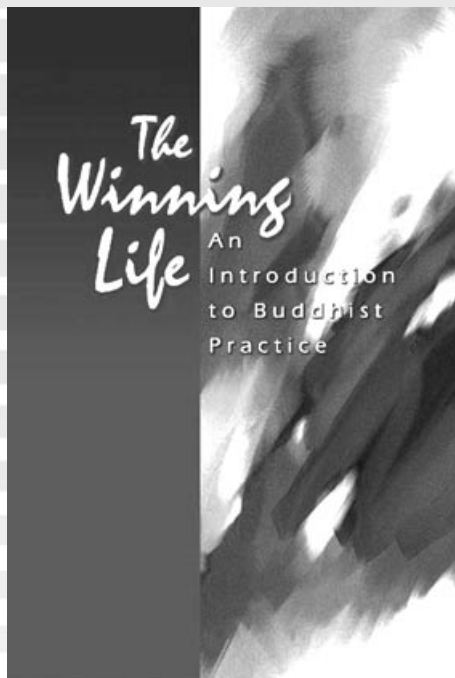
fers, the previous title appears in parentheses. This section can be pulled out by opening and closing the staples that bind the magazine. Thanks to Mark Willwerth and the San Francisco Research Group for compiling this.

Title	page	MW page	Recipient	Date
A Comparison of the Lotus and Other Sutras	1037	MW-3, 303	Toki Jonin	May 26 1280
A Father Takes Faith	845	MW-6, 239	Ikegami Munenaga	Sep 9 1277
A Sage Perceives the Three Existences of Life	641	MW-2, 222	Toki Jonin	— — 1275
A Ship to Cross the Sea of Suffering	33	MW-1, 9	Shiji Shiro	Apr 28 1261
A Warning against Begrudging One's Fief	823	MW-4, 281	Shijo Kingo	Jul — 1277
An Outline of the "Entrustment" and Other Chapters	911	MW-5, 263	Nichinyo	Jun 25 1278
Aspiration for the Buddha Land	213	MW-5, 129	Toki Jonin	Nov 23 1271
Banishment to Sado	202	MW-5, 123	Enjo-bo	Oct — 1271
Conversation between a Sage and an Unenlightened Man – Part One	99	MW-5, 41	—	— — 1265
Conversation between a Sage and an Unenlightened Man – Part Two	116	MW-5, 81	—	— — 1265
Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment	317	MW-2, 198	Shijo Kingo	May 2 1272
Easy Delivery of a Fortune Child	186	MW-4, 87	Nichigen-nyo	May 7 1271
Encouragement to a Sick Person	76	MW-6, 19	Nanjo Hyoe Shichiro	Dec 13 1264
Flowering and Bearing Grain	909	MW-1, 217	Joken-bo & Gijo-bo	Apr — 1278
General Stone Tiger	952	MW-1, 225	Shijo Kingo	Oct 22 1278
Good Fortune in This Life	654	MW-5, 185	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Jan 19 1276
Great Bodhisattva Hachiman	1080	MW-7, 251	Nichigen-nyo	Dec 16 1280
Great Evil and Great Good	1119	MW-5, 161	—	Feb — —
Happiness in This World	681	MW-1, 161	Shijo Kingo	Jun 27 1276
Hell Is the Land of Tranquil Light	456	MW-2, 207	Ueno-ama Gozen	Jul 11 1274
How Those Initially Aspiring to the Way Can Attain Buddhahood through the Lotus Sutra	872	MW-6, 175	Myoho	— — 1277
King Rinda	983	MW-7, 176	Soya Doso	Aug 17 1279
Lessening One's Karmic Retribution	199	MW-1, 17	Ota Saemon, Soya, Dharma Bridge Kimbara	Oct 5 1271
Letter from Echi	194	MW-7, 17	Toki Jonin	Sep 14 1271
Letter from Sado	301	MW-1, 33	Toki Jonin	Mar 20 1272
Letter from Teradomari	206	MW-4, 97	Toki Jonin	Oct 22 1271
Letter to Akimoto	1014	MW-7, 193	Akimoto Taro Hyoe	Jan 27 1280
Letter to Endo Saemon-no-jo	454	MW-6, 87	Endo Saemon-no-jo	Mar 12 1274
Letter to Gijo-bo	389	MW-2, 204	Gijo-bo	May 28 1273
Letter to Horen	505	MW-7, 90	Soya Jiro Hyoe-no-jo Kyoshin	Apr — 1275
Letter to Jakunichi-bo	993	MW-1, 235	Jakunichi-bo Nikke	Sep 16 1279
Letter to Konichi-bo	659	MW-4, 155	Konichi-bo	Mar — 1276
Letter to Misawa	894	MW-3, 251	Misawa Kojiro	Feb 23 1278

Title	page	MW page	Recipient	Date
Letter to Niike	1026	MW-1, 253	Niike Saemon-no-jo	Feb — 1280
Letter to Priest Nichiro in Prison	204	MW-5, 127	Nichiro	Oct 9 1271
Letter to Shomitsu-bo	863	MW-5, 241	Shomitsu-bo	— — 1277
Letter to the Brothers	493	MW-1, 131	Ikegami Brothers	Apr 16 1275
Letter to the Lay Nun of Ko (Letter to Ko-no-ama Gozen)	595	MW-4, 139	Ko-no-ama	Jun 16 1275
Letter to the Lay Priest Domyo (Letter to Domyo Zemmon)	750	MW-6, 173	Domyo Zemmon	Aug 10 1276
Letter to the Lay Priest Ichinosawa	526	MW-6, 95	Ichinosawa Nyudo's Wife	May 8 1275
Letter to the Lay Priest Nakaoki (Letter to Nakaoki Nyudo)	1005	MW-5, 291	Nakaoki & his wife	Nov 30 1279
Letter to the Priests of Seicho-ji	650	MW-2, 226	Priests of Seicho-ji	Jan 11 1276
Letter to the Sage Nichimyo (Letter to Nichimyo Shonin)	321	MW-3, 43	Nichimyo Shonin	May 25 1272
Many in Body, One in Mind (On Itai Doshin)	618	MW-1, 153	Takahashi	Aug 6 1275
New Year's Goshō	1137	MW-1, 271	Lady Omosu	Jan 5 —
No Safety in the Threefold World	891	MW-7, 138	Matsuno Rokuro Saemon	Feb 13 1278
On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime	3	MW-1, 3	Toki Jonin	— — 1255
On Consecrating an Image of Shakyamuni Buddha Made by Shijo Kingo	683	MW-6, 159	Shijo Kingo	Jul 15 1276
On Curing Karmic Disease	631	MW-2, 213	Ota Jomyo	Nov 3 1275
On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land (Rissho Ankoku Ron)	6	MW-2, 3	Hojo Tokiyori	Jul 16 1260
On Establishing the Four Bodhisattvas as the Object of Devotion	976	MW-3, 293	Toki Jonin	May 17 1279
On Filial and Unfilial Conduct	1033	MW-6, 287	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Mar 8 1280
On Offering Prayers to the Mandala of the Mystic Law (Bestowal of the Mandala of the Mystic Law)	414	MW-3, 55	Sennichi	— — 1273
On Offerings for Deceased Ancestors (On the Urabon)	817	MW-7, 166	Jibu-bo's grandmother	Jul 13 1277
On Omens	644	MW-4, 145	Shijo Kingo	— — 1275
On Persecutions Befalling the Sage (On Persecutions Befalling the Buddha)	996	MW-1, 239	Shijo Kingo	Oct 1 1279
On Practicing the Buddha's Teachings	391	MW-1, 99	All believers	May — 1273
On Prayer	336	MW-7, 29	Sairen-bo Nichijo	— — 1272
On Prolonging One's Life Span (On Prolonging Life)	954	MW-1, 229	Myojo	— — 1279
On Rebuking Slander of the Law and Eradicating Sins	435	MW-6, 53	Shijo Kingo	— — 1273
On Recommending This Teaching to Your Lord and Avoiding the Offense of Complicity in Slander (On Recommending This Teaching to Your Lord)	460	MW-6, 89	Shijo Kingo	Sep 26 1274
On Repaying Debts of Gratitude	690	MW-4, 171	Joken-bo & Gijo-bo	Jul 21 1276
On the Buddha's Prophecy	398	MW-1, 109	All believers	May 11 1273
On the Four Stages of Faith and the Five Stages of Practice	783	MW-6, 211	Toki Jonin	Apr 10 1277
On the Treasure Tower	299	MW-1, 29	Abutsu-bo	Mar 13 1272
On Upholding Faith in the Gohonzon	624	MW-5, 177	Myoshin	Aug 25 1275
Opening the Eyes of Wooden and Painted Images	85	MW-4, 27	—	— — 1264
Persecution by Sword and Staff	962	MW-2, 252	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Apr 20 1279
Propagation by the Wise	752	MW-1, 169	Shijo Kingo	Sep 6 1276
Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra	55	MW-5, 17	—	Mar — 1263
Reply to a Believer	905	MW-3, 269	Shijo Kingo	Apr 11 1278
Reply to Hakiri Saburo	405	MW-6, 37	Hakiri Saburo	Aug 3 1273
Reply to Hoshina Goro Taro	155	MW-4, 41	Hoshina Goro Taro	Dec 5 1267
Reply to Jibu-bo	1094	MW-7, 265	Jibu-bo Nichii	Aug 22 1281
Reply to Kyo'o	412	MW-1, 119	Shijo Kingo	Aug 15 1273
Reply to Matsuno	843	MW-5, 237	Matsuno Rokuro Saemon	Sep 9 1277
Reply to Niama	466	MW-3, 61	Niama	Feb 16 1275
Reply to Onichi-nyo	1089	MW-7, 259	Onichi-nyo	— — 1280
Reply to Sairen-bo	309	MW-7, 20	Sairen-bo Nichijo	Apr 13 1272
Reply to the Followers	901	MW-7, 143	Followers	Mar 21 1278

