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GLOSSARY

Buddha

“Enlightened One.” One who perceives the true nature of all life and leads others to attain the same enlightenment. The Buddha nature exists in all beings and is characterized by the qualities of wisdom, courage, compassion and life force.

Gohonzon

The fundamental object of devotion in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. It is the enlightened entity of Nichiren Daishonin’s life embodying the fundamental Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Thus representing the Oneness of the Person and the Law.

Kosen-rufu

Literally, it means to widely declare and spread (Buddhism); to secure lasting peace and happiness for all humankind through the propagation of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism.

Lotus Sutra

The highest teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha, it reveals that all people can attain enlightenment and declares that his former teachings should be regarded as preparatory. Reciting excerpts from the Lotus Sutra is part of SGI members’ daily Buddhist practice.

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo

The fundamental law expounded in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, it expresses the true aspect of life. Chanting it allows people to directly tap their enlightened nature. Although the deepest meaning of Nam-myoho-

renge-kyo is revealed only through its practice, the literal meaning is: *Nam* (devotion), the action of practicing Buddhism; *myoho* (Mystic Law), the essential law of the universe and its phenomenal manifestations; *renge* (lotus), the simultaneity of cause and effect; *kyo* (Buddha’s teaching), all phenomena.

Nichiren Daishonin (1222–82)

The founder of the Buddhism upon which the SGI bases its activities. He inscribed the true object of devotion, the Gohonzon, for the observation of one’s mind and established the invocation of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as the universal practice for attaining enlightenment. Daishonin is an honorific title that means great sage.

Shakyamuni

Also known as Siddhartha Gautama. Born in India (present day southern Nepal) about twenty-five hundred years ago, he is the first recorded Buddha and founder of Buddhism. For fifty years, he expounded various sutras (teachings) culminating in the Lotus Sutra, which he declared his ultimate teaching.

Ten Worlds

Hell, Hunger, Animality, Anger, Humanity, Heaven (or Rapture), Learning, Realization, Bodhisattva and Buddhahood. The Ten Worlds are also interpreted as states of life.

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Frequently Cited Sources

For convenience, all citations from the following works will be given in the text and abbreviated as follows after the first listing:

— *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin:* **WND**, followed by the page number.

— *Gosho Zenshu:* (The Collected Writings of Nichiren Daishonin in Japanese) **GZ**, followed by the page number.

— *The Lotus Sutra,* Translated by Burton Watson: **LS**, followed by the chapter and page number.



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Buddhism Lives in the **MENTOR-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP**

Greetings to the readers of *Living Buddhism*! Congratulations on being able to greet this significant May 3, 2001! I am so happy to share this wonderful day with all of you.

May 3 is like New Year's Day for the Soka Gakkai. It is the date every year that as an organization, we renew our determination and refresh our spirit of continuous advancement. This is the first May 3 of the new century, and it is the date we have been aiming toward for many years. We made it! Each one of us has made it!

The reason we commemorate this day is because on May 3, 1951, Josei Toda became the second president, and on May 3, 1960, Daisaku Ikeda became the third president of the Soka Gakkai. Therefore, May 3 expresses the spirit to take responsibility. It is not a holiday to admire our past heroes; it is a day for all of us to express our own spirit to take responsibility where we are.

Also, this spirit means to carry on the work begun by our mentor. When President Toda assumed responsibility in 1951, he did so to fulfill the task he inherited from Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, and when President Ikeda took leadership in 1960, he did so on behalf of all the disciples of Mr. Toda. This is the spirit of May 3 — a day of great determination.

This is the spirit of mentor and disciple. This is a living relationship. Each great leader has himself or herself been an exemplary disciple. In my opinion, the greatest mentors have been dedicated disciples. Buddhism has always flourished and been propagated through the relationship of mentor and disciple.

Although Nichiren Daishonin revealed a totally new practice, he based himself on the words and teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. He lived his life as a disciple.

After Nichiren's passing, it was the actions of his disciple, Nikko Shonin, that laid the foundation for the correct practice and propagation of his teachings. Even in the twentieth century, the successive presidents of the Soka Gakkai who practiced and propagated this philosophy exactly as the Daishonin taught revived the spirit of the Daishonin's Buddhism.

The foundation of the mentor and disciple relationship lies in living with a sense of responsibility. It is to deeply understand the mentor's heart, and to act based upon that understanding. The mentor is the heart, and the disciple is the action. Because of the mentor, the disciple acts.

The converse is also true. We can say that when Buddhism had historically fallen into decline, it had been because the genuine, heartfelt relationship between disciple and mentor had disappeared.

The foundation of the mentor and disciple relationship lies in living with a sense of responsibility. It is to deeply understand the mentor's heart, and to act based upon that understanding. The mentor is the heart, and the disciple is the action. Because of the mentor, the disciple can act.

In President Ikeda's series "The Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra" he takes up the question of why Buddhism declined in India. He concludes that it is because "Shakyamuni the mentor" became "Shakyamuni the deity". When the essential humanity of Shakyamuni became lost, Buddhism fell into decline. He states: "Fundamentally, Buddhism is a teaching about how to live that is transmitted from mentor to disciple. The relationship of mentor and disciple is formed when there are people who desire to follow the correct path in life and who seek a mentor, and when the mentor responds to their spirit. But if the Buddha as the mentor ceases to be a human being and becomes a "god," then, practically speaking, the path of mentor and disciple cannot exist" (*Living Buddhism*, March 1998, p. 29).

This was the cause of the historical decline of Buddhism in India: "When 'Shakyamuni the human being' was forgotten, Buddhism ceased to be a teaching about how to live the best possible life. The path of mentor and disciple disappeared. Consequently, Buddhism declined and became authoritarian" (*Ibid.*, March 1998, p. 30).

This is a principle that Nichiren Daishonin stresses, also. The way of life taught by the Buddha is not simply idealistic. The mentor actually walks this path with the disciple. Even when the mentor is not physically present, the disciple can still walk the

path of the mentor by understanding the vision and the way the mentor lived. It is a living relationship, a life-to-life relationship where one human being responds to another.

Within the SGI, we are disciples who engage ourselves in the real world. Our continued development depends on whether or not we can maintain the living relationship between mentor and disciple. We don't worship or deify our mentor. We seek to live based on the example he is showing us.

May 3 is the day we commemorate the spirit of the successive presidents of the Soka Gakkai to take leadership for the widespread propagation of the Law. It is also the day each one of us can determine to take a personal stand with the same sense of responsibility as the successive presidents of our organization.

On this highly significant day — the first May 3 of the new millennium — allow me to thank you all for your untiring dedication and effort. I congratulate each of you for being able to make this great new departure with our mentor.

Thank you very much!

Daniel K. Nagashima



SGI-USA General Director

Bodhisattva Never Disparaging **ALWAYS Respecting OTHERS** *IN OUR Behavior*

“I would never dare disparage you, for you are all certain to attain Buddhahood!” (The Lotus Sutra, trans. Burton Watson, p. 267).

Imagine the scene: You have made a sincere determination to dedicate yourself to helping others become happy. You recognize your mission to behave as a bodhisattva and you set out to take action toward that end. You approach others and let them know that you respect them and that they are valuable. However, the people don't respond to you the way that you might imagine. They beat and throw stones at you. They call you names and say you are irresponsible for predicting that they will attain Buddhahood.

What would you do?

In light of being physically and verbally abused, we might think that being a bodhisattva requires too much patience and forbearance. Many of us might give up trying to help others or acknowledge their potential for Buddhahood. But this wasn't the spirit of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. Despite the ill treatment he received from the four kinds of believers — monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen — he showed reverence for every person he met and resolved to help them discover their Buddha nature.

“The heart of the Buddha's lifetime of teachings is the Lotus Sutra, and the heart of the practice of the Lotus Sutra is found in the ‘Never Disparaging’ chapter. What does Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's profound respect for people signify? The purpose of the appearance in this world of Shakyamuni Buddha, the lord of teachings, lies in his behavior as a human being” (“The Three Kinds of Treasure,”

The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 851–52).

As practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, we are all trying to polish our lives. As the quote above states, the most essential part of our Buddhist practice — a way to polish our lives — can be found in the twentieth chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren Daishonin explains that although Shakyamuni taught many sutras, the most important is the Lotus Sutra. Moreover, what is taught in “The Bodhisattva Never Disparaging” chapter explains the essence of our Buddhist practice.

Since Kumarajiva's Chinese translation of the passage above consists of twenty-four characters, it is often referred to as “the twenty-four-character Lotus Sutra.” This represents the abbreviated Lotus Sutra. “The Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings” says: “These twenty-four Chinese characters that make up this passage are interchangeable with the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo; [though the wording is different] the meaning is the same. These twenty-four characters represent the ‘abbreviated’ Lotus Sutra” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 764).

In a previous existence, Shakyamuni was Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. He told the story of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging to show that the purpose of his advent lay in his behavior as a human being. We see the exact words with which he showed respect to all. “I have profound reverence for you, I would never dare treat you with disparagement or arrogance. Why? Because you are all practicing the bodhisattva way and are certain to attain Buddhahood” (*Lotus Sutra*, pp. 266–67).

If someone is not treating us right, it is all too easy to give up trying to encourage him and help him create a valuable life. But every human being

has the potential for Buddhahood, however dormant it may seem to our own limited vision. When we recognize this in others — even in people we don't like — a phenomenal thing begins to happen. Others will change and so will we. Although we are working for the happiness of others, a wonderful side effect is that we become even happier ourselves.

The entire teaching of the Lotus Sutra, which expounds the universality of Buddhahood, is crystallized in Never Disparaging's words. He put the teaching into practice.

Showing Respect to Even Those Who Are Hostile

Despite his best efforts to respect everyone with whom he came in contact, Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's contemporaries saw his behavior as strange. He didn't take time to read and recite the scriptures as other monks were doing; he spent his time bowing to people. These four kinds of believers felt contemptuous of what they perceived to be his arrogance and ignorance and treated him cruelly, ridiculing and berating him.

Interestingly, Bodhisattva Never Disparaging was never discouraged by his circumstances. When the malignity began, he would run a safe distance away — not to avoid being injured, but to prevent his attackers from creating more negative causes — and continue calling out his words of homage: "You are certain to attain Buddhahood."

This pattern continued for years. At the time of his death, he had expiated his bad karma through continuous practice and had "the power to preach pleasingly and eloquently, the power of great goodness and tranquility" (LS 20, 268). When the four kinds of believers saw this change in him, they reconsidered their views and gladly became his followers. Because of their poor treatment of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, they were able to form a "reverse relationship" — a relationship that allows one to have a connection with the Lotus Sutra even though that person may have slandered the Law — that allowed them to encounter him again later.

This shows Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's

dauntless spirit and how his efforts of many years came to fruition. He continued to respect all because he had confidence that everyone has the potential for enlightenment. Because he believed in the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and practiced according to his convictions, he attained Buddhahood. It is just as the Daishonin states: "There is a fundamental oneness of self and others. Therefore when Bodhisattva Never Disparaging made his bow of obeisance to the four groups of people, the Buddha nature inherent in the lives of the four groups of arrogant people bowed toward Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. This is the same as how when one bows facing a mirror, the reflected image bows back" (GZ, 769).

Translating What We Believe Into Action

Although the four kinds of arrogant people abused Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, the Buddha nature that existed deep in their lives was respectful of his efforts. His sincere behavior transformed their inner lives without them being aware of it. He was able to translate his beliefs into concrete behavior. His example teaches us that unless we incorporate bodhisattva practices in our lives, we won't create much value. However, this does not mean that we should allow people to abuse us.

How do we apply this knowledge to real-life situations? It is important to understand that Bodhisattva Never Disparaging's behavior is an ideal. We are all persevering and working hard to be our best selves. As we continue practicing, studying and believing in our potential, our Buddha nature will expand. We shouldn't have a poor self-image because we do not see ourselves as Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. Over the long course of our practice, we will achieve our goals. The fact that we exert ourselves in our faith and SGI activities, in spite of our shortcomings, is evidence that we are following the same path of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging. ☸

By Alexis Trass, based on *Yasashii Kyogaku* (Easy Buddhist Study) published by *Seikyo Press* in 1994.

The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin

“Letter to Jakunichi-bo”

(*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 993–94, *Gosho Zenshu*, p. 902)

The following is an excerpt from “Letter to Jakunichi-bo,” the study material for June study meetings in the SGI-USA.

The sutra reads, “As the light of the sun and moon can banish all obscurity and gloom, so this person as he advances through the world can wipe out the darkness of living beings.”¹ Consider carefully what this passage signifies. “This person as he advances through the world” means that the first five hundred years of the Latter Day of the Law will witness the advent of Bodhisattva Superior Practices, who will illuminate the darkness of ignorance and earthly desires with the light of the five characters of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. In accordance with this passage, Nichiren, as this bodhisattva’s envoy, has urged the people of Japan to accept and uphold the Lotus Sutra. His unremitting efforts never slacken, even here on this mountain.

The sutra then goes on to say, “After I have passed into extinction, [one] should accept and uphold this sutra. Such a person assuredly and without doubt will attain the Buddha way.”² Therefore, those who become Nichiren’s disciples and lay believers should realize the profound karmic relationship they share with him and spread the Lotus Sutra as he does. Being known as a votary of the Lotus Sutra is a bitter, yet unavoidable, destiny.

Fan K’uai,³ Chang Liang,⁴ Masakado,⁵ and Sumitomo⁶ never acted cowardly because they cared

so deeply about their honor and abhorred disgrace. But disgrace in this life is nothing. Of far greater concern is the disgrace that appears in the next life. Proceed to the place of practice of the Lotus Sutra, bearing in mind the time when you must face the wardens of hell, and the garment-snatching demoness and the garment-suspending demon will strip off your clothes on the bank of the river of three crossings. The Lotus Sutra is the robe that will keep you from disgrace after this life. The sutra reads, “It is like a robe to one who is naked.”

Believe in the Gohonzon with all your heart, for it is the robe to protect you in the world after death. No wife would ever leave her husband unclothed, nor could any parents fail to feel pity for their child shivering in the cold. Shakyamuni Buddha and the Lotus Sutra are like one’s wife and parents. You have helped me and thereby saved me from disgrace in this life; in return, I will protect you from disgrace in the next. What one has done for another yesterday will be done for oneself today. Blossoms turn into fruit, and brides become mothers-in-law. Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, and be always diligent in your faith.

I cannot thank you enough for your frequent letters. Jakunichi-bo, please convey all these teachings in detail to that believer.

Nichiren

The sixteenth day of the ninth month

Background

This letter was written to a young disciple named Jakunichi-bo Nikke, the son of the lord of Okitsu, Kazusa Province. There is a contemporary of this recipient also named Jakunichi-bo Nikke, but it is a different person, using different Chinese characters that are read the same phonetically. This letter is dated the sixteenth day of the ninth month, with no year indicated, though it is believed to be 1279. Early in the Bun'ei era (1264–75), Jakunichi-bo and his family had become followers of the Daishonin, who was then propagating his teachings in their area. Jakunichi-bo became a priest and later, after the Daishonin's death, he founded Tanjo-ji temple in Kominato to commemorate the place of the Daishonin's birth. Jakunichi-bo remained faithful to Nikko Shonin, the Daishonin's immediate successor, and was never swayed by the erroneous interpretations of the wayward five senior priests who betrayed Nichiren Daishonin and opposed Nikko Shonin. It is also thought that this letter was intended for a female believer who lived in Kazusa Province and was referred to in the closing sentence of this excerpt as "that believer."

The passage at the end reads, "I cannot thank

you enough for your frequent letters." Jakunichi-bo exerted himself in propagation activities in the area where Nichiren Daishonin was born and must have reported and made offerings to him regularly. It is most likely that Jakunichi-bo had a Gohonzon from the Daishonin, who inscribed many at that time for believers of strong faith.

Earlier in this letter, the Daishonin discloses the meaning of his name, Nichiren, implying that it signifies the Buddha who will bring enlightenment to all people in the Latter Day of the Law. (This letter is also known by the title "My Own Enlightenment Regarding the Buddha Vehicle.") He declares that his disciples must also exert themselves to convey the supreme teaching of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo to all humankind. Then the Daishonin explains that the demons who, according to legend, strip one of one's garments at the time of death symbolize death's stripping away all pretensions and superficial attainments, whether wealth, power or knowledge. In conclusion, the Daishonin encourages Jakunichi-bo, pledging to protect him in the next life since the latter protected the Daishonin in this life. Thus the Daishonin suggests the profound and timeless nature of the teacher-disciple relationship.

Commentary

In an earlier portion this letter, Nichiren Daishonin states that it is extremely rare to be born as a human being. Appreciation to have been born in human form is the foundation of Buddhist humanism. There are several million plant and animal species on the earth today. In view of the myriad forms of existences, human beings are a most wondrous occurrence. Beyond that, to encounter the Buddha with the correct teaching is rarer still. Buddhism describes human beings as "the correct vessel for the sacred path."

Figuratively speaking, the Daishonin states that we must have "offered alms to a hundred thousand million Buddhas" in our past existences to have been born human and encounter Nam-myoho-renge-kyo in this lifetime. When the going is difficult and we tend to begrudge our lives, it is important to remember that we have exerted great effort and accumulated tremendous good fortune to be in our present circumstances. We are living at the time of worldwide propagation of the Law. We should not just take this as good fortune, but as a sign of our mission to accomplish kosen-rufu.

In accordance with this passage, Nichiren, as this bodhisattva's envoy, has urged the people of Japan to accept and uphold the Lotus Sutra. His unremitting efforts never slacken, even here on this mountain.

