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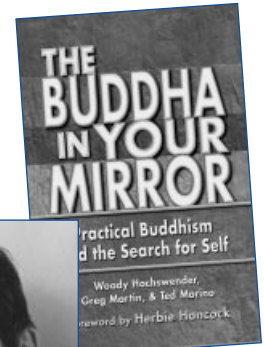
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Cover: Honored speakers at the dedication ceremonies for Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo (see page 21). From top, left to right: Dr. Lawrence Carter Sr. of Morehouse College (see page 11); Benjamin Lin incoming student from Singapore; Carmen Vall, chair of Aliso Viejo City Council-elect; Dr. Daniel Habuki, president of SUA, Dr. Eric Hauber, vice president for enrollment services and long-range planning; Naomi Yamamoto incoming student from Japan; Dr. Linus Pauling Jr.; Dr. Gail E. Thomas, vice president for institutional assessment and professor of sociology; Dr. Alfred Balitzer, dean of faculty and professor of political science.

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From Our Readers

IMMUTABLE KARMA

Thank you for publishing my experience in the April issue [“The Power of a Mother’s Prayer”]. The response from friends, family and colleagues has been fantastic. My prayer was to encourage many people with my family’s victory.

I would like to emphasize my absolute certainty that my Buddhist practice changed immutable karma. Janelle’s name went straight to the top of the transplant list because she faced certain death without a liver transplant within a few days. That she received one so quickly was evidence of the rhythm and fortune we gain through our practice.

Also, for anyone who faces a difficult and prolonged struggle like mine, I recommend keeping a diary. I started mine in 1990 when I was encouraged to create my own personal history of kosen-rufu. My diary has been a therapeutic tool and a record of benefit that never ceases to amaze me.

Kim Hawkins, Newbury Park, California

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-enge-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-enge-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-

enge-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-enge-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.

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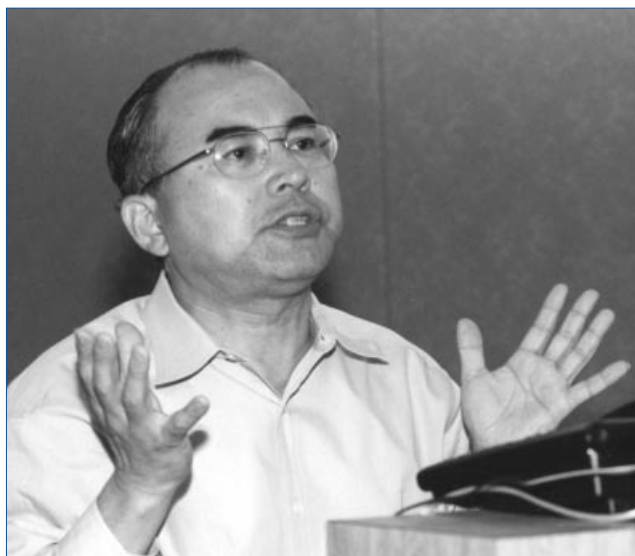
For convenience, all citations from the following works will be given in the text and abbreviated as follows after the first listing:

— *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.

FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



The vision or promise of Soka education is not only for those young people who are able to attend Soka University. It is a vision for the cultivation of character, a vision for young people developing their insight, wisdom and values, in order to create a new age of humanism, peace and culture.

AN ENDURING MONUMENT *of Humanity and Justice*

Greetings to the readers of *Living Buddhism!* As you have seen from the reports in the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, the opening of the Aliso Viejo campus of Soka University of America took place with great success last month. I felt privileged to participate in the opening events. Seventy-five members of the first class were also present. Their enthusiasm and open-heartedness inspired me. I was so happy to be around this group of hope-filled youth, and when I looked into their eyes, I truly felt I could see a new age being born.

I met SGI friends from all over the United States — actually, from all over the world. The dedication events of May 3 were like a beautiful family reunion, and people who had been working together in different places for many years were reunited in a celebration of their dream and their mentor's dream. I felt like I was attending the “ceremony in the air” described in the Lotus Sutra.

Dr. Lawrence Carter, Dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta, spoke during the opening ceremony. He also delivered a public lecture in which he expressed his hopes for Soka education (see pages 11–16). The main point was that the purpose of education is to enable people to “ascend to democracy’s crown,” or to become worthy of the highest promises of democracy. This is certainly true of education in general, but it is particularly the aspiration of Soka University of America, which aims to foster world citizens and leaders of humanism with a global outlook. Dr. Carter’s speech expressed a deep understanding of the heart of Soka education — the cultivation of human wisdom and ability in the creation of a new age.

While I was on the campus for those few days, I had the opportunity to reflect on the vision of the university’s founder, SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, and on the goals of Soka education as expressed by Dr. Carter.

...he is teaching us that Buddhists do not separate themselves from the problems of society — the practice of Buddhism is a living philosophy deeply connected to our efforts in society.

In his message to the opening, President Ikeda says: “To bequeath to humankind an eternally enduring monument of humanity and justice, an imperishable bastion for the culture of peace — this was the burning desire of the first and second presidents of the Soka Gakkai. I believe that has been the anguished cry and hope of all those whose rights and lives have been trampled by violence and tyranny. Soka University of America has been built in an effort to fulfill those hopes and dreams” (May 18 *World Tribune*, p. 4).