<b>Title</b>	<b>page</b>	<b>MW page</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Date</b>
Reply to the Lay Nun Myoho (Reply to Myoho Bikuni Gozen)	1105	MW-6, 311	Myoho	— — 1281
Reply to the Lay Nun Nichigon (Reply to Nichigon-ama)	1079	MW-5, 305	Nichigon	Nov 29 1280
Reply to the Lay Priest of Ko (Reply to Ko Nyudo)	491	MW-7, 87	Ko Nyudo	Apr 12 1275
Reply to the Lay Priest Soya (Reply to Soya Nyudo)	486	MW-5, 163	Soya Jiro Hyoe-no-jo Kyoshin	Mar — 1275
Reply to the Lay Priest Takahashi (Reply to Takahashi Nyudo)	605	MW-6, 123	Takahashi Rokuro Hyoe	Jul 12 1275
Reply to the Mother of Ueno	1072	MW-7, 239	Ueno-ama Gozen	Oct 24 1280
Reply to the Wife of Matsuno	981	MW-7, 163	Lady Matsuno	Jun 20 1279
Reply to Tokimitsu	925	MW-7, 145	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Jul 8 1278
Reply to Yasaburo	827	MW-6, 231	Saito Yasaburo	Aug 4 1277
Roots of Good Fortune	1103	MW-7, 270	Kubo-no-ama	Dec 27 1281
The Actions of the Votary of the Lotus Sutra (On the Buddha's Behavior)	763	MW-1, 173	Konichi	— — 1276
The Birth of Tsukimaro	188	MW-3, 39	Shijo Kingo	May 8 1271
The Blessings of the Lotus Sutra (Letter to Myomitsu Shonin)	667	MW-5, 189	Myomitsu Shonin	Mar 5 1276
The Bodies and Minds of Ordinary Beings	1128	MW-6, 267	—	— — —
The Bow and Arrow	656	MW-7, 125	Toki-ama Gozen	Mar 27 1276
The Daimoku of the Lotus Sutra	141	MW-3, 3	—	Jan 6 1266
The Difficulty of Sustaining Faith	471	MW-1, 127	Shijo Kingo	Mar 6 1275
The Doctrine of Attaining Buddhahood in One's Present Form	1052	MW-7, 215	Myoichi-nyo	Jul 14 1280
The Dragon Gate	1002	MW-1, 249	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Nov 6 1279
The Drum at the Gate of Thunder	948	MW-5, 285	Sennichi	Oct 19 1278
The Eight Winds	794	MW-1, 205	Shijo Kingo	— — 1277
The Embankments of Faith	625	MW-1, 157	Sennichi	Sep 3 1275
The Entity of the Mystic Law	417	MW-7, 58	Sairen-bo Nichijo	— — 1273
The Essence of the "Life Span" Chapter (The Essence of the Juryo Chapter)	182	MW-3, 31	—	Apr 17 1271
The Essence of the "Medicine King" Chapter (The Essence of the Yakuo Chapter)	91	MW-7, 3	Ueno-ama Gozen	— — 1265
The Essentials for Attaining Buddhahood (Admonitions Against Slander)	746	MW-1, 163	Soya Jiro Hyoe-no-jo Kyoshin	Aug 3 1276
The Farther the Source, the Longer the Stream	940	MW-3, 285	Shijo Kingo	Sep 15 1278
The Four Debts of Gratitude	41	MW-5, 3	Kudo Yoshitaka	Jan 16 1262
The Fourteen Slanders	755	MW-3, 205	Matsuno Rokuro Saemon	Dec 9 1276
The Gift of Clear Sake (Clear Sake Goshō)	1091	MW-7, 261	Ueno-ama Gozen	Jan 13 1281
The Gift of Rice	1125	MW-1, 267	—	— — —
The Gods Same Birth and Same Name (The Causal Law of Life)	315	MW-2, 194	Nichigen-nyo	Apr — 1272
The Good Medicine for All Ills (Beneficial Medicine for All Ills)	937	MW-5, 279	Myoshin	Aug 16 1278
The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life	216	MW-1, 21	Sairen-bo Nichijo	Feb 11 1272
The Hero of the World (The Supreme Leader of the World)	835	MW-3, 229	Shijo Kingo	— — 1277
The Izu Exile	35	MW-2, 54	Funamori Yasaburo	Jun 27 1261
The Kalpa of Decrease	1120	MW-6, 139	—	— — —
The Letter of Petition from Yorimoto	803	MW-5, 207	Shijo Kingo	Jun 25 1277
The Meaning of Faith	1036	MW-5, 303	Myoichi	May 18 1280
The Mongol Envoys	628	MW-5, 179	Nishiyama	— — 1275
The Object of Devotion for Observing the Mind Established in the Fifth Five-Hundred-Year Period after the Thus Come One's Passing (The True Object of Worship)	354	MW-1, 45	Toki Jonin	April 26 1273
The Offering of an Unlined Robe (The Offering of a Summer Robe)	533	MW-4, 135	Sajiki Nyobo	May 25 1275
The One Essential Phrase	922	MW-1, 221	Myoho	Jul 3 1278
The One-eyed Turtle and the Floating Log	957	MW-4, 295	Lady Matsuno	Mar 26 1279
The Opening of the Eyes - Part One	220	MW-2, 59	Shijo Kingo	Feb — 1272
The Opening of the Eyes - Part Two	251	MW-2, 118	Shijo Kingo	Feb — 1272
The Origin of the Service for Deceased Ancestors (The Origin of Urabon)	190	MW-4, 91	Shijo Kingo	Jul 12 1271
The Persecution at Tatsunokuchi	196	MW-1, 13	Shijo Kingo	Sept 21 1271
The Person and the Law	1097	MW-1, 263	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Sep 11 1281

Title	page	MW page	Recipient	Date
The Place of the Cluster of Blessings (Reply to Lord Shijo Kingo)	1069	MW-6, 307	Shijo Kingo	Oct 8 1280
The Postscript to "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" (Postscript to the Rishso Ankoku Ron)	31	MW-2, 45	—	Dec 8 1269
The Problem to Be Pondered Night and Day	620	MW-5, 167	Toki Jonin	Aug 23 1275
The Proof of the Lotus Sutra	1108	MW-2, 260	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Feb 28 1282
The Properties of Rice	1117	MW-5, 151	Takahashi	— — —
The Pure and Far-Reaching Voice	328	MW-5, 135	Shijo Kingo	— — 1272
The Rationale for Writing "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land" (Rationale for Having Written the Rishso Ankoku Ron)	161	MW-2, 47	Hogan	Apr 5 1268
The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon	831	MW-1, 211	Lady Nichinyo	Aug 23 1277
The Receipt of New Fiefs	945	MW-6, 261	Shijo Kingo	Oct — 1278
The Recitation of the "Expedient Means" and "Life Span" Chapters (Recitation of the Hoben and Juryo Chapters)	68	MW-6, 3	Hiki Daigaku Saburo Yoshimoto's wife	Apr 17 1264
The Royal Palace	488	MW-3, 71	Shijo Kingo	Apr 12 1275
The Selection of the Time	538	MW-3, 79	Yui	Jun 10 1275
The Sons Pure Storehouse and Pure Eye (Jozo and Jogen)	1049	MW-7, 211	Matsuno Rokuro Saemon	Jul 7 1280
The Story of Ohashi no Taro	675	MW-6, 147	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Mar 24 1276
The Strategy of the Lotus Sutra	1000	MW-1, 245	Shijo Kingo	Oct 23 1279
The Supremacy of the Law	612	MW-3, 193	Nichimyo	Aug 4 1275
The Sutra of True Requit	928	MW-6, 245	Sennichi	Jul 28 1278
The Swords of Good and Evil	451	MW-1, 123	Hoyo Yagenta	Feb 21 1274
The Teaching for the Latter Day	902	MW-3, 263	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Apr 1 1278
The Teaching That Accords with the Buddha's Mind	967	MW-7, 149	Niike Saemon-no-jo	May 2 1279
The Teaching, Capacity, Time, and Country	48	MW-4, 7	—	Feb 10 1262
The Teaching, Practice, and Proof	473	MW-4, 111	Sammi-bo Ajari	Mar 21 1275
The Third Day of the New Year	1013	MW-7, 191	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Jan 11 1280
The Third Doctrine	854	MW-7, 129	Toki Jonin	Oct 1 1277
The Three Kinds of Treasure	848	MW-2, 233	Shijo Kingo	Sep 11 1277
The Three Obstacles and Four Devils	636	MW-2, 242	Ikegami Munenaga	Nov 20 1277
The Treasure of a Filial Child	1041	MW-6, 293	Sennichi	Jul 2 1280
The Treatment of Illness	1111	MW-3, 273	Toki Jonin	Jun 26 1278
The Tripitaka Master Shan-wu-wei (The Learned Doctor Shan-wu-wei)	166	MW-4, 55	Gijo-bo & Joken-bo	— — 1270
The True Aspect of All Phenomena (The True Entity of Life)	383	MW-1, 89	Sairen-bo Nichijo	May 17 1273
The Two Kinds of Faith	899	MW-2, 249	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Feb 25 1278
The Two Kinds of Illness	919	MW-4, 289	Shijo Kingo	Jun 26 1278
The Unity of Husband and Wife	463	MW-5, 155	Nichigen-nyo	Jan 27 1275
The Universal Salty Taste	39	MW-4, 3	—	— — 1261
The Unmatched Blessings of the Law (The Unmatched Fortune of the Law)	973	MW-7, 158	Nishiyama	May 11 1279
The Votary of the Lotus Sutra Will Meet Persecution	447	MW-6, 77	Toki Jonin	Jan 14 1274
The Wealthy Man Sudatta	1086	MW-5, 307	Nanjo Tokimitsu	Dec 27 1280
The Wonderful Means of Surmounting Obstacles	842	MW-7, 136	Shijo Kingo	— — 1277
The Workings of Brahma and Shakra (The Workings of Bonten and Taishaku)	798	MW-3, 219	Nanjo Tokimitsu	May 15 1277
"This Is What I Heard" ("Thus I Heard")	859	MW-3, 243	Soya Jiro Hyoe-no-jo Kyoshin	Nov 28 1277
"This Person Advances through the World" (...Will Practice Among the People)	1011	MW-6, 285	Ikegami Munenaka	Dec 3 1279
Three Tripitaka Masters Pray for Rain	598	MW-6, 109	Nishiyama	Jun 22 1275
Unseen Virtue and Visible Reward	907	MW-5, 259	Shijo Kingo	Apr 23 1278
White Horses and White Swans	1061	MW-7, 228	Lady of Utsubusa	Aug 14 1280
Winter Always Turns to Spring	535	MW-1, 149	Myoichi	May — 1275
Wu-lung and I-lung	1099	MW-4, 305	Ueno-ama Gozen	Nov 15 1281



## Just Reprinted With a New Design

The bestselling booklet, *The Winning Life*, has been redesigned with a fresh, new look. This concise introduction to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism remains the perfect tool for introducing others to the benefits of practice.

Still only \$ 1.00.



Available at all SGI-USA bookstores.  
Or purchase your copies via mail order:  
1-800-626-1313; [sgiusamoc@aol.com](mailto:sgiusamoc@aol.com)  
M/O #: 4105



## Subscribe today

Check One:

- 6 Months \$28 (6 issues)
- 1 Year \$50 (12 issues) SAVE \$22
- 3 Years \$125 (36 issues) SAVE \$91

U.S.A. only

CHARGE MY VISA  OR MASTER CARD  PAYMENT ENCLOSED

CARD # \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

*All credit card orders are subject to bank approval*

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Source Code (If known)

For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver

Subscriptions: (800) 835-4558 • email: [sgisubs@aol.com](mailto:sgisubs@aol.com)

MAIL TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907



# Opening My Heart



By Vincent Garreau, Japan

**A**s a child, I always had the ambition to excel in everything I undertook. I had to be first in class and in gymnastics championships, and I had to succeed where others had failed. I needed to gain the respect, recognition and admiration of all. This tendency led me to experience extreme obsessions and great frustrations. I felt that I never got enough and that I was never good enough. My moments of jubilation were often followed by a mental state of depression. Somehow I managed to keep hoping that, one day, I would be successful and happy, but when? How? Where? I was looking for love, but loved neither others nor myself.

At the age of 21, after graduating from a prestigious business school, and in search of ideal love, I decided to leave France — where no one understood me — to travel, meet different people and become a member of the international jet set. The grass had to be greener on the other side. After many business trips abroad, I had become what people would call a young, successful, high-voltage businessman who had it all but who was sometimes impatient and self-centered, unable to distinguish what is essential from what is superfluous.

Traveling and living abroad allowed me to meet many different people, but I found myself most fascinated by Asian people — they seemed to be masters of their own destiny and to be more balanced than I had ever learned to be.

In January 1992, my company transferred me to its Tokyo branch. After two years of commuting between Europe, Japan and other Asian countries, I realized I was always passing over and passing through places, like a satellite. I was dissatisfied with just about everything, including my working conditions, and always felt that “others” didn’t understand or appreciate me enough.

At around this time, I met a young Japanese businessman whose compassion and apparent happiness intrigued me. He told me he was practicing Nichiren Buddhism. Despite previous disappointing experiences with religion in general, I decided to learn more about this Buddhism which, he said, could help bring out one’s life force to create happiness for oneself as well as others.



Vincent Garreau

Through the practice of Nichiren Buddhism, I realized the inherent connection between my attitude and my environment. Not only did my working conditions improve, but also my responsibilities within the company rose like an arrow. My life started to gear toward others. When hiring new staff, I was able to consider not only the company’s needs, but also whether the position would offer long-term advancement opportunities for the new employee. I was also determined to work harder than everyone else, to set a good example, knowing that others were following in my footsteps. I would do my best to value each employee’s unlimited potential. I feel that my past efforts to intervene against the dismissal of some employees and the time I dedicated to training them bore fruit, and these people are today key players in the company. This change of attitude toward others helped me advance in my work and in my life in general. Through my Buddhist practice, I was able to see the jewel that exists in each person’s life, to look at myself and polish my own. I am 36, and my functions as general manager of an industrial ceramics company do not allow for much leisure time. However, I am always trying to redouble my efforts and to dedicate myself equally to my work, my Buddhist activities, social activities and my friends and relatives.

