



EXPERIENCE:
Jarmil Maupin
breaks down
barriers in South
Africa.

pages 6-7

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Make Your Life a Beacon

Courtesy of SEIKYO PRESS



SGI President Daisaku Ikeda

The following is SGI President Ikeda's message that conveyed his respect for and solidarity with the participants of Millennium Sunday, A Gathering of Spiritual Awareness, held April 2 at the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Photo by LUCY ESTEPHANOS



Dean Lawrence E. Carter, of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta, welcomes SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima during the launching of the Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation at the college, April 2. Dean Carter, introducing SGI President Ikeda's message for the occasion, said: 'We have received an absolutely beautiful statement written by Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of Soka University in Tokyo and Soka University of America in California. Please, when you get home, take the time to read his millennium message to us. It is powerful, and it is timeless. We hope that sometime in the near future, he will be able to visit us. He is probably the world's most outstanding champion of international peace.'

SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE MILLENNIUM SERVICE 2000

To all of you attending this Gathering of Spiritual Awareness, please allow me to express, on behalf of the Soka Gakkai International, my deepest respect, praise and sense of solidarity.

In the course of your 45-year struggle, since 1955, the birth of the civil rights movement, you have shown the world a powerful example of the victory of the spiritual over the material. In a world filled with violence and scheming, the struggle for nonviolence led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has proved that morality is capable of transforming reality.

You have left behind a concrete example, showing that human beings can definitely solve the problems created

by human beings.

Yours is a precedent that will remain vividly etched in the annals of history.

When Ms. Rosa Parks paid a visit to the campus of Soka University of America, I had the wonderful opportunity to join her in singing "We Shall Overcome." And I had the precious chance to speak with President Nelson Mandela during one of his trips to Japan about the principle that "justice is the ultimate victor." And today I would be honored to seize this golden opportunity to make a declaration together with all of you.

No matter how successful they may appear, those who go against the tide of humanity's advancement toward human rights will eventually fade like

the setting sun.

On the other hand, those who have persevered in the face of hardship and suffering, and have struggled against oppression, will forever be showered in the triumphant and joyous light of the sunrise.

What is justice?

It is something only truly understood by those who have been abused and ostracized despite having committed no crime. It is you who know what justice is.

What is truth?

It is known only to those who have been besieged and pounded by the cunning lie called violence.

It is you who know what truth is.

Simply because you sought equal

treatment as human beings and reached out to help the oppressed, you have been threatened, endangered and have experienced the loss of employment and even the deaths of loved ones.

What is endurance? It is you who know endurance. You have surpassed the limits of ordinary endurance, persevering in the face of maltreatment, and illuminated society's night with the brilliance of the spirit of nonviolence.

What is freedom? It is you who know freedom. Those who have had their freedom wrested away for crying out against the lack of freedom truly understand the value of freedom. They can understand how tyrants, or a soci-

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ety in which information is controlled by the privileged, can even go so far as forcing people to sing a false song of freedom.

Your 45 years of struggle have inspired courage in minority groups everywhere. You have given courage to indigenous peoples around the world; to women, long the victims of discrimination; to activists opposing environmental pollution; and to those striving for reform in the universities.

You have instilled courage in the promoters of African independence. Your courage has also contributed to the groundswell of efforts for human rights around the world, and you have given courage to us in the SGI.

We of the SGI have advanced thus far with the conviction that "those who are most oppressed must become the happiest." The Buddha Shakyamuni of India tended the ill and the suffering, and he called upon his disciples to do the same. He taught them that to "serve the ill, is to serve the Buddha." The essence of Buddhism lies in working voluntarily to help the suffering.

Nichiren Daishonin, who reawakened in Japan this spirit of Shakyamuni, stated, "All the sufferings of the people are without exception Nichiren's own sufferings," and "The sufferings of all living beings are Nichiren's own sufferings." Humankind is a single living entity. When one individual is wounded, the entire body of humanity is wounded. Humanity itself suffers the pain. So long as there are people in this world who are being treated inhumanely, our own human rights are being violated.

Those who look down on others are destroying the dignity of their own lives. The lack of this understanding gives rise to discrimination, war and poverty. All these problems grow from the same root.

Mathatma Ghandhi said that religion which does not deeply ponder real problems and work to contribute to their solutions is not religion at all. This is our view as well. We also share Dr. King's perspective that religion fundamentally concerns itself with the betterment of society. Religion should involve itself with both heaven and earth; with both the problem of eternity, and the very real concerns of society.

Editor's note: Beginning with this issue of the *World Tribune*, the last issue each month will focus on the SGI's activities for education, culture and peace. Some of our regular series, like "The New Human Revolution," will not appear. We hope that you will find this special issue refreshing and that it will appeal to our growing international readership.



A nine-foot bronze plaque of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' speech is unveiled by Dr. Martin Luther King III (left) and Mrs. Coretta Scott King (center). Pictured next to Mrs. King are Morehouse College President Walter E. Massey, Mrs. Christine King Farris, sister of the late Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Hugh M. Gloster, seventh president of Morehouse College, emeritus (the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at the college was built during his presidency), and Dr. Lawrence E. Carter (far right), dean of the Chapel at Morehouse College.

**‘Love the people! Live splendid lives!
Make your life a beacon that will illuminate
the darkness ahead. Build a guidepost
to mark the way for future generations!’**

We of the SGI know all too well how a popular movement with this religious spirit will experience oppression from those in power who seek to protect the social evils they have a stake in. The Soka Gakkai's first and second presidents were imprisoned for resisting Japan's fascist government during World War II. Supporting this oppression were corrupt priests who betrayed the spirit of Buddhism. Our first president died in prison as a result of such persecution. Our second president emerged from his two-year struggle as a prisoner and initiated a movement to bring spiritual awareness to the people of postwar Japan.

Today, April 2, marks the anniversary of the passing of my mentor, our second president. Like Dr. King, my mentor had a dream. His dream, he stated, was to "rid the world of misery."

Throughout his life, my mentor acted as the greatest ally of the sick and the poor. Amid the bitter divisions of the Cold War, he advocated the ideal of global citizenship and the abolition of nuclear weapons. For 42 years since my mentor's passing, I have dedicated my life to bringing his dream closer to reality.

The esteemed campus of Morehouse College is the place where President Benjamin Mays and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. carved out a noble history together as mentor and disciple.

The ultimate and most glorious of human relationships is the relationship of spiritual successors. Even animals have relationships of parent and child. There are animals that share partnerships similar to marriage, and even those that enjoy friendships. However, the relationship of mentor and disciple, of spiritual successors, exists only among human beings.

With this in mind, I ask that you join me in transmitting a message to our successors, our children:

Have a dream! If you have a dream you will someday ap-

proach that dream! Overcome your obstacles and advance! You have the energy and mission to make the world a better place. When you awaken to this fact, your talents will fully blossom. You will be surprised at how strong you have become.

Let us share this with our children:

Resist and oppose evil. Say an emphatic 'No' to drugs, to violence, and to destructive temptations. Only when you respect and cherish yourselves, will you gain the respect of others. Also, only when you care for yourselves can you care for others.

Children are envoys from the future. To speak with children is to talk with the future. Their problems will be different from those of our generation—they may face problems we can't even begin to imagine. Therefore, let us support them and lend them a helping hand, so that they may stand up and move forward with courage.