The Daishonin modestly refers to himself as “this bodhisattva’s envoy,” but revealing the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and propagating it in the Latter Day of the Law is itself the mission of Bodhisattva Superior Practices, the leader of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth as revealed in the Lotus Sutra. These are the actions of one who “will illuminate the darkness of ignorance and earthly desires” with the light of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

In the fifteenth chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni preaches to numerous bodhisattvas who pledge to propagate the Lotus Sutra after his death. But in a dramatic turn of events, he tells them:

“Leave off good men! There is no need for you to protect this sutra. Why? Because in this saha world of mine there are bodhisattvas and mahasattvas who are as numerous as the sands of sixty thousand Ganges.... After I have entered into extinction, these persons will be able to protect, read, recite and widely preach this sutra” (LS15, 212–13).

At that moment, the earth trembles and uncountable, radiant bodhisattvas emerge from the earth looking unlike anything the assembly had ever seen. “Among these bodhisattvas were four leaders. The first was called Superior Practices. . . .” (LS15, 214). These multitudes, led by Superior Practices, carry the mission to propagate the Law in the defiled future age, the Latter Day of the Law. The figure of Bodhisattva Superior Practices is Nichiren Daishonin and the Bodhisattvas of the Earth are his followers who accomplish kosen-rufu, the members of the SGI.

In the part of “Letter to Jakunichi-bo” just before the excerpt on page seven, the Daishonin states, “My giving myself the name Nichiren (Sun Lotus) derives from my own enlightenment regarding the Buddha vehicle.” This identifies him as the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law, who attained enlightenment by himself. He also states that from among the multitude of bodhisattvas who pledged to propagate the Lotus



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Bodhisattva Superior Practices will illuminate the darkness of ignorance and earthly desires with the light of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

Sutra, withstanding all the persecutions foretold in the sutra (LS13, 193–95), only he had fulfilled that pledge.

The significance of taking the name Nichiren is that while the lotus blooms in a muddy swamp, the lotus flower remains pure. Nichiren Daishonin, as the original Buddha, lived in this world filled with earthly desires and suffering, and yet was not swayed by them. His life was like a beacon, a sun, lighting the path to enlightenment for others.

Therefore, those who become Nichiren’s disciples and lay believers should realize the profound karmic relationship they share with him and spread the Lotus Sutra as he does. Being known as a votary of the Lotus Sutra is a bitter, yet unavoidable, destiny.

As practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism we are Bodhisattvas of the Earth who bear the mission to propagate the Law. This is not a matter of chance, but a result of causes made in the past. It is our “profound karmic relationship” that we share with him to spread Nam-myoho-renge-kyo as he did. In “The True Aspect of All Phenomena,” he states, “If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth” (WND, 385). Today,

whose actions and accomplishments prove they “are of the same mind as Nichiren?” It is, without doubt, the members of the SGI who are striving to accomplish *kosen-rufu*. Devoting our lives to the same noble cause as Nichiren Daishonin is the meaning of the mentor–disciple relationship.

In “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra,” SGI President Ikeda explains the meaning of *bodhisattva*:

“Though we speak of them as *bodhisattvas*, they are in fact Buddhas.

“*Bodhisattva* is not a stage of completion (the effect of Buddhahood), but of incompleteness (the cause of Buddhahood). *Bodhisattvas*, while incomplete, cause their lives to overflow with the state of completion (the effect of Buddhahood)” (*Living Buddhism*, October 1997, p. 47).

From the viewpoint of the mentor–disciple relationship, a *bodhisattva* (cause) is the disciple and the Buddha (effect) is the mentor. The fact that cause and effect are, in essence, simultaneous provides the basis for the view of the oneness or equality of mentor and disciple. This clarifies the misunderstanding that the mentor or Buddha is superior to others. This gives us an accurate understanding of the distinction between Nichiren Daishonin and ourselves. He is not different or better than us in the sense that his life is qualitatively superior to ours. His greatness lies in his ability to manifest his enlightenment on his own.

Our “bitter yet unavoidable destiny” as votaries of the Lotus Sutra should not be viewed as a fatalistic statement. Through our Buddhist practice we can absolutely change our destiny for the better. People tend to believe that happiness is the absence of problems. But this view leads us to define happiness as some kind of heavenly or paradisiacal concept. Buddhism does not teach freedom from problems, but freedom from the suffering that accompanies problems. We overcome suffering and feel joy in the midst of our struggles. It gives us the inner resources, the power and wisdom to be victorious over any difficulties.

We are responsible to change our karma. It is an unavoidable responsibility that requires patience, self-discipline and strong faith. The Daishonin wants us to realize that Buddhism is not some kind of escape from the realities of living. It is a philosophy of

how to live most meaningfully and happily to the fullest of our potential.

The Daishonin chose to fulfill his mission in spite of the persecutions and difficulties it entailed. His full understanding of the alternatives made his choice “unavoidable.” To observers, it may have seemed “bitter” but he was not bitter at all about his destiny. In the midst of his most severe circumstances while in exile on Sado Island he writes in “The True Aspect of All Phenomena”:

“I cannot hold back my tears when I think of the great persecution confronting me now, or when I think of the joy of attaining Buddhahood in the future. Birds and crickets cry, but never shed tears. I, Nichiren, do not cry, but my tears flow ceaselessly. I shed my tears not for worldly affairs but solely for the sake of the Lotus Sutra” (WND, 386).

We also are votaries of the Lotus Sutra and although we face many difficulties, we should view them as proof of our mission and a source of nourishment and energy to strengthen our faith. In “Earthly Desires Are Enlightenment,” the Daishonin expresses his own attitude: “I do not regret meeting with such great persecutions as the votary of the Lotus Sutra. However many times I were to repeat the cycle of birth and death, no life could be as fortunate as this” (WND, 317).

Fan K’uai, Chang Liang, Masakado, and Sumitomo never acted cowardly because they cared so deeply about their honor and abhorred disgrace. But disgrace in this life is nothing. Of far greater concern is the disgrace that appears in the next life. Proceed to the place of practice of the Lotus Sutra, bearing in mind the time when you must face the wardens of hell, and the garment-snatching demoness and the garment-suspending demon will strip off your clothes on the bank of the river of three crossings.

“The river of three crossings” is a mythical river that one is said to cross after his or her death. How one crosses depends on the amount of good and evil karma accumulated in life. Those with mostly good karma

cross by a bridge adorned with seven kinds of precious jewels. Those with an even karmic balance of good and evil cross at a ford. Those with a negative balance must swim through water infested with terrible serpents.

On the far bank, male and female demons wait under a large tree. The female demon strips the dead of their clothes and the male demon hangs them on a tree. The severity of one's offenses is determined by how much the branch bends under the weight of the clothes.

The river of three crossings is not an orthodox Buddhist concept and its specific origin is unknown. It appeared in India around the tenth century and entered into Japanese folklore in the eleventh. The idea of such a river or rivers that the dead must cross exists also in Greek and Zoroastrian traditions.

In this particular story, the clothes taken by the demons represent worldly attachments. As the saying goes, "You can't take it with you." In a world that emphasizes fame, success and material goods, the Daishonin is turning our focus to matters of eternal importance. Just what can we take with us when we die? What should we value most in this life? It is not what other people think of us in this life. To be admired for the trappings of wealth and social standing will not serve us at all after death.

He cites the names of people whose behavior was dictated by their fear of being disgraced in the eyes of others. "Of far greater concern is the disgrace that appears in the next life," he says. At the moment of



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"The river of three crossings" is a mythical river that one is said to cross after his or her death. How one crosses depends on the amount of good and evil karma accumulated in life.

death, our faith—our life-condition—will be the only determining factor in how we experience death and rebirth. Once we are stripped of the garments of pretense and superficial attainments, what will clothe and protect us? Nichiren Daishonin assures us, "The Lotus Sutra is the robe that will keep you from disgrace after this life. The sutra reads, 'It is like a robe to one who is naked.'"

If we attain Buddhahood in this life, it is a matter of course that we will continue in Buddhahood after death. In the letter "Hell is the Land of Tranquil Light," the Daishonin writes to a widow, "When he was alive, he was a Buddha in life, and now he is a Buddha in death. He is a Buddha in both life and death" (WND, 456). In "Letter to Jakunicho-bo," he writes, "Believe in the Gohonzon with all your heart, for it is the robe to protect you in the world after death."

Using familiar examples, he shows us how natural it is that we will be comforted and protected by our faith in the Gohonzon. "You have helped me and

thereby saved me from disgrace in this life; in return, I will protect you from disgrace in the next” again emphasizes that the mentor–disciple relationship transcends a single lifetime — it is a profound karmic relationship. He ends with the admonition to not be lax in our faith. ❁

By SGI-USA Study Department

1. Lotus Sutra, chapter 21.
2. Ibid.

3. Fan K’uai (d. 189 B.C.E.) A military leader and strategist who assisted Emperor Kao-tsu in unifying China and establishing the Former Han dynasty. Fan K’uai is known for his courage and loyalty.
4. Chang Liang (d. 168 B.C.E.) A statesman and strategist who assisted Liu Pang, or Emperor Kao-tsu, in the overthrow of the Ch’in and the establishment of the Former Han dynasty of China.
5. Masakado (d. 940) Taira no Masakado, a distinguished warrior of the Taira clan who exercised great power in eastern Japan. He attacked government offices in Kanto and adopted the title of “New Emperor.” Soon thereafter, however, his forces were routed, and he was killed by his cousin, Taira no Sadamori, with the support of Fujiwara no Hidesato.
6. Sumitomo (d. 941) Fujiwara no Sumitomo, a military commander of the Fujiwara clan who subdued a gang of pirates in 936. However, he later became a pirate chief himself and rebelled against the government. He was finally defeated and killed in 941.

NICHIREN DAISHONIN’S IDENTITY AS THE “Supreme Votary of the Lotus Sutra”

In “Letter to Jakunichi-bo,” Nichiren Daishonin identifies himself as “the supreme votary of the Lotus Sutra” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 993). A votary is a person who has made a vow to fulfill a religious practice — in this case, to propagate and practice the Lotus Sutra. Identifying himself in this way was important because it directly led to how he lived his life. Our self-image influences our action. Depending on his relationships within society, the Daishonin, as we all do, assumed different identities — a man, a subject of the shogunate government, a priest, a teacher, a son and so on. Throughout his writings, however, he sees himself primarily as a votary of the Lotus Sutra.

If we examine the Daishonin’s image of a votary of the Lotus Sutra, it can provide a guide on how to practice the Daishonin’s Buddhism, as well as how we view ourselves.

The Daishonin views a votary of the Lotus Sutra as someone who fulfills the Buddha’s prophesy, that is, the widespread propagation of the Lotus Sutra. In the form of a pledge by Shakyamuni’s disciples, the Lotus Sutra foretells the spread of its teachings: “After the Buddha has passed into extinction, / in an age of fear and evil / we will preach far and wide” (LS13, 193). In the sutra, Shakyamuni also instructs the bodhisattva Constellation King Flower: “After I have passed into extinction, in the last five hundred year period you must spread it abroad widely

throughout Jambudvipa [the world] and never allow it to be cut off” (LS 23, 288).

The Daishonin rhetorically asks in “The Opening of the Eyes II,” “Who, then, in this present age will be the votary of the Lotus Sutra and fulfill the prophecy of the Buddha?” (WND, 278). The foremost qualification of a votary of the sutra is his or her devotion to the spread the Law contained in the Lotus Sutra — Nam-myoho-rence-kyo. The Daishonin revealed what has existed eternally so his identity as a votary of the sutra transcends the Lotus Sutra taught at a specific time and place by Shakyamuni Buddha. His unique mission was to make the Law contained in the sutra available to all people.

The Daishonin sees a votary of the Lotus Sutra as someone who actualizes the sutra’s ideals of the sanctity, equality and freedom of all lives. Furthermore, the Daishonin explains that votaries of the sutra undergo various difficulties on account of their efforts to spread the sutra’s teachings. He states, “If there exists a votary of the Lotus Sutra, then the three types of enemies are bound to exist as well” (WND, 278). Here “the three types of enemies” refer to verbal and physical abuses from lay people ignorant of the sutra, attacks by arrogant priests and finally government persecutions incited by religious authorities (LS13, 193–95).

The Daishonin explains that since the votaries of the sutra uphold and spread the sutra’s ideals, which are alien to many and threatening to those in power,

they are bound to experience those difficulties. He describes his reaction when he hears of imminent persecutions in “The Actions of the Votary of the Lotus Sutra,” “Hearing this, I rejoiced, saying that I had long expected it to come to this” (WND, 764). Because he saw himself as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, his difficulties — even a failed execution attempt and exile to a remote island — became a source of joy and pride. The Daishonin’s self-awareness and action as a votary of the Lotus Sutra enabled him to attain Buddhahood.

The Daishonin’s life is also an example for his disciples to follow. The Daishonin in fact teaches that those who share his desire for the sutra’s widespread propagation and act in the same way he does are also votaries of the Lotus Sutra. He explains: “Now, no matter what, strive in faith and be known as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, and remain my disciple for the rest of your life. If you are of the same mind as Nichiren, you must be a Bodhisattva of the Earth” (WND, 385). Here the Daishonin views faith as one’s confidence in his or her identity as a votary of the Lotus Sutra. He also equates a votary of the Lotus Sutra with a Bodhisattva of the Earth.

It is interesting to note that the four leaders of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth that appear in the Lotus Sutra are symbolic of Buddhist practice. They are Bodhisattvas Superior Practices, Boundless Practices, Pure Practices and Firmly Established Practices. A votary, in other words, is a person of practice, of action. According to the Daishonin, those four bodhisattvas also respectively represent the four virtues of a Buddha: true self, eternity, purity and happiness. Put another way, a votary of the Lotus Sutra is a Buddha in action.

Although the Daishonin often emphasizes the fearless practice of a votary of the Lotus Sutra in the midst of difficulties, we must not overlook his or her warm humanistic side, as the Daishonin demonstrates in “Letter to the Lay Nun of Ko.” In this letter, the Daishonin writes to an elderly woman who would



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“As the light of the sun and moon can banish all obscurity and gloom, so this person as he advances through the world can wipe out the darkness of living beings.”

probably never see her dear teacher again: “If you find that you miss me, always look at the sun that rises [in the morning] and the moon that rises in the evening. Whatever the time, I will be reflected in the sun and the moon. And in our next life, let us meet in the pure land of Eagle Peak” (WND, 596). The Daishonin teaches us that neither distance nor time presents an obstacle in the realm of faith. He reassures us that the bond between mentor and disciple in Buddhism transcends time and space. Through the care and concern he extends to his disciples, the Daishonin demonstrates that being a votary of the Lotus Sutra is to be someone who appreciates human relationships, someone who understands the hearts of others. Compassion is the spiritual foundation for a votary of the Lotus Sutra.

We fulfill many roles in our lives — husband, wife, student, employee, friend, etc. — including practitioner of Buddhism. But which self-image is our fundamental identity? Which will lead us to Buddhahood? Since how we view ourselves affects how we behave, our self-image can determine the quality of our lives. The Daishonin’s life, based on his confident self-awareness as a votary of the Lotus Sutra, guides us in our search for our own fundamental identity. ❁

By SGI-USA Study Department



Dedication of a Dream: SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, ALISO VIEJO

The long-awaited opening of SUA, Aliso Viejo has finally arrived. The 103-acre, fourteen-building campus is just about complete and the dedication events are scheduled for May 2–5. Living Buddhism is proud to feature Founder’s Hall of SUA, Aliso Viejo as our May cover in commemoration of this historic event.

A Brief History of Soka Education

“What our world most requires now is the kind of education that fosters love for humankind, that develops character — that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace and empowers learners to contribute to and improve society.”

*Daisaku Ikeda
Founder, Soka University of America
Rajiv Gandhi Foundation lecture
New Delhi, India, October 21, 1997*

Helping students learn how to create value in their lives, their communities and the world is a central tenet of the Soka schools founded by Daisaku Ikeda, an educator and the current president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI). The Soka schools, which range from kindergartens to the 8,800-student Soka University of Japan, have established a tradition of humanistic learning and scholarship where the focus is on each student’s growth and development. *Soka* means “to create value.”

Soka education has its origins in the work of

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, a Japanese educator and Buddhist leader. During World War II, Makiguchi was arrested by Japanese military authorities for his opposition to the war and for his defense of religious freedom. He died in prison in 1944.

The small education society that Makiguchi founded in 1930 has since grown to become one of the world’s largest lay Buddhist organizations. Today, members of the SGI work for education, cultural exchange and peace in 163 countries and territories.

In 1987, President Ikeda founded Soka University of America (SUA) as an independent not-for-profit organization with its first campus in Calabasas, California. SUA, Calabasas currently offers a graduate program specializing in Second and Foreign Language Education.

In 1995, SUA acquired a 103-acre site in Aliso Viejo for a private non-profit four-year liberal arts college that will accept its first freshman class in August 2001.

Mission

“The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.”



Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo is a selective, independent, non-profit, co-educational, comprehensive institution of higher learning. The university offers a comparative study of Eastern and Western perspectives integrated across a traditional liberal arts curriculum. SUA seeks both national and international students. Founded on the Buddhist principles of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life, SUA is open to students of all beliefs and is committed to diversity in its academic community. Soka University, Aliso Viejo will open this fall 2001 to its first 120 freshmen students. Ultimately, the university plans to serve 1,200 residential, undergraduate students. The student-faculty ratio will be 9 to 1 (5 to 1 the first year).