With the money I have saved, I was finally able to buy an old house by the sea in western France and renovate it with my parents. This house is now a meeting place for my family and an anchor in my life. I visit this house several times a year. Last winter I was there when storms wrecked an oil tanker on the coast, causing enormous damage to the beaches. I found myself joining the recovery effort, cleaning up after others for the sake of our precious environment.

What I have learned is that if I want something to change, I have to change myself first and inspire others to do the same. In this way, we can all work together toward building a more harmonious society. Happiness does not exist in a distant land. Neither does the cause of problems. Everything lies within our lives. Rather than looking for recognition from others, I am striving to open my heart to them. And it works! 🌀

*Courtesy SGI Quarterly*

# DIALOGUE

ON THE *Lotus Sutra*

**The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra —  
A Discussion on Religion in the Twenty-first Century**

**53**

**The Lotus Sutra Is a Teaching of  
the Oneness of Mentor and Disciple**

This is the fifty-third and final installment of an ongoing discussion on the Lotus Sutra among SGI President Ikeda, Soka Gakkai Study Department Chief Katsuji Saito and Vice Chiefs Takanori Endo and Haruo Suda. It appeared in the June 1999 issue of the *Daibyakurenge*, the Soka Gakkai study journal.

All people are Buddhas — this is the truth to which the Buddha is enlightened and the conclusion of the Lotus Sutra. To enable all people to realize their Buddha nature is the goal of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and is

itself what it means to work for *kosen-rufu*. To strive harder and harder no matter what happens and to continue giving hope to more and more people — it is in this spirit to move ever forward from the present moment that the heart of the Lotus Sutra is found. In this installment, which brings to a close a series of discussions carried out over four and a half years, the participants elucidate how the essence of the Lotus Sutra is alive nowhere but in the practice of the oneness of mentor and disciple upheld by the SGI, which alone is promoting the widespread propagation of the Mystic Law.

**KATSUJI SAITO:** A pioneer member shared the following account with me. Second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda once visited Shimonoseki City in Yamaguchi Prefecture for the completion ceremony of a renovated temple there. After the ceremony, he attended a banquet, where people took turns singing songs.

When someone began to sing “Nippon Danji no Uta” (Song of the Sons of Japan), a traditional song of the young men’s division, President Toda suggested that instead they sing “Byakko-tai” (White Tiger Brigade).<sup>1</sup> As participants energetically sang, President Toda stood listening. Behind his thick glasses, tears welled in his eyes.

Afterwards he remarked: “While you are all enjoying yourselves like this, my dear Daisaku is waging a desperate struggle in Osaka. Now that I’ve heard the song ‘White Tiger Brigade,’ I’m going to bed.” His voice was choked with emotion as he spoke. Then he took his leave. This completely changed the mood of the evening.

**TAKANORI ENDO:** And that took place when?

**DAISAKU IKEDA:** I seem to remember it was April [20] 1957. It is my great fortune to have had such a mentor.

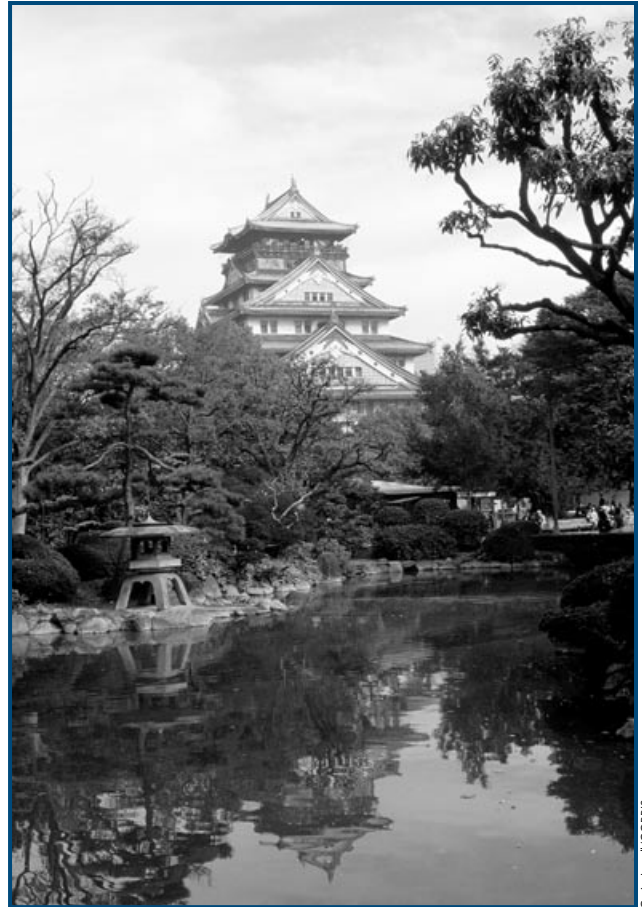
**ENDO:** That was when you took leadership of activities in Osaka during the time of the House of Councilors by-election. It was that struggle that led to your arrest on July 3.<sup>2</sup>

**SAITO:** It was a struggle against corrupt power. Ten days later (on April 30), President Toda suddenly fell ill, and one year later he passed away. Even in his weakened condition, Mr. Toda’s concern for you, the person to whom he would entrust the future of kosen-rufu, was tremendous.

**IKEDA:** He was a mentor of immense compassion. He once told me, “If you should die, I would rush to where you were and lay down with you and join you in death.” It was my determination, too, to give my life to protect the Soka Gakkai.

**SAITO:** This will be our last in this series of discussions on the Lotus Sutra. Having come to this point, I deeply feel that the Lotus Sutra is ultimately a teaching of mentor and disciple. That is the core theme running through the entire work.

The “Expedient Means” (second) chapter, for example, expounds the principle of the true aspect of all phenomena, revealing that all living beings equally possess the Buddha nature. The people of the two vehicles of Learning and Realization (voice hearers and pratyekabuddhas) — who



Osaka Castle, an important military and political structure since the 1580s. It was in Osaka, Japan that President Ikeda’s struggle during 1957 elections led to his arrest on July 3.

until then, it had been taught, could not attain Buddhahood — then receive a prophecy of future enlightenment.

Throughout the sutra’s theoretical teaching, or first half, the idea that the Buddha (the mentor) and all living beings (the disciples) are inseparable is elucidated in a variety of ways.

**IKEDA:** That’s right. The sutra also explains [in the “Devadatta” (twelfth) chapter] that even evil people and women can become Buddhas.

**HARUO SUDA:** It proclaims: “All people can become Buddhas!”

**IKEDA:** A Buddha is one who has awakened to the truth that all people are potentially Buddhas. A Buddha’s enlightenment is none other than this. There is therefore no such thing as a Buddha who is arrogant or who looks down on others. Such behavior would indicate that one is not the genuine article.

## A Battle Against Arrogance

**SUDA:** In the description of the “three powerful enemies” found in the “Encouraging Devotion” (thirteenth) chapter, all three are labeled as “arrogant.” [They are called arrogant lay people, arrogant monks, and arrogant high-ranking priests.]

I think arrogance itself is the enemy of the Lotus Sutra. In particular, arrogant high-ranking priests are those who, while being revered by others as sages, harbor malice in their hearts. The sutra says that they in fact “despise and look down on all humankind” (LS13, 193).<sup>3</sup>

**ENDO:** The Nichiren Shoshu priesthood is a textbook example. The Lotus Sutra is a struggle between the Buddha’s spirit to respect all human beings and that of the “devil” to look down on them. In my opinion, the battle with the devil king of the sixth heaven is the sutra’s ultimate teaching.

**IKEDA:** Exactly. It is when we resolutely carry out this struggle in the unity of mentor and disciple that we first experience the world of Buddhahood welling forth from our life. It is then that the lotus flower of the Mystic Law begins to blossom.

Myo, or “mystic,” corresponds to mentor; and ho, or “law,” to disciple. They are indivisible. Renge, or “lotus flower,” symbolizes the simultaneity of cause and effect. “Cause” refers to the nine worlds and thus to the disciple, while “effect” indicates the world of Buddhahood and the mentor. Hence, mentor and disciple are one. The Mystic Law and the lotus flower both express the oneness of mentor and disciple. This is the meaning of Myoho-renge-kyo.

Buddhahood is found in the faith to spread the Mystic Law far and wide. We should deeply reflect on the Daishonin’s words:

Never seek this Gohonzon outside yourself. The Gohonzon exists only within the mortal flesh of us ordinary people who embrace the Lotus Sutra and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. . . . This Gohonzon also is found only in the two characters for faith. (WND, 832)<sup>4</sup>

Faith means action. It is struggle. To the very last moment of his life, President Toda burned with passion for kosen-rufu. The same was true of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. This world-class scholar and person of outstanding character died



Lotus flowers in bloom. “The Lotus Sutra is a struggle between the Buddha’s spirit to respect all human beings and that of the ‘devil’ to look down on them.”

Keren Su/CORBIS

in prison! Japan’s militarist authorities killed him.

The year that President Makiguchi was imprisoned (1943), he had declared that it was time to save the nation from crisis, and in spring of that year, he began lecturing to students on the Daishonin’s treatise “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land.”

He was imprisoned on July 6. Many so-called disciples, who had referred to Mr. Makiguchi as their mentor, suddenly turned around and began denouncing him as a scoundrel and saying he had it coming. The human heart is a fearful thing.

President Toda, on the other hand, was the only one who felt tremendous gratitude toward his mentor. He would later address Mr. Makiguchi in an elegy saying, “In your vast and boundless mercy, you took me with you even to prison.”<sup>5</sup> There could be no starker contrast than that between Mr. Toda and the others.

President Makiguchi passed away in November

1944. He died in prison, where he had poured his life into reading “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land.”

## An Awakening in Prison

**IKEDA:** And Mr. Toda, the disciple who shared Mr. Makiguchi’s spirit, read the Lotus Sutra and perceived its essence while he was in prison at the same time as his mentor. He realized that “Buddha” is the “great life” that pervades the universe, and that he was a product of that great eternal life—life that from time without beginning has constantly existed and operated in the cosmic world. In other words, he realized that he was a child of the Buddha.

As inquiries about humanity advance, the validity and importance of this profound realization regarding life will no doubt be persuasively demonstrated. We are in fact already entering such a time.

President Toda often said: “This [truth] isn’t something I studied and learned. It’s something I remembered.” As a result of his painful ordeal in prison, President Toda became extremely near-sighted. When reading the Daishonin’s writings or some other material, he would take off his glasses and squint his eyes, bringing the object so close that it nearly touched his nose. He would remark: “With my vision the way it is, I don’t read the Goshō the way all of you do. The Daishonin’s Buddhism is recalled.”

When asked a question about Buddhism, he would give his opinion and say: “I’m sure the Daishonin said the same thing. I know it’s written somewhere.” And sure enough, when we would go and look, we would find the Daishonin’s same teaching in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” or some other writing.

He would also describe how on numerous occasions when pondering a difficult portion of the teachings, the meaning would just come to him as if out of the blue.

President Toda was enlightened to the oneness of mentor and disciple. He “remembered” the truth that he had been exerting himself as a disciple of and with the same spirit as Nichiren Daishonin since the remote past. Understanding this, how could he begrudge his life?

With nothing but appreciation, we should advance toward kosen-rufu. There is no enlightenment in the Latter Day of the Law and no world of Buddhahood apart from the faith to move eternally in the direction of kosen-rufu. This is what President Toda taught.

## Buddhism of the True Cause Is the Buddhism of Hope

**SAITO:** To continually go forward—this is the Buddhism of the True Cause.

**IKEDA:** Now is eternity. Right now is the “beginning.” The past is gone. The future has not yet arrived. The present moment is all that exists.

The present in an instant becomes the past. We may say that it exists; we may also say that it doesn’t exist. This is the meaning of non-substantiality. Life continues from moment to moment. Apart from this moment, life has no actuality. One moment we might feel happiness, the next, misery.

To view this moment of life as the direct effect of some cause made in the past is to think in terms of the True Effect. To think, in other words, “I did that, so this happened.” But that perspective alone will not give rise to hope.