And let us tell our children:

To witness evil and yet stand silently by is to be an ally to evil. To fail to do good yields the same result as doing bad. Each time you overlook evil, you

allow another malicious weed to take root. To exclude others is violence. However, to ignore, disregard, or show no interest in challenging wickedness is another form of violence.

And let us share this with our children:

Don't let your spirit rest! Give expression to the empathy and humanity you possess. Act! Break loose from the restraints of laziness and cowardice, and begin something new. Only in action is there growth of the spirit. Only in growth of the spirit does one find happiness. Happiness can never be bought.

Let's convey to our children:

You must never forget!—never forget your predecessors who held high the torch of hope during the long, long night.

Never forget that your parents have struggled for their parents, who struggled and suffered before them; that they have struggled for you, their children, and for their grandchildren.

Let us teach our children:

What would make those who came before you the happiest?

If you were to carry on their struggle, to fight for the happiness of future generations as they have, to care for and serve those who are suffering. When you do so, you will begin to realize why your predecessors were able to hold their heads high and live with pride despite being surrounded by cruelty and lies.

You will then begin to understand why they never gave up on their dreams, no matter how often they were betrayed. You will begin to know why they stood tall and kept marching ahead, despite rocks being thrown and guns being aimed at them. You will realize that they have done so to provide you with a wonderful future!

And lastly, let us tell our children:

Love the people! Live splendid lives! Make your life a beacon that will illuminate the darkness ahead. Build a guidepost to mark the way for future generations!

Pool your energies and abilities to create the world of the 21st century, a world with no murder, a society where no one agonizes on account of being overlooked and neglected! Build a monument of achievement that glows with the light of human fellowship!

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share my thoughts.

April 2, 2000
Daisaku Ikeda
President,
Soka Gakkai International

BUDDHISM IN DAILY LIFE

A series in which Buddhist terms are explained both in historical context and in their relevance to today's world.

Who Is a Buddha?

To many, the image conjured up by the word *Buddha* is of an otherworldly being, calmly remote from the matters of this world. Through meditation he has attained the state of "nirvana," which will enable him to escape this world and its constant sufferings — the fruit of human delusion and desire.

However, this image does not reflect the truth about the life of Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism who lived in India around 2,500 years ago. He was a deeply compassionate man who rejected the extremes of both asceticism and attachment, who was constantly interacting with others and wanted all people to share the truth he had discovered.

The literal meaning of *Buddha* is enlightened one. Enlightenment is a fully awakened state of vast wisdom through which reality in all its complexity can be fully understood

and enjoyed. Any human being who is awakened to the fundamental truth about life can be called a Buddha.

However, many schools of Buddhism have taught that enlightenment is only accessible after an arduous process undertaken over unimaginably long periods of time — over many lifetimes, in fact. In dramatic contrast, what is considered Shakyamuni's last and highest teaching, the Lotus Sutra, explains that Buddhahood is already present in all life. It teaches absolute equality and emphasizes that even within the life of a person apparently dominated by evil, there exists the unpolished jewel of the Buddha nature. No one else gives it to us or judges whether we "deserve" it.

As with gold hidden in a dirty bag, or lotus flowers emerging from a muddy pond, we have first to believe our Buddha nature is there, then awaken and develop or "polish"

it. In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, this can be done through devotion to the law contained in the Lotus Sutra and the chanting of the phrase Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

But Buddhahood is not a static condition or a state in which one can rest complacently. Rather, it is a dynamic experience and a journey of continual development and discovery.

When we continually reinforce the Buddhahood in our lives, we come to be ruled less and less by selfishness (or greed), anger and foolishness — what Buddhism terms the three poisons. As we fuse our lives with the enlightened life of the Buddha, we can tap the potential within us and change ourselves in a fundamental way.

As this inner state of Buddhahood is strengthened, we also develop a fortitude that enables us to ride even the wildest storms. If we are enlightened to

the true, unchanging nature of life, we can joyfully surf the waves of difficulty that wash against us in life, creating something of value out of any situation.

In this way our "true self" blossoms, and we find vast reserves of courage, compassion, wisdom and energy or life force inside us. We find ourselves becoming more active and feeling deep inner freedom. And as we experience a growing sense of oneness with the universe, the isolation and alienation that cause so much suffering evaporate. We lessen our attachment to our smaller egotistical self, to difference, and become aware instead of the interconnectedness of all life. Gradually we find our lives opening up to those of others, desiring their happiness as much as our own.

However, while it is easy to believe that we all possess the lower life-states outlined in Buddhist teachings (Hell,

Hunger, Animality, Anger and so on), believing that we possess Buddhahood is much more difficult. But the struggle to develop and constantly strengthen this state within our lives is well worthwhile.

For, in the words of SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, "[Buddhahood] is the joy of joys. Birth, old age, illness and death are no longer suffering, but part of the joy of living. The light of wisdom illuminates the entire universe, casting back the innate darkness of life. The life-space of the Buddha becomes united and fused with the universe. The self becomes the cosmos, and in a single instant the life-flow stretches out to encompass all that is past and all that is future. In each moment of the present, the eternal life force of the cosmos pours forth as a gigantic fountain of energy."

Courtesy of SGI Quarterly

Persian New Year Celebrated

Photos by EDWARD CLARK



SGI General Director Eiichi Wada, with interpreters Naoko Asada and Ali Rezaei.

Participants take a commemorative photo after their meeting celebrating the Persian New Year, at the Los Angeles Friendship Center, March 22.

By **HALEH MANSOURI**
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.

Norouz, the Persian New Year, is a celebration of the coming of spring, which began officially this year at 11:35 p.m. PST, Sunday, March 19 (in Farsi, *no* means new and *rouz* means day). With the coming of spring, the violet, which is considered "the messenger of spring" in Persian literature, shows off its beauty by appearing near flowing streams. This 3,000- to 4,000-year-old tradition, observed by Iranians across the globe, brings youth and vitality to all.

The Persian Language Group of SGI-USA cele-

brated *Norouz* at the Los Angeles Friendship Center on March 22 with SGI General Director Eiichi Wada in attendance. A spirit of joy and friendship permeated the main prayer room as members and guests enjoyed Persian music, dance, food and traditional costumes worn by some of the participants.

After evening prayer, there was an explanation of *Norouz* in both Farsi and English. This was followed by a belly dance; an explanation of the practice; reading of the "New Year's Goshō"; a traditional Persian dance; words by SGI General Director Wada; and presentation of a gift to Mr. Edward Clark for his support of the Persian-language meetings. Mr. Wada explained

that instead of being overly concerned about deep philosophical and theoretical matters, it is more important to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

"I really enjoyed the meeting and was happy to be a part of it," stated Rosalie Dasko. "I thought everything was really good, especially the Persian dance," said Ned Nelson IV, a fifth grader who attended the meeting with his parents, grandparents and aunt. Mr. Rezaei, who came to the meeting with his wife and son, felt that the meeting was "perfect, very nice. It was very embracing."

For information about the Persian Language Group, please call the SGI Visitor Center at (310) 260-8978.

Developing a New Consciousness

A dialogue between SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima and Lawrence Carter Sr., Dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel and professor of philosophy and religion at Morehouse College in Atlanta, March 14.

Danny Nagashima: Dean Carter, thank you for talking with us. The Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation you are establishing sounds very interesting. What is the Institute's purpose?

Lawrence Carter: The Gandhi Institute will be an information distribution center. I want to have the largest website on Gandhi in the United States. I want to have a living learning center, where students from all over the world will be given the opportunity to participate in seminars, symposium and have exposure to the resident scholars.