While many people unfamiliar with Buddhism may view it as a monastic religion, with an emphasis on meditation and removed from the affairs of the world, we, within the SGI, understand that the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism is the spirit of engaged compassion. In other words, when Nichiren Daishonin taught Buddhism, it was with the spirit of engaging with the problems of society, not distancing himself from them. In his famous treatise, “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land,” Nichiren expresses his passionate concern for secular matters by saying “I cannot keep silent on this matter. I cannot suppress my fears” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 7).

In saying this, he is teaching us that Buddhists do not separate themselves from the problems of society — the practice of Buddhism is a living philosophy deeply connected to our efforts in society.

It is this spirit of engaged compassion, of taking action for the people, that is the motivating force of the Soka Gakkai. As President Ikeda said in his message, building a “monument of humanity and justice” was the ardent hope of the first and second

presidents of the Soka Gakkai. The “monument” he refers to is an educational institution, but I believe that the worldwide SGI movement is also such a monument and “bastion for the culture of peace.” In that sense, the project of education — the task of inspiring and cultivating young people with a sense of purpose and vision — is very much the task of Buddhism, and it is very much the heart of the SGI.

I believe this is why President Ikeda has dedicated so much of his life to the field of education.

The vision or promise of Soka education is not only for those young people who are able to attend Soka University. It is a vision for the cultivation of character, a vision for young people developing their insight, wisdom and values, in order to create a new age of humanism, peace and culture. All of us, in our own spheres of endeavor, have a role to play in this.

In our families, we can encourage each other to develop our innate capacities. At our places of work, we can foster an atmosphere of support and care which cherishes the unique contributions of each individual. In so many ways, we can work for the happiness of ourselves and other people. I believe that not only is this part of the founding spirit of Soka University of America, it is also the spirit of each of us and the way that we can make the vision of the founder part of our own lives.

Thank you very much!

Daniel K. Nagashima



SGI-USA General Director

“The Saha World Is the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light”

THE DRAMA OF SUFFERING LEADS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Each of us possesses infinite life force. We are individual “gold mines” with limitless resources embedded within our lives that need only be tapped. These stores of riches have always been there and are ours for the taking — if we use our Buddhist faith and practice to “mine” them. When times are good and we’re riding high, this may make perfect sense. But what about when we’re facing difficulties? When problems arise, do we remember our potential, our internal treasures?

The purpose of faith is to reveal that potential whether life gives us roses or thorns. It’s during difficult times that our faith is tested. It is when we’re facing seemingly colossal problems and feeling overwhelmed that it’s most challenging to squarely face our hardships. Losing sight of our Buddhahood, we can start to unravel and begin to doubt ourselves. Or we sometimes give in to complaint and blame others or the environment for our problems. We long for a more carefree existence, a life without problems. We want to escape.

As Buddhists, we learn that amid the challenge of facing and overcoming our problems, while painful at the outset, exists the opportunity to tap our most precious resources that will eventually lead us to our greatest happiness. This chaotic world we live in is fertile earth for the revelation of our enlightenment. This concept in Buddhism is known as “the *saha* world is the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light.”

The Sanskrit word *saha* means to endure. This endurance refers to a life filled with suffering that stems from greed, anger, foolishness and other earthly desires. The “Land of Eternally Tranquil Light” connotes the Buddha’s land. The Buddha’s

enlightened wisdom is often compared to light. Together the phrases imply that the mundane world in which we live is, itself, the Buddha land.

According to the pre-Lotus Sutra scriptures, Shakyamuni taught that the world we live in was an impure land filled with suffering and earthly desires, completely separate from the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light in which Buddhas were said to have lived. There was no hope of attaining enlightenment unless we were reborn into a “pure land.”

So why did Shakyamuni teach this? At the time, it was an expedient means or a way to arouse the seeking spirit of the believers who were interested only in secular desires.

In a world riddled with problems and earthly desires, is it really possible to ever become happy, let alone enlightened? How do we counteract our escapist tendencies?

Later in the “Life Span” chapter of the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni clearly refutes his previous teaching: “Ever since then I have been constantly in this *saha* world, preaching the Law, teaching and converting. And elsewhere I have led and benefited living beings in hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas and asamkhyas of lands” (LS16, 225).

He clarifies that the *saha* world is where the Buddha preaches the Law to help people overcome their sufferings. Renouncing his princely status, Shakyamuni spent his entire life traveling throughout India talking with people and sharing his enlightenment.

Similarly, Nichiren Daishonin states in the “Record of the Orally Transmitted Teachings”: “It is not the case that he [the practitioner of the Lotus Sutra] leaves his place and goes to some other

place.... Now the places where Nichiren and his followers chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, be they 'mountain valleys' or 'wilderness,' are all the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 781).

Here the Daishonin teaches that in order to attain enlightenment, rather than seek fulfillment in some other realm, we chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo where we are and make that place the Buddha land. As we each grapple with our reality, "the saha world thereupon immediately changed into a place of cleanness and purity" (LS11, 173).

In spite of numerous death threats, nearly being beheaded and exiled, Nichiren Daishonin tirelessly devoted his life to the cause of human happiness. He revealed the Mystic Law as the way all people could also become enlightened, and one by one encouraged his disciples through letters, leaving behind his written teachings for all generations to come.