The key is to view one’s life at the present moment as the cause for creating future effects. This is the True Cause that reaches the very depths of one’s being. It is not a superficial cause.

Temporally, our lives are rooted in the life of time without beginning. Spatially, they are the True Cause that pervades the entire realm of phenomena. This is Nam-myōhō-rengē-kyō, the eternal cosmic life, the great principle that moves the entire universe and sparks constant development.

Therefore, when we believe in the Gohonzon as the embodiment of that Law, chant the Mystic Law and take action, at that moment we are experiencing eternity. And it is then that the eternally pure and boundless life force that is “neither created nor adorned, but remaining in its original state” (*Goshō Zenshu*, p. 759) wells forth. We enjoy complete freedom in both the present and the future. Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism is the Buddhism of hope.

The Lotus Sutra is precious because in its depths is the Gohonzon. If we forget this one point, all of our efforts will amount to nothing.

**SAITO:** So, the point is that each moment is time without beginning and everything always starts from now.

**IKEDA:** This is faith based on the Buddhism of the True Cause. Faith means to have boundless hope.

No matter how bad our present circumstances might



AFP/CORBIS

West Berliners crowd in front of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as they watch the East German border patrol demolish a section of the wall in order to open a new crossing point between East and West Berlin. Some might characterize the twentieth century as the age of the rise and fall of Communism.

be, even if it seems we are fighting a losing battle, we must stand up determined not to be defeated, and from there show actual proof of the limitless potential of the Mystic Law. Is this not the true purpose of faith?

Without putting our whole lives into creating something from nothing, we cannot know genuine faith. The intense challenge to create value — to change loss into gain, bad into good, and baseness into beauty; This is the spirit of Soka. This is faith.

The Daishonin says, “If you exert a hundred million aeons of effort in a single moment of life, the three enlightened properties of the Buddha will appear within you at each moment” (GZ, 790).

We must not become cowardly and craven people who become disheartened and critical of others and think only about protecting themselves when things get even a little bit tough. Those who can pull together in the direst of circumstances are true comrades. Faith is the spirit to give even our very lives for the sake of

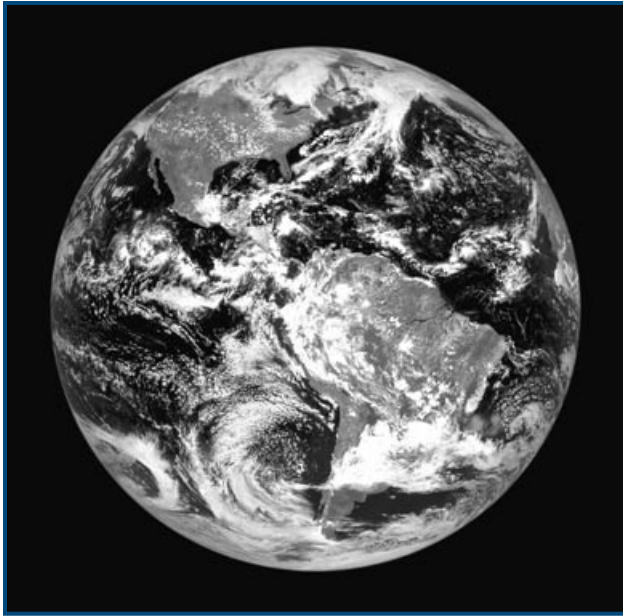
kosen-rufu and the happiness of the people, whether we gain from it or not.

In the entire world, the SGI is the only group that is working to spread the Mystic Law throughout the world. We must steadfastly protect this noble organization. The SGI is the light of hope for humankind.

## The Great Mission of the SGI

**SUDA:** In a speech last year in Okinawa, Kyrgyz writer Chingiz T. Aitmatov said:

“Humanism” is an extremely important word. Until now there have been systems of thought that served to bring people together in unity within a given ethnic group. But the kind of unity whereby people open their hearts to all others and forge bonds of trust based on friendship is a completely new spirit of unity that has never before been seen.



CORBIS

“When we view the Earth from space, it is easy to see just how foolish it is for this beautiful planet to be divided into some two hundred ‘nations,’ and for them to be constantly at odds with one another.”

Such unity cannot be realized without a supreme and sublime philosophy. This philosophy must be spread by an outstanding individual who is a product of the age. Through my long association with President Ikeda, I have come to believe that he is the very person who is promoting just such a philosophy. . . .

If I were asked to describe what kind of age the twentieth century has been, I think I would have to say it has been a century of war and frightening brutality. Some might characterize it as the age of the rise and fall of Communism. Others might describe it as the “age of mass culture” born in the West. In other words, a great many would likely describe the twentieth century as having been the “age of Westernization.”

I would distinguish the Soka Gakkai movement as an undertaking that has transcended all of that, that has gone beyond the ideologies and politics of the past century. The Soka Gakkai emerged during the twentieth century, and it has advanced and developed while overcoming all manner of ordeals and obstacles. It is because of this continuous effort that we have been able to learn of a fresh perspective on the world. Let us all have great pride in this.

Globalization is proceeding as the overall trend of the times. This is true in economics, as well as in

the areas of technology and communications. But it is my belief that unless this is accompanied by a “spiritual globalization,” humankind will perish.

If the twenty-first century is really an age of globalization, and if globalization is indeed the way for genuine progress, then all of you, the members of the Soka Gakkai, have a truly immense and profound mission as we enter this new time. . . .

If youth who are thinking about the future come into contact with the idea of humanism and with people who advocate humanism, then humankind will be able to advance even further. I have hope that the twenty-first century will be one of true progress for humankind.

Lastly, I would like to share my thoughts on the Soka Gakkai itself. In addition to enjoying utter freedom, the members of the Soka Gakkai believe in and strive to realize the ideals upheld by the organization. Ordinarily, religious doctrine tends to restrict in some way the individual’s inner realm. But the Soka Gakkai has no such limitation. While each member is free as a unique individual, all are brought together by a common philosophy. Never before have I seen such a wonderful phenomenon. . . .

The planet is a legacy that we must pass on to our descendants. Human beings must be prevented from creating any more war, conflict, confrontation and other such destructive activity.

Now, as the twentieth century draws to a close and the twenty-first century is at hand, human reason is steadily approaching a universal perspective. We have entered a time when people are taking a more universal approach to life and thinking on a universal level.

The sea, the mountains, the plains, the earth, the air—it is the responsibility of human beings to protect these treasures.<sup>6</sup>

## Devote Oneself to the Practice of “Never Disparaging”

**ENDO:** Dr. Aitmatov’s words are very clear.

At the beginning of this series of discussions, President Ikeda, you explained the idea of “cosmic humanism.” It seems to me that the times are inevitably moving in that direction.

**IKEDA:** When we view the Earth from space, it is easy to see just how foolish it is for this beautiful planet to be

divided into some two hundred “nations,” and for them to be constantly at odds with one another. Before we are Japanese or American or Russian, we are human beings. If we cannot grasp something as natural as this, the twenty-first century will be dark indeed. We run the risk of creating an age where brutish violence runs rampant.

We must build a society in which people work with and help one another in a spirit of humanism; we must pursue a peaceful world in which people can lead happy and fulfilled lives with dignity. The basis for doing so is the “spirit of never disparaging” found in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and which is the essence of the Lotus Sutra. It is the philosophy of thoroughly treasuring each person. I have said this many times, but of utmost significance is concrete action. Young or old, the important thing is to treat others with real love and compassion.

Half-heartedness and irresponsibility don’t work in Buddhism. Such behavior only degrades the noble work of an “emissary of the Buddha.” Faith is not about leaving things up to others or believing that things will just work out somehow. Thinking that way will not bring about real joy; it will only leave one with regret in lifetimes to come. It is the Soka Gakkai’s constant and untiring work to help even one person achieve real happiness that makes it truly great.

**IKEDA:** At any rate, no matter how flashy and decorated the words, if the actual sufferings of the people are ignored, those words are nothing more than a pretense of sincerity. If we were to place ourselves above others while living alone in peace and tranquillity, the spirit of Buddhism would be dead.

The Daishonin, who appeared in this world to teach others the essence of the Lotus Sutra, chose to be born into positively the lowest station in society. We should



The idea of deliberately challenging a difficult path in life brings to mind Pearl Buck’s work, *The Child Who Never Grew*.

carefully reflect on the profound meaning of his declaration that he is the “son of a chandala family” (WND, 202). Born among those who were suffering the most as one of the discriminated, he waged a struggle for human rights against the discriminators while undergoing great persecution. Such effort itself is the practice of Lotus Sutra.

**SUDA:** Having studied at Mt. Hiei [of the Tendai school of Buddhism], one of the main centers of learning in Japan at that time, the Daishonin was qualified for the upper echelons. If he had wanted to live in peace at a temple in his home town, I don’t think it would have been a problem. But he purposely cast aside such an easy life.

## Human Beings Are Human Beings!

**IKEDA:** Though on a different level, the idea of deliberately challenging a difficult path in life brings to mind Pearl Buck’s<sup>7</sup> work, *The Child Who Never Grew*. In it, she gives a candid account of her hardships while raising her developmentally disabled daughter. She describes her pain and how she would vacillate between feelings of hope and despair.

At one point, she was looking for a school that would be suitable for her only child. However, the people she met, though employed as caregivers for children with disabilities, did not possess an awareness that those children were human beings, too. She writes:

The children who never grow are human beings and they suffer as human beings, inarticulately but deeply nevertheless. The human creature is always more than an animal.

That is the one thing we must never forget. He is forever more than a beast. Though the mind has

gone away, though he cannot speak or communicate with anyone, the human stuff is there, and he belongs to the human family.<sup>8</sup>

Her words are deeply moving.

## “Happiness First and All Else Follows”

**IKEDA:** Pearl Buck eventually found a school to which she felt comfortable entrusting her daughter. The headmaster of the school had the motto, “Happiness first and all else follows.” He explained:

That’s not just sentimentality . . . It is the fruit of experience. We’ve found that we cannot teach a child anything unless his mind and heart are free of unhappiness. The only child who can learn is the happy child.<sup>9</sup>

This is similar to President Makiguchi’s philosophy that education exists for the happiness of children.

At any rate, Mrs. Buck also relays in her book that she learned much from her daughter:

It was my child who taught me to understand so clearly that all people are equal in their humanity and that all have the same human rights. None is to be considered less, as a human being, than any other, and each must be given his place and his safety in the world. I might never have learned this in any other way. I might have gone on in the arrogance of my own intolerance for those less able than myself. My child taught me humility.<sup>10</sup>

“My child taught me humility.” How wonderful! The world is becoming a place where people are pre-occupied with undermining others. Many go to



## Subscribe today

**Check One:**

**6 Months \$28**  
(6 issues)

**1 Year \$50**  
(12 issues)  
SAVE \$22

**3 Years \$125**  
(36 issues)  
SAVE \$91

U.S.A. only

CHARGE MY VISA   
  OR MASTER CARD   
  PAYMENT ENCLOSED

---

CARD #

EXPIRATION DATE

---

SIGNATURE All credit card orders are subject to bank approval

---

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

PHONE #

---

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

---

Source Code (if known) For gift subscription, please indicate gift giver

Subscriptions: (800) 835-4558 • email: [sgisubs@aol.com](mailto:sgisubs@aol.com)  
 MAIL TO: SGI-USA Subscriptions, PO Box 1427, Santa Monica, CA 90406-9907

extraordinary lengths to dig up others' faults and are ready to do whatever it takes to humiliate them even a little. We live in a society plagued by jealousy and envy.

**ENDO:** In addition to being a writer, Pearl Buck is also known for her peace activities. A person who respects the dignity of life can't help but try to awaken the same understanding in others.

**IKEDA:** Exactly. Mrs. Buck knew that a person without humility could not possibly guide others to happiness. She says:

The attendant must be a person of affectionate and invincibly kind nature, child loving, able to discipline without physical force, in control because the children love him or her. Whether this attendant is well educated is not important. He must understand children, for he has in his care perpetual children.<sup>11</sup>

The same, I believe, applies not only in the realm of education, but to leaders in all fields. Only when we truly care for another can we begin to understand that person's heart, and thus become able to guide the person.