I want to try to create some new solutions, some less violent approaches. You see, we have ignored the fact that the diplomatic agencies of the world are perhaps the best examples of institutionalized non-violence. I want to deal with conflict resolution, domestic violence and ecological violence.

Nagashima: Our SGI organization is based on the principle of human revolution, that one person's decision to live a contributive, valuable life can influence a change in society at large. Gandhi is certainly one of humanity's greatest examples of this principle.

Carter: I think that there is a "value revolution" going on. College is the time when most students are trying to decide what values they are going to be claiming as their own. And we are living in a time when the greatest values are claimed to be material values; the values of appearance — the weighable, the seeable and the spatial. There is great confusion about what spiritual values are. Most people talk about ethical principles, but very few have ever seen one and would not know



Photo by YOSHI NAGAOKA

On March 14, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima met with Lawrence Edward Carter Sr., dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, and discussed how the mentor-and-disciple relationship has been integral to the entire history of nonviolence. (Pictured above, l-r) Norman Palmer, a student at Morehouse College; Danny Nagashima; Dean Carter; Anne Ford, Atlanta Region Culture Department leader; Cliff Sawyer, Southern Zone leader; Ian McIlraith, SGI-USA vice general director.

how to write about it. That will be another emphasis for us.

I have a couple of book manuscripts that are unpublished, and one of them is titled *Ethical Options: Virtue and Value Centered Learning in the Tradition of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas K. Gandhi*. Most of our youth don't understand that virtues are character values. They characterize us.

Our religious institutions don't really teach people how to imbibe values. Most students are not aware that values are coherently criticized wants. They don't understand the nature of coherence as a synonym for reason and that we're talking about the need to be consistent. We don't do a good job with helping youth to understand that they should become the things they want to see.

That's Gandhian; that these ideals, when imbibed, consciously have within them all of the germinating power and ethics to help the individual manifest that idea. This goes back to the whole notion of being the truth. Rather than just hearing it or trying to digest it, we should make a conscious decision to be love, to be courage, to be kindness.

Nagashima: Our SGI president, Daisaku Ikeda, has spoken of the need to create a new spirituality among our youth, who are being inadequately

served by government, educational and religious institutions.

Carter: It isn't that youth are not moral or not ethical. I think we all are spiritual beings, planetary citizens and human incarnations, but we are unaware of our spirituality. It needs to be evoked. President Ikeda is right. When students become aware on a deeper level, the new spirituality will emerge.

Nagashima: Morehouse College has been in existence for 133 years and is internationally renowned for building leaders. How has this tradition been established, and what are you doing to preserve it?

Carter: The whole emphasis of Morehouse building leaders rested on the shoulders of a few powerful mentors, the most famous of whom was Benjamin Elijah Mays, who was the college's sixth president and served for 27 years. Every Tuesday morning, he addressed the student body. In those talks, he planted seeds of revolution in the minds of the students, saying that they should be ashamed to die until they'd won some victory for humanity. On the Tuesday after Gandhi's passing, President Mays delivered a tribute to him, reflecting on their dialogue, which is now published. Seated dead center in front of the pulpit on this occa-

sion was Morehouse College senior Martin Luther King Jr.

The biggest concern for President Mays was the elimination of segregation in the United States and ultimately the world — educationally, legally, corporately, socially and culturally. Many outstanding people have graduated from Morehouse College who claimed him as a mentor, the most famous of whom was Dr. King.

But when President Mays' generation passed, it was widely felt that the incubator that produced leaders passed with him. So now that that era has ended and we have changed centuries and also millennia, it is felt that we have to do something new.

This is what has motivated me. We have to do something to institutionalize and re-create the incubator for leadership. We can't do the same thing President Mays did.

What I'm trying to do is begin an approach and a system that others will become attracted to. First of all, I am claiming — not just for Morehouse College, but for Atlanta and the nation — one of the ignored mentors, Gandhi. He's ignored in this country primarily because he's from another world. Asia is another world. Americans can be so disdainful of difference. We think we are almighty and know it all.

When somebody starts to

question all of my excitement about Gandhi, I will quickly remind them of one of my favorite stories about Dr. King. He was asked who should be named Christian of the Century, and he said Gandhi, a Hindu. That immediately shocks most Christians, because you're not suppose to step outside of the tradition.

Nagashima: As dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel, how did you come to found the Institute in Gandhi's name?

Carter: One of the things I'm doing is subtly reintroducing people to whom Dr. King really was, because most people don't know him. They want to baptize him in a kind of traditionalism, when he would have baptized himself in truth. This is where he and Gandhi come together. Gandhi believed that you should worship in those places that take you closer to the truth. It's tradition that's killing us and he went so far as to say that for him God was truth.

It's hard to elevate and revere Dr. King without looking closely at the stereotypes that he shattered. That can be a little painful. He has been anesthetized, sterilized, and he is only quoted in a popular way around the 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech. Most people don't quote him after 1965, when he made his most revolutionary statements and when he and Malcolm X were getting closer together.

I have deliberately called this the Gandhi Institute for Reconciliation. I'm putting the spinach into the ice cream by using the term *reconciliation*. That has been a problem for this nation since the Civil War. We're talking about dialogue across all boundaries and disciplines, learning to bridge differences with integrity. This does not mean that you have to give up that which is yours by inheritance or by birth, but learning how to hold your views with a tentative confidence and open your ears.

Nagashima: Last year, the youth of our organization started a nonviolence campaign called Victory Over Violence, focusing on each person's impact on violence and encourag-

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ing people to make a pledge of nonviolence. I believe that it is through grass-roots efforts such as this that we will change the hearts of Americans.

Carter: We're talking about a kind of harmony here that has not been given a chance, because we have a defense department rather than a peace department. Even our national anthem is violent. Whenever someone suggests that we change it to "America the Beautiful," you get the hawks who want to out-shout the doves.

We have so much to learn from Gandhi and King, who are the two preeminent champions of nonviolence. We're trying to

'Our SGI organization is based on the principle of human revolution, that one person's decision to live a contributive, valuable life can influence a change in society at large.'

— Danny Nagashima

'We have so much to learn from Gandhi and King, who are the two preeminent champions of nonviolence. We're trying to raise a new phoenix from Morehouse College. That's my vision.'

— Lawrence Carter

raise a new phoenix from Morehouse College. That's my vision.