In prison, second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda thoroughly studied the Lotus Sutra as well as Nichiren Daishonin's teachings and chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Prison was where he attained enlightenment, making his place of confinement the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. When he was released, he spent the rest of his life teaching others how to apply Buddhism to overcoming their problems in daily life.

Josei Toda wrote the following poem in prison:

*My master left this world,
offering his life like Yakuo
How can I who remain
serve the Buddha's will?*

*All that is left to me
— the pure flower of life itself —
I will break from its stalk in offering
to repay my country and my friends.*

(*The Human Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 160)

Shakyamuni and Nichiren Daishonin — and in fact, the three founding Soka Gakkai presidents Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda — have shown how ordinary human beings can transform their sufferings into joy. And by remaining

in this world and "preaching the Law" they helped other people find happiness. They did not shrink from their sufferings. Instead, they recognized their difficulties as the means to prove the existence of the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. As SGI members and Bodhisattvas of the Earth we have the same potential and many have and still are brilliantly transforming their lives. Winning over our problems is the way to prove the power of our Buddhist practice to our friends and families and all suffering people.

SGI President Ikeda often reminds us that we are enacting a great drama on the stage of kosen-rufu. He quotes his mentor: "President Toda often said: 'Someone who is too exemplary from the outset cannot go among the people. To spread Buddhism, we intentionally chose to be born as people who are poor or sick.' 'Life is like appearing in a play,' he would say" (*The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, vol. 2, p. 208).

No matter what struggles we are currently enduring, the key is to face them with a positive attitude and confidence that they are part of our "drama for kosen-rufu." Since we can never divorce ourselves from this suffering world, no matter how hard we try, why not stop suffering as "escape artists" and become the protagonists in our personal dramas? As we learn to transform the reality of suffering with a sense of purpose, we can also develop a tremendous sense of freedom and power in that we are in control of how we act in relation to our environment. In doing so, we develop total fulfillment because everything is a source of growth. It is not a relative happiness, but a long-lasting one that emerges from the deeper regions of the self through faith. It is not dependent on one's external circumstances or environment.

As we go about our everyday business in the saha world, our Buddhist practice of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and helping others is the way to enlightenment. And no matter how difficult our lives may become or painful our experiences in the world around us, we challenge our difficulties with the determination to turn our lives and society into the "Land of Eternally Tranquil Light." ☸

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

Living the Teachings (6)

Arrogance Is the Beginning of the End

BY FRED ZAITSU, PUBLISHER

When I was a reporter working for the Soka Gakkai newspaper *Seikyo Shimbun* in Tokyo during the 1960s, I had a boss who made me want to quit. As a young man new to the job, I knew I had plenty to learn. During my years working on the paper, I had many instances where my work was corrected. As was the custom at that time, we received strict training in order to develop our potential. For our own sake, our shortcomings were not treated lightly. Most of the time, my superiors were trying to help me learn and improve—I could sense where they were coming from. But this one managing editor was different.

When I made a mistake he would yell at me sometimes for up to an hour. He would scream and curse and degrade me horribly. He told me I was stupid and to go to hell. I was so discouraged one time, I almost wanted to die.

“Now, if you wish to attain Buddhahood, you have only to lower the banner of your arrogance, cast aside the staff of your anger, and devote yourself exclusively to the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. Worldly fame and profit are mere baubles of your present existence, and arrogance and prejudice are ties that will fetter you in the next one. Ah, you should be ashamed of them! And you should fear them, too!”

“Questions and Answers about Embracing the Lotus Sutra”

(The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin, pp. 58–59)

That night, I went out with some co-workers for a couple of beers. I told them I couldn't take it anymore. I was so upset I wanted to punch him in the face and walk out. But my friends encouraged me to not be defeated.

Later, I realized that this boss's behavior was an expression of his arrogance. He was bolstering his feeling of superiority by belittling me. In the Buddhist concept of the Ten Worlds, arrogance is a function of the world of Anger (Jpn *asura*), although it is not always expressed through the emotion of anger. *Asura* actually represents a state of belligerence or war-like behavior. An arrogant person looks down on others in an attempt to prop up his or her self-esteem. It is a harmful attitude, especially to those who express it. Eventually, this boss left his job and turned against the Soka Gakkai.

SGI President Ikeda constantly warns leaders not to think they are better than others. His message is that leaders should serve the members.

In describing the forces that oppose propagation of the Law, the Lotus Sutra elucidates “three powerful enemies.” All three are labeled as arrogant: arrogant lay people, arrogant monks and arrogant high-ranking priests. People who behave arrogantly are antithetical to the teachings of Buddhism.

Sensing that his death was near in the autumn of 1282, Nichiren Daishonin made final preparations to perpetuate the Buddhism he founded: he designated Nikko Shonin as his successor in September 1282. The following month, he named six senior disciples, including Nikko Shonin, and entrusted them with the propagation of his teachings. Early on October 13, he appointed Nikko Shonin as chief priest of Kuon-ji temple at Mount Minobu and urged all believers to follow him. Nichiren Daishonin died later that day.

At first, Nikko Shonin was accepted as the chief priest of the temple at Minobu. But soon, all five of his fellow senior priests turned against him, betrayed the Daishonin and propounded their own teachings. What force could be so powerful as to turn all five from the correct path? I think in the end, it was arrogance. Arrogant people cannot grasp the mentor-disciple relationship because they cannot accept the equality of themselves and others. They view the mentor as superior and are inclined to tear him or her down, or they view themselves as superior. Therefore, they are not receptive to the mentor’s message. This is a challenge we all face — overcoming the arrogance of our lesser ego. The question is, “How do we overcome our arrogance?”