**SAITO:** This is very inspiring.

The more I think about it, the more I realize just how significant the fact is that the votary of the Lotus Sutra, of the teaching that all people are Buddhas, appeared in this world as "the son of a chandala family" among the lowest class of society.

**IKEDA:** As practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, we must always live as ordinary people, together with the people, and dedicated to the welfare of the people. If in the future leaders should emerge who, having forgotten this point, think they are special and above everyone else, they must be ousted from our movement.

## The Bodhisattvas of the Earth Are People of Eternal Action

From the Universal Worthy (Fugen) Sutra:

This Mahayana sutra [the Lotus Sutra] is the treasure storehouse of the Buddhas. It is the eye of the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three existences. It is the seed that gives rise to all Thus Come Ones over the three existences. Someone who upholds this sutra upholds the Buddha's body

and carries out the works of the Buddha. Know that this person is the emissary of all Buddhas. This person dons the cloak of all Buddhas and World-Honored Ones, and is the child of the true Law of all Buddhas and Thus Come Ones. You should practice the teaching of the Mahayana and not allow the seeds of the Law to be destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

**IKEDA:** At any rate, it is not enough just to say that all people are Buddhas. Without efforts to widely spread the Law for the purpose of enabling all people to become Buddhas, the concept is nothing more than theory. The essential teaching (second half of the Lotus Sutra) is about actualization. And actualization equates to action.

Earlier, we noted that the theoretical teaching explains the oneness of mentor and disciple. But it is in the essential teaching that genuine practitioners of this principle actually appear. They are the Bodhisattvas of the Earth.

**SUDA:** Yes. The essential teaching opens with the emergence of countless Bodhisattvas of the Earth. These bodhisattvas are really Buddhas in disguise.

**IKEDA:** Since their true identity is that of Buddhas, they share a bond of mentor and disciple with Shakyamuni. Moreover, though they are Buddhas themselves, they also actively put the Buddha's teachings into practice as disciples. They are bodhisattva-Buddhas advancing toward the realization of kosen-rufu. They are symbols of the Buddhism of the True Cause. It is very significant that the Daishonin describes himself as a "votary of the Lotus Sutra."

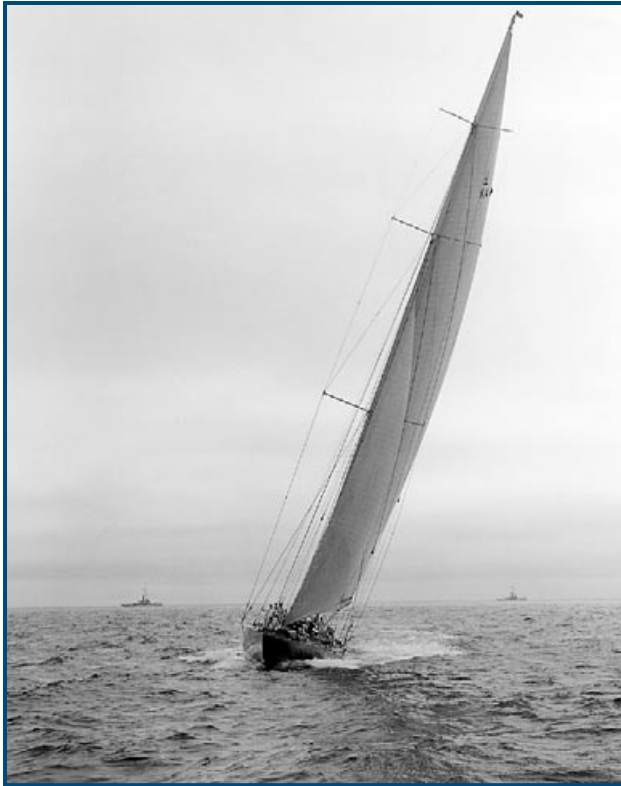
**ENDO:** The Daishonin also refers to Shakyamuni as a "votary of the Lotus Sutra" (cf. WND, 448). ["Votary" is a translation of the Japanese gyoja, which means a person who puts the teachings into action.]

**SAITO:** They are both people of action. They do not stop once they have attained Buddhahood. They are never satisfied with what they have achieved.

**IKEDA:** Having declared himself to be the votary of the Lotus Sutra, the Daishonin proceeds to rigorously examine whether or not his assertion is true. And he does so while undergoing incredible opposition.

**SUDA:** That was during the Sado Exile (1271–74).

**ENDO:** He says that at that time "999 out of 1,000 people" gave up their faith (WND, 469). His followers



The Mariners' Museum/CORBIS

The Endeavour sails in the fifth race of the America's Cup competition near Newport, Rhode Island in 1934. Those who steadfastly chant daimoku can absolutely steer their lives onto the path of ultimate fulfillment, like a ship catching a powerful tailwind.

harbored doubts, thinking it strange that the Daishonin should be persecuted relentlessly when he had promised that faith in the Lotus Sutra leads to peace and tranquillity in the present existence. They questioned whether he could really be the votary of the Lotus Sutra when he was not receiving protection from the Buddhist gods.

**IKEDA:** To quell such doubts, as soon as he reached his place of exile on Sado Island, the Daishonin began writing the treatise "The Opening of the Eyes." He begins this work clearly explaining the reasons he has been so violently opposed. And what he states directly after this explanation reveals his vast state of life.

**SAITO:** That is in the famous passage: "This I will state. Let the gods forsake me. Let all persecutions assail me. Still I will give my life for the sake of the Law" (WND, 280).

The passage continues:

Shariputra practiced the way of the bodhisattva for

sixty kalpas, but he abandoned the way because he could not endure the ordeal of the Brahman who begged for his eye. Of those who received the seeds of Buddhahood in the remote past and those who did so from the sons of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence, many abandoned the seeds and suffered in hell for the long periods of numberless major world system dust particle kalpas and major world system dust particle kalpas, respectively, because they followed evil companions.

Whether tempted by good or threatened by evil, if one casts aside the Lotus Sutra, one destines oneself for hell. Here I will make a great vow. Though I might be offered the rulership of Japan if I would only abandon the Lotus Sutra, accept the teachings of the Meditation Sutra, and look forward to rebirth in the Pure Land, though I might be told that my father and mother will have their heads cut off if I do not recite the Nembutsu — whatever obstacles I might encounter, so long as persons of wisdom do not prove my teachings to be false, I will never yield! All other troubles are no more to me than dust before the wind.

I will be the pillar of Japan. I will be the eyes of Japan. I will be the great ship of Japan. This is my vow, and I will never forsake it! (WND, 280–81)

## Living the Spirit of the Lotus Sutra

**IKEDA:** Though the Daishonin makes various arguments in an effort to resolve the doubts of his followers, in his heart, he cares not in the least whether or not the Buddhist gods come to his aid. His spirit is to give his life to propagating the Mystic Law. He swears he will never relent, even if enticed with the most powerful position in the land, or threatened with the beheading of his parents. He declares he will never break his vow to lead all people to enlightenment.

Regarding the Daishonin's spirit, Nichikan, the twenty-sixth high priest, says, "Each time I read this passage, my tears flow ceaselessly. Disciples in later ages should engrave these words in their hearts" (*Commentaries of High Priest Nichikan*, p. 205).

**SAITO:** Up until this point in the treatise, the Daishonin goes to great lengths to examine whether he is the votary of the Lotus Sutra in light of the sutra's teachings. Once he has done that, he completely transforms his approach.

**IKEDA:** That’s right. He then clearly proclaims his own position as the one living the spirit of the Lotus Sutra, the spirit to achieve kosen-rufu. It’s not a question of whether he can prove himself from the standpoint of the sutra. On the contrary, he himself justifies the Lotus Sutra by revealing the sutra’s essence. That is, the spirit to enable all people to realize their full potential, come what may.

**ENDO:** The Daishonin goes from evaluating himself based on the standard of the Lotus Sutra to using as his standard his own vow to lead all people to ultimate happiness and then employing the sutra to aid him in fulfilling that vow.

**SAITO:** In my opinion, this passage is the most profound reading of the Lotus Sutra. It mustn’t be taken lightly. Furthermore, I don’t think these words can be truly grasped without challenging oneself to work for kosen-rufu in the same spirit as Nichiren Daishonin.

## The Mystic Law Moves like a “Great Wind”

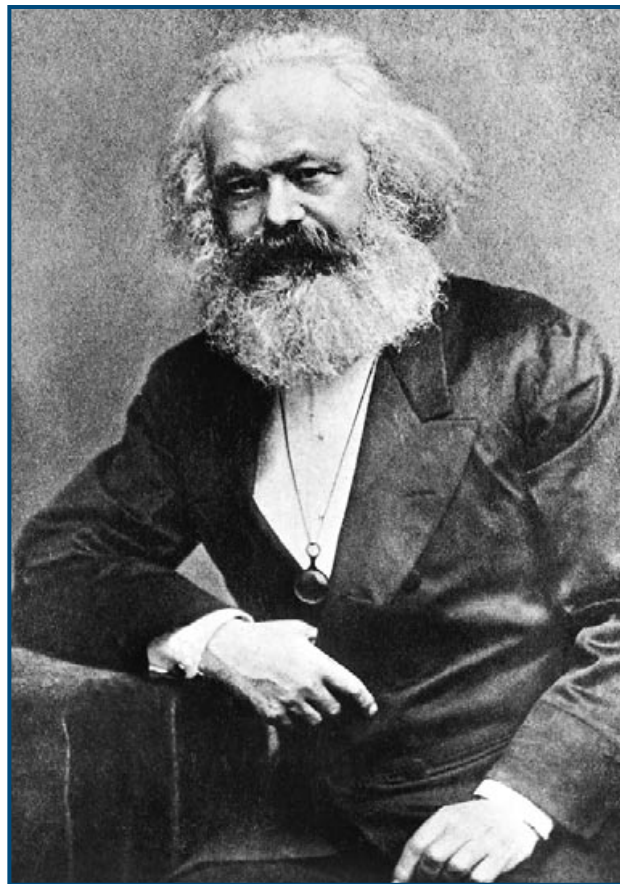
**IKEDA:** Kosen-rufu is itself the heart of the Lotus Sutra. It is the rhythm of the cosmic life that is Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. It is the endeavor to elevate the life-state of all humanity to the world of Buddhahood.

Though we might like it to stand still, time flows ceaselessly. Winter always turns into spring. In the same way, humankind is ever moving in the direction of the wellspring of life that is the Mystic Law, moving toward the world of Buddhahood. As people who are taking responsibility for advancing this movement, we enjoy the highest honor as human beings.

The Daishonin says, “Now when Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, they are like the blowing of a great wind” (GZ, 742). Wind is invisible, but no one can stop it. Wind and water always find their way around any obstruction they may encounter.

The “great wind” of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo will not cease no matter who might try to block it. Humankind will without fail awaken to the truth that we are all one with the universe.

On an individual level, those who steadfastly chant daimoku can absolutely steer their lives onto the path of ultimate fulfillment, like a ship catching a powerful tailwind. To have weak faith is to sail on a weak wind. Strong faith brings forth a great wind. It all comes down to determination.



Karl Marx argued that “religion is the opium of the people.”

Even from his place of exile on Sado Island, a place from which people were not expected to return alive, the Daishonin stood up with the resolve to guide the people of Japan — the people who had persecuted him — and all humankind to enlightenment.

This immense compassion is Buddhahood. It is the core of the Lotus Sutra. The Gohonzon is infused with the life of Nichiren Daishonin, the life of the Buddha. This incredible mercy and compassion is the pulse of the living expression of the eternal universal life called Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

## Religion That Is Not an “Opiate”

**IKEDA:** Karl Marx argued that “religion is the opium of the people.”<sup>13</sup> Certainly there are religions that function as opiates. Such religions become pawns of the iniquitous nature of authoritarian power, serving to numb the spirit of the people by teaching them to be satisfied with their lot in life and seek happiness only after death. They function to keep the people in a state of ignorance.