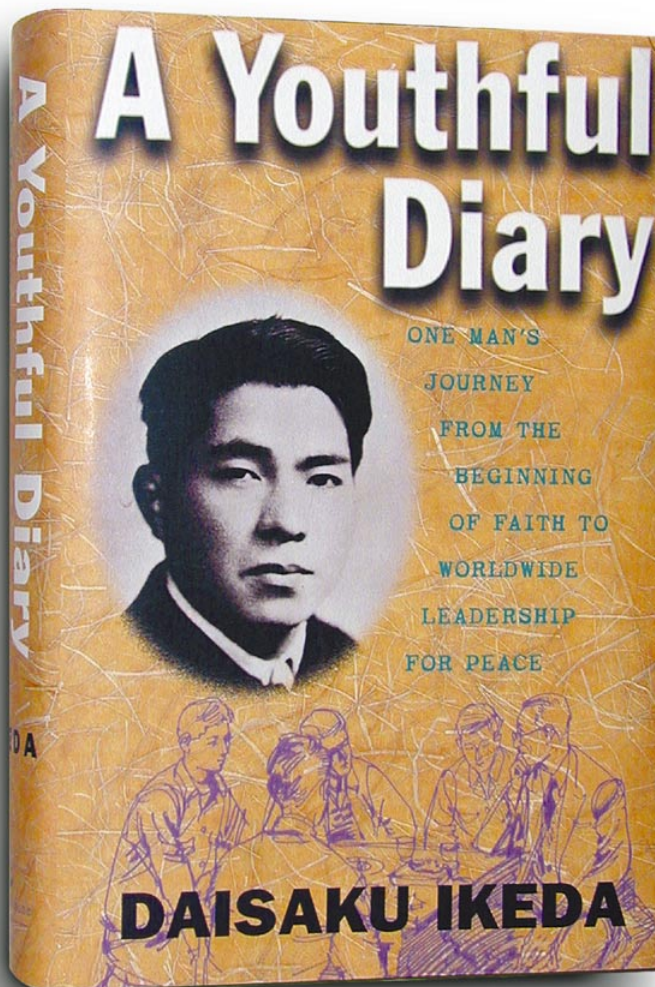
What we're doing on April 2 [the founding of the Gandhi In-

stitute for Reconciliation] is inaugurating a program emphasis around the philosophies of these two men. We are bringing

together Gandhi and King in a very natural way, around the common denominator of nonviolence as a way of life.

I know that when we go deep enough in their theories, we're going to come up in everything else on the planet. We're going to come up in all of the religions, because you're going to come up in truth. In all the scientific disciplines, you're going to come up into a new consciousness. The consciousness of nonviolence is the common denominator that will bring science and religion together. One is anticipated in the other. You can't have change without this new consciousness.

This is why you as Buddhists and I as a Christian, a follower of Jesus can be discovering this common ground. It's because there is one mind and in every person we are longing for the same thing. **W**



Youthful Inspiration for All of Us

Through the tale of the ever-deepening relationship between the young Daisaku Ikeda and his mentor-in-life Josei Toda — *A Youthful Diary* is a compelling account of both triumphs and setbacks on the road to establishing the foundation of today's Soka Gakkai.



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EXPERIENCE — JARMIL MAUPIN, LOS ANGELES

Breaking Down Barriers In South Africa

Jarmil Maupin finds a way to contribute to the development of the new South Africa.

By JARMIL MAUPIN

AS TOLD TO JAMIE LIPTAN, STAFF WRITER

In his 1990 poem to Nelson Mandela titled "Banner of Humanism, Path of Justice," SGI President Daisaku Ikeda writes:

The surging tide of liberty and human rights has begun to flow majestically from the land of South Africa toward the entire world and toward the new century. (November 1990 Seikyo Times, p. 20)

This March, I had the great fortune to be part of an American delegation invited to the 2nd Annual South African Renaissance Festival in Durban, South Africa. This experience has helped me gain a deeper understanding of my unique mission for world peace and greater resolve to work toward it.

Twenty-six years ago, when I was 11, my family began practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in the SGI. My father, Bennie Maupin, a successful jazz musician worldwide, had been introduced to Buddhism in his travels. I joined the Young Men's Division Brass Band and immediately found a new home, a place that inspired hope and vitality for the future. I can still hear the voices of my Brass Band leaders saying: "You can do anything you set your mind to, no matter what. Just stay focused and chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and all your prayers will be answered."

Although I was a classically trained musician, I chose not to play professionally, as I could not see myself following in my father's large footsteps. I needed to find my own gift, and I discovered that it was the gift of hearing—the ability to in-

terpret and blend sounds. This came naturally to me.

Growing up and tagging along with my father to the studio and live performances, I was exposed to the more technical side of the arts. After high school, I attended Devry Institute of Technology, receiving a degree in electronics. That led me to a 15-year career in the aerospace industry.

After about 10 years of hard work to establish myself, I began to feel like my talents were being wasted behind a desk. At the same time, in my SGI activities and through my own projects, I was able to live out my creative

opportunity to work at a higher level and giving me the confidence to succeed. I've also been working for six years in the post-production arena of television and motion picture as a sound designer/sound effects editor for a major post-production facility.

This past January, in my role as technical director for Jazz at Drew, I was asked to travel to Atlanta to support a concert in tribute to the late singer/songwriter Curtis Mayfield and in celebration of the 71st anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s

it became apparent to me for the first time that Roland had strong ties to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the organization founded by Dr. King during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In fact, Roland had been an integral part of Dr. King's organization, serving as a sort of advanced crew for Dr. King's travels around the country.

The scope of this event amazed me. The Impressions—the rhythm and blues group to which Mayfield belonged—performed, and Mayfield's daughter performed a

birth of South Africa in the aftermath of apartheid. I was reminded of SGI President Ikeda's declaration that the 21st century would be the century of Africa, and specifically that South Africa, following the great example of Mandela, would be a shining example for the rest of the world. In light of this, I felt so honored to be a part of this delegation.

I asked my brother, Derrick Ollison, to go with me, in part for his assistance in my duties as technical director for the festival, but also to repay a debt of gratitude. Eleven years ago, it



Jarmil (left) and his brother Derrick pose with a group of Zulu dancers who welcomed the delegation at the airport.

Jarmil with Sbu Ndebele, Minister of Transportation for South Africa.

birth. It was also in conjunction with the first annual African American Renaissance Festival.

dance in tribute to him. There was also a delegation from South Africa that included former President Nelson Mandela

and Derrick who provided the financial backing for me to start my company and has since served as its executive producer. Without his support, I would not have had this tremendous opportunity.

The 24-member delegation included some of the most prominent civil rights leaders in America, most notably Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, and the Reverend James Orange, former trusted lieutenant of Dr. King.

Before I left, I sincerely prayed to the Gohonzon to realize what my true mission was in going to South Africa. I wanted to take full advantage of this incredible opportunity to participate in another culture. As soon as we arrived in South Africa, I had the overwhelming sensation of finally coming home after a long journey. At the time, I couldn't explain this feeling, but it was certainly real.

We were greeted at the air-

life in supporting various events through sound production. I decided to leave the "comfort zone" of my career and completely dedicate myself to sound production.

For the past 11 years, I've operated my own sound production company. I've been able to contribute to many SGI activities through my experience in sound production, including designing several sound systems and training others to use them. I am in my fourth year as the technical director for Jazz at Drew for Drew Medical Center, a medical school in the Los Angeles area. Roland Betts, the executive producer, was immediately impressed by my work ethic and ability to deal effectively with people, and we developed a strong working relationship. Roland became a sort of mentor, providing me the op-

'As soon as we arrived in South Africa, I had the overwhelming sensation of finally coming home after a long journey.'

Roland told me that due to the short notice—six days—and magnitude of this concert, he didn't feel it would come together without my help. He stated that if I were there, he felt everything would come together.

I felt so honored that my mentor saw such great potential in my life and allowed me to exercise it.

Once we arrived in Atlanta,

and Sbu Ndebele, Minister of Transportation.

The concert was a complete success. Afterward, Minister Ndebele invited us, along with the Impressions, to South Africa to participate in the 2nd Annual South African Renaissance Festival in Durban, South Africa. We immediately accepted.

The South African Renaissance Festival celebrates the re-

Photo by DERRICK OLLISON

port by Minister Ndebele, along with a troop of traditional Zulu dancers and South African media. We were then taken to a beautiful dinner reception at Minister Ndebele's home.