A few years after I was appointed SGI-USA general director, I was in Japan at a dinner with President Ikeda. I asked him, “How can I help the SGI-USA to grow?” I thought he might dismiss such a simple question from the general director. But he didn’t. He looked at me very seriously for a moment and said: “Pray for the members’ happiness. For more than forty years I have prayed deeply every single day for the health, prosperity, safety and happiness of each member. This is the foundation of the SGI.”

My first thought was, “I already pray for the members’ happiness.” My own arrogance made me feel a little defensive at first. But I chanted and thought

about it. I realized that President Ikeda was talking about the depth of prayer. It seems simple, but I came to understand this point more profoundly — that if the members are happy, if they show proof of their Buddhist practice in their lives, then our organization will naturally become more warm and humanistic and people will want to join us.

Praying for the happiness of others is what the SGI is all about. This is a lifelong challenge to overcome our self-centered arrogance and develop compassion. In *Faith into Action*, President Ikeda says: “The moment we forget to have a humble seeking mind and instead come to see ourselves as intrinsically great, our ruin begins. This is as true of leaders in the organization as it is of people with social status” (p. 162).

At the same time, we have to stand strong against those who would mislead our fellow members. To have compassion for members and to take action for justice are two sides of the same coin. Sometimes humility or absolute self-confidence may be appropriate depending on the circumstances. But arrogance is not the way of a Buddha. In “Dialogue on the Lotus Sutra,” President Ikeda says: “A Buddha is one who has awakened to the truth that all people are potentially Buddhas. A Buddha’s enlightenment is none other than this. There is therefore no such thing as a Buddha who is arrogant or who looks down on others. Such behavior would indicate that one is not the genuine article” (*Living Buddhism*, October 2000, p. 30).

In “Letter to the Sage Nichimyo,” the Daishonin writes:

“Bodhisattva Never Disparaging was for many years cursed and humiliated [because] he venerated them by uttering the twenty-four characters that read: ‘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’” (WND, 322).

It is always easier to see the arrogance in others than it is to see it in ourselves. So it must be our lifelong challenge to overcome our innate arrogance, the nature of the devil king of the sixth heaven, within our own lives. ☸

What Is **Evil** in Buddhism?

BY FRED ZAITSU, PUBLISHER

The following question-and-answer essay is mostly the result of a letter to the editor from Lisa Jones of West Hollywood, California, regarding Fred Zaitzu's article in the April issue. We are planning to address these and similar subjects in future issues.

“When we talk about differences among various schools of Nichiren Buddhism, terms such as evil and betrayal usually come into play. While these terms may be accurate, are they the most effective words for us to use today?”

Terms such as *evil* or *devil* are used in the context of the Buddhist belief in the absolute sanctity of all life. In the Western Judeo-Christian context, words such as *evil* can have different connotations; therefore, how we use them is important. Everyone possesses both fundamental darkness and fundamental enlightenment. These two forces, one of self-destruction that says life isn't worth living and one of life-affirmation and the pursuit of life's potential, are inherent in life.

What is considered *evil* is anything that diminishes or contradicts the dignity of life. The purpose of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is to lead people to enlightenment or Buddhahood — the full development of human happiness and the perfect expression of the dignity and sanctity of life. From the Daishonin's point of view, teachings that lead people away from this path are *evil*. But even this strict view is based on compassion and not blanket condemnation. He states clearly that not pointing out mistaken views shows a lack of compassion.

There are several Japanese words that can be translated as *evil* depending on context. In the thesis “On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land,” he says, “Rather than offering up ten

thousand prayers for remedy, it would be better simply to outlaw this one *evil* [Jpn *kyo*]” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 15). The word *kyo* (different character from other words sounding the same) can mean diabolical, heinous, fiendish, etc. In “Many in Body, One in Mind,” Nichiren Daishonin writes, “Though evils may be numerous, they cannot prevail over a single great truth, just as many raging fires are quenched by a single shower of rain” (WND, 618). In this quote, the Japanese word translated as *evil* is *aku*, which can mean wrong or bad. The Japanese word *ja* can also be translated as *evil*, twisted or wicked, depending on context. The word *evil* appears numerous times in *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*.

As for the word *betrayal*, those disciples who deviated from Nichiren Daishonin's intent, proposed their own teachings and became hostile to his successor Nikko Shonin, did indeed betray him. But in the world of Buddhism, even one's enemies can function in a positive manner. Nichiren Daishonin referred to those who persecuted him as “good friends,” for they enabled him to prove his true identity and fulfill his mission. Mistaken views and attacks from opposing parties can help clarify one's position and beliefs.

Nevertheless, he was very strict toward those who misinterpreted the Law or slandered those who propagated it. In betraying him, they also betrayed the Law and damaged their relationship to it. In “The Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life,” the Daishonin

encourages his disciples to be unified in chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. “This spiritual bond is the basis for the universal transmission of the ultimate Law of life and death.... But if any of Nichiren’s disciples disrupt the unity of many in body but one in mind, they would be like warriors who destroy their own castle from within” (WND, 217).

“Who are we referring to when we refer to the Fuji school? Does the SGI consider itself to be the Fuji school?”