But not all religions are opiates. There are religions that, determined to awaken the people, will not succumb to any power, and which are devoted to fighting oppression in an effort to enable all people to live freely and with dignity. This is the spirit of the Lotus Sutra. This is the purpose of a religion of the twenty-first century.

**SUDA:** We can surely say that the aim of the Lotus Sutra is to “open the eyes of the people”—to cause the inherent “flower of the Law” to bloom in the life of each individual.

**IKEDA:** That aim is to open the world of Buddhahood; to awaken people to the supreme nobility of their existence. The original meaning of “Buddha” is “to open” or “awaken.”

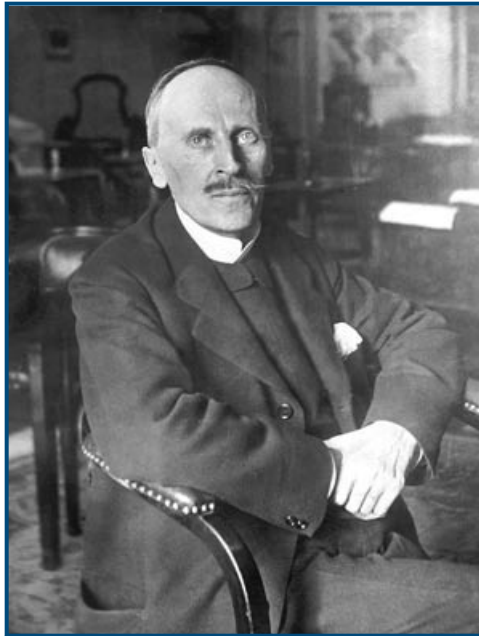
**SUDA:** Yes. It comes from the Sanskrit word *budh*, which suggests the opening of a person’s eyes or the blooming of a flower. Buddha literally means a person who is awake, a life in which the “flower of the lotus” has blossomed.

**IKEDA:** The “flower of the Law” blooms within the human being. It shines through our character. The Lotus Sutra is wholly a teaching for human beings.

The purpose of religion is to help each person become happy. But even a teaching whose original intent was to promote human happiness may start to restrict people. Even the Lotus Sutra could be used incorrectly as an “authority” to justify discrimination.

What is necessary to prevent the danger of such distortion from occurring? It is the mentor-disciple relationship. It is the disciple’s inheritance of the resolute spirit and faith of the mentor to lead people to happiness.

**ENDO:** Because the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood has lost the mentor-disciple spirit, they’ve gone completely astray.



“In Jean Christophe, Romaine Rolland states that challenging suffering is the backbone of the universe.”

Beihann/CORBIS

## Inheriting the Faith of the Mentor

**IKEDA:** It would be terrible if this spirit were to disappear from the SGI. What is the meaning of the oneness of mentor and disciple in Buddhism? Physically, mentor and disciple are of course two different people. It is the heart, spirit, and teaching that each uphold that makes them inseparable. Therefore, it is important to seek a mentor who correctly practices the Law, and to forge ahead with the aim of becoming one in spirit with that mentor.

A relationship not based on a shared principle or spirit, but where one blindly follows the orders of another in a relationship of boss and underling, or where one claims to be the disciple of the other, but only in form, is not the correct way of Buddhism.

Buddhism is about the disciple taking on the spirit of the mentor to aspire eternally for kosen-rufu. Without the mentor-disciple relationship, there can be no advancement. There can only be decline.

**SAITO:** It goes without saying that our faith is grounded on Nichiren Daishonin’s teachings. He is the original mentor. Based on that understanding, Nikko Shonin, the Daishonin’s successor, emphasized that the mentor-disciple relationship is essential to one’s Buddhist practice. He says:

In this teaching [of the Daishonin], the way to enlightenment is attained through correctly practicing the path of mentor and disciple. If we err in the path of mentor-disciple, then, even though we might uphold the Lotus Sutra, we will fall into the hell of incessant suffering.

**SUDA:** And as proof that the relationship between mentor and disciple in Buddhism is not just a matter of form, Nikko Shonin clearly stated as his last instructions: “Do not follow even the high priest of the time if he goes against the Buddha’s teaching and propounds his own views” (GZ, 1618). What matters is whether one is correctly practicing the Buddha’s teaching.

## Faith That Grows Stronger and Stronger

From the “Ten Benefits” (third) Chapter of the Immeasurable Meaning (Muryogi) Sutra:

Good men, this sutra [the Immeasurable Meaning Sutra, which is the preamble to the Lotus Sutra] arouses a spirit of aspiration in bodhisattvas who have not yet aroused a seeking mind; it arouses a spirit of mercy in those who lack a spirit of mercy; it arouses a spirit of compassion in those who are fond of killing; it arouses a spirit of rejoicing in those who are envious; it arouses an inclination to gladly discard attachments in those who have many attachments; it arouses an inclination to make offerings in those who are loath to part with their possessions; it arouses a spirit to uphold the precepts in those who have much arrogance; it arouses a spirit of forbearance in those who have a strong angry nature; it arouses a will to make tenacious effort in those who are lazy; it arouses a spirit of single-minded meditation in those whose minds are disordered and scattered in various directions; it arouses a spirit of wisdom in those who have much ignorance; it arouses a desire to help others in those who are not inclined to help others; it arouses a spirit to perform the ten good acts in those who commit the ten evil acts; it arouses an aspiration for the eternal and ever-lasting truth in those who yearn for continual flux; it arouses a spirit of never-regressing faith in those who are inclined to regress; it arouses a pure spirit in those who are defiled; it arouses a spirit to extinguish earthly desires in those with many earthly desires. Good men, such is the supreme and mystic power of benefit of this sutra.

**IKEDA:** A disciple is one who carries on the faith of the mentor without any deviation. The important thing is to practice faith that grows ever stronger, without becoming arrogant. In his letters to his followers, the Daishonin repeatedly uses the words “more than ever” and “still more.”

**SAITO:** This is certainly true in his correspondence with the Ikegami brothers. When they were faced with the hardship of their father Yasumitsu disowning the elder

brother, the two brothers fought in unity just as the Daishonin instructed and came out completely victorious.

In addition to praising their joint struggle, the Daishonin strictly instructed them, saying: “No matter what might happen in the future, you must not waver in the least. Exert yourself still more strenuously in faith” (GZ, 1090).

**IKEDA:** Yes. We cannot let down our guard for even a moment. This is all the more true with regard to evil. Evil must be challenged with an unrelenting spirit.

**ENDO:** Sure enough, the Daishonin’s guidance to Shijo Kingo when the latter came up against a barrage of opposition was the same. He says: “Strengthen your power of faith more than ever” (WND, 681); “Strengthen your resolve to seek the way all the more and achieve Buddhahood in this lifetime” (WND, 946); and “Spur yourself to muster the power of faith” (WND, 1001).

**SUDA:** Nichimyo was a believer who traveled to Sado Island with her daughter Oto Gozen to visit the Daishonin. The Daishonin encourages this person of stalwart faith, saying: “All of you are my lay supporters, so how can you fail to attain Buddhahood?” (WND, 615). And he tells her: “Strengthen your resolve more than ever” (WND, 615).

**IKEDA:** He also instructs followers who have practiced for many years that they, too, should strengthen their faith more and more. To the mother of Nanjo Tokimitsu (the wife of the late Lord Ueno), the Daishonin says: “After hearing it, strive even more earnestly in faith. One who, on hearing the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, makes even greater efforts in faith is a true seeker of the way” (WND, 457). To make “even greater efforts in faith”—this is faith of the True Cause. Where such faith exists, the world of Buddhahood manifests, and great benefit thus arises.

**SAITO:** The Daishonin himself sets an example of faith that grows ever stronger. His life after he moved to Mt. Minobu was definitely not one of idle retirement. While lecturing to several score of his disciples on the Lotus Sutra, T’ien-t’ai’s Great Concentration and Insight (Maka Shikan) and other works, he composed a large number of treatises and letters to his followers, providing detailed encouragement to each.

**ENDO:** The works he produced during the eight years and four months he spent at Minobu are said to number

approximately three hundred. This means that, on average, he wrote one piece every ten days. And these include a number of lengthy writings such as “The Selection of the Time” and “On Repaying Debts of Gratitude.”

Considering that there are nearly one hundred-twenty Gohonzon extant today thought to have been inscribed during this time by the Daishonin, these must have been days of intense and awesome struggle.

## The Daishonin’s Last Lecture on “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land”

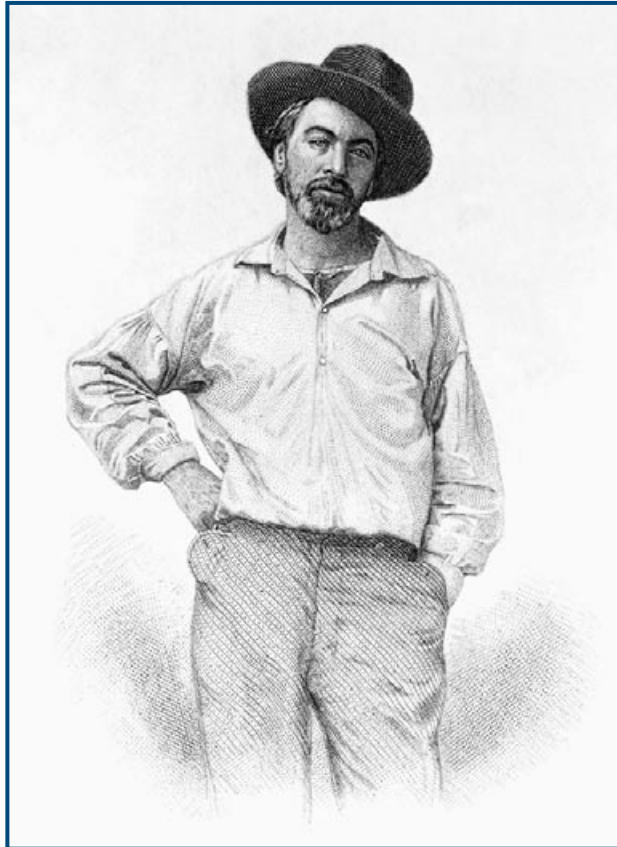
**IKEDA:** To the very end, until the last moments of his life, the Daishonin lectured on “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land.”

**SAITO:** Yes. On the eighth day of the ninth month in 1282, about a month before his death, the Daishonin left Minobu. On the 18th, he arrived at the residence of Munenaka, the elder of the Ikegami brothers. Today, this is in Tokyo’s Ota Ward.

**SUDA:** The eleven-day journey must have really taken its toll. Although he made the trip on horseback, the Daishonin’s age and ill health would surely have left him completely exhausted after his journey.

**ENDO:** Despite his poor condition, however, the Daishonin delivered a final lecture for his followers.

**IKEDA:** That’s right. And doubtless he did so wringing every last ounce of strength from his being. This is



Walt Whitman, whose poetry SGI President Ikeda read as a youth, sings, “Now understand me well — it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.”

what a mentor does. For the sake of the beloved disciples, and to forge a path for those to come, the mentor spares no effort. This is a Buddha. A Buddha is someone who fights on to the very end.

## “Youth Is Constant Growth and Advancement”

**IKEDA:** At the height of the Atsuhara Persecution [in 1279], the Daishonin called on his followers: “Strengthen your faith day by day and month after month. Should you slacken in your resolve even a bit, devils will take advantage” (WND, 997). This is the essence of faith.

To the end of his days, President Makiguchi would say: “We are all youth! Youth is not a mat-

ter of years according to the calendar. It’s about constant growth and advancement.” There is no such thing as age in Buddhism. The beneficial power of the Lotus Sutra is “ageless and undying.”

Indeed, outside the realm of Buddhism as well, those who are champions of life never stagnate. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe remarked, “For I’ve been a man for ever / And that means I’ve had to fight.”<sup>14</sup> In Jean Christophe, Romain Rolland states that challenging suffering is the backbone of the universe. And Walt Whitman, whose poetry I loved reading as a youth, sings, “Now understand me well — it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.”<sup>15</sup>

Kosen-rufu is the same. Human revolution is the same.