The next day was scheduled as a rest day. Well, I got no rest. Our main contact in Durban and producer of the festival, Rakesh Maharaj, took Derrick and me to a beautiful playhouse where we were scheduled to watch a performance the following evening as part of the delegation. While we were looking around at the facility, Rakesh got a phone call from his mixer (the person responsible for running the sound system during the show), who informed him that he had contracted malaria, had to go to the hospital and would be unable to do the show. Later that day, Rakesh sheepishly asked me if I would be willing to mix the show. Without hesitating, I said, "Sure. I just want to get in at least one run-through."

The next morning, Rakesh called me at 7:00 from the hotel lobby and asked if I was ready to go to rehearsal. Until late that evening, we worked with 30 groups of performers with no sense of organization. Fortunately, my brother and I had brought along a set of motorola radios that became an invaluable tool in keeping everyone moving.

In South Africa, even after the fall of apartheid in 1995, there are still three basic classifications of people: South African whites, descended from Dutch and British settlers; Africans, those with the dark skin tone indigenous to southern Africa; and coloreds, or anyone with a skin tone reflecting an Indian heritage or mixed ethnicity. By this definition, I would be considered an African.

Most of the arts facilities, including this playhouse, continue to be run by whites while the labor continues to be done by the coloreds and Africans. It struck me that in America, we really take our opportunities for granted. Here in South Africa, a country whose government now guaranteed the freedom of all people, those in

the minority still held most positions of influence.

An experience that really capsulized this inequity involved one of the engineers at the playhouse who was white. I had asked him several basic questions about the audio system, which he could have easily answered but chose to ignore before leaving, seemingly unable to tolerate the thought of an "African" in a position like technical director. This left my brother and me to test each segment of the system inde-

pendently, just to be able to get it functioning properly. I got a strong sense from the non-whites that they were impressed that an "African" person had the knowledge to accomplish what in their country was always done by whites. In fact, there is only one sound production company in all of South Africa, which is run by those in the minority.

with the staff of the International Convention Center of Durban, which was the facility for the show we had come to support. Again, our main contact, with whom I had corresponded by email, showed surprise at the color of my skin. Noticing his surprise, I asked, "You didn't think I was a black man?"

"No," he said. "I thought by your name that you were French."

I asked him if my being black would change anything. He

replied that it wouldn't, but "we've never had an African—excuse me, Afro-American—running a show of this magnitude in South Africa." "That's interesting. Well then, this will be the first," I said.

He proceeded to test my knowledge and ability. For ex-

ample, I asked if we could hang the speaker system from a cross beam obviously built for just that purpose. He mentioned that they didn't have any winches and he wasn't sure of the cross beam's weight capacity. After pointing out the two winches sitting on the stage and calculating the weight capacity to be three times what we needed, we were finally able to hang the speakers.

Just as before, seeing this type of interaction seemed to give the Africans a sense of em-

powerment, delighted that a person of color could take such bold action. While working together so intensely, our sound crew, comprising whites, coloreds and Africans, became a completely cohesive unit. We were able to totally erase the barrier of race, transcending our differences to accomplish our common goal. This event also went beautifully, entertaining and inspiring 850 dignitaries from around the world.

At each of the following events, the local citizens were taken aback at the sight of an "African" in a highly skilled position. They continually told me how

they could use equipment and knowledge like this and seemed so thirsty for this type of training. This whole experience has shown me that I'm being called upon to reveal peace through sound. I want to go back to South Africa with something to help. It shocked me that the Minister of Transportation or members of the Parliament might make the effort to travel and speak to the citizens but not be heard due to an inadequate sound system or none at all. As President Ikeda says, in any great movement for peace, those behind the scenes must be of the highest caliber.

Even if they had one sound system, they could see dramatic change. If I could train just a few of the Africans that I worked with, they could start something great. In July, I am determined to return to South Africa with a portable sound system and train a few people to use it.

My Buddhist practice has helped me to recognize the importance of breaking down barriers between people and providing opportunities for people to challenge themselves and grow. I am determined to contribute whatever I can to the development of the new South Africa, empowering common people to build a beautiful nation for peace. **WT**

'My Buddhist practice has helped me to recognize the importance of breaking down barriers between people and providing opportunities for people to challenge themselves and grow.'

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I got a strong sense from the non-whites that they were impressed that an "African" person had the knowledge to accomplish what in their country was always done by whites. In fact, there is only one sound production company in all of South Africa, which is run by those in the minority.

Needless to say, the show was great. Everything looked and sounded fabulous. Rakesh expressed his appreciation, saying, "We could have never done this without you." Afterwards, of course, I was drained.

The next day, we had our first meeting

replied that it wouldn't, but "we've never had an African—excuse me, Afro-American—running a show of this magnitude in South Africa." "That's interesting. Well then, this will be the first," I said.

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At each of the following events, the local citizens were taken aback at the sight of an "African" in a highly skilled position. They continually told me how



Photo by DERRICK OLLISON

Jarmil at the mixing board.

**Join the Class
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Calabasas**

Now in its sixth year, Soka University of America's graduate school in Calabasas, Calif., is accepting applications for its master's degree program in second and foreign language education. Individuals seeking admission to the master's program must hold a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree with a minimum grade-point average of 2.7 (B-) on a four-point scale. Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600. Applications for the 2000-01 academic year are due by April 30, 2000. For more information, contact the Graduate Admissions Office at 26800 West Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, CA 91302. Telephone: (818) 878-3717, e-mail: grad_admissions@soka.edu.

The History of the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century



Circle seating encourages dialogue among participants at the spring 1999 conference series, 'From War Culture to Cultures of Peace: Challenges for Civil Society.'

By VIRGINIA STRAUS
BRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, located in Cambridge, Mass., was founded by Daisaku Ikeda in 1993, the SGI president provided a challenge that guides all of our activities. He urged us to do the following: Be the heart of a network of global citizens. Be a bridge for dialogue between civilizations. Be a beacon lighting the way to a century of life. The exhortation, like a chiseled poem, was couched in the language of metaphor, placing emphasis on heart, network, bridge, dialogue and beacon. It underscored for us the importance of fostering peace by first creating our institution as a unique kind of place characterized by a welcoming embrace of multiple points of view.

We've learned that as we create the opportunity for dialogue in an open atmosphere where people are free to share their multiple perspectives and to generate a spirit of trust and friendship, the dialogue tends to move in the direction of revealing truths about our common humanity. The dialogue uncovers what President Ikeda, in his millennial message carried in the Center's latest newsletter, calls an "authentic universality." I can't help but think that these human networks that evolve from genuine dialogue are the most powerful force for peace in a fractured world.

In order to contribute to an evolving consensus on authentically universal ethics, the BRC brings together scholars and activists from different disciplines, schools, walks of life, age groups, ethnic origins and religious traditions to examine and elaborate on common values across cultures and religions. The particular values that we take as focal points are these: 1) nonviolence, 2) human rights, 3) economic justice and 4) environmental ethics.

The BRC has many activities to promote these values. Each year we present Global Citizen Awards to acknowledge and reward global leadership in the areas of peace, education and human rights. By showcasing the work of peace activists like Elise Boulding, Randall Forsberg, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel and Oscar Arias, economists like Hazel Henderson, and educators like Vito Perrone, we help to spread the word that individual action has always been the most important force for change.