The SGI practices Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism based on his writings and teachings and those of his legitimate successor, Nikko Shonin, who founded the Fuji school. The ups and downs of the school’s efforts to carry on the original intent of Nichiren Daishonin and Nikko Shonin are recounted in *The Untold History of the Fuji School*. The Soka Gakkai has been a separate entity, both legal and otherwise, from the Fuji school (renamed Nichiren Shoshu in 1912). That affiliation ended in 1991 when High Priest Nikken Abe proposed views that were no longer those of the founder and excommunicated the SGI membership, calling for the organization dedicated to kosen-rufu to disband.

In spite of its failings, the Fuji school did preserve the Dai-Gohonzon and many of the Daishonin’s writings for seven hundred years. It often appeared that the Law had to preserve itself at times. Hence the importance of high priests such as the twenty-sixth, Nichikan, who restored the school to its original path. But, in a sense, the term *Fuji school* signifies more than a “school”—it is the heritage of the founder, Nichiren Daishonin, and that exists in faith alone.

“Is there any mention of the Dai-Gohonzon in The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin?”

In “On Persecution Befalling the Sage” (WND, 996), Nichiren Daishonin clearly states that it took twenty-seven years for him to fulfill the purpose of his advent, indicating October 1279. Within SGI, this statement is understood as a refer-

ence to the Dai-Gohonzon of the second year of Koan, and therefore constitutes documentary proof.

A passage from “On Establishing the Four Bodhisattvas as the Object of Devotion,” written on May 5, 1279, to Toki Jonin, reads: “Now that we have entered the Latter Day of the Law, an object of devotion should be made of the original Buddha flanked by his original attendants, since, according to the Buddha’s golden words, this is the most appropriate time. Because this age corresponds to the predicted time, the Bodhisattvas of the Earth will appear soon and establish an object of devotion of the four bodhisattvas. Now is truly the proper time” (WND, 977).

This was written just five months prior to his statement “for me it took twenty-seven years” to fulfill the purpose of his advent. It is apparent that he did not believe that the ultimate object of devotion had been created yet. But he definitely feels the time is near.

His successor, Nikko Shonin writes in the transfer document, “Articles Regarding the Succession of Nikko,” the original of which is kept at Taisei-ji, as follows:

“The Dai-Gohonzon inscribed in the second year of Koan (1279), which was bestowed upon me, Nikko, is to be transferred to Nichimoku. It should be enshrined at the Honmonji Temple” (tentative translation, *Soka Gakkai Bukkyo Tetsugaku Daijiten, Dictionary of Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 1294–95).

Nichiren Daishonin never referred to himself as Daishonin (great sage), but that does not prevent us from having faith that he is a “great sage.” The Daishonin did not specifically use the term Dai-Gohonzon, but Nikko Shonin certainly did. The Daishonin’s disciples commonly understood that revealing the Law of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and establishing the Dai-Gohonzon was the purpose of his advent. This is the foundation of our faith and efforts for kosen-rufu.

These references are regarded by the SGI as the basis for our faith in that specific Gohonzon. We believe in the Gohonzon and exert ourselves for kosen-rufu to attain Buddhahood and establish world peace. This is Nichiren Daishonin’s will and the SGI has been fulfilling this mission. ☸

GROWING UP INTO DEMOCRACY'S CROWN

Be the Change You Wish to See



Dr. Carter, with SGI President Ikeda in Tokyo, is the first person to serve as guest lecturer at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo.

Seikyo Press

The following speech was given on May 4, 2001, at the “Celebration of Soka University and the City of Aliso Viejo” held at SUA.

BY LAWRENCE EDWARD CARTER SR., PH.D.

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America became a reality with this pronouncement: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [and women] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

When our founding fathers penned these words 225 years ago, they pointed us in the direction of democracy and inclusiveness. Since then, there have been those among us who keep bringing us back to the grand and noble idea of democracy.

Mohandas Karamchand “Mahatma” Gandhi, believed to be the greatest world leader of the twentieth century, once said: “Civilization is the encouragement of differences. Civilization thus becomes a synonym of democracy. Force, violence, pressure or compulsion with a view to conformity is, therefore,

both uncivilized and undemocratic.”

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the leader of the civil rights movement in the United States, also understood the deep well of democracy and wanted the “world house” to drink from that well. King said: “We have inherited a large house, a great ‘world house’ in which we have to live together — black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Moslem and Hindu, [Buddhist and Bedouin] — a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.”

Learning to Live in Peace

How do we learn to live in peace? How do we learn to live the lessons of democracy? Thomas Jefferson said democracy cannot survive with an ignorant population. For centuries, we have depended on our insti-



Bethmann/CORBIS

W. E. B. DuBois believed that the university's purpose is to provide a link between real life and the growing knowledge of life, thereby forming the secret of civilization.

tutions of higher education to teach us community, humanity, service and happiness.

W. E. B. DuBois,¹ whom I believe to be the greatest sociologist ever produced on American soil, once said: "The function of the university is not simply to teach breadwinning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools or to be a center of polite society. It is,

above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization."

And so for the sake of democracy envisioned by our forefathers, for the sake of civilization as conceived by Gandhi and for the sake of civil rights imagined by King, we need new educational institutions to teach us SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's civility for the uplift of all human personality and the environment. We need Ikeda's Soka University of

America to help us grow up into democracy's crown.