It is my hope that the youth who will shoulder the twenty-first century will engrave these words in their



Uwe Watz/CORBIS

Destruction takes but an instant.



CORBIS

Construction takes tenacious and painstaking effort.

hearts. Idleness is the cause of decline. Construction takes tenacious and painstaking effort. Destruction takes but an instant.

What kind of philosophy, what kind of movement, will guide people into the twenty-first century? We must keep in mind that the real struggle is now beginning.

**SAITO:** For four and a half years we have held these discussions on the Lotus Sutra each month without interruption. During this time, we have delved deeply into the vast and boundless treasures of wisdom contained in the Lotus Sutra.

What really amazes me is how the essential spirit that we have discussed is entirely contained in some impressions that you recorded after listening to President Toda lecture on the Lotus Sutra when you were in your early twenties, President Ikeda. To conclude our discussion, I would like to introduce those impressions to our readers.

**IKEDA:** Though we have been studying the Lotus Sutra for many months now, it would be fair to say that we have barely scratched the surface. Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is boundlessly deep.

I therefore hope that in the future an even more thorough study of the Lotus Sutra will be pursued based on our discussion thus far. For it is only we of the SGI, who are dedicated to spreading the Mystic Law across the globe, who are able to truly grasp the essence of the sutra's teachings.

## Impressions on President Toda's Lectures on the Lotus Sutra

[from the seventh series of lectures] (September 13, 1948)

How I marvel at the greatness and profundity of the Lotus Sutra.

Isn't it the path to salvation for all humankind?

The teaching that enlightens one to the origin of life and the universe,

the fundamental principle revealed to enable all people to acquire the loftiest character and happiness.

I am twenty-one years old.

Since setting out on my journey of life, what did I contemplate,

what did I do,  
what did I make the wellspring of my happiness?  
From this day on, I will advance bravely.  
From this day on, I will live resolutely.  
I will live within the life of the great Law,  
win over my sufferings.  
True sadness inspires one to lead a great life.  
I now see the true great path and  
perceive life's true nature.

Mt. Fuji stands solemnly in the evening twilight.  
Graceful, multi-hued clouds.  
The august moon rising in the east.  
And my own existence.  
Within my being pulses the energy of life  
and therein exists the zenith of beauty.  
I realize my fortune in having encountered the funda-  
mental principles of the immensely profound and  
infinite Lotus Sutra.  
President Toda will become the mentor of humankind.  
Lamenting the condition of his native land, he has the  
great confidence to advance, certain of imparting  
supreme happiness to humanity.  
And he has the searing passion of justice that can burn  
through anything.

I shed tears at the vast compassion of Nichiren Dais-  
honin, who fought tremendous persecution and lit  
a brilliant light out of the desire to enable all people  
to attain Buddhahood.  
Youth must advance, eternally forward.  
Youth must advance, for  
the eternal prosperity of the Law.

As a follower of the Mystic Law, is there anything  
shameful in my conduct?  
Is my heart free of doubt?  
If there is doubt or hesitation, I myself am causing it.

Religious revolution is itself human revolution.  
Likewise, it is educational revolution and  
economic revolution,  
and will also become true political revolution.  
The world is confused and polluted.  
Who will purify society and the people?  
The Soka Gakkai has a profound and great mission.  
Its advance alone will decide everything.

Revolution means dedicating one's life.

We devote our lives to the Mystic Law.  
Faithful commitment to a noble cause—  
this will be the great cornerstone for the salvation  
of the country and the world.

Youth, advance embracing great compassion.  
Youth, move onward, embracing a great philosophy.  
I, at just twenty years of age, know the path  
for leading a youth of the highest glory.<sup>16</sup>

(This concludes the series "The Wisdom of the Lotus  
Sutra—A Discussion on Religion in the Twenty-first  
Century.)

1. Byakko-tai (White Tiger Brigade): A corps of a few hundred youth organized in March 1868 to oppose the forces of the imperial restoration. Despite its desperate and heroic struggle, the group was decimated. It has come to be a symbol of loyalty, courage and determination.

2. In what has become known as the "Osaka Incident," Mr. Ikeda was arrested in 1957 on trumped-up charges of violating election law. He was later cleared of any wrongdoing.

3. Editor's note: All quotations from the Lotus Sutra are from: *The Lotus Sutra*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). For purposes of convenience, all citations from this work will be given in the text and abbreviated as follows: LS followed by the chapter number, and then the page number.

4. Editor's Note: All quotations are from the newly published translation *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (abbreviated as WND) (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999), unless otherwise stated. The number indicates the relevant page number.

5. At Mr. Makiguchi's third memorial in November 1946. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1983), vol. 3, p. 386.

6. From a speech delivered by Chingiz T. Aitmatov at the Seikyo Shimbun Culture Seminar, held at the Okinawa International Peace Center on November 18, 1998.

7. Pearl Buck (1892–1973): Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938.

8. Pearl Buck, *The Child Who Never Grew* (New York: The John Day Company, 1950), p. 42.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

12. *Hokekyo narabini kaiketsu* (the Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1974), p. 688.

13. *The Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims, and Famous Phrases*, ed. Burton Stevenson (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1948), p. 1948.

14. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *West-eastern Divan*, trans. J. Whaley (London: Oswald Wolff Publishers Ltd., 1974), p. 211.

15. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Everymans Library, 1968), p. 134.

16. Cf. Daisaku Ikeda, *Kantogen Kogishu* (Collection of Editorials and Lectures) (Tokyo, Soka Gakkai, 1966), vol. 4, pp. 153–155.

**If you have any questions about your subscription to the  
World Tribune or Living Buddhism magazine, please call  
1-800-835-4558 or e-mail [sgisubs@aol.com](mailto:sgisubs@aol.com)**



Seikyo Press

Auburn, New South Wales, Australia bestowed its first honorary citizenship to SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and his wife, Kaneko at Soka University on January 4, 2000. The citizenship is presented by Mayor Le Hoa Lam.

# *Recollections* of MY MEETINGS with LEADING WORLD FIGURES

*By SGI President Daisaku Ikeda*

*In his travels for peace, SGI President Ikeda meets with world leaders from all walks of life. In this series, he introduces the lives and characters of those memorable figures. President Ikeda is the founder of Soka University and the Soka school system.*

## Ms. Le Hoa Lam—Mayor of Auburn, New South Wales, Australia

“Your story should be called *Gone with the Waves*. You have lived a life of such turmoil, but it has been a life of true greatness. Listening to you speak brings tears to my eyes.”

These were my honest feelings.

Before me stood a small woman with a gentle smile. She was Mayor Le Hoa Lam of Auburn, New South Wales, Australia.

She replied modestly, “I did not choose to live the life I have. I had no other option.”

“Bombs! Run!” shouted Ms. Lam’s father when she was a young girl. The children hurried to the bomb shelter. Her mother ran, too, carrying her youngest.

The girl ran and, as she did so, she saw the panic and bloodshed around her.

Unarmed civilians were falling everywhere—even



Charles Lamora/CORBIS

Possibly the largest rock in the world, just the tip of Ayers Rock juts out into the Australian outback. Once a sacred Aboriginal site, it is now a tourist destination for hikers.

children. They weren't moving. Were they dead? Why? What had they done wrong?!

"Help me!" someone cried. Then a dreadful, deafening sound. A bomb had exploded.

She looked up into the sky and gasped. A human body was falling, in pieces.

This was Vietnam in 1975.

Saigon fell in April. The chaos was tremendous.

Ms. Lam's parents were Chinese immigrants to Vietnam, who went on to achieve success in business there. When she was young, Ms. Lam lived a comfortable life filled with love. Then, in her teens, her world was transformed into a living hell.

"We must escape," she thought one day as she stood on the shore watching the waves break. "But why does the sea have to be such an obstacle?"

Her father told her: "You are the bravest member of our family. I'm counting on you."

The first time, Ms. Lam tried to escape with her older brother. They failed. They tried again. They failed again. Each time they were caught, they were thrown in jail. She blamed these setbacks on bad luck.

During these escape attempts, classmates and neighbors died before her eyes. She was nearly killed more than ten times. But she survived. She was glad just to be alive.

Then a young man named Tuong Long Hua, or Tom, invited her to try again. She and her younger siblings joined him.

Tom had many talents, one of which was music. In

fact, during his fifteen-month incarceration for a previous escape attempt, he even made friends with his captors, teaching them to play the guitar. Eventually, he received special permission to leave the country as a refugee and was given a small boat.

Tom also had some knowledge of astronomy, and he plotted their course. They set sail at night.

This time she would make it!

But they met with high winds and the boat capsized. Floating on the dark waves, they desperately called for help. Fortunately, a U.S. naval ship was passing by and rescued them.

It was Ms. Lam's twelfth failed attempt to leave Vietnam.

Her mother encouraged her to keep trying. In 1977, she made her

thirteenth attempt. There were 498 people in a small boat seventy-nine feet long and twenty feet wide. They were jammed in so tightly they could not move.

With Ms. Lam were most of her family and Tom. It pained them all that Ms. Lam's father, whose leg had been injured by a bomb, could not make the arduous journey with them.

The boat was launched. If only they would have a safe trip.

But then came the shout: "Ahoy! Stop!" They had been spotted by Thai pirates.

Would they all be killed?

The pirates approached. Ms. Lam's mother volunteered to interpret. She came forward, at the risk of her life, with the hope that somehow she might save her children.

The pirates took what money the refugees still had, but spared their lives.

After four days of terror, the boat finally arrived in Malaysia. This was the day Ms. Lam had always dreamed of. But her heart was somber. How were they to live now?

Yet life goes on, and it must be lived.

Ms. Lam and her family later migrated to Toronto, Canada, where a new life began. With her mother taking the lead, the whole family worked very hard. Ms. Lam was nineteen. The only English words she knew were yes and no. She attended school while working. She was lucky enough to find a job as a receptionist in the office of a Vietnamese doctor. On the weekends, she worked as a housemaid in a nearby hotel and on holi-



Peter Tumley/CORBIS

Vietnamese boat people. Ms. Lam made a total of thirteen attempts to leave Vietnam when she was a teenager.

days she worked at a photo framing shop. While doing all this, she managed to study economics at a university and eventually earn a degree.

In 1985, her father was finally able to join the family in Canada. The warm spring sun was shining on them at last.

Tom, with whom Ms. Lam had shared the harrowing ordeal of escape, had in the meantime immigrated to Australia. The two finally made contact, and their “trans-Pacific love” blossomed. Ms. Lam went to Australia to be with Tom when she was twenty-seven, in 1987.

Many immigrants lived in the area of Ms. Lam’s new home in Sydney. Although the White Australia Policy the government had promoted in the past had been abolished, lingering discrimination still prevailed, especially against Asian immigrants.

In Ms. Lam’s neighborhood, there was an immigrant girl of sixteen, married and with a child. Her lack of English proficiency prevented her from understanding the benefits available, and so she was not able to receive the public assistance that she needed. The path out of poverty was therefore blocked for her. Ms. Lam felt as if

she were seeing her own family’s plight from many years ago being replayed. It bothered her. No one chose to be a refugee. Why were they treated so poorly?

“My own experiences made me want to help others who were suffering as I had. I came to feel that I had to do something, anything, for them,” she says. Ms. Lam changed her destiny into her mission. She decided to run for the city council of Auburn. She was elected, and then the really hard work began.

She was also a realtor, and after a fifteen- or sixteen-hour day, she had only three or four hours to sleep. Sometimes she went without sleeping at all. Yet despite juggling this taxing schedule, she still managed to raise two children. City council meetings sometimes ended as late as 11:00 at night. Ms. Lam became famous for bringing her children to the meetings.

What philosophy sustained Ms. Lam through all this? It was her conviction that government on every level must serve the people.

She says: “The representatives of local government in Australia are not authoritarian, for they are selected



Dave G. Houser/CORBIS

Monorail line running above a sidewalk in Sydney.

from among the ordinary citizenry. They are therefore dedicated to serving and improving the lives of the people. That is why, even though the pay is low, they don't complain. They are different from authoritarian leaders who don't understand the hearts of the people."

