

## **DIALOGUES ON EDUCATION**

### **DR. RICHARD SEAGER PRAISES THE SGI'S VALUE CREATION**

On Oct. 5, 2000, SGI President Ikeda met with Dr. Richard Seager of Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji, Tokyo. Dr. Seager, a noted American scholar of religious history and comparative religion, has spent many years researching modern Western religions and cultural traditions, as well as encounters between the religions of East and West.

Last year, Dr. Seager published the book *Buddhism in America*. One of the chapters in this work, titled "Soka Gakkai and Its Nichiren Humanism," is devoted to a discussion of the SGI. The scholar praises the SGI's efforts to establish new institutions in the United States that are devoted to "progressive and humanistic value creation," citing as examples Soka University of America and the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century. Dr. Seager is presently working on a book analyzing President Ikeda's thought and his activities to develop a global movement for humanism based on Nichiren Dai-shonin's Buddhism.

President Ikeda expressed appreciation to the scholar for his deep understanding of the SGI, and talked about the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents. The SGI leader explained that in establishing the Makiguchi Hall he had been motivated by the desire to pay eternal tribute to the struggles of first Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, who fought Japan's militarist authorities and died in prison for his beliefs.

Mr. Ikeda also introduced how second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda, who had experienced deep grief upon the deaths of his wife and daughter, determined to spread Buddhism to bring people relief from the universal sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death. Mr. Ikeda further related how, upon meeting President Toda at 19, he, too, resolved to dedicate his life to this cause in the conviction that it was the only path to creating genuine lasting peace.