In addition, we initiate forums and conferences in support of civil society initiatives like the Earth Charter and the International Year for the Culture of Peace. Of our consultations and publications on the Earth Charter, Professor Winston Langley of the University of Massachusetts-Boston has written, "This type of [sponsorship] becomes part of the effort to develop moral solidarity among human beings." This year we will co-host with the Coalition for a

Strong United Nations (CSUN) a conference commemorating the International Year for the Culture of Peace.

Publications that have evolved from the Center's initial on-site dialogues have been used in classrooms in more than 50 universities. These include this year's text, published in association with Wisdom Publications, *Buddhist Peacework: Creating Cultures of Peace*. The work has been acknowledged as making a substantial contribution for "this volume makes available — for

the first time in one place — first-person statements of the ideas and work of such eminent Buddhist leaders as H.H. the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Maha Ghosananda, A. T. Ariyaratne, Daisaku Ikeda, Shih Cheng-yen, Sulak Sivaraksa and Robert Aiken: a cornucopia of visionary and creative social engagement." Editor David W. Chappell stresses that the dialogue "is not a discussion about external issues, but a sharing of personal experiences that opens awareness to the range of human factors involved in social decisions."

One year ago the Center published *Subverting Hatred: The Challenge of Nonviolence in Religious Traditions*, a collection of essays by representatives of a broad spectrum of religious traditions on what Boston University professor John Berthrong referred to as "defusing the contagion of hatred." The Center also completed its set of publications on the Earth Charter, which includes: *Buddhist Perspectives on the Earth Charter*, *Women's Views on the Earth Charter*, and *Human Rights, Environmental Law, and the Earth Charter*.

At the same time, it introduced an innovative series of dialogues, *Abolishing War: Dialogue with Peace Scholars Elise Boulding and Randall Forsberg*. Saul Mendlovitz, Dag Hammarskjöld Professor at Rutgers Law School, said of the book, "This volume will undoubtedly be useful for courses on conflict resolution and peace and world order studies in

universities throughout the world...the policy community would be well advised to study these materials for they contain significant initiatives which officialdom could begin to undertake to promote the abolition of war."

In his recent message to the BRC, "Creating the Foundation for a Culture of Peace in the New Millennium," President Ikeda alludes to the story of Shrimala, a woman described in Buddhist scripture as a bodhisattva who personifies the reality that "all people, irrespective of gender, occupation, or social status, can reveal the Buddha nature that resides as a treasure in the depths of human life." It is the conviction of the Center's founder, Daisaku Ikeda, that "the lion's roar of women committed to the creation of peace will be key in ushering in a new 'Century of Life.'" In concert with this view, the BRC — following its work on post-Beijing conferences and development of an expanded network of women's leadership groups — is continuing to contribute to the growth of women's leadership through forums, colloquia and informal meetings.

Building on the success of our first "Creating Connections: Women's Leadership Forum" in 1998, we are preparing for a two-part event in the spring of 2000, "Creating Connections: Peace with Self, Sister and Society." This conference will celebrate sisterhood across generations, af-

PLEASE SEE CENTER, 9



The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (from a watercolor by Thomas Rebek).

FROM CENTER, 8



BRC's most recent publications.

firm practices of inner and outer peace, and renew our commitment to social justice.

Finally, the BRC organizes a biannual series on global ethics. Past topics for these conferences have included "Religion and Transnational Civil Society in the 21st Century"; "Religion and Ecology: Forging an Ethic Across Traditions"; and "From War Culture to Cultures of Peace: Challenges for Civil Society." Early in the year 2001, we will gather together a wide spectrum of individuals to delve into the subject of economic justice.

In all of our work, we single out initiatives reflecting a broad humanism that is consistent with Buddhism and we create pro-

grams that help to strengthen the peace movement. We are very grateful to the inspired scholars, activists and other friends and neighbors who have helped, through their participation and support, to make the Center an oasis for dialogue where people are free to express their humanity in all its dimensions.

Visit the Boston Research Center's Website at www.brc21.org for the complete text of our newsletter as well as information about the Center's programs and publications.



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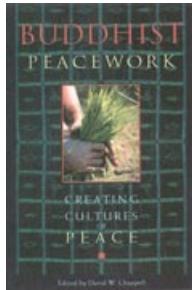
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The *World Tribune* welcomes reader submissions. If you are interested in contributing an article or photograph, please contact us for guidelines. Together we can make a great newspaper.

BRC LAUNCHES NEW BOOK 'Buddhist Peacework' Published



The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC) has launched a new book, *Buddhist Peacework: Creating Cultures of Peace*, edited by Professor David W. Chappell and published by Wisdom Publications, aimed at deepening public awareness and religious understanding of what peace in its fullest sense actually means. Coinciding with the advent of the year 2000 — designated by the United Nations as the International Year for the Culture of Peace — the book

explores the link between inner peace and global harmony and examines Buddhism's development from isolated monasticism to an engaged form of activism for peace.

With 18 chapters, each by one of the world's leading Buddhist practitioners, teachers and social activists, *Buddhist Peacework* covers themes such as rebuilding moral cultures and the correlation between inner peace and outer kindness. Professor Donald K. Swarthmore of Swarthmore College noted at the BRC's book launch at the American Academy of Religion annual meeting that one of the main contributions made by the writers is the practical way that they revive the

Buddhist tradition and apply it to global and everyday concerns. Among the points of emphasis are the importance not only of mindfulness training but also of dialogue and social action. The contributors are at the same time religious spokespersons and world leaders, and several are currently in political exile or struggling to create social equality and justice under the threat of terrorism and arrest.

The book can be ordered from *Wisdom Publications* on their Website at www.wisdompubs.org or in the United States from 800-272-4050.

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Located in Broward County just west of the City of Fort Lauderdale, the SGI-USA Florida Nature and Culture Center preserves and celebrates the unique Everglades environment of South Florida. Since opening in 1996, this Buddhist retreat and international conference facility has become a focal point for lectures, seminars, cultural exchanges, education and exhibits, all designed to stimulate interaction among people and enhance their understanding of our mutual humanity. Visitors come from every continent and from the more than 100 nations where SGI members practice Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism.

The facility also is home for the regular activities of local Soka Gakkai members. Special traveling exhibits and cultural events are held at the Center periodically for the enjoyment of the general public.