You may ask, Why? I ask, Why not?

Why not Daisaku Ikeda's idea of a university founded to use the power of education to promote respect and peaceful coexistence around the world? Why not an American educational institution built on the philosophy of peace, a philosophy that emphasizes the need for human bonding with the natural world, the need for community and the need for character-nurturing education? To paraphrase a popular 1960s song, why not give a pedagogy of peace a chance?

We can, if we think outside the box.

The Reverend Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays, whom Martin Luther King Jr. called his spiritual and intellectual mentor, was admitted to Bates College in Maine on probation. He went on to pursue four concentrations and graduated with honors. In 1950, fifteen years after he received his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago, Mays was inducted by his undergraduate alma mater, Bates College, into Phi Beta Kappa, when its national chapter voted not to be racist. His 1935 doctoral dissertation, *The Negroes God*, is still in print and hailed as a classic. Today Dr. Mays is considered one of the most published college presidents in American history and is referred to as "walking integrity."

Think what we might have missed if Bates College had not thought outside the box — if the equivalent of affirmative action (equity) had not

A College and Life Dedicated to Students

Morehouse College was founded in 1867 as the Augusta Institute with the purpose of preparing students for teaching and the ministry. It is the nation's only private, historically black, four-year, liberal arts college for men. Morehouse College is ranked number one on the Black Enterprise list of Top 50 Best Colleges for African-Americans. The college houses the Morehouse Research Institute and the Journal of Negro History. It is also home to the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel, where Dr. Lawrence Carter has served as dean since 1979.

In addition to serving as dean of the chapel, Dr.

Carter teaches Psychology of Religion, Religion and Ethics, Introduction to Religion and The Life and Thought of Martin Luther King Jr. He is also the archivist and curator of Morehouse College. For the past thirty-nine years, Dr. Carter has studied and worked in thirteen American universities, colleges and professional schools, spoken at sixty colleges, universities and seminars and received more than 300 speaking engagements from eighteen denominations in the United States and overseas. He has made more than fifty radio and television appearances, including Thames Television in London and has traveled to nineteen foreign countries.



Flip Schulke/CORBIS

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks at a rally in Selma, Alabama. He entered Morehouse College with a “C” average and an eighth-grade reading level. Dr. Carter wonders what we might have missed if Morehouse did not think beyond the standard of admitting students based solely on academic merit.

been practiced by the college in 1918 or if it had used the standard of pure merit for admitting Mays.

Dr. Mays went on to become the sixth president of Morehouse College, where he mentored generations of young men — including Dr. King — and led that institution in thinking outside the box. Morehouse admitted Dr. King at the age of fifteen from the tenth grade in high school. He entered with an eighth-grade reading level and graduated with a “C” average. We should keep this in mind when we are reading his brilliant “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” We are still a family “unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest,” and we don’t all blossom at the same rate. Some blossom early and some blossom late. The tragedy is if we don’t blossom at all.

Think what we might have missed if Dr. Mays had not continued the courageous stance of thinking beyond the standard of pure merit in admitting students like Dr. King.

Today, more than ever, we need a certain kind of educational institution that promotes international exchange, cross-cultural dialogue and environmental justice that is needed for all of us to blossom and self-actualize to the maximum. Benjamin Elijah Mays, Martin Luther King Jr., Mohandas Karamchand “Mahatma” Gandhi and Daisaku Ikeda all had extensive international, interracial, interdisciplinary and interreli-

gious educations through a worldwide dialogue.

We must not think without history, detaching from it in a new autonomous cultural space, losing our historical memory. Soka University of America is prepared to honestly tell its students about the history we have passed so that we might have a more honest and inclusive tradition for building leaders in the academy. “Without a truthful tradition, you cannot build leaders,” says Dr. Ikeda.

In the words of philosopher Alfred North Whitehead,² we are witnessing a time in history: “When civilization is shifting its basic outlook; a major turning point in history where the pre-suppositions on which society is structured are being analyzed, sharply challenged, and profoundly changed.”

The Goal of Change is Democracy

All of this change has the goal of freedom, liberty, equality, equity, coherently critical thinking, ecological responsibility, peace, nonviolence, happiness, value creation and the building of a new world humanitarian order. This change has the goal of inclusive democracy.

Some of the language today which points to the moral frontiers of this profound change in our evolving democracy for the next century are civility, diver-



Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS

Gandhi once remarked: “Civilization is the encouragement of differences. Civilization thus becomes a synonym of democracy. Force, violence, pressure or compulsion with a view to conformity is, therefore, both uncivilized and undemocratic.”

and women backing us up is not in the spirit of democracy. Women and men should work side by side on the front lines. Women are also leaders. Women in Montgomery, Alabama, for example, stayed up overnight in December 1955 and printed 35,000 flyers outlining what happened to Rosa Parks. That’s how the movement got started.

We certainly have enjoyed much progress since the civil rights movement. Today, our challenge and our responsibility are to grow into the crown

sity maturity, the vertically challenged, gender justice, global excellence, quality control, integrity, the physically challenged, gender-neutral, inclusive language, sustainability, religious pluralism, multiculturalism, cloning, communication between silos, universal human, smoke-free zones, profanity-free zones, homophobia, distance learning, issue sensitive, time sensitive, quantum leap, xenophobia, the digital age and value creation. If we’re going to grow up into democracy’s crown, we’ve got to deal with the implications of all that.