Other programs, including educational access for adult students and graduate programs, through the doctorate, are planned for the future.

SUA is founded on the belief that student-centered education is the best way to promote peace and human rights by fostering a global humanistic perspective on the world in which we live. The university prepares students for graduate studies and the world of work in an increasingly diverse and global society.

The initial degree offered is a B.A. in Liberal Arts, with concentrations in Humanities, International Studies, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Degree offerings and concentrations will increase in number and range consistent with enrollment increases and student interests. In addition to a well-rounded general education program, SUA offers classes in fine and performing arts, science, communications and other areas.

The uniqueness of the SUA approach lies in the comparative teaching of international perspectives, the Core Curriculum and Learning Clusters, and an emphasis on language, art and culture.

The Core Curriculum is a series of four sequential courses taken by all students, focusing on central issues facing our world in the twenty-first century.

These courses examine comparative perspectives in areas including views of the self, the relationship between self and the physical environment, the relationship between self and society, and global issues involving peace, culture and education.

The Learning Clusters are courses in which small interdisciplinary teams of students and faculty work together to do research and develop proposals and solutions addressing local, regional and world issues. Acquiring the critical tools of investigation and analysis is integral to the Learning Cluster experience, as well as the integration of knowledge and service.

All SUA students concentrate on a foreign language and culture. All students participate in an internship/study abroad relevant to their language and field of study.

Classrooms are centers of dialogue and discussion, emphasizing seminar course settings. Students work in small teams in the classroom and with faculty on research projects, as well as with peers in residence hall learning activities. Advanced computing and telecommunication capabilities are widely available in all buildings and outside gathering areas, supporting a laptop computer campus. Information technology facilitates student-faculty and student-student interactions.

The university's research institutes contribute to the uniqueness of the learning environment by providing undergraduates with the opportunity to interact with faculty and visiting scholars on a range of vital issues. The institutes, including the Pacific Basin Research Center, a policy institute founded in 1991, bring together individuals and organizations whose work relates to the institutes' thematic issues.

For more information, please visit SUA, AV's Web site: www.soka.edu or write: Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, 1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo, California 92656. The main toll-free number for Admission and Financial Aid information is: (888) 600-SOKA. ☸



Seikyo Press

President Ikeda with Dr. Linus Pauling on the campus of Soka University in Calabasas, California. The book of their discussions is published as *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*.

Since 1983, when the United Nations accredited the Soka Gakkai International as a nongovernmental organization (NGO), SGI President Ikeda has been issuing an annual peace proposal on January 26, SGI Day. Each year the proposal is sent to a wide range of groups and individuals in the international community.

BY DAISAKU IKEDA
PRESIDENT, SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL

January 26, 2001

Creating and Sustaining a Century of Life:

CHALLENGES FOR A NEW ERA

We have at last entered a new century. It is natural at such a time that there should be large measures of both hope and anxiety. Compared with the intellectual currents in vogue at the start of the twentieth century, what is starkly lacking today is the sense of optimism that was present then. Naturally there are great expectations regarding advances in science and technology — particularly in fields such as information and biotechnology — but there is also great foreboding, especially in Japan, about the political and economic fronts.

So what will the new century bring?

I think that many people today harbor a profound sense of disillusionment that makes them question whether the twentieth century was really a period of advancement for humankind. This is because, while the remarkable progress of science and technology brought with it many blessings, the

ceaseless occurrence of war and the unprecedented horrors of the age have cast an indelible shadow over people’s hearts.

How can we dispel this dark shadow? What should be the core values on which to base human endeavors in the twenty-first century?

When I ponder these questions, I am reminded of my discussions with Linus Pauling, hailed as the father of modern chemistry.

In our discussions, later published in book form, I shared my long-standing belief that we must make the twenty-first century a “century of life.” Dr. Pauling extended his full support to this concept, which he described as “a century in which greater attention will be paid to human beings and their happiness and health” (p. 45).

Born in 1901, Dr. Pauling’s life spanned the whole of the turbulent twentieth century. As a scientist and a peace activist, he never, right up until his death at age ninety-three, ceased to interrogate

human and social realities. For this reason, perhaps, I sensed a unique weight in his words.

Our decision to title the Japanese edition of our dialogue “In Quest of a Century of Life” was likewise spurred by the conviction that unless humanity grapples with the fundamental questions of life and death, we will not be able to identify the challenges we must overcome or the direction in which to advance.

How will history judge the twentieth century?

Eric Hobsbawm’s important work *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* is in this sense filled with valuable insights. The introductory chapter of the book, “The Century: A Bird’s Eye View,” comprises the analyses of twelve thinkers of global standing. Reading this, one is struck by the consistency with which these views convey a sense of pained anguish.

René Dumont (agronomist, ecologist, France): “I see it only as a century of massacres and wars.”

William Golding (Nobel laureate, writer, Britain): “I can’t help thinking that this has been the most violent century in human history.” (p. 1)

Hobsbawm then asks: “Why, as the epigraphs to this chapter show, did so many reflective minds look

back upon [the twentieth century] without satisfaction, and certainly without confidence in the future?” His answer is as follows: “Not only because it was without doubt the most murderous century of which we have record, both by the scale, frequency and length of the warfare which filled it, . . . but also by the unparalleled scale of the human catastrophes it produced, from the greatest famines in history to systematic genocide” (p. 13).

Material Progress, Spiritual Regression

It may not be entirely fair to focus exclusively on the darker sides of recent history. There are certainly aspects of the twentieth century that deserve to be recognized as genuine progress and advancement.

First and foremost, perhaps, is the fact that overt imperialism and colonialism are no longer acceptable. Likewise, the United Nations has, despite its many failings, continued to function as a global political organization for the past half-century, far longer than its short-lived predecessor, the League of Nations.

Key Points in SGI President’s Peace Proposal

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A careful examination of the list of advances and progress made in the twentieth century will reveal that these were virtually all material and physical. With regard to the inner realm of the human spirit, it seems undeniable that the era was marked by regression rather than advance. Humanity’s spiritual life seems to have followed a one-way path of shrinkage and atrophy, to have become trapped in what Buddhism refers to as the “lesser self”—a state of isolation that results when the ties among people and between people and the cosmos are severed.

Buddhism regards life in its most profound

sense not as something that is simply conferred upon us without effort, but as a luminous and fertile realm that can be entered and experienced fully only through the most strenuous spiritual effort.

FAMILY

Parent–child relations, and family ties in general, differ from other human relations in that they are essentially not of our choosing. They should be recognized as something that issues from the depths of our being, and as such they represent the most real and vital connections.

I believe that the crises of life, heart, spirit, and family all spring from this same source. And it is for this reason above all that I feel compelled to make reverence for life the driving spirit of the coming era.

By sounding the deepest realms of life—the vast, vital network of interaction and interdepend-



Seikyo Press

Dialogues with British historian Arnold J. Toynbee and SGI President Ikeda, beginning in May 1972 in London, led to the publication of the book *Choose Life*.

There are far fewer people who openly question democratic values. And while there is still a long way to go, the advances made by women, their emergence in all realms of society over the course of the past century, have been truly remarkable. While science and technology have produced a distinctly mixed record, on the positive side must be counted material affluence (however grossly maldistributed) as well as progress in the fields of transport, communications, medical treatment and hygiene. These are

ence—we can reawaken and restore the bonds that have become so tenuous.

LIFE

We encounter the deepest realms of life, of dependent origination, when we succeed in breaking through all artificial constructs, including the snares of language. Dependent origination describes the degree to which each individual existence is linked and connected with all others.

Only a person who maintains the constant effort to strengthen his or her mind, who maintains a taut and awakened consciousness, who soars in uninterrupted flight—only such a person will be able to touch the lodestone of genuine reality. This is the ideal of self-mastery that Shakyamuni expounded without cease. In contrast, a person whose mind is lax, whose attitude is passive, whose purpose is lost, will be consumed

all contributions whose importance I think no one would deny. And if we look at the degree to which humanity as a whole has access to human rights, there is a vast difference between the legal and institutional structures that existed 100 years ago and those that pertain today.

Despite these achievements, the undeniable fact is that the twentieth century was an era stained by an unconscionable amount of bloodshed. One analyst's estimate is that twice as many people were killed in wars during the twentieth century as in the preceding four centuries put together. The past century was indeed an era of mass slaughter—of megadeath—without parallel in history (Sakurai, p. 9).

In the final analysis, it must be said that the twentieth century was an era marked by a wanton disregard for human life. It was an age when the well-springs of life were starved, dried up and fouled.

Further, a careful examination of the list of advances and progress made in the twentieth century will reveal that these were virtually all material and physical. With regard to the inner realm of the human spirit, it seems undeniable that the era was marked by

by such negative passions as fear, hatred, jealousy and cowardice.

All ideologies—not just fascism and bolshevism—share the inherent fault that they establish barriers of discrimination based on perceived differences. These are then treated as fixed and unchanging; one's own superior standing is asserted, justifying the marginalization and oppression of others.

WOMEN

The values, principles and ideologies that are presently being called into question are all the products of male-dominated societies. I am certain that the emergence of women in the twenty-first century has a significance that goes to the very core of human civilization. I believe that this will prove even more important finally than legal and economic liberation, as vital as that is.

regression rather than advance. Humanity's spiritual life seems to have followed a one-way path of shrinkage and atrophy, to have become trapped in what Buddhism refers to as the "lesser self"—a state of isolation that results when the ties among people and between people and the cosmos are severed.

How can this historical trend be reversed to bring about a true century of life? This was the historical and civilizational challenge that Pauling and I together felt compelled to address.

Recently, there have been many works reflecting on the twentieth century, not limited to the inquiries of historians. Among the books of this nature that I have had the opportunity to read, I was struck by the fact that more than a few refer to the idea of a spiritual crisis.

This was the subject of "The Crisis of the Mind," penned by Paul Valéry (1871–1945) in the aftermath of World War I. This 1919 essay sets out with urgency the spiritual crisis wrought by the world's first "total war." There was indeed a sense of foreboding that European civilization, which had seemed to be in its glory, might be verging on demise (p. 23).

The issues that Valéry stressed were the impo-

tence of knowledge, the cruel purposes to which science had been applied and a sense of directionlessness. These problems are all still with us; Valéry's profound insights into the spiritual bankruptcy of Western modernity describe a trajectory that would continue into the final years of the twentieth century.

Elsewhere, he examines the underlying causes of the spiritual crisis, drawing a contrast with "the ancients, who set their philosophy as ardently to peopling the universe as we were later to set ours to emptying it of all life" (p. 39).

While this statement may reflect a certain unjustified nostalgia for the past, at the same time, I feel that it concisely encapsulates something essential about the times in which we live.

I don't, however, think that the process of "emptying the universe of life" was intentional. Efforts in the fields of both literature and philosophy were unable to overcome the impaired capacity of language to generate meaningful cosmologies. These earnest attempts to revive language and to inspire a living semantic space met with a general failure.

At the same time, the centrally important role of sci-

UNITED NATIONS

Discussion about the future direction of the UN inevitably focuses on such questions as: "What kind of world do we seek?" and "How will we respond to the various challenges that confront us?" As we ponder these questions, we must bear in mind above all that the UN's essential nature is to be found in "soft power"—the power of dialogue and cooperation.

POVERTY

At the international level there should be a permanent forum where the voices of marginalized people can be heard. I would like to propose that what might be called an "Earth Forum" be established as a bridge between the people of the developing countries and these meetings of the world's wealthy. This could facilitate dialogue and discussion toward a global society that is truly just and equitable.

ENVIRONMENT

The destruction of Earth's environment continues to outstrip the responses. Globally, the situation continues to deteriorate, and if this trend is not reversed, we are virtually certain to confront a crisis of devastating proportions. The only path left to us is a revolution in the consciousness of both individuals and entire societies. This is precisely the aim of the Earth Charter Initiative.

CHINA

I have sought, in my capacity as a private citizen, to promote grassroots cultural and educational exchanges in order to deepen the bonds of friendship between China and Japan. Over the course of these efforts, I have become intensely aware of numerous qualities cited by Toynbee as the spiritual legacy of Chinese civilization. These



Joel W. Rogers/CORBIS

Chief Sealth (Sealth) once remarked that, “Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth,” indicating his belief that all things are connected. Above, a bust of Chief Sealth in Seattle, Washington’s Pioneer Square.

ence and technology in this process must be admitted. The progress of modern science has been premised on a mechanistic view of nature as the object of manipulation and control, essentially separate from humanity.

In the final twenty-five years of the twentieth century, however, certain issues began to exert inexorable pressure for a paradigm shift in our approach to science. These include the dramatic emergence of the global environmental crisis and the dangers inherent in cloning technology — a technology that represents an important intellectual frontier, but if misapplied, could undermine the very foundations of our humanity. Our fundamental understanding of nature and of life must be an acknowledgment of the fact that the subjective and objective realms are inseparable and that humanity is an integral part of nature.

Takafumi Matsui, professor at the University of Tokyo, has argued that Descartes’s famous *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) should today be supplanted with something more along the lines of “I interact, therefore I am,” or “I engage with, therefore I am” (p. 131). This is an assertion with which I am in full agreement. For it accords with the state-

remain a vital force today, maintaining their relevance to contemporary society through a process of adaptive transformation.

INDIA

I believe there exists in India what could be termed a cosmic humanism. This transcends the limitations of the humanism of modern scientific rationality, which had the ironic effect of reducing human beings to an ever smaller, more insignificant presence. It takes as its highest ideal creative coexistence based on shared spiritual principles rather than conquest by force.

AFRICA

The historical realities Africa has long endured — colonial rule and arbitrary division of territory by the great powers — must be acknowledged as among the root causes of the present crisis

situation. It is therefore humanity’s shared responsibility to ensure that this tragic legacy is not carried forward into the future.

Africa is the birthplace of humankind. It has been a continent of hope, giving rise to a rich diversity of civilizations since ancient times which have given humanity numerous blessings in many areas, including philosophy and science.

It has long been my belief that the twenty-first century must be the century of Africa.

Lasting peace in Africa, our neighbor in an interconnected world, must be an immediate concern to everyone.

DIALOGUE

Dialogue has the power to restore and revitalize our shared humanity by setting free our innate capacity for good. It is an indispensable lodestone around which people are united and trust is fostered.

ment that I feel represents the essence of the philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955), one that I referenced in my peace proposal of four years ago: “I am myself plus my circumstance, and if I do not save it, I cannot save myself” (*Meditations*, p. 45).

Life, Heart, Spirit

Life — in the more encompassing sense indicated by Valéry, not merely the biological sense — is the focus of increasing interest and discussion in turn-of-the-millennium Japan. It is interesting to note that the words being used tend to be simple words of long standing — “life,” “heart,” “spirit” — written in the script historically used by women and appealing more to the emotions than the intellect.

Such discussions have been sparked by a spate of shocking crimes committed by children, which may explain the use of these words of direct emotional impact. More fundamentally, however, I feel that this demonstrates a slow but important shift in people’s concerns and values: the vital sensibility that lies at the very heart of the spiritual climate of the times.

Meeting Sir Yehudi Menuhin (1916–99) was for me a precious opportunity to share ideas in a frank and unrestrained fashion with a man whose vision and whose achievements as one of the century’s great violinists I deeply respected. Sir Yehudi was fond of referring to the words of the Native American leader Chief Seattle. Chief Seattle is said to have made a speech in the 1850s in response to an offer by white settlers to buy indigenous lands, which Sir Yehudi quoted as follows:

“If I decide to accept . . . , I will make one condition: the white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. . . . I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to live. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beast also happens to man. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth” (Qtd. in *Daniels*, p. 187).

Sir Yehudi stressed the relevance of Chief Seattle’s words to our time — to all time.

Indeed we cannot afford to dismiss the awareness and sensitivity that inform this speech as primitive animism or to view it as mere bucolic romanticism. The kind of discriminatory consciousness that would permit the slaughter of wild animals simply for entertainment also justified the forcible removal of the Native Americans from their lands and their containment in reservations. And, further, it is profoundly incompatible with the goal of bringing about a new century of life.

In its essence, discrimination is the act of throwing up barriers of difference among the phenomena that fill the universe and establishing among them a hierarchy of value, thus breaking the bonds that link and connect all things. This is then used to justify oppression and exploitation; as such, it must be condemned as a desecration of the sanctity of life itself.

An Interconnected, Interdependent World

All things are connected.” Buddhism echoes and extends this awareness voiced by Chief Seattle. At the same time, it takes as its highest imperative the work of removing such barriers in the effort to approach the reality, the genuine aspect of life itself. This is expressed in the idea of a life-moment embracing both sentient and non-sentient existence. In other words, an essential life-moment (Jpn *ichinen*) contains within it all phenomenal realms (*sanzen*) (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 355). This encompasses not only sentient beings, such as human and animal life, but non-sentient life such as grasses and trees, and even the seemingly lifeless mountains and rivers. Likewise, Buddhism teaches that Buddhahood — the potential for ultimate joy, wisdom and compassion — exists in all things (WND, 848).

While there are more precise definitions of “life-moment” and “Buddhahood,” for present purposes it probably suffices to say that they are basically equivalent to the expansive sense of the word life that I have been employing. While Buddhism shares



Illustration by Teikichi Miyoshi

Josei Toda, the second president of the Soka Gakkai, decided to understand the Lotus Sutra with his very being during his imprisonment in World War II.

the direct appreciation of life that characterizes animism, its approach differs in the following regard. Buddhism regards life in its most profound sense not as something that is simply conferred upon us without effort, but as a luminous and fertile realm that can be entered and experienced fully only through the most strenuous spiritual effort.