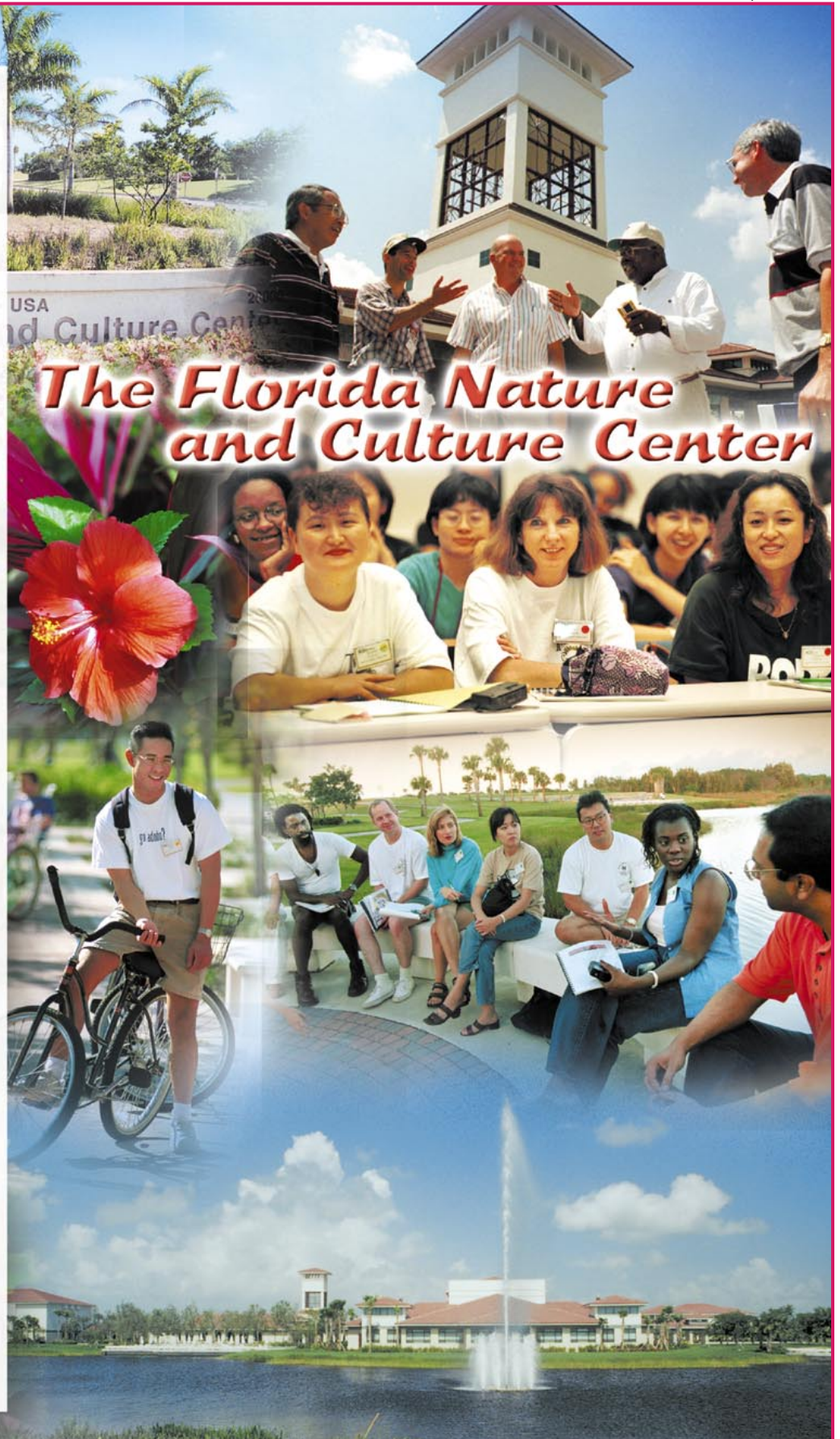
During SGI President Ikeda's visit to Florida in the spring of 1993, he shared his vision of establishing a facility in America where members could gather to refresh their spirit and determination for the further advancement of American kosen-rufu. Florida was selected not only because members from across the United States could gather, but because it is a location where members from the neighboring continents of South and Central America, Europe and Africa could conveniently travel to as well.

Construction of the FNCC was started in autumn of 1994 and completed in the spring two years later. It officially opened on June 19, 1996, upon the arrival of President and Mrs. Ikeda for the 21st SGI General Meeting.

The 12-building, campus-style complex occupies only one-fourth of the site—the main auditorium, the Miami Community Center, a conference center, the dining hall, a gymnasium, four dormitories, a reception hall and a guest house. The balance of the 125-acre tract is devoted to a combination of untouched or restored grasslands, a 20-acre lake and accompanying wetlands. Wildlife, especially Everglades birds, have flocked to the site. Herons, egrets, anhingas and ibises are seen regularly, along with eagles and other "visitors" whose presence helps visitors focus on their own place in the larger environment.

West of Fort Lauderdale and near the community of Weston, the secluded SGI-USA Florida Nature and Culture Center is accessible only from U.S. Highway 27. The Center is one mile east of U.S. 27 on S.W. 36th Street, which is the first street north of the major artery of Griffin Road.

SGI-USA Florida Nature
and Culture Center
20000 S.W. 36th Street
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33332
(954) 349-5000.



The Florida Nature and Culture Center

SGI-USA Publications Win Awards at International Religion Communicators Convention



Three SGI-USA publications received an Award of Excellence from the Religion Communicators Council, an interfaith network of more than 500 religion communicators across North America. The awards were presented at the group's convention held in Chicago March 29–April 1.

The DeRose Hinkhouse Memorial Awards are given

annually to religion communicators who demonstrate excellence in religious communications and public relations. The entries are judged on overall quality, including aspects such as writing, design, style, use of color, appropriateness of material, etc. The awards were in the categories of national newspapers (*World Tribune*) and for graphic design, art and photography

(*Living Buddhism* magazine and the calendar datebook *Dawn of the Century of Life*).

With hundreds of entries submitted annually—450 this year—for these awards, including major national newspapers such as the *Christian Science Monitor* and magazines such as *Christianity Today*, it is significant that the SGI-USA publications were among the 61 awardees

acknowledged for their excellence and a tribute to all the SGI-USA volunteers who contribute regularly to them.

This year's theme, Communicating Religious Freedom in a Diverse World, attracted 1,200 religion communicators from 50 countries.

—NANCY SIMMS,
Los Angeles

Earth Charter Activity Held at the University of Florida

By DIANNE CHARETT,
ANDY BRUCK AND ALONZO DAVIS

SGI members, in tandem with the local Bahai community and members of the United Nations Association (UNA-USA), sponsored a very successful Earth Charter Dialogue Day on the campus of the University of Florida.

This activity was the culmination of almost a year of efforts spearheaded by the diligent efforts of the Jacksonville, Fla., men's division members. Monthly meetings were held to work out plans, find speakers, train facilitators, design and produce the participants' handout, and coordinate location of a facility. This meant traveling regularly to either Jacksonville or the Gainesville area, roughly a 90-mile distance. As we got closer to the event, other members caught our momentum and joined in to help.

The day of the event began with an early morning arrival at the facility to finalize our work with the last of the finishing touches. Some more last-minute flyers were put up. A reception area was set up for welcoming our many guests with nametags and programs. The stage equipment was set up and everything was in place. The chorus rehearsed their part in another area. Everything checked out. Soon it was time.

We organized our activity by leading off with two speakers, followed by a discussion period. After enjoying lunch, two more speakers offered presentations and then another discussion session. The sessions were organized as forums to more specifically examine the Earth Charter's elements and to submit individual ideas for consideration toward its final draft on a form designed just for that purpose. The children who attended were entertained by recycling enthusiast Imani Ayobunmi. The youth members hosted a Victory Over Violence Display, which was visible to all the guests in the lobby. And the chorus entertained us first with Don Besig's "Flying Free" and "Children of the World" by Karl Anthony later in the afternoon.

The two emcees then opened the meeting by welcoming the many SGI members, guests and attendees from the university and local area. "The concerns of the environ-

ment have been represented and expressed by both individuals and groups for a long time now... We hope that the Earth Charter will develop as a set of principles and values agreeable to and supported by society as a whole that will help us sustain human life on this planet."