The American civil and human rights nonviolent movement was a time of open struggle for international democracy and uniting our divided world house. In this movement, we rehearsed for the democracy that is to be. The whole civil rights movement was a rehearsal. It turned the stupid, stumbling South into the sunshine states because, “A moral person cannot patiently adjust to injustice.” That, my friends, is where Gandhi, King and Ikeda are different. They have all taught the necessity of inclusiveness.

The cause of civil rights — which began as a point of entry for including minorities in the larger society — helped revitalize the American democratic ethos, as Martin Luther King Jr. had intended. That rehearsal time broke down barriers for women all over the world. The notion of men being leaders

of our possibilities. We must grow into civilization’s crown, into civil rights’ crown and into civility’s crown. We must grow into democracy’s crown. We must “be the change we wish to see.”

The wisdom of Robert Maynard Hutchins³ agrees with Ikeda when he says: “Justice and freedom, discussion and criticism, intelligence and character — these are the indispensable ingredients of the democratic state. We can be rich and powerful without them. But not for long.”

Through the founding of Soka University of America, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda has placed a crown of civility above the heads of Americans with the hope we will grow tall enough to wear it. Dr. Ikeda states your mission simply: “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.” Not in the history of this nation has an institution of higher learning been founded on the premise of peace.

Dr. Ikeda emphasizes an education that calls for a revolution of the inner life. A human revolution that does not confuse knowledge for wisdom but develops compassionate wisdom by focusing on the deepest and most universal dimensions of life resulting in a natural empathy toward life in its infinite diversity.

The failure of empathy makes violence possible. Our goal as “spiritual beings, planetary citizens and human incarnations” must be diversity-maturity.

We have in the twentieth century a near triumph of liberal democracy. Dr. Vincent Harding⁴ helps us ask some relevant questions: How do we expand democracy in the poorest communities in this country? What is democratic economics, democratic health care, democratic distribution of wealth? Where are the centers of democracy? How shall American democracy be redeveloped and expanded? How do we achieve the political and spiritual deepening of democracy into education, religion, science and the arts? How do we create a multi-racial and international democracy? What kind of democratic practice will give the world peace? America is still a developing nation, maybe even ethically and morally a third world nation when you consider how frightened we are of differences that we have created.

You, here at Soka University at the beginning of the twenty-first century, are preparing to make students brave. You are preparing to teach them to move beyond this rehearsal time and continue the creation of absolute and indestructible happiness.

From my meeting and dialogue with Dr. Ikeda, it is clear that by happiness, Dr. Ikeda — like Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda — does not mean mere pleasure, indulgence, self-seeking, cowardice, indolence or complacency where the development of personality ceases and we are left with immature and arrogant individuals, unable to grow out of their selfish ways of never listening to others. Dr. Ikeda talks about an attitude of creativity, exhilaration, joy, accomplishment, deep fulfillment, purpose and enlightenment that evokes creativity in students. Happiness is obtained through fully realizing our potential, while not being swayed by circumstances, but seeking to tower above misfortune.