There are parallels to the process described by René Descartes (1596–1650) in his *Discourse on the Method*. In other words, in an often absurd and contradiction-filled world, a fully awakened state of life can only be attained through a process of continuous and painstaking doubt and thought, a process that utilizes the full resources of knowledge, emotion and will. Entry into the equal and impartial realms of life can only be attained by a sensibility polished and refined through a sustained and strenuous process of seeking.

To describe these realms as impartial and equal, however, does not mean to say that they are featureless or anonymous. What I am trying to describe is what Buddhism calls dependent origination (Jpn *engi*) — the fact that all phenomena are interlinked, that they repeat cycles of emergence (birth) and withdrawal (death) in interrelation with each other. There are no words adequate to describe this reality, although such terms as plenitude, concentration, alertness, harmony, balance and unity all come to mind. The Buddhist canon describes this state as “beyond all words, which neither thought nor action can convey” (Hori, p. 563).

Even Shakyamuni Buddha in his fully awakened state felt great hesitancy before the task of attempting to convey to his listeners this profound and sub-

tle enlightenment in a way that would not invite misunderstanding or disdain.

My own mentor, Josei Toda (1900–58), the second president of the Soka Gakkai, experienced severe persecution for his religious beliefs at the hands of the Japanese military authorities in the dark days of World War II. Imprisoned under brutal conditions, he devoted his efforts to pondering and seeking after the truth and was thus able to reach this realm of the true aspect of life itself.

During the course of his imprisonment, he determined that he would attempt to read and understand with his very being the Lotus Sutra. With focused prayer, he invoked the mantra of the Lotus Sutra some ten thousand times daily as he repeatedly read through the sutra. In the Immeasurable Meanings (Jpn Muryogi) Sutra, which serves as an introduction to the Lotus Sutra, he encountered a passage that baffled him entirely. In a verse that praises the Buddha, he found the following:

*His entity is neither existing nor non-existing;
Without cause or condition,
Without self or others;
Neither square nor round,
Neither short nor long;
.....
Neither that nor this,
Neither blue nor yellow,
Neither red nor white;
Neither crimson nor purple,
Without a variety of color.* (Taisho, p. 385)

In all, this verse contains thirty-four such negations. What could this Buddha be that would either remain or emerge from this tenacious process of being denied all possibility of expression?

With a focused and honed concentration of all his spiritual capacities, Toda gained the insight — and with it a grand and unshakable state of being — that the Buddha is nothing other than life itself.

I wrote the following words about Toda’s experience in my historical novel *The Human Revolution*: “That moment of opening in Toda’s life was sufficient to transform the future direction of philosophy in our world. This is certain to become clear with the passage of time” (p. 18). This was my conviction

when I first wrote these words in January 1968, and my belief has remained unaltered since then. Indeed, the continuing growth of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), which has now spread to some 163 countries and territories, traces its spiritual origin and impetus to Toda's experience in jail.

Further, my own commitment to making the new century an era of reverence for the sanctity of life stems from the same source. I am convinced that my mentor's unique and invaluable experience can be the pivot for prying open the deadlock facing humanity. For I believe that his experience is indeed universal, transcending any narrow sectarian framework, sufficient to enrich the spiritual life of all humanity.

The Family in Crisis

The English historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) urged us not to be taken in by the superficial aspects of history, but rather to look to the “slower, impalpable, imponderable movement that work below the surface and penetrate to the depths” (*Civilization*, p. 213).

It was in this sense that I earlier stated my assertion that the frequent use in Japan of such terms as life, heart and spirit is indicative of a profound transformation in the orientation of people's interests and thus in the currents of the times. I believe, very simply, that this represents a search for identity, for a satisfying sense of reality at a time when all values, structures and systems are being questioned at the most elemental level.

In recent years, a great deal has been made of the revolution in communications and Internet technologies. The more basic question remains, however, of who will take up the challenges and realize the positive possibilities of this revolution. Where will people find a

genuine sense of identity and purpose?

If we fail to address such questions, we may well find that the future awaiting us is anything but rosy, one in which life, heart and spirit are in fact strangled and crushed. It is this sense of anxiety about an uncertain future that is urging people toward an inner journey or search. In any event, it is impossible for me to share the unalloyed optimism that some commentators hold for the explosion of information technologies.

The scale and depth of the crisis we presently face can only be grasped within the historical context of the spiritual evolution of the human species.

The family is said to be the oldest form of human community, and the development of the family unit is arguably what made us human and distinguished us from other animals. Nowhere is the impact of the crisis of life, heart and spirit felt more intensely than in the family.

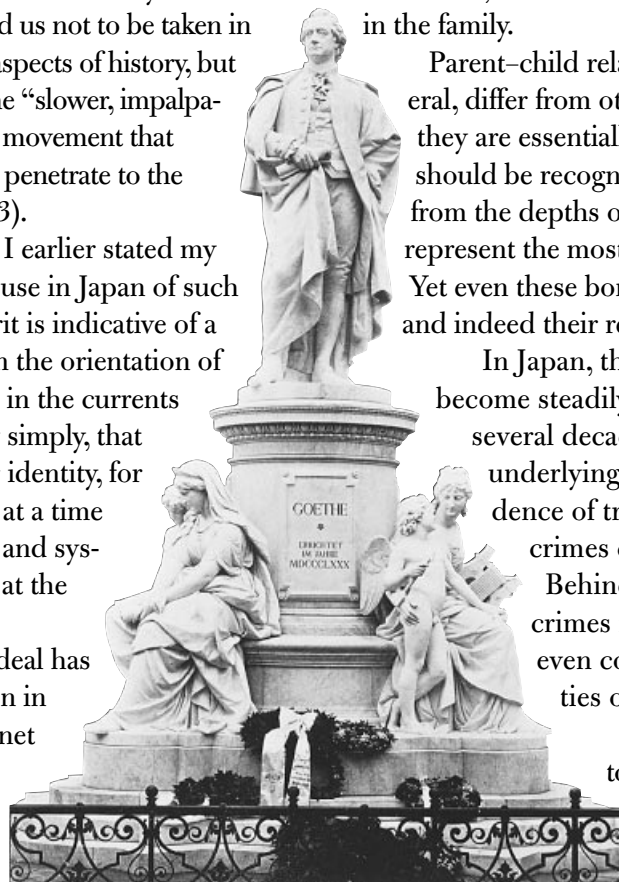
Parent-child relations, and family ties in general, differ from other human relations in that they are essentially not of our choosing. They should be recognized as something that issues from the depths of our being, and as such they represent the most real and vital connections. Yet even these bonds are losing their strength and indeed their reality.

In Japan, the crisis of the family has become steadily more apparent over the last several decades. It is, I believe, the underlying cause of the continuing incidence of truly disturbing and bizarre crimes committed by children.

Behind each of these unthinkable crimes is a profound weakening, or even complete breakdown, of the ties of familial love.

Indeed, as many commentators point out, the family is ceasing to be a place of renewal and revitalization and becoming a stifling one of isolation and alienation.

There is a sense that the bonds between people, as



A statue of the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, author of *Faust*, in Berlin, Germany.

Michael Maslan Historic Photography/CORBIS



In René Descartes' *Discourse on the Method*, he describes how a fully awakened state of life can only be attained through a process of spiritual effort. Above, engraving of Descartes giving a geometry demonstration.

well as the connection that we should sense with nature and the cosmos, are losing their reality and becoming increasingly “virtual.” I think that the spiritual malaise afflicting so many young people in Japan today — isolation, withdrawal, extreme apathy, loss of expressive capacity and collapse of personal identity — can be cited as evidence of this phenomenon.

This spiritual malaise has undermined the ability of people to sense the truth that “all things are connected.” With genuine reality obscured by multiple layers of its virtual counterpart, people are experiencing the uprootedness that the French philosopher Simone Weil (1909–43) so compellingly described as *déracinement*. They yearn for a conscious sense of being alive: in short, they are looking for themselves.

Reverence for Life

I believe that the crises of life, heart, spirit and family all spring from this same source. And it is for this reason above all that I feel compelled to make reverence for life the driving spirit of the coming era.

By sounding the deepest realms of life — the vast, vital network of interaction and interdependence — we can reawaken and restore the bonds that have become so tenuous. I am speaking of the kind of love for life that J. W. von Goethe (1749–1832) has Faust voice when he declares:

I might entreat the fleeting minute:

Oh tarry yet, thou art so fair! (p. 294; pt. 2, act 5, l. 11581–82)

Once illuminated by this deepest appreciation of life, we will be able to successfully reconstruct and reconfigure the true meaning of why we live and why we die.

Only if we are able to respond to existential questions — “Why this family?” “Why this gender?” “Why these sufferings?” — will we be able to answer the ultimate question — “Why must we not kill others?” Thus a renewal of reverence for life is necessary if humanity is to find a clear direction in the new century.

How do we go about doing this? Together with Faust, we must focus our efforts fully on the “fleeting minute.” For this, we must understand two things. One is that everything is contained in the present moment. The other is that the way we approach this moment is crucial and will determine the entire course of our lives.

The first of these understandings is necessary because the true aspect of life, of reality, is only to be found in this very moment. Other than the present instant, all things are to some degree virtual. This is certainly true of the future, but it can also be said of the past. The events of the past are all set in the flow and framework of such artificial constructs as daily, historical or scientific time. They are not genuine reality.

As we find in the Buddhist scriptures, “If you want to understand the causes that existed in the past, look at the results as they are manifested in the present. And if you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future, look at the causes that exist in the present” (WND, 279). This is not describing a linear progression of cause and effect. Rather, it indicates that everything is contained within the present instant.

As Josei Toda was able to discover, we encounter the deepest realms of life, of dependent origination, when we succeed in breaking through all artificial constructs, including the snares of language. Dependent origination describes the degree to which each individual existence is linked and connected with all others.

C. G. Jung (1875–1961), who was deeply versed

in Eastern philosophy, expressed a similar insight as he reflected on the horrors of World War II: “Even if, juristically speaking, we were not accessories to the crime, we are always, thanks to our human nature, potential criminals” (p. 296).

While this may seem an abrupt form of reasoning, from the perspective of the Buddhist teaching of dependent origination it has its own very convincing logic.

Awakened to this truth, we can sense the timeless bonds that connect us to those living in distant parts of the planet. We can understand and appreciate that every one of us belongs to the same human family. The limitless expansion of the self, the ability to sense that we are all bound together by innumerable unseen ties, is what Buddhism refers to as the “greater self.”

Second, our approach to the present moment is crucial because the true richness and overflowing vitality of life can only be accessed through ceaseless, moment-by-moment spiritual struggle. This attitude is the polar opposite of the indolence and passivity that signal spiritual bankruptcy.

In one famous passage, Nichiren, the thirteenth-century Buddhist sage whose teachings inspire the activities of the SGI, urges us to strive constantly to strengthen ourselves, day by day, month after month, and warns that we will fall prey to the forces of negativity if we slacken in the slightest (WND, 997).

In other words, only a person who maintains the constant effort to strengthen his or her mind, who maintains a taut and awakened consciousness, who soars in uninterrupted flight — only such a person will be able to touch the lodestone of genuine reality. This is the ideal of self-mastery that Shakyamuni expounded without cease. In contrast, a person whose mind is lax, whose attitude is passive, whose purpose is lost, will be consumed by such negative passions as fear, hatred, jealousy and cowardice.

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948) stated: “There is no such thing as defeat in nonviolence. The end of violence is surest defeat” (*Non-Violence*, p. 129). This man, who never retreated a single step, is a grand exemplar and pioneer for the century of life.

“There is no such thing as defeat.” This great spiritual leader was filled with unshakable confidence and

pride with regard to the single point of always being master of himself. His living spiritual legacy will always be lit by the brilliant lights of glory and triumph. So long as this one principle remains uncompromised and undiminished, final victory is assured. While there remain innumerable challenges to the realization of Gandhi’s dream of a nonviolent world, I am personally confident that none of them would be sufficient to shake his conviction in the slightest.

Creative Coexistence and Autonomy

How can we characterize the spirit that must animate the twenty-first century if it is to be a century of life?

Two of the specific indices that come to mind are creative coexistence and the autonomous functioning of the inner will. Both of these are extremely close in meaning to the key words *life* and *dependent origination* that I have been discussing. At the same time, both have been conspicuously absent from the spiritual life of the twentieth century.

In sharp contradistinction to the ideals of creative coexistence and autonomy are competition (in the purely negative sense of the word) and externally applied pressure. These are key characteristics of the totalitarian philosophies such as fascism and bolshevism that dominated the twentieth century. I believe that the preeminence of such ideologies was perhaps the greatest single factor in making it an age of unprecedented slaughter.

All ideologies — not just fascism and bolshevism — share the inherent fault that they establish barriers of discrimination based on perceived differences. These are then treated as fixed and unchanging; one’s own superior standing is asserted, justifying the marginalization and oppression of others.

In times of social disorder, ideologies may take the form of extreme and fanatical sloganeering. In such cases, competition exhibits its raw and primitive aspects of conflict and the exclusion of others. External force is applied as the ruthless use of hard power. The blood-drenched history of the twentieth



E.O. Hoppe/CORBIS

Rabindranath Tagore argued that women's contributions are essential in transforming the male-centered civilization of force into a civilization of the spirit. Above, Tagore with students in 1929.

century powerfully attests to these tendencies.

Ortega y Gasset's *Revolt of the Masses* is rightly renowned as a masterwork that unsparingly revealed the pathology of twentieth-century mass society. In it we find these insightful words: "This is the epoch of 'currents' and of 'letting things slide.' Hardly anyone offers any resistance to the superficial whirlwinds that arise in art, in ideas, in politics" (p. 105).

In such an age, the dangers of exclusion, conflict and force grow exponentially. Noting Joseph Goebbels's infamous maxim: Repeat a lie a hundred times, and it will become the truth. Such ideologies as the nationalistic fanaticism of fascism and the class struggle of bolshevism are the demonic products of unthinking submission to the prevailing currents.

I think we must recognize that the present movement toward globalization contains within it the danger of becoming yet another ideological "ism." I am quite willing to acknowledge the positive potentials and merits of globalization as one megatrend of our times. Here again, however, I cannot share the unbridled optimism of some commentators.

Specifically, I am concerned that the inflexible application of so-called global standards can cause the logic of conflict, exclusion and pressure to be brought to bear on those societies and parts of the world that do not fit a particular model of development. More than enough warning signs have already emerged to temper the enthusiasm of the most dedicated proponents of globalization. By this I mean the shocking disparity of wealth between and within

societies as well as the purely speculative, nonproductive global movements of money that are sometimes referred to as "casino capitalism."

I believe that we must carefully attend to the dearly-bought lessons of ideological domination. We must replace unrestrained competition with an ethos of coexistence, the application of external pressure and force with the autonomous decisions of people and societies. I believe we must uphold these new values as we advance steadily toward our long-term goal of making the twenty-first century truly a century of life.

The Buddhist teaching of dependent origination, which places ultimate emphasis on interrelatedness and interdependence, is essentially synonymous with creative coexistence. Further, in Buddhism the workings of life — the realm of genuine reality reached when we see past the false trappings of language and the tendency to see things as fixed, unchanging entities — are described as "the moment-to-moment spontaneous issuing forth" (Hori, p. 752). Indeed, this phrase describes the essentially inner-motivated, autonomous nature of the vital force of life.

If these values can be made into the driving spirit of the age, we will be able to put behind us the nightmares of the twentieth century and realize a century of life and of peace, a peace that is much more than a mere interlude between wars.

Women Against War

Here I feel it is necessary to stress the extremely important role that women can and must play in realizing this kind of world in the twenty-first century.

In contrast with the conflict, exclusion and force that are the hallmarks of ideology and which are traditionally linked to the psychology of men, women are naturally oriented toward such values as unity and harmony — the kind of creative coexistence and autonomy that I have identified as central to a century of life.

This is something that both Gandhi and his close friend and ally, the great Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), were quick to recognize.

Gandhi expressed his hopes for women in the most clear and direct language. “If only women will forget that they belong to the weaker sex, I have no doubt that they can do infinitely more than men against war. Answer for yourselves what your great soldiers and generals would do, if their wives and daughters and mothers refused to countenance their participation in militarism in any shape or form” (*All Men Are Brothers*, p. 163).

Likewise, Tagore argued from a macro perspective that women’s contributions are essential if we are to transform the male-centered civilization of force into a civilization of the spirit.

“So the next civilization, it is hoped, will be based not merely upon economical and political competition and exploitation, but upon world-wide social cooperation; upon spiritual ideals of reciprocity, and not upon economic ideals of efficiency. And then women will have their true place” (p. 218).

The values, principles and ideologies that are presently being called into question are all the products of male-dominated societies. As these are all increasingly in flux and their underlying rationales are interrogated, values such as life, heart and spirit are coming increasingly to the fore. Each of these is intimately linked with “the feminine.”

In this sense, I am certain that the emergence of women in the twenty-first century has a significance that goes to the very core of human civilization. I believe that this will prove to be even more important than legal and economic liberation, as vital as that is.

Thus, a century of life must also be a century of women. Since I founded it as a peace research center in 1993, the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC) has made the role of women one of the central themes of its research and educational activities. The center’s work on such issues as United Nations reform, the global environment, and creating a culture of peace has all been carefully structured to include the perspectives and voices of women.