These words carry the message of the twenty-first century.

From now on, there must be no difference between leaders and the people. Leaders must understand more than anyone else the hardships that people face. They mustn't live in a different world, looking down on those whom they are meant to serve. At the same time, the people must awaken to their responsibility for society's future and develop greater awareness and knowledge.

The leaders of the future must have a combination of the fresh determination of the amateur and the skill of the pro.

Immigrants make up fifty-three percent of Auburn's population. It is a microcosm of the world, with people from China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Lebanon, Turkey, India and many Arab nations. In 1996, Ms. Lam established the Asian Welfare Center to assist immigrants. She has formed a sister-city relationship with Kuangtung City in China, and has also pursued friendly relations with Hunan Province and Changsha City.

Her many achievements have been widely recognized. And last year, she was elected as Auburn's first female mayor of Asian descent. Mayor Lam is always thinking of the people. She says: "I believe that just because our cultures are different doesn't mean we can't get along. In fact, those differences allow us to learn from each other and help each other out."

This is an important warning for Japan, which is so quick to close ranks and exclude other opinions, while simply following the majority. Japan still hasn't rid itself of the militarist thinking that emphasizes homogeneity at all costs. Even today, Korean nationals with permanent residency in Japan are excluded from participation in local elections, though they have lived here most of their lives and pay taxes like any other citizen. On this point alone Japan deserves the criticism it gets as a racist nation, a country of closed hearts and minds.

This September and October, the Olympics and the Paralympics—two global festivals—will be held in Sydney, and the main venue is located in Auburn. Mayor Lam continues to fight for the people. "We are facing a crossroads today," she says, "that will determine whether we can change history and move forward or not."

All over the world, it is women who are standing at the forefront of this new force for change. ☸

*(Continued from inside front cover)*

- ❖ Work together with other religions to resolve issues affecting humanity
- ❖ Respect cultural diversity and promote cultural exchange
- ❖ Encourage the protection of nature and the environment

## **What We Do...**

The principle activity for SGI-USA members is the neighborhood discussion meeting. These informal gatherings, held in members' homes, bring people together to practice Buddhism, to study Buddhist principles and discuss how they can best be applied to the challenges of daily life.

In addition, through youth activities, educational seminars and exhibits, we address urgent issues facing individuals and humanity. Non-sectarian activities have included:

**Victory Over Violence:** A grass-roots campaign to raise awareness about violence, its causes, and solutions. The program is expanding to schools and community organizations.

**Religious Tolerance Through Dialogue:** SGI-USA sponsors and participates in a number of local and national inter-religious conferences and symposia, including the Society for Buddhist Christian Studies (SBCS).

**Education for a Culture of Peace:** SGI-USA traveling exhibits are recognized for their ability to inform and to evoke a sense of responsibility toward important issues facing our planet. These have recently included exhibits on global children's rights, the environmental crisis, nuclear disarmament, and on the life of the great scientist and pacifist Linus Pauling.

**The Earth Charter:** SGI-USA members have sponsored more than thirty conferences involving some 1,800 participants to educate the American people about the international Earth Charter project, and participates in the Earth Charter USA Network, the project's national coordinating group.

**Friendship Through Knowledge:** An SGI-USA educational project that collected and shipped more than 14,000 books to schools and colleges in Ghana.

## **A Modern Heritage...**

The founding Soka Gakkai president, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, was a Buddhist and an educator who asserted that the purpose of education should be development of people's ability to create "value" (i.e.,

improvement, beauty and social good) in their daily lives. The word *soka* means value creation. In pre-war Japan, where education focused on the training of workers and soldiers for the nation's growing military-industrial machine, Makiguchi's humane, student-focused views often brought him into conflict with the authorities. Arrested with other top Soka Gakkai leaders during World War II as a "thought criminal" for his unyielding opposition to Japanese militarism and government oppression of religion, Makiguchi died in prison of malnutrition and mistreatment at the age of 73 in November 1944.

Makiguchi's close disciple, Josei Toda, survived the ordeal and was released from prison in July 1945, just weeks before the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Determined to rebuild the Soka Gakkai, Toda developed its membership from less than 3,000 families when he assumed the presidency in 1951 to more than 750,000 before his death in 1958. The Soka Gakkai's remarkable early growth stemmed from its commitment to helping people overcome suffering in the postwar chaos. Toda confirmed the Soka Gakkai's pacifist stance in 1957 by taking a strong, pioneering, public position against the use of nuclear weapons.

On May 3, 1960, Daisaku Ikeda became the third president. Within six months, he established chapters in the United States and South America, followed a year later by organizations in nine European countries. He continues to provide leadership for the global SGI organization, which now includes members in half the countries of the world. Mr. Ikeda has founded a number of educational and cultural institutions, including Soka University, which seek to foster the values of peace, culture and education.

For more information visit our web site at [www.sgi-usa.org](http://www.sgi-usa.org)

### **SGI-Affiliated Institutions**

The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century  
[www.brc21.org](http://www.brc21.org)

Toda Peace Institute for Global Peace and Policy  
Research [www.toda.org](http://www.toda.org)

Soka University of America [www.soka.edu](http://www.soka.edu)

Soka University of Japan [www.soka.ac.jp](http://www.soka.ac.jp)

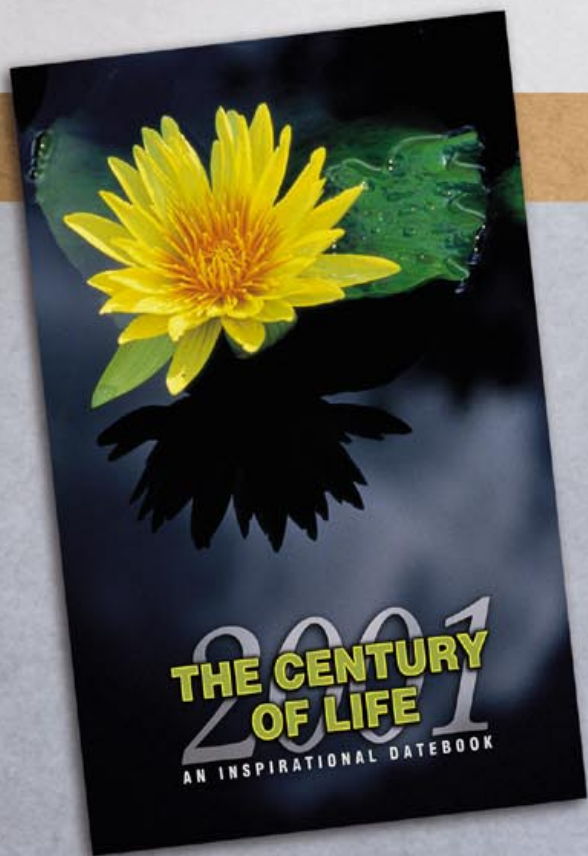
Institute of Oriental Philosophy

Pacific Basin Research Center [www.ap.harvard.edu](http://www.ap.harvard.edu)

Tokyo Fuji Art Museum

The Min-on Concert Association [www.min-on.or.jp](http://www.min-on.or.jp)

# Calendars for 2001!



## The Century of Life 2001

The Century of Life datebook is back with a new edition for 2001. This gorgeous week by week calendar features stunning photography by SGI-USA members together with inspirational quotes from SGI President Ikeda. This year we've added a place for phone numbers and addresses, too.

6" x 9" \$12.95 M/O # 4112

## Florida Nature and Culture Center 2001

A wall calendar featuring the unique beauty of the Florida Nature and Culture Center in photographs by Jonathan Wilson.

12" x 12" \$9.95 M/O # 4108

Available at all SGI-USA bookstores.  
Or purchase your copy via mail order:  
1-800-626-1313 or [sgiusamoc@aol.com](mailto:sgiusamoc@aol.com).



Living Buddhism  
Periodicals Postage Paid  
at Santa Monica, CA 90401  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED  
Return to: SGI-USA Subscription Office  
606 Wilshire Boulevard  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

# Living

## BUDDHISM

JOURNAL FOR PEACE, CULTURE AND EDUCATION \$6.00 OCTOBER 2000

**AFTER 28 CHAPTERS,  
53 INSTALLMENTS AND  
OVER FIVE YEARS —  
THE DIALOGUE ON THE  
LOTUS SUTRA SERIES  
COMES TO AN END!**

**"INTERRELIGIOUS  
DIALOGUE IS NOT  
MERELY TO AGREE ON  
DIFFERENCES, BUT TO  
FIND COMMONALITIES"**  
SGI President Ikeda's  
Message to the Sixth  
International Conference of  
the Society for Buddhist-  
Christian Studies



**"PRAYER CHANGES  
SOMETHING IN THE  
DEPTHS OF THE  
HUMAN HEART"**  
What is Faith and How  
Do We Strengthen It

**FROM REFUGEE TO  
CITY MAYOR**  
Recollections of  
Australia's  
Le Hoa Lam





## ***What Is the SGI & 'Living Buddhism' Magazine?***

### ***Building a Culture of Peace...***

Living Buddhism is the monthly journal for Soka Gakkai International-USA (SGI-USA), an American Buddhist association that promotes peace and individual happiness based on the teachings of the Nichiren school of Buddhism. With seventy-one centers throughout the United States, SGI-USA is affiliated with the worldwide SGI organization, which has twelve million members in 163 countries, with its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. Our members reflect a broad range of ethnic and social backgrounds, representing the diversity of our American society.

### ***An Ancient Tradition...***

The origins of SGI-USA's philosophy can be traced to the teachings of the Buddha, Shakyamuni, who lived some 2,500 years ago in what is present day India. Born Gautama Siddhartha, he abandoned his sheltered, princely life and sought instead to understand the inescapable sufferings all people share — birth, aging, sickness and death — and the means by which these sufferings could be overcome. He achieved at age 30 an awakening to the nature of life and the solution to these sufferings, and then traveled throughout India for 50 years, sharing the wisdom he had discovered. Shakyamuni's intuitive realization of a universal Law (Skt: *Dharma*) eternally permeating all life is most succinctly articulated in the Lotus Sutra, widely considered his most definitive teaching. Here the existence of the innate and universal reality, an essential enlightened nature, is revealed as being inherent in all life. The Lotus Sutra affirms that the realities of daily living provide both motivation and opportunity for spiritual transformation.

One of the most significant proponents of the Lotus Sutra was the 13th-century Japanese reformer, Nichiren Daishonin, who, the late religious scholar Masaharu Anesaki wrote, "stands almost a unique figure in the history of Buddhism, not alone because of his persistence through hardship and persecution ... [but also as] an eloquent speaker, a powerful writer, and a man of tender heart."

In one of his earliest writings, Nichiren Daishonin

declares both the purpose of his teaching and its conclusion: "If you wish to free yourself from the sufferings of birth and death you have endured since time without beginning and attain supreme enlightenment in this lifetime, you must awaken to the mystic truth which has always been within your life."

Nichiren taught all the workings of the universe embody a single principle or Law, a "mystic truth," which he expressed as Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. He set forth a Buddhist practice of chanting this phrase to place one's life into harmony with that universal principle. In this way, he taught, people can unlock boundless hidden potential and transform the inevitable sufferings of life into sources of growth and fulfillment.

### ***What We Believe...***

Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Soka Gakkai International, writes, "Our task is to establish a firm inner world, a robust sense of self that will not be swayed or shaken by the most trying circumstances or pressing adversity. Only when efforts to reform society have as their point of departure the reformation of the inner life — human revolution — will they lead us with certainty to a world of lasting peace and true human security."

Our Buddhist philosophy is expressed in the concept of "human revolution," a process of inner transformation arrived at through Buddhist practice. It is a process by which we develop character; cultivate wisdom, courage, and compassion; and come to live and act for the happiness of others and the betterment of society as well as for personal fulfillment.

The SGI Charter, adopted in 1995, voices our beliefs and aims. These are to:

- ❖ Promote an understanding of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism
- ❖ Contribute to peace, culture and education within society
- ❖ Safeguard fundamental human rights and eliminate discrimination
- ❖ Respect and protect freedom of religion and religious expression

*(Continued on inside back cover)*