The speakers were sought and chosen for a wide and balanced array of issues and interests. Reverend Zack Lyde, with his talk on "Threatened People, Threatened Land," challenged listeners to support people suffering from the consequences of toxic waste dumps and to question the legitimacy of prison labor. His organization, Save Our People, Inc., challenged the construction of a five-lane highway in Brunswick, Ga. When the project seemed unstoppable, an environmental assessment revealed very serious health hazards in the area. Dr. Alex Green oversees the university's Clean Combustion Technology Laboratory and is an advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Energy. He described U.S. energy sources and their resulting pollution. He recognized room for a modest but important increase in biomass (wood and plant matter) as an energy source. Mr. Steve Kintner of the Volusia County (Daytona) Environmental Management spoke on balancing the needs of

the environment with those of commercial growth. He offered creative ideas toward regulating the development of wetlands and scrub lands

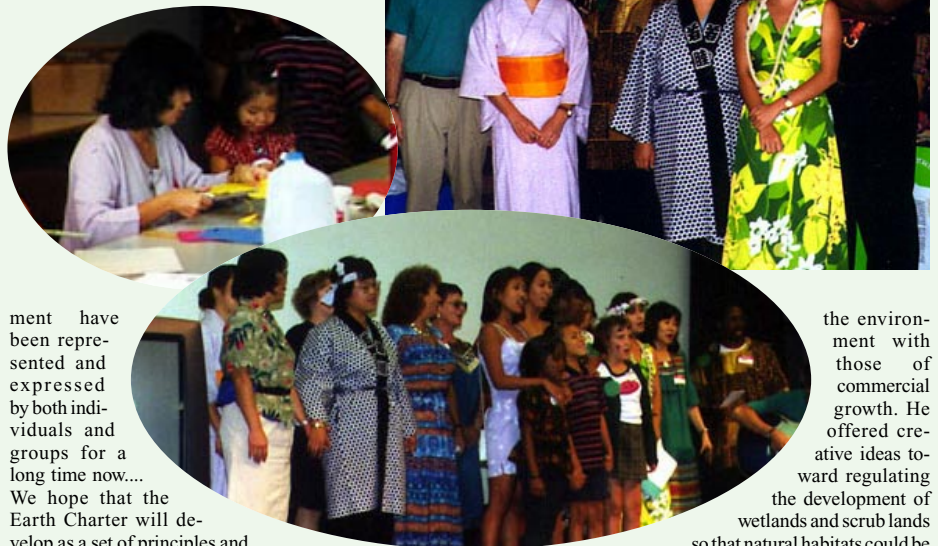
so that natural habitats could be conserved. And Dr. Gary Hankins, vice-

chair of the Badi Environmental Consultation Network, treated listeners to a multimedia presentation on the scientific and spiritual underpinnings of the Earth Charter. Our final speaker discussed the concept of an "ecological footprint" or the amount of land needed to sustain a population.

Our event concluded with a final session in the auditorium where everyone reviewed the day's activities and congratulated all the participants. Among other things, we saw this as a starting point—an opportunity to learn about the Earth Charter and the process to make it reality, the importance of sharing its mission with more people, and how the participants could sponsor similar activities.

The event was separately recognized with official proclamations by both the City of Gainesville and the County of Alachua. It also gained local press coverage on two occasions in the *Gainesville Sun*.

We all went home encouraged and fulfilled! **W**



Photos by ALONZO DAVIS

Luminous Waves of Hong Kong



A view of Victoria Harbor and Hong Kong Island from the Kowloon Peninsula. Under the strait runs a tunnel to downtown.

The sea shimmered and smiled in the sunlight. I was just returning to Hong Kong after having flown from there to Nepal and Singapore. It was January 1995. “The Pearl of the Orient” greeted me with her exquisite smile. Ships from around the world came and went on the waters of Victoria Harbor, which was studded with gems of glistening light.

There is always drama in Hong Kong. The atmosphere is charged with energy, as if something is about to happen — pedestrians in a hurry, brightly colored billboards and neon signs, business people talking loudly on their cellular phones, and shop windows like kaleidoscopes.

Full of life, people walk the streets engaged in clamorous, energized conversation. Restless vigor, sun-like cheerfulness. Honest simplicity. I love Hong Kong, which somehow reminds me of Kansai.

If you go off the busy main street, you see lines of clothes hanging like arrays of international flags from over-crowded apartment buildings. You hear the boisterous sounds of living and smell the food cooking in street vendors’ pots.

The people of Hong Kong are living with all their strength and energy. Merciless competition does not allow them to stand still. With brains, guts, luck and perseverance, everyone is looking for a chance, everyone is struggling desperately with life’s realities.

Hong Kong is not a place for sentimentality — there is no time for it. The whole city is a huge vortex searching for something resplendent. At the center of this vortex is Victoria Harbor. Along the north and south sides of the strait the twin cities of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island prosper.

It was two years before the restoration of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. Reports in the Western media only

served to fan the flames of anxiety over the issue. But I wanted to relieve the people of Hong Kong of their worry. In my own capacity, I had been making efforts to this end from early on. I had spoken with the successive governors of Hong Kong, and also directly conveyed the people’s anxiety to the Chinese leaders. Through these discussions, I became convinced that China would certainly treasure Hong Kong, and so I shared my conviction with the people there. Later China announced its policy of “one country, two systems,” promising not to change Hong Kong’s present social and economic system for 50 years after its restoration to Chinese rule.

Along with China’s promotion of a socialist market economy, its decision to maintain Hong Kong’s current system will constitute a grand experiment for humanity in the first half of the 21st century. If China succeeds, it will give us great hope — hope for transcending the tragedy of a 20th century ridden with war caused by ideological rifts; hope toward realizing a peaceful world, in which people’s differences can complement one another, creating synergy through diversity.

Dr. Arnold Toynbee once remarked, “Perhaps it is China’s destiny now to give political unity and peace not just to half but to all the world” (*Choose Life*, p. 251). Hong Kong is a city that stands on the frontier of human history.

Victoria Harbor is deep; it is calm because the mountains to the north and south block the wind. There is usually little difference between low and high tides, and so the harbor provides an excellent anchorage for ships and makes for easy loading and offloading of cargo. It is a truly fine natural harbor. For this reason, Hong Kong has been much sought after and has endured many vicissitudes of fortune.

The British annexed Hong Kong as a result of the First

Opium War (1839–42). It is said that the harbor was once surrounded with warehouses for storing opium. Years later, there were exchanges of fire across the strait. The Japanese army attacked the British on Hong Kong Island, targeting British oil tanks with their artillery. The British returned the shelling to the Japanese on Kowloon Peninsula, the harbor on both sides turning into a sea of fire. Then, for three years and eight months, Hong Kong had to suffer the nightmare of Japanese occupation.

Yet Hong Kong surmounted each fierce wave of hardship, including harsh economic times. On each occasion, the people fought bravely and won. They stubbornly refused to let anything defeat them.

As a point where East meets West, Hong Kong has hungrily accepted everything from both, be it materials, people, information or technology, and put it to good use. As a result, the island, once a haven only for pirates, has become one of the world’s most thriving ports of international trade. The dilapidated village where boys once rode water buffalo among the banyan trees now enjoys economic power surpassing that of some European nations.

What energy it must have required to overcome the adversity of colonialism and transform an island devoid of natural resources into a forest of skyscrapers! The history of Hong Kong is a testament to the fact that people can turn the impossible into the possible if they work at it seriously.

It is my belief that as long as Hong Kong maintains her optimism and vitality, her tomorrow will be even better and brighter, like this harbor shimmering in the sunlight.