This approach is based on the awareness that unless women’s perspectives are incorporated and their contributions actively sought, there is a real risk that the resulting research will fail to generate useful ideas. Indeed, it could even skew thinking

away from the core strategies needed for the fundamental resolution of the challenges at hand.

One of BRC’s mottoes is: Be a beacon lighting the way to a century of life. It is indeed my hope that BRC will continue its research efforts with a special focus on women as it works to build a global network of peace research, illuminating the way toward the oceanic expanses of the century of life.

The Family: Crucible of Humanity

The crisis of the family, which threatens to undermine the most basic levels of our humanity, brings into sharp focus the need for women to claim a more central role.

The collapse and reconstruction of the family is one of the larger trends of contemporary history and, for example, is a central theme in Francis Fukuyama’s *Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*.

We need to look at this from the broader historical perspective.

In a sense, the history of the family can be considered the history of humanity. According to the Japanese primatologist, Masao Kawai, whereas the mother-child bond dates back some 200 million years, to the emergence of mammals, the history of fatherhood is a mere 5 million years. For it was by the males of the species accepting the role of fatherhood opposite the females as mothers that the distinctive human structure of the family emerged, separating the human species from other mammalian herds. Kawai claims that the collapse of the family signals the loss of our species identity and an abandonment of our humanity; we face a crisis of proportions unprecedented in the history of our species.

In order for us to maintain and deepen our humanity, it is essential that mothers and fathers work together in a partnership of reciprocity and mutual support. The relationship between them must be one of creative coexistence, based on a recognition of interdependence, or dependent origination.

The key to making this kind of mutually supportive and reciprocal relationship work is women’s initiative.



Seikyo Press

The Boston Research Center has made the role of women one of the themes of its research and activities.

Men best function, in my view, as good partners and collaborators; the protagonists of the family are women. Direct and indirect experience has convinced me that the wisdom and strength of mothers is the central element in the healthy development of individuals.

I am not, of course, calling for a return to traditional gender roles, in which women's lives are limited to the home — the stereotypes that are currently being challenged. It is simply that if we look at the span of the history of the family, we must recognize that women play a profound, immeasurable role that must be accorded the very highest respect.

Indeed, the limitations of the modern male identity are such that Goethe's *Faust*, its embodiment *par excellence*, must seek salvation from self-destruction in the "eternal feminine" (p. 308; pt. 2, act 5, l. 12110–11).

Building Consensus on Japan's Peace Constitution

Here I would like to discuss the current debate about the Japanese Constitution. While this may be a specifically Japanese issue, I believe it is one that must be addressed if we are to realize the promise of a century of life.

It is only natural and right that, in order to respond to historical and social changes, appropriate measures should be taken to review the constitution, the highest law of the land. Like Japan, Germany also began its postwar history under a new constitution, one that sought to reflect the bitter lessons of

World War II. In contrast to the Japanese, the German people have amended their constitution on numerous occasions in the intervening years.

In Japan, in January 2000, constitutional research commissions were established in both the upper and lower houses of the Diet, initiating the process of parliamentary debate on the current constitution.

There is a tendency to frame any debate on the Constitution solely in terms of war-renouncing Article 9, as views are sharply split on whether this clause should be maintained as it is or amended. This narrow focus is unfortunate and shortsighted as it obscures other important constitutional issues that bear directly on the kind of democracy Japan aspires to become in the twenty-first century. These include: diverse and complex human rights issues, the need to respond to emerging environmental challenges, and the problems raised by new information and communications technologies. Also meriting consideration are the introduction of national referenda and the direct election of the prime minister as means of better reflecting the popular will.

It is important that the Constitution be reviewed in light of these issues in order to realize the goal of a better society. In this sense, I feel that constitutional debate is both necessary and positive.

But it is imperative that such review be conducted within the framework of a long-term vision, sustained by enduring principles. Hasty revision based on shortsighted goals, for immediate political gain or without taking the time to develop genuine national consensus, must be avoided at all costs. To do so could be cause for regret and would call into question the legitimacy of the constitutional review process.

In any debate on constitutional reform, we must never forget that the ideals of pacifism and international cooperation expressed in the Preamble and Article 9 are the very heart and soul of Japan's Constitution — that which qualifies it to be called a "peace constitution."

While there is room for multifaceted debate on specific national security policies, I am concerned above all that the principles and spirit of the peace constitution not be eroded. And, for this reason, I feel that Article 9 should not be touched, a view

that I have long asserted.

Sadly, the kind of pacifist message that Japan has broadcast to the world during the past half century under the present constitution has been all too feeble. Those efforts that have been made have been undermined by persistent and anachronistic moves to turn back the clock or even to attempt to justify Japan's past wars of invasion. The result is that Japan has not emerged as a truly pacifist nation recognized and trusted by our Asian neighbors or by the world as a whole.

The Pitfalls of "One-Country Pacifism"

Japan's proponents of peace have suffered from a tendency to turn inward, to limit their interest to Japan, and this is linked to the failure to produce the kind of concrete actions that can actually transform the world. The net result of this egotistical "one-country pacifism," which ignores movements in international society and the concerns of other countries, has been a false peace. This is far from the original spirit of the Constitution, whose preamble declares the right of humankind to coexist in peace.

If we are to make the new century a complete departure from the past century of war, it is imperative that Japan break out of this stagnation and deadlock. I believe that in the twenty-first century Japan should act from a realistic and global perspective and breathe new life into the spirit and ideals of Article 9, sharing these with the world.

I am reminded of the following words of the Japanese philosopher Arimasa Mori (1911–76): "The world is a competition in self-control. It is in this sense that the political is superior to the military. In this is also to be found the true meaning of peace" (p. 163).

This is a view that we should carefully heed. What have been most lacking in Japan's postwar political culture — not only with regard to debates on constitutional issues — have been self-mastery, genuine conviction and the taut and awakened consciousness that I referred to earlier.

It is an undeniable fact that during the Cold War years, Japan's leaders acted in a way that was neither self-directed nor self-reliant. Nor has this changed in the post-Cold War era. The collapse of Japan's bubble economy, an event whose psychological impact is sometimes compared with Japan's defeat in World War II, has produced a spiritual landscape of passivity and apathy far estranged from any ideal of self-mastery or conviction.

The same applies to constitutional debate. The most important thing is to develop and elaborate, with care and autonomy, the core principles and convictions of pacifism that characterize the entire constitution. And it is my belief that this can be done without revising Article 9.

Article 9, in particular the first paragraph, owes a debt to the 1928 Treaty of Paris, in which the signatories renounced war as an instrument of national policy. This was a direct attempt to realize humanity's profound desire for the abolition of war. By renouncing "war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes," the Japanese Constitution accepts limitations on national sovereignty. From its origin, it is clear that Japan's acceptance of this condition of limited sovereignty was predicated on the idea that the relinquished aspects of sovereignty would be entrusted to an international body, specifically the United Nations.

Therefore, Japan's best and most natural choice is to make the voluntary limitation of sovereignty an impetus to work in a carefully coordinated fashion with the UN to build a world of lasting peace.

This is entirely in accord with the spirit of the Preamble of the Japanese Constitution and the UN Charter. By locating the particular constitutional commitments of Japan within a larger, universal context, it should be possible to develop the kind of policies that make Japan known to the world as a true nation of peace. Japan has an opportunity to take the lead in creating the conditions for genuinely universal and effective UN-centered security and conflict-prevention systems.

In conjunction with this, it is crucial that we find effective means to promote international under-



Since the end of the Cold War, there have been 108 armed conflicts in Africa. Food shortages and famine are often the result for the continent's citizens. Above, an Ethiopian woman and child at refugee camp in Danan.

standing and cooperation. Here there is clearly room for Japan to take a more proactive stance. Japan can contribute, based on the spirit of self-mastery and genuine conviction, in such fields as international development and the raising of living standards as well as educational, cultural and sports exchanges.

In order to do this, it is essential that all Japanese citizens renounce passivity and embrace a profound commitment to meaningful action. It is my fervent and unchanging desire that Japan play a leading role in the unprecedented experiment and challenge of realizing a world without war.

A Central Role for the UN

The success of Japan's efforts in these regards is deeply linked to the future direction and development of the UN.

To realize peace in the coming century, it is absolutely essential that we replace the traditional ascendancy of competing national interests — the cause of so much war and tragedy — with an international community dedicated to the welfare of the whole of humankind and Earth.

The UN can and must play a pivotal role in this transformation. The challenges facing humanity — promoting peace and disarmament, protecting the environment, eradicating poverty — clearly require that we cooperate and harmonize our efforts across national boundaries. Indeed, we must unite as one humanity engaged in a common struggle.

In this sense, we really have no choice but to turn

to the UN. For half a century, it has been actively building international consensus as a forum for global dialogue; it has consistently engaged in humanitarian relief and assistance programs in different parts of the world. It is my belief that only the UN, for all its limitations and problems, can play the axial role in uniting humankind.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the unprecedented gathering of heads of state and government at the Millennium Summit of September 2000 has a profound significance in this regard.

Calling on the countries of the world to share responsibility for managing global issues, the declaration clearly states, "As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role."

The lofty objective and founding spirit of the UN are powerfully expressed in the Preamble of the Charter, "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind."

It is time to move forward with the effort to create a framework that genuinely engages all of humankind in a shared struggle to abolish the scourge of war from the face of Earth.

Soft Power, Popular Participation

Discussion about the future direction of the UN inevitably focuses on such questions as: "What kind of world do we seek?" and "How will we respond to the various challenges that confront us?" As we ponder these questions, we must bear in mind above all that the UN's essential nature is to be found in soft power — the power of dialogue and cooperation.

While the UN Charter clearly accepts the possibility of the exercise of hard power, including military action — Chapter VI, on the pacific settlement of disputes, is followed by Chapter VII, stipulating enforcement measures — precedence is firmly placed on the peaceful resolution of conflict; the use of hard

power is reserved for crisis situations that absolutely necessitate it. To realize international peace and security through soft power is the unchanging, foremost mission of the UN.

This is evident in the origins of the UN — the bitter lessons of two world wars. If we are to make the twenty-first century a century of life built on the ethos of creative coexistence and autonomy, it is vital that we never lose sight of this fundamental principle.

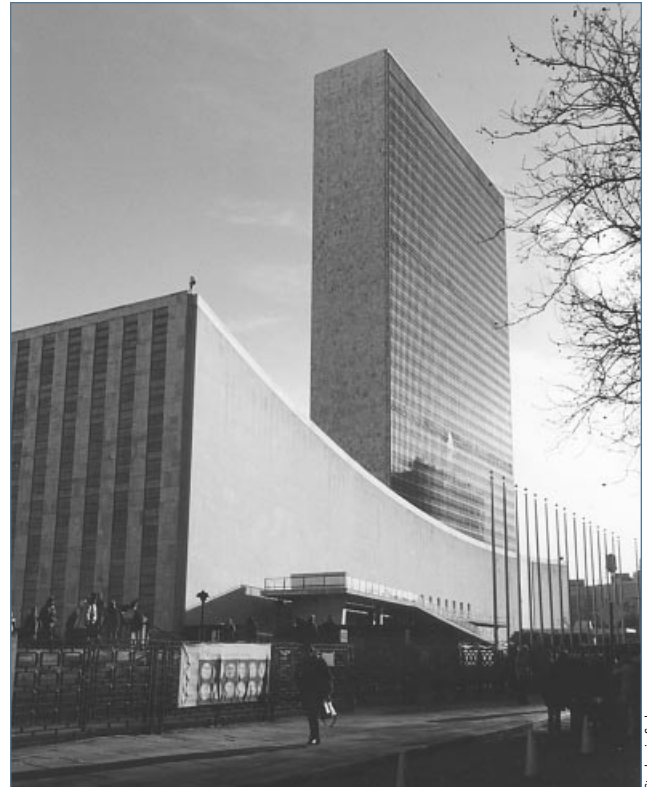
While the legitimate functions of the UN Security Council must be acknowledged, it is clear that the UN of the twenty-first century must be centered on a soft-power approach that emphasizes conflict prevention and stabilization of potential crisis situations.

This requires the promotion of human security — the safety and well-being of human beings rather than simply the integrity of national borders.

To this end, we should fully incorporate the invaluable lessons and experiences of the past fifty years to enable the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and humanitarian agencies to assume ever more constructive and active roles. In that regard, I sincerely hope that meaningful results will emerge from an earnest debate on what we as humankind can do for future generations at the General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001.

Equally crucial to the work of strengthening the soft-power orientation of the UN is the task of enhancing cooperative relations between the UN and civil society, the broad spectrum of nongovernmental and volunteer movements. This is vital if we are to ensure that the UN is genuinely of the people, by the people and for the people.

The UN will be disempowered and marginalized if it is overtaken by the logic of confrontation and exclusion, the negative legacy of a twentieth century that was dominated by competing national interests. If the UN gives in to the temptation to rely on pressure and coercion, this will create sources of further conflict, and it will lose credibility and trust. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen its identity as an organization dedicated to the well-being of all humankind and fundamentally supported by the people. It is not too much to say that the destiny of humanity in the twenty-first century will be deter-



Stephanie Sydney

The United Nations has been actively building international consensus and engaged in humanitarian relief and assistance programs throughout the world.

mined by the success of efforts to empower the UN and assure the people a central role in its workings.

This new imperative is clearly reflected in the Millennium Declaration mentioned earlier. The section on strengthening the UN defines civil society as an indispensable partner, and voices the resolve to “give greater opportunities to the private sector, nongovernmental organizations and civil society, in general, to contribute to the realization of the organization’s goals and programmes.” This is a highly significant statement that explicitly aims at enabling the UN to grow beyond its current framework as a gathering of sovereign states.

People’s participation is the best way to revitalize the UN. Even more centrally, however, this is necessary if the UN is to transcend its present limitations and evolve into a pivotal focus for the activities of global civil society. By bringing together the wide-ranging talents and capacities of ordinary citizens,



AFP/CORBIS

Amartya Sen, left, receives the Nobel prize for economics from Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf in Stockholm, 1998.

the UN will be able to enrich and strengthen the humanistic quality that should be its essence. This, I am convinced, is the path it should pursue as it moves into the future. Now is the time to take effective steps to implement and realize this vision.

In this regard, the proposals made at the We the People Millennium Forum, a gathering of global civil society held in May 2000 as a lead-up to the Millennium Summit, are a rich source of ideas for concrete action.

In one of the adopted papers, the Forum urges the creation of a Global Civil Society Forum. It calls for the extension of the NGOs' consultative rights of access and their participation in the General Assembly and other principal organs of the UN.

These initiatives are consistent with ideas I have proposed in the past, and I call for them to be realized promptly.

Reform Proposals

Last year, the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research published *Reimagining the Future* (Camilleri et al.), a report of the Global Governance Reform Project. This is a product of research conducted in collaboration with La Trobe University, Melbourne, and Focus on the Global South at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Specifically, it reflects the work of two expert panels that included such leading thinkers as Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former secretary-general of the UN.

Calling for democratized global governance as one of the keys to strengthening the UN, the report presents specific initiatives for bold reform, such as the

creation of a people's assembly that will make the organization more open and accessible to civil society.

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to share views with Johan Galtung, a pioneer of the field of peace studies. At that time, he offered this comment on the special value of a people's assembly, "Perhaps I believe more in long-lasting dialogues leading to new ideas and consensus than in short debates entailing few ideas and ending in decisions reached by means of voting, in which there are winners and losers" (p. 140).

New institutional means must be developed that fully integrate people's participation in a process of dialogue. This is the most certain way of developing the kind of long-term vision that leaves no one behind and takes the interests and concerns of all parties into consideration. Plans along these lines are being proposed by various organizations, and I believe strongly that the time has come to take meaningful steps toward their realization.

NGOs should not simply be seen as playing a supporting role to that of governments; they, in fact, are the key actors in building a new international order based on an ethos of creative coexistence and autonomy. The UN will be effective in guarding the dignity and security of each individual to the degree that it incorporates people's energies and efforts.

Similarly, one key to resolving the UN's long-standing challenge of securing stable sources of financing may lie in enlisting the support of the world's people.

The current dependence on member states' contributions hinders the ability of the organization to engage in emergency responses to crises or to address issues in a focused and sustained manner. Stabilizing UN finances by including an additional funding stream would help alleviate these problems.

In this connection I would like to suggest the creation of a people's fund for the UN, learning from the examples of independent fund-raising implemented so successfully, for example, by UNICEF. This new body would be actively engaged in fund-raising, accepting donations from individuals, organizations and corporations. The funds collected would be used primarily to support the humanitarian activities of the UN.

Eradicating Poverty, Protecting the Environment

Here I would like to address the urgent global issues of alleviating poverty and protecting the environment. These are key problems to be resolved as part of humanity's common struggle, led by the people themselves and centered on the UN.

More efforts must be focused on the eradication of poverty. According to the World Bank's *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*, 1.2 billion people, approximately twenty percent of the world's population, live on less than one dollar a day. And all indications are that this number is, if anything, increasing.

Last year, the World Bank also published an important report titled *Voices of the Poor*. This is the product of a ten-year effort to collect the firsthand voices of some sixty thousand people from sixty countries. Conveying the actual realities of poverty-stricken lives, the study seeks to illuminate the underlying nature of the problem and what poor people seek.

The World Bank urges that the following points be considered in implementing policies and assistance programs: 1) Expanding economic opportunities for the poor to free themselves from poverty. 2) Empowering people to shape decisions that affect their lives and work. 3) Developing basic infrastructure and programs to extend assistance during disasters and emergencies.

The Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen echoes this view. In his book *Development as Freedom* he maintains that people should not merely be regarded as the beneficiaries of development programs but that "With adequate social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other. They need not be seen primarily as passive recipients of the benefits of cunning development programs" (p. 11).

I completely agree with Sen that people should be seen as the agents of change. It is crucial to find out from the people themselves what is needed and reflect it in assistance and development programs rather than arbitrarily planning these in a unilateral, "top down" man-

ner. This is the true significance of democratization.

At the international level there should be a permanent forum where the voices of marginalized people can be heard. Currently, it is only the wealthy developed countries that have created opportunities, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) summits and the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland — to come together and discuss the direction of international politics and economics.

Here I would like to propose that what might be called an "Earth Forum" be established as a bridge between the people of the developing countries and these meetings of the world's wealthy. This could facilitate dialogue and discussion toward a global society that is truly just and equitable.

I envision that this forum would centrally involve the participation of the developing countries through their governmental and nongovernmental representatives, as well as those of international bodies, including the UN secretary-general. Sharing and learning from the failures as well as the best practices of various countries and agencies, it would encourage the kind of globalization policies that will truly respect developing countries' points of view, the kind of human development that will meet the real needs of people. This forum could meet twice a year, sending representatives to summit meetings and Davos to present its findings and demands, ensuring that the views of the developing world are more adequately reflected in the agendas of these conferences.

The G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit 2000 was the first OECD summit that included dialogue between the leaders of developed and developing countries. This experience should be built on, and such dialogue should be made an integral part of the ongoing summit process. This kind of dialogue is vital to unite the world's people in the cause of eradicating poverty and the untold suffering it causes.

The other challenge we must meet is that of protecting and enhancing the global environment.

The 1992 Rio Earth Summit accelerated awareness of the need for cooperation on a global scale to protect the environment. This awareness has taken the form of such international environmental treaties as the United



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In the life of Mahatma Gandhi we can see the full splendor of the human spirit. Above, Gandhi, center, arrives in Delhi to talk with the Viceroy of India in 1939.

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Despite these efforts, however, the destruction of Earth's environment continues to outstrip the responses. Globally, the situation continues to deteriorate, and if this trend is not reversed, we are virtually certain to confront a crisis of devastating proportions. The only path left to us is a revolution in the consciousness of both individuals and entire societies. This is precisely the aim of the Earth Charter Initiative promoted by Mikhail Gorbachev and others, and herein lies its great value.

For a number of years now, the SGI has been engaged in a wide range of activities to support the Earth Charter campaign. In addition, the BRC also held conferences and seminars that provided multi-dimensional perspectives and input to the Earth Charter drafting process.

The text of the Earth Charter was finalized in March of last year. Its language is the product of tenacious efforts to integrate the voices and opinions of people of different backgrounds from throughout the world.

In four chapters and sixteen sections, the Charter sets forth a comprehensive set of ethical principles on which to build a new global society. The titles of the respective chapters clearly convey the scope and depth of this document: Respect and Care for the Community of Life; Ecological Integrity; Social and Economic Justice; Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace.

It is my firm conviction that the principles of the Earth Charter, the crystallization of a process of global dialogue, can serve as the foundation for a century of life.

One of the goals of the Earth Charter Initiative is to seek its endorsement by the UN General Assembly in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit. It is crucial that the Earth Charter principles take root in each person's life as fundamental ethical guidelines. Its words must not become simply an intergovernmental agreement.

The SGI will continue to promote the Earth Charter through wide-ranging activities including newly planned exhibitions, raising grass roots awareness toward its official adoption and encouraging individuals everywhere to make the Charter a personal pledge and commitment.

China and India: Future Roles and Contributions

The last areas I would like to address in discussing the practical steps to be taken if we are to realize a world of creative coexistence and autonomy are the regional concerns of Asia and Africa.

Regarding Asia, I would like to focus on the roles of China and India. Both countries are destined to assume increasing importance not only by virtue of their population, size and significance to international security but even more importantly from what might be termed a civilizational perspective.

I recall with fondness the image of Arnold Toynbee as he shared with me his thoughts on China: "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).

Resounding in the depths of his words was the conviction, a consistent factor in his grand theory of history, that our vision should not be clouded by immediate phenomena; that the future can only be accurately envisaged by carefully attending to the deeper, slower movements that are the ultimate determinants of history.

At the time I was calling for the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and China and the admission of China into the UN. Toynbee's assessment of China's importance resonated strongly with my own sentiments. One year after my series of

dialogues with Toynbee in London, my long-standing desire to visit China was realized in 1974.

Since then, I have sought, in my capacity as a private citizen, to promote grass roots cultural and educational exchanges in order to deepen the bonds of friendship between China and Japan. Over the course of these efforts, I have become intensely aware of numerous qualities cited by Toynbee as the spiritual legacy of Chinese civilization. These remain a vital force today, maintaining their relevance to contemporary society through a process of adaptive transformation.

One of these qualities is a worldview that places precedence on harmony over confrontation and on unity over fragmentation. The other is the humanistic thinking that seeks the best available solutions through actual practice rather than a rigid adherence to theory.

The emphasis on harmony indeed suggests an ethos of creative coexistence, a wisdom fostered over the millennia and symbolized by the Datong utopia. This was, incidentally, one of the themes I addressed when I spoke at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1992. The practical perception of reality, meanwhile, has given rise to a gradualist methodology of reform seen in the bold experiment of a socialist market economy. Likewise, the idea of “one country, two systems” launched after the return of Hong Kong and Macao is an extension of such thinking.

It is intensely regrettable that some elements of Japanese society still deny the historical reality of Japan’s war of aggression against China and that these denials have even found their way into school textbooks. In 1995, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Japan’s defeat, Japan’s then prime minister expressed profound repentance and heartfelt apology. We can no longer tolerate denials of historical fact, for they not only bring into question the sincerity of this official statement but also discredit Japan’s standing in the international community as a nation of conscience.

Like China, India’s long history is imbued with a profound spirituality. In the magnificent lineage that flows through Shakyamuni Buddha, King Ashoka and Mahatma Gandhi we can see the full splendor of the human spirit.

While space does not permit a detailed examination, I believe there exists in India what could be

termed a cosmic humanism. This transcends the limitations of the humanism of modern scientific rationality, which had the ironic effect of reducing human beings to an ever smaller, more insignificant presence. It takes as its highest ideal creative coexistence based on shared spiritual principles rather than conquest by force. It seeks to realize a harmonious society that respects diversity rather than the divisions of discrimination and exclusion.

C. G. Jung stated that “in India there seems to be nothing that has not lived a hundred thousand times before” (p. 517). This echoes the Buddhist ideas of interconnection and interdependence.

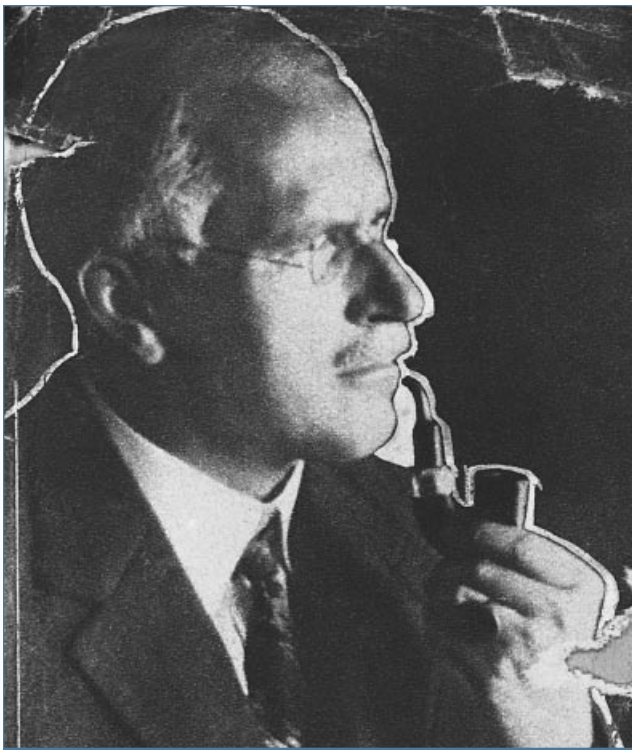
In recent years, it seems that only certain aspects of India and China, such as their nuclear capability or their emerging technical prowess, have caught the world’s attention. But I believe that the power of the spirit, the undercurrent flowing throughout the history of both India and China, clearly has the potential to be one of the driving forces to bring about an era of soft power.

It is not my intention, of course, to glorify the past of these two countries, and I am fully aware of the various challenges they presently face. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that they can each contribute importantly to Asia and the entire world if the spiritual heritage they have nurtured over the long course of history can be creatively developed and brought to blossom within the larger framework of a new global civilization.

The Koreas: Dialogue for Peace

No country is free of a negative past or present problems; it is unproductive to focus exclusively on the darker aspects of any country or culture. It is far more constructive for each culture to “compete” in terms of exerting the most positive influence on other cultures and the world. The same thinking was behind my proposal, first made in 1998, that the current G8 summit be permanently expanded to include China and India as these countries also have a special responsibility to the world.

The twentieth century saw the dark nadir of



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C. G. Jung stated that “in India there seems to be nothing that has not lived a hundred thousand times before.” This is in line with the Buddhist concepts of interconnection and interdependence.

competition for dominance. Humanity in the twenty-first century must shift its focus from the pursuit of hegemonic dominance to a “humanitarian competition” that brings forth an era of creative coexistence and unleashes the inner spiritual and moral qualities of each culture and tradition.

More than anything, it is dialogue that holds the key to putting the race for dominance permanently behind us. The leaders of the two halves of the divided Korean Peninsula last year held talks of truly historical significance, reminding us again of the value and importance of dialogue.

For the first time ever, the heads of state of these two countries — President Kim Dae-Jung of the Republic of Korea and Chairman Kim Jong-Il of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea — met in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. For three days last June, they discussed the issues of peace and the peninsula’s future.

For more than fifteen years, I have repeatedly called for face-to-face meetings between the top leaders of the two Koreas. In my 2000 peace proposal, I asserted that the opportunity be seized, fifty

years after the start of the Korean War, to bring to a close the state of cold war on the Korean Peninsula. Thus I followed the realization of this dialogue with particularly profound emotion.

It is critical that this summit meeting be followed up in order to unravel this long-standing stalemate and bring about a genuine easing of tensions on the peninsula.

It is my sincere hope that Chairman Kim Jong-Il’s visit to Seoul, called for in the South–North Joint Declaration, will be realized in the near future and that a process of regular summit talks can be established. I further wish to express my earnest desire that the two Koreas continue the process of confidence-building and advance steadily toward eliminating the threat of war on the peninsula.

The Challenge and Promise of Africa

Africa is, along with Asia, a region of crucial importance to world peace. Since the end of the Cold War, regional and internal conflicts have broken out in various parts of Africa, ravaging people’s lives and livelihoods. According to one survey, in the eleven years since the end of the Cold War, there have been 108 armed conflicts that have each claimed more than one thousand lives. The majority of these tragic conflicts have occurred in Asia and Africa (SIPRI).

As a result of prolonged conflict situations, a growing number of Africans live as refugees, as many as 6.2 million as of January 2000 according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Food shortages and famine are often the tragic by-products of conflict. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2000* published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that nineteen African countries suffer from famine whose primary cause is armed conflict. And there has been a much more dramatic increase in such cases than for those where famine is provoked by natural disaster.

Failure to find effective remedies to the problem of persistent poverty has given rise to a misplaced

sense of pessimism about the continent, intensified by so-called “aid fatigue” on the part of developed countries. Consequently, international concern for Africa has shrunk in inverse proportion to the severity of need, exacerbated by the problem of AIDS.

Africa’s crisis, however, is a challenge that must be met if we are to realize peace in an increasingly globalized world. And from a basic humanitarian perspective, indifference is inexcusable.

The historical realities Africa has long endured — colonial rule and arbitrary division of territory by the great powers — must be acknowledged as among the root causes of the present crisis situation. It is therefore humanity’s shared responsibility to ensure that this tragic legacy is not carried forward into the future.

Africa is the birthplace of humankind. It has been a continent of hope, giving rise to a rich diversity of civilizations since ancient times which have given humanity numerous blessings in many areas, including philosophy and science.

It has long been my belief that the twenty-first century must be the century of Africa. This conviction is in part rooted in the experience of my first visit to the UN Headquarters in 1960, soon after I accepted the responsibility to serve as third president of the Soka Gakkai. There, I witnessed and was deeply impressed by the energy and vitality of the African delegates participating in the General Assembly and various committee meetings. Indeed, 1960 was an extraordinary year for Africa, with seventeen African nations winning their independence.

From that time I began to develop friendships with the political, cultural and intellectual leaders of various African countries, hoping to contribute to the realization of a century of Africa. Moreover, as the founder of Soka University and the Min-On Concert Association, I have been actively engaged in promoting broad educational and cultural exchange at the grass-roots level.

The SGI has been particularly committed to supporting refugee relief activities undertaken by the Office of UNHCR. Our fund- and awareness-raising campaigns in support of UNHCR and other bodies will continue this year, the fiftieth anniversary of the Refugee Convention.

Peaceful Solidarity: Africa’s Mission

LASTING peace in Africa, our neighbor in an interconnected world, must be an immediate concern to everyone. Over the decades, many important, constructive visions for Africa have been set forth. Ideas to bring together the nations of Africa in strong solidarity and a shared pursuit of peace and prosperity include those made by Ghana’s first president Kwame Nkrumah (1909–72) and other leaders of the Pan-Africanist movement for a United States of Africa. These cannot be dismissed as mere relics from the dawn of the postcolonial period.

A United States of Africa was one of the visions that Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and I discussed during our dialogue two years ago. Indeed, there is a rising awareness among African countries of the importance of strengthening Pan-African solidarity.

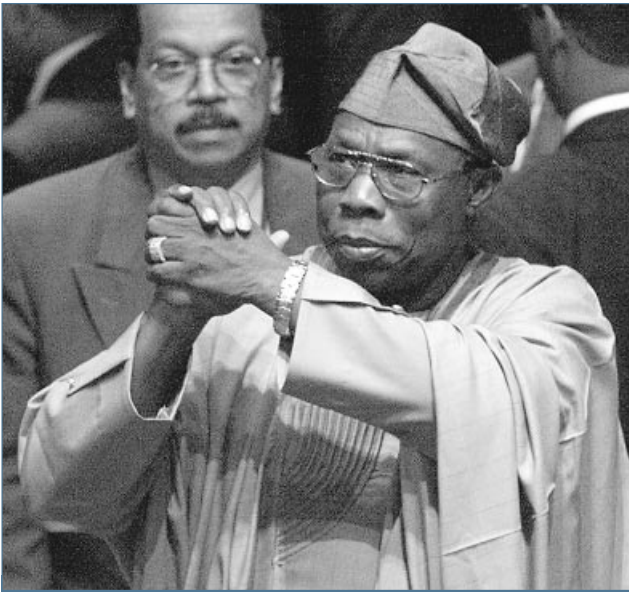
At the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held in Lomé, Togo, in July 2000, leaders from twenty-seven countries signed a proposal to create an African Union. Drawing from the experience of European integration, this African Union will have an African Parliament, a Pan-African court of justice, and the continent’s own central bank.

Although no agreement was reached on a timetable for its creation, it is truly significant that African countries have agreed on the common goal of an African Union.

Over the course of its long history, the OAU has realized many achievements, ranging from the establishment of the Banjul Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty to the recent mediation of the Ethiopia–Eritrea conflict.

It is the international community’s responsibility to provide unstinting support and cooperation to the creation of an African Union and the further strengthening of continental unity.

The European Union reviewed its achievements of the past half century in *Strategic Objectives for 2000–2005: “Shaping the New Europe”* as follows: “The European Union provides living proof that



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Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo envisions a United States of Africa, part of a rising awareness of Pan-African solidarity.

Strength, Wisdom, Solidarity

The destiny of Africa and indeed of all humankind in the twenty-first century hinges on the degree to which ordinary people awaken their inner capacities for strength, for wisdom and for solidarity. I cannot stress enough the value of open dialogue in bringing forth these qualities.

Dialogue has the power to restore and revitalize our shared humanity by setting free our innate capacity for good. It is an indispensable lodestone around which people are united and trust is fostered. It was the failure to make dialogue the foundation of human society that unleashed the bitter tragedies of the twentieth century.

The year 2001 has been designated the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. We must spread the spirit of dialogue to make it the current and flow of the twenty-first century — a century of life. In this way we can together create an era in which all people enjoy the fruits of peace and happiness and celebrate their limitless dignity and potential.

Dialogue can lead to the creation of a new global civilization. The members of the SGI, as engaged and responsible citizens of their respective societies, will continue to use honest dialogue to build a people's solidarity for peace and humanity throughout the world. ☸

peace, stability, freedom and prosperity can be brought to a continent once torn apart by wars" (3). Viewed over a span of fifty to one hundred years, there is no reason to believe that what has been accomplished by the EU should not be possible for Africa also.

Envisaging a United States of Africa, President Nkrumah of Ghana stated that it "will emerge . . . as a Great Power whose greatness is indestructible because it is built not on fear, envy and suspicion, nor won at the expense of others, but founded on hope, trust, friendship and directed to the good of all mankind" (p. xii).

I believe that this vision of peaceful solidarity, defined as Africa's mission by President Nkrumah, should be the guiding principle of regional integration in the twenty-first century. Competition rooted in animosity and exclusion, external pressure and coercion, breeds only fear, envy and suspicion. In contrast, the overflowing vitality of the human spirit seeking creative coexistence and autonomy cultivates hope, trust, and friendship.

This year is the United Nations International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The World Conference on this theme is to be held in September in South Africa. The SGI plans to participate in NGO forums to be held in parallel with the intergovernmental meetings, and to stress the importance of human rights education to counteract the ignorance that is the root cause of intolerance.

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IMAGINE PEACE CONFERENCE

“Creating a Culture of Peace:



Sharing Visions of Equitable, Sustainable Societies”

BY DR. HAZEL HENDERSON

On February 25, 2000, at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., the SGI-USA women of Mid-Atlantic Zone, the World Bank and American University co-sponsored the ‘Imagine Peace’ Women’s Peace Conference. Women from diverse backgrounds joined with community activists and academics to share their views on how to create a more peaceful world. Noted American futurist, environmental economist and author Dr. Hazel Henderson delivered the following speech in which she finds areas of common values with the SGI. [SGI President Daisaku Ikeda met with Dr. Henderson on two occasions, in September 1998 and October 2000. They agreed to continue their dialogue with the intent to publish it in the future.]

I am honored to address this very important conference, which gets to the heart of creating a culture of peace. I honor all of you, from so many spiritual traditions, who work so faithfully in organizing for the abolition of weapons and violent conflict and for your peace-building efforts. I am one who believes that we humans are not incorrigible or terminally stupid. I believe we

have equal potential for both good and evil — and that we do evolve toward higher levels of awareness and consciousness.

As we have evolved our technologies and spread our settlements around the planet, we have created new challenges. Today, the planet itself is our teacher as the human family has grown so as to consume forty percent of all nature’s primary production: the photo-



Seikyo Press

Futurist Hazel Henderson and SGI President Ikeda discuss the power of the people at the Seikyo Shimbun Building in Tokyo, October 27, 2000.

synthesis of plants. Competition over territory and resources has been a prime source of humanity's wars and conflicts. We are even polluting outer space.

At this stage, humans must balance and “de-fang” their competitive behaviors with cooperation and sharing. This requires creativity. I wrote *Building a Win-Win World* (1996) to trace the evolution of human understanding and about this transition from the win-lose games that worked in our “uncrowded” past, to the win-win strategies that would be needed for our survival in today's small, crowded planet.

To facilitate this great transition from our 350-year-old warring nation-state stage of humanity, we must employ our collective imagination. We need to create practical visions and win-win alternatives to the existing global order. We need detailed, believable, doable transition strategies at all levels — from the

personal and local to the national and global. Examples of such scenarios are these including my own in the new book *Imagine* (Roda Press, 2001), edited by my friend Marianne Williamson. Today, violence is also evident in the ecological destruction that results from over-consumption, unregulated market forces and corporate-led globalization. Violence against women persists. The Taliban in Afghanistan have regressed to barbarism in their oppression of women. Where are the official sanctions against this wholesale abuse of human rights? And, we must heed, more than ever, U.S. President Eisenhower's famous words about the growing power of the military-industrial complex — still unchecked today. He added: “Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending



Keynote speaker Hazel Henderson (left), with old friend and workshop presenter Linda Smith, director of The Clothesline Project, at the "Imagine Peace" Conference in Washington, D.C., February 25, 2001.

the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.”

Meanwhile, most of “We the People,” shown in many surveys, do not want more weapons. They want education, health care, clean water, adequate food and shelter, as well as socially responsible companies, which are “good neighbors.” Many scientists and scholars are confirming that we humans can and do evolve more altruistic behaviors, often out of awareness of our larger, long-term self-interest, including David Loye’s *Darwin’s Lost Theory of Love* (2000); Robert Wright’s *Non Zero* (2000); and Mauro Torres’s *A Modern Conception of Universal History*, which argues that we are at the end of masculine history and embarking on the era of gender-parity development. These books echo women’s literature from Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland in the 1890’s* to the works of Riana Eisler and Elise Boulding, as well as the spiritually inspired writings of Daisaku Ikeda and Josei Toda of the Soka Gakkai, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many others.

We need to propagate our visions of how cultures of peace and sustainable societies will work and how all peoples can take part in helping create appropri-

ate transition paths in their own situations and societies. In this way, citizens in all societies can share in these goals and strategies, identifying the deepest human values and aspirations of humanity. This will be of great value to world political leaders, including President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic and Nelson Mandela of South Africa. An example of such efforts is the Earth Charter, based in Costa Rica’s Earth Council and circulating in grass-roots communities worldwide since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. You can find the Earth Charter at www.earthcharter.org. I have been a fervent supporter and will continue to promote this process as a member of the RIO+10 Commission.

As we move these strategic visioning and scenario-building activities into

mainstream societies, we can reduce the resistance of current keepers of the existing order. Whether politicians, academics, business people, those who derive wealth, incomes, status and power from the current order will fear change. This includes most of us who live and vote in the United States and other industrialized, mass-consumption-driven societies of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As these countries and others strive to maximize their GNP growth, they widen the gaps between rich and poor, as well as the digital divide, while stressing the limits of natural resources and ecosystems.

Thus, we in this gathering are at the heart of this lifestyle and its ideology: the Washington Consensus (i.e., policies of conventional economics and development promoted by The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the U.S. Treasury Department and their academic foot-soldiers). I want to show you some visual images of how these ideologies and their current and past policies have led to mal-development, and the growing gap in wealth, incomes and information that have helped exacerbate local conflicts and wars.

World Tribune

How many of you have been participating in the growing global debate over economic and technological globalization — and the need to democratize global markets with global ethics, treaties, standards for human and workplace rights, equitable access to health, education and decent jobs, within the limits of natural resources and ecosystems? How many of you were in Copenhagen for the World Summit on Social Development in 1995 or last year's follow up in Geneva? We are seeing the rise of grass-roots globalism. I attended both and joined with thousands of NGOs calling for taxation of commercial uses of our global commons: our oceans, atmosphere satellite orbits and electromagnetic spectrum of airwaves, which media use. All these are the common heritage of humanity. We also called for fines and sanctions on abuses of these common resources, including pollution, arms and drugs trafficking and currency speculation. Much conceptual progress has been made on these issues of global commons, such as *Global Public Goods* (1999), edited by Inge Kaul. Activist NGOs have promoted currency exchange taxes among many of their governments.

How many of you were in Porto Alegre for the recent World Social Forum — the civic grass-roots answer to the elite Davos World Economic Forum? I did not attend, but my ideas were there, and my friend Vicki Robin, author of *Your Money or Your Life*, sent me a full report — not available in mass media. Vicki concentrates on the spiritual poverty of consumerism — a theme deep in all my work on making the non-money “Love Economy” more visible. A new “Attention Economy” is emerging. Such new paradigms and analyses are vital in balancing the excesses of the money-driven, GNP-measured economic growth paradigm based on ever more material consumption. I have summarized most of this exciting NGO activity and many sensible proposals from global to local in my book *Beyond Globalization: Shaping a Sustainable Global Economy* (1999).

Money is not wealth. There have always been two ways of transacting. My work has focused on correcting this faulty economics whose textbooks still drive policies and business decisions in the

wrong direction. Conventional economics, which drives today's globalization of markets, deregulation and privatization is rooted in scarcity, fear and competition. Economics, unlike all other social sciences, does not embrace the full range of human behavior to include our caring and sharing behaviors, our demonstrably loving qualities, volunteerism and altruism. Women have shouldered a great share of the responsibility for such nurturing work in the families, communities and societies.

We must now insist that the time has come to create the new sectors of evolving economies, the peace-building sector, the caring sector and expand the education, health and pollution-prevention sectors fully, along with the renewable energy and sustainable development sectors. This redeployment of our tax dollars and public budgets can lead private sector efforts by cutting subsidies to the “Old Economy” weapons industries, nuclear and fossil fuels. Shifting national priorities to education and re-training our citizens for the Information Age, “New Economy” is better than cutting taxes. Let's build the jobs and work places of the future, not subsidize obsolete corporations, which are going offshore looking for cheap labor and unprotected resources to exploit.

As you can see, in all of my future scenarios, it is the spirit, the visions and the energies of women that lead the way in shaping sustainable, equitable, eco-friendly peaceful societies. With the now 6-billion-member human family, women are no longer just joining their genes with men to procreate. As my visionary sister Barbara Marx Hubbard says, “Today, women are joining their genius with each other and our dear brothers to co-create a better future.” Women are taking equal partnership and responsibility with all men of goodwill in building cultures of peace for this new century. In a large-enough, planetary perspective, all our self-interests are identical: continuing the 15-million-year experiment of life. At this stage of human development, Earth ethics, cooperation and altruism have become pragmatic. ☸

You're Never Too Old TO WIN



BY MIKE EVERS, MEBANE, NORTH CAROLINA

The stadium was filled to capacity as more than sixty thousand friends, family members and faculty of North Carolina State University gathered to celebrate the graduates of the class of 1998. It was an exciting morning for me. Upon previous graduations of my undergraduate and master's degrees, I had already begun work assignments in Berlin, Germany and Japan, and was unable to "walk" with my classmates. On this day I was actually going to receive my doctorate diploma in person rather than through the mail. I had insisted that my mentor Dr. Edgar J. Boone (above photo, right) be seated with me. During the course of my doctoral studies, he had refused to allow me to fail. It was he who deserved accolades.

My trek through the doctoral gauntlet began with the encouragement of Professor Rikio Kimata of

Soka University, Japan, who learned that I was living in Raleigh, North Carolina. "You are an educator, and you live in Raleigh, but you are not learning from Dr. Edgar Boone? Don't be foolish! Go learn from him!" he insisted. Not wanting to be foolish, I called Dr. Boone upon my return to Raleigh and made an appointment to meet with him.

Our first meeting in June 1995 was one that I'll never forget. Dr. Boone welcomed me warmly and asked about my goals. I told him I wanted to pursue my doctorate in adult and higher education administration under his tutelage. I outlined my goal of completing the program in two years, and informed him that I would have to do so while continuing to work full time. He asked about my health, age, family and philosophy regarding life and education.

I have never had the opportunity to be just a student in college. I have always had to work full time

while supporting a family; therefore the idea of my working full time while pursuing my doctorate seemed natural. I was, however, approaching my fiftieth birthday and had been away from academic studies for more than fifteen years. My age was of concern to me, but Dr. Boone, who was approaching seventy, encouraged me by saying, "You are young with much still to accomplish!" As we continued our dialogue he said, "Mike, I will mentor you through this program, but if you fail to meet your goal it will not be my fault." I was to learn what he meant by that statement as we progressed through the program.

That first day we worked together to plot a course of study. We decided which courses I would complete. We also decided upon my dissertation topic. From that day on, I became the protégé of Dr. Edgar J. Boone. However, some details had to be attended to before I could be accepted into the program. First, I had to retake the Graduate Records Examination. I also had to take three courses and make an 'A' in all three to prove myself capable of becoming a doctoral candidate.

I was permitted to take only one course per semester while awaiting judgement on my acceptance into the program. I began research on my dissertation even though I had not yet been accepted. Dr. Boone encouraged me by saying: "Go into those classes and into your dissertation work as if you are a candidate. If you believe and act like a candidate, then the committee will believe it too!"

I challenged every course with excitement. I felt like I was twenty-something again! From every class I gained something that I could use. With each visit to the library, I gained something that I could apply. Every lecture, every discussion and every paper were geared to learning something new. Every cell in my body was focused toward accomplishing my goal.

In July 1996, I received acceptance into the doctoral program at North Carolina State University. I then began taking two courses per semester, and one or two each summer session. In less than two years after having been accepted into the program, I was graduating. I sat proudly with my mentor in the stadium that day, graduating before my fifty-second birthday, having done so while maintaining my

Buddhist practice, my work and my sanity. (The last is, according to some, questionable.)

The program usually takes three to four years to complete. What was it that enabled me to accomplish my goal and complete my doctorate in such a short time? First, I maintained my daily Buddhist practice of prayers and chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and attended SGI activities. I fed on the encouragement provided by my fellow members. Our monthly Men's Division meetings were especially encouraging for me. Believe it or not, there were many points provided in the *World Tribune* and the *Living Buddhism* that helped me with my class papers and dissertation. The sources cited in SGI President Ikeda's speeches are great places to begin researching numerous topics in education. I recommend these highly to any student or researcher of education.

Second, my wife's full support and her powerful prayer enabled me to focus on my goal. It will take many lifetimes of dedicated practice to ever repay her. Many nights I did not come home at all, rather, spending time in the library, or in my office preparing papers and doing research. The neglect that she must have experienced is the one blemish on this otherwise beneficial accomplishment in my life.

Third, I had a mentor who did not accept failure. Every Monday morning for two years I was in Dr. Boone's office at 6:30 receiving his guidance as to what steps to take next in completing my program. Almost every morning he called me at 5:30 to ask me what I was doing that day to accomplish my goal. Every time we met, he reminded me of my commitment to myself and to my goal, and on each occasion he asked me about my health, family's well-being and work. He encouraged me to balance each of these in my life and use every moment as a learning moment.

So on that morning in May 1998, I sat in the stands, proud of what I had accomplished, but recognized that the accomplishment was due to the efforts of many. I was a graduate being celebrated, while those who had worked so diligently behind the scenes looked on. I realized that day that the lessons of my doctoral programs were not so much what had occurred in the class-



Mike Evers with his family: (Yasuko, Michelle, his wife Yoshiko, Izumi, Toshi and Ken.

room, but what had occurred through the process of this challenging experience, which had created change within my life. Some of the more important lessons that I learned are that a mentor takes extraordinary steps to teach and encourage a protégé — to affect the success of a protégé. If Dr. Boone called me at 5:30, that means that he was awake before me. He showed me with his life what it means to teach one human being the elements of victory. I saw in Dr. Boone concrete evidence of what President Ikeda teaches us all: a continuous striving to teach and encourage others to win. Although not a Buddhist by religious affiliation, his life enabled him to exhibit the compassion of his innate Buddha nature.

For every accomplishment in life there are those unseen heroes who propel the celebrated forward. Those who, although in the shadows, work diligently for the success of those who run the race, climb the mountain, or complete a doctoral program.

For every accomplishment in life there is challenge and struggle. No one wins a race by sitting in the stands. No one climbs a mountain by sitting beside the stream admiring the view. And no one completes a doctorate without dedicated and focused hard work.

Focused and consistent chanting works when it is based upon a goal and determined effort that is specific to fulfilling one's prayer for the accomplishment of that goal. Any time that I experienced a writing block or had difficulty focusing on a task for study or for work, I went to the Gohonzon and chanted.

On every occasion my life responded with the actions necessary for success.

Never assume that you can't. No matter what your age, your circumstances or your previous history of procrastination, shortsightedness or seeming stupidity (pardon me for transferring my history to you), determine that you can. Set your prayers and actions to accomplishing your goal, and you will.

Upon graduating I was told that I would never receive a promotion or be offered a job at any college or university in North Carolina as long as I am a Buddhist. However, for two years I co-taught a course with Dr. Boone at North Carolina State University. I am the head administrator for the North Carolina Department of Corrections where I manage the curriculum for criminal justice certification, providing classes in human relations, diversity, ethics and computer training. I was asked to present Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to the fifty-seven chaplains for the Department of Corrections. On my job, I have expanded an academy that was once housed in an abandoned prison into a five-campus academy with each campus having new facilities that serve the five regions of North Carolina. I have founded an international research institution and serve as its president: a loosely connected group of scholars who are interested in education's impact on people. We research and present papers at conferences. I use Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's educational theories as a basis for my research. Last year there were two members and this year there are sixteen.

I have participated as a panelist at interfaith seminars and presented perspectives of life and death based upon Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I am a member of one of North Carolina's Education and Training Standards Committees. I am being afforded so many opportunities to teach and learn. I experience the concept of teacher-as-student/student-as-teacher on a daily basis. I do not have to be employed by a college or university to exercise my skills as an educator.

President Ikeda has on more than one occasion stressed the noble concept that a university is not a place or set of buildings; rather it is anywhere that learning for the sake of humanity takes place. "Learning

is the very purpose of human life...” he states in his recent views on education (*Living Buddhism*, February 2001, p. 15). He further states: “If we are to build a society that serves the essential needs of education in the twenty-first century, we must not become divided or isolated. Rather, we must deepen human bonds that transform differences” (Ibid., p. 18).

If a college or university does not come to me then I will go to the University of Humanity, and like Dr. Boone and President Ikeda, share my life with others in mutual learning experiences that transform differences and break through the barriers of bias.

Because I responded to one person who said “don’t be foolish, go and learn,” I have created new doors of opportunity in my life. Because I took action to seek out and listen to my mentor, I learned to open those doors. Because I challenged my life by setting a goal and praying for wisdom and strength of action to accomplish that goal, I have moved through those doors to create even newer doors. And because I practice in the SGI under the tutelage of President Ikeda, I can more readily see the true nature of things and take action to create harmony where there is dissonance and gain the trust of those with whom I work.

Every positive aspect of my doctoral studies is a direct result of my faith and practice in Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism within the SGI-USA. More than the learning that took place in the classroom is the learning that took place in my life through the process of challenging myself. And because my faith and practice provided the determination to succeed, I have won this victory and accomplished an important goal in my life.

President Ikeda offered these words of encouragement (*World Tribune*, September 29, 2000, p. 12):

*Do not envy others; instead praise them!
Do not resent others; instead surpass them!
Summon your courage, and work cheerfully!
Do what needs to be done! Do it now!
Focus always on the present!
For only in the present exists eternity!
I am determined to apply these words to my life.*

In his poem “Soar ~ Into the Vast Skies of Freedom! Into the New Century!” (*World Tribune*,



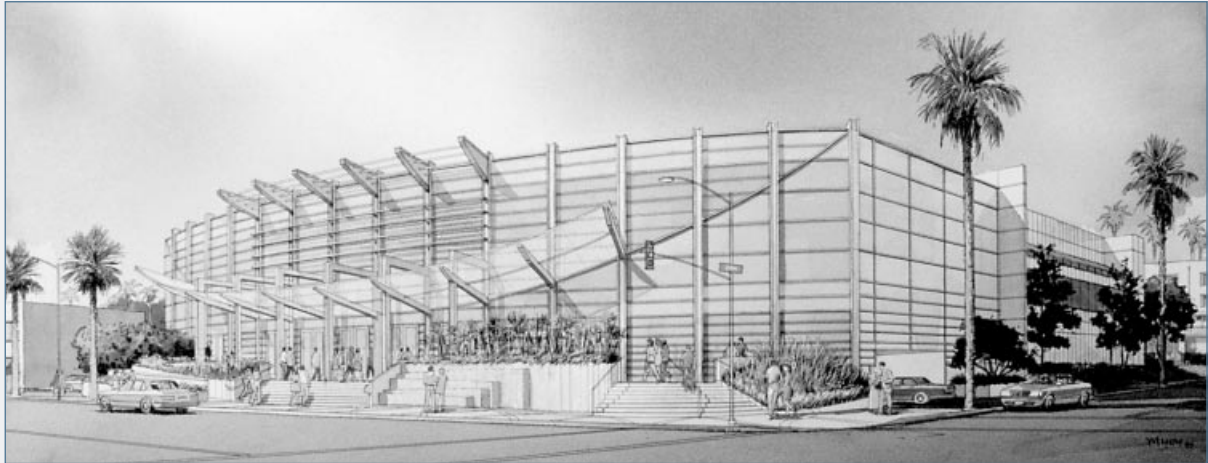
At 51, while working full time and caring for his family, Mike Evers received his doctorate degree in adult and higher education administration in less than two years from North Carolina State University under the tutelage of his mentor, Dr. Boone.

August 11, 2000, pp. 6–7), President Ikeda also says:

*“More effectively than countless doctoral theses,
you are sharing with others the profound and subtle
teachings of Buddhism.
Off in the distance, there may be those who criticize
us with wan, foolish, sarcastic smiles.
Concealing the pain of their own hearts,
they watch with longing and envy
— our lives, shining with commitment and courage...
The malicious acts directed against us ...
only bring suffering upon their authors.*

The person who told me that as a Buddhist I would not be promoted or hired into a new job has since become my friend. He has attended several Buddhist meetings and chanted with me. That person has given me cause to rise above the bias and prejudice shown to me and to surpass it with cheerful courage.

I am eternally grateful to Professor Kimata, Dr. Boone, my wife Yoshiko, President Ikeda and my fellow SGI members. Without their support and encouragement, I may have let this goal remain a dream. I’m much too young not to have dreams and goals, but not too old to win. ☸



An architect's drawing of renovations to the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium scheduled to be opened in 2001.

What are the SGI & Living Buddhism Magazine?

Living Buddhism is the study journal for Soka Gakkai International-USA (SGI-USA), an American Buddhist movement that promotes peace and individual happiness based on the philosophy and practice of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism. SGI-USA works in association with 75 other SGI organizations comprising members in more than half the world's countries. SGI-USA activities are driven by our understanding of the inseparable link between individual happiness and the peace and prosperity of our diverse communities. Our religious teachings place the highest emphasis on the sanctity of life.

Through their Buddhist faith and practice, our members aim to improve their lives by taking up the challenge to create value, to live without fear, to take responsibility for their circumstances, to care for their families and to live with compassion for others.

What we believe...

Our core philosophy is expressed in the concept of human revolution, a process of inner transformation that centers on the idea that the causes we make through our thoughts, words and actions have influence that extends beyond their immediate context to affect the vast and complex web of life. Through undergoing our individual human revolution, we awaken to the responsibility we each have for our own circumstances and for our environment. Our inner transformation will lead us to take the actions that bring about personal fulfillment and help us contribute to the harmony and healthy development of society. These ideals are based on the Buddhist worldview of dependent origination, a concept of interrelation where all things in the realms of humanity and nature are dependent upon each other for their existence and nothing can exist in isolation.

The Buddhist tradition...

The roots of the SGI-USA worldview can be traced to the teachings of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, who lived some 2,500 years ago in what is modern-day Nepal. His enlightenment to eternal, universal reality was most succinctly articulated

in the Lotus Sutra. Following Shakyamuni's death, the Lotus Sutra spread through Central Asia into China and Japan.

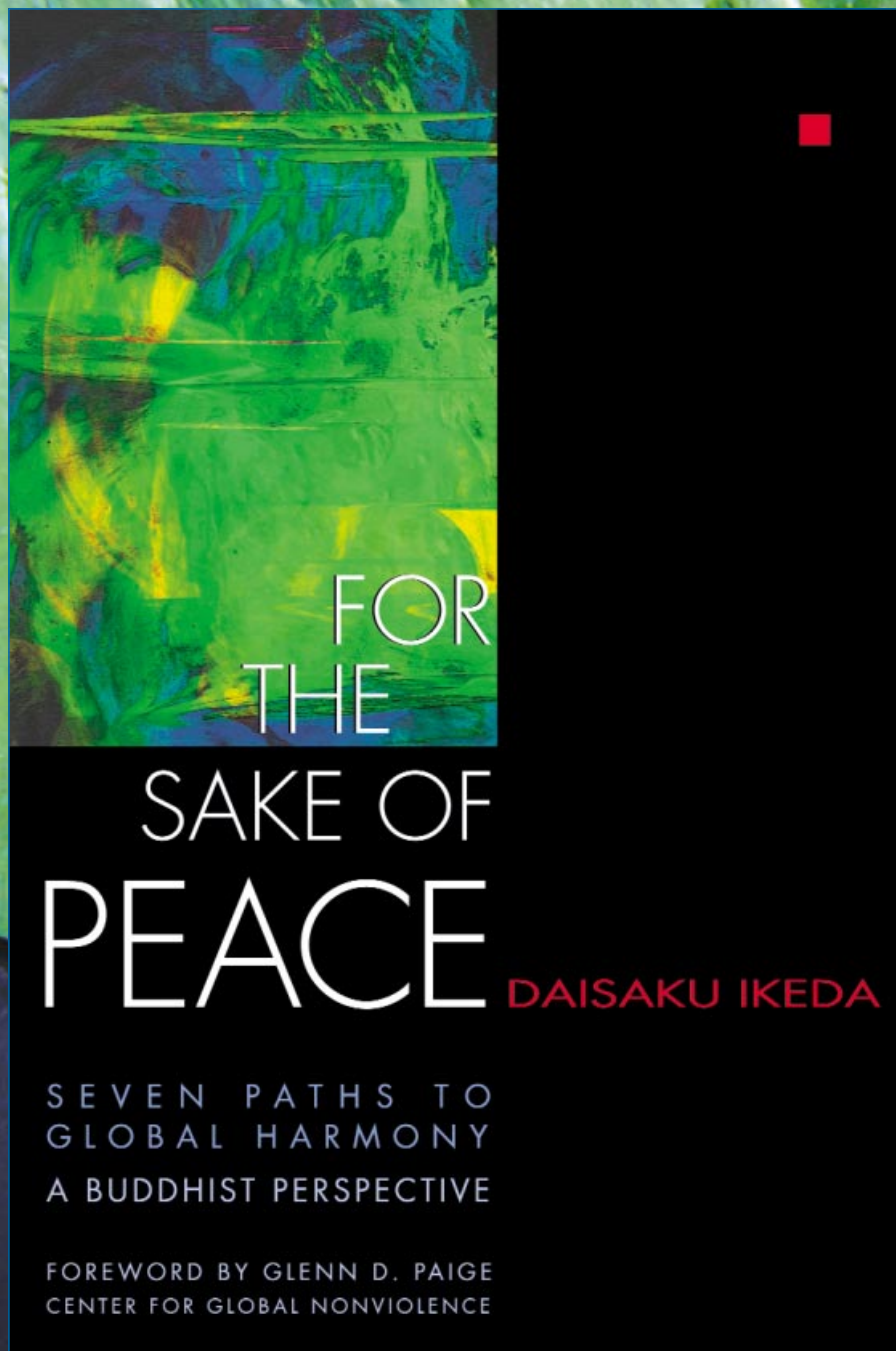
In the 13th century, Nichiren Daishonin revealed the truth hidden in the Lotus Sutra. According to Nichiren Buddhism, the workings of the universe are an expression of a single principle or Law — Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, the title and essence of the Lotus Sutra. By putting their lives in rhythm with this Law, individuals can unlock their hidden potential — the Buddha nature — and achieve creative harmony with the environment. Nichiren Buddhism is a vehicle of individual empowerment — that is, individuals have within themselves, the power to transform the inevitable sufferings of life into happiness and to be a positive influence in the community.

The SGI Heritage...

The SGI organization has its origin in the educational theory of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, whose quest to understand the deepest meaning of life eventually led to his encounter with Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Here, he discovered a philosophy that recognized and sought to develop the wisdom inherent in all human beings. The term *soka gakkai* (value-creation society) was first used by Makiguchi in 1930 when he founded the lay organization. During World War II, Makiguchi and his disciple Josei Toda were imprisoned for their opposition to the war. Makiguchi died in prison within eighteen months at the age of 73. After the war, Toda rebuilt the organization and it achieved remarkable growth until his death in 1958. On May 3, 1960, Daisaku Ikeda became the third president. Under his leadership, the organization has grown to its present membership of 12 million in 163 countries and territories.

Based on the humanistic principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, SGI President Ikeda has founded the Soka School System which includes universities in Japan and the United States. He is also the founder of the Toda Peace Institute, the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, and more. He is the author of numerous books that have been translated into many languages and has received world-wide recognition for his peace efforts.

New from Middleway Press



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Looking up from the lobby of Founders Hall on the campus of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo

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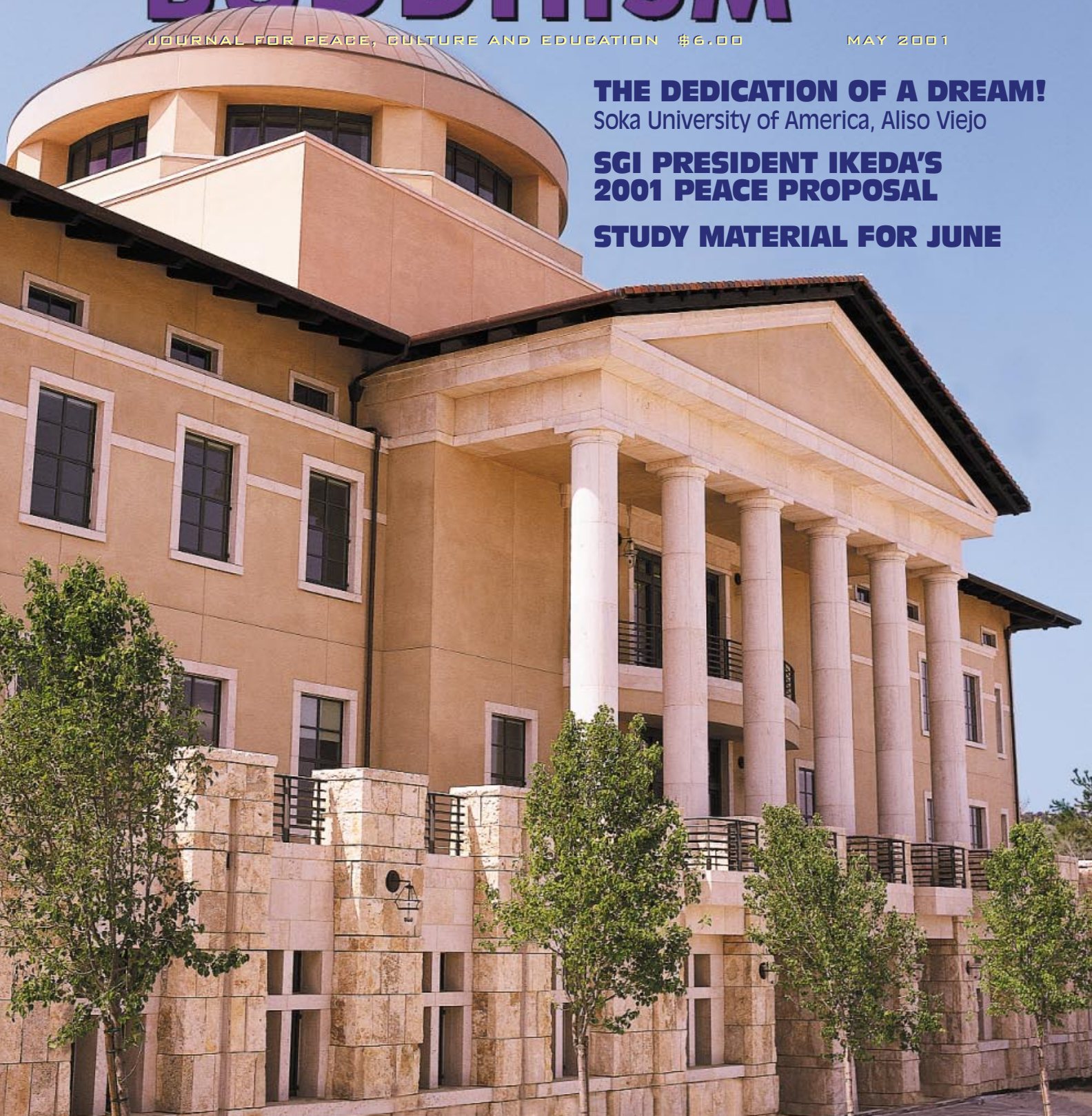
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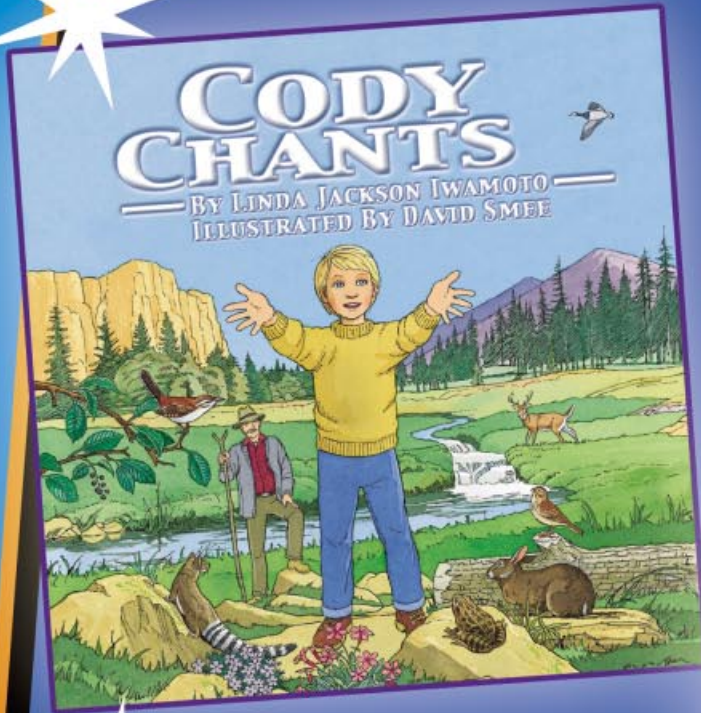
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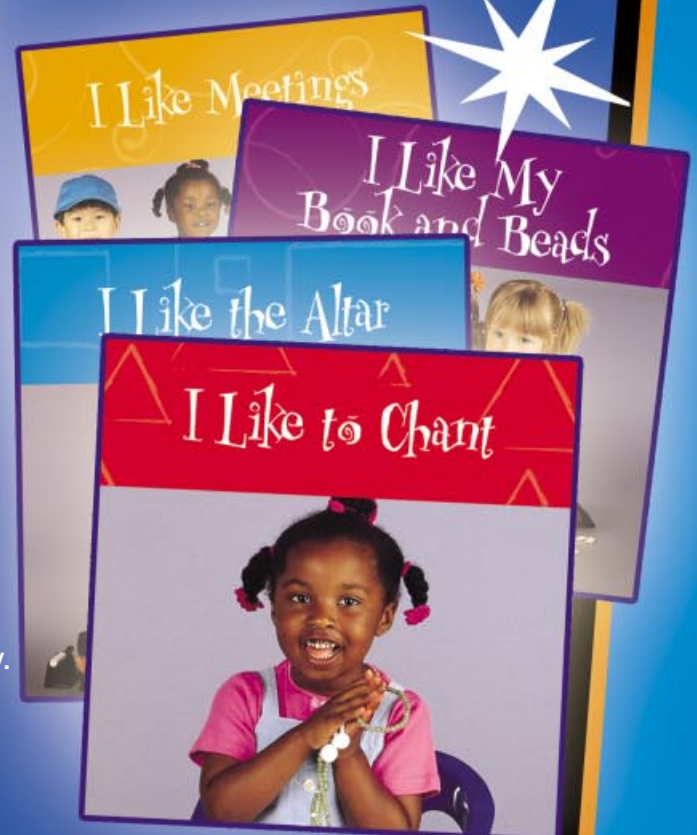
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