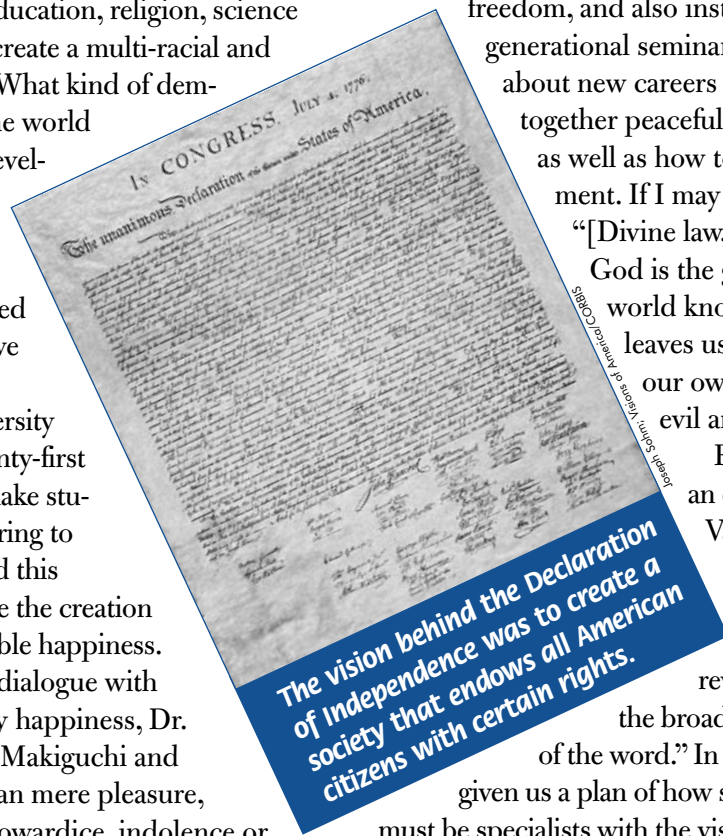
The Constant Creation of Value

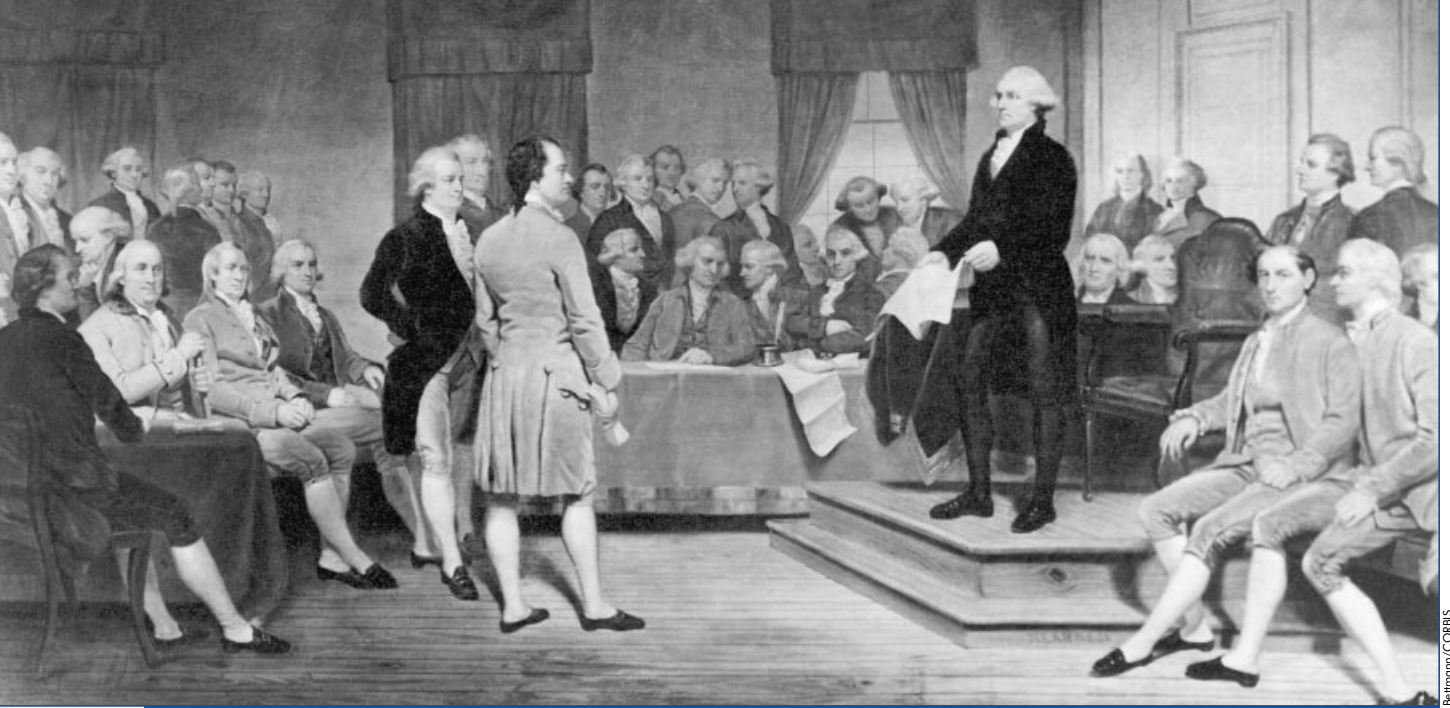
Real freedom is a constant creation of value. This is a very American idea. Freedom is not a gift. It is an achievement. If our dreams for democracy are to be actualized, every citizen in our nation is going to have to be educated to the limit of his or her capacity. And I don't mean uncritical accommodation, uncritical adjustment, uncritical amusement, uncritical exercise or uncritical training. Soka University will hold freedom seminars about the many meanings of freedom, and also institutionalized inter-generational seminars and conversations about new careers on how to live together peacefully across racial lines, as well as how to save the environment. If I may paraphrase Gandhi: “[Divine law, sacred principle], God is the greatest democrat the world knows, for the universe leaves us unfettered to make our own choice between evil and good.”

Fear should never be an organizing principle. Value creation must be! There must be, as your founder Dr. Ikeda says, “A

revival of philosophy in the broadest, Socratic meaning of the word.” In our bodies, Spirit has given us a plan of how society is to work. We must be specialists with the vision as a whole, like each cell in our body. Soka University will provide more education to develop the imagination. It will be an education not always based on pure merit.

Freedom has a purpose. Freedom is for the pursuit of happiness and service. It is for the development of the individual and of society. Freedom gives us the release from the great burden of uniformity, and releases value creation. Dr. Vincent Harding says, “If two people agree on everything all the time, then one of them is unnecessary.” It is only when we





Betmann/CORBIS

In signing the Declaration of Independence, the founding fathers pointed the United States in the direction of democracy and inclusiveness.

are in dialogue that we are most human. There is something special about multi-lateral dialogue, one in which we are all minorities.

We are citizens of a world that does not yet fully exist. The future is an infinite succession of present moments. We must learn to live together now what we believe to be the best of the ideals we treasure. We must abandon undemocratic and uncivil practices. Daisaku Ikeda holds a crown above our heads with the hope that we will grow tall enough to wear it. He encourages us, in Gandhi's words, to "be the change we wish to see."

And when we have grown up into democracy's crown, we will have answered the anguished echo from all of the wisest humane reformers: Roger Williams's⁵ call for religious liberty; Samuel Adams's⁶ call for political liberty; Henry David Thoreau's⁷ denouncing coercion; William Lloyd Garrison's⁸ demanding emancipation; Eugene V. Debs's⁹ crying for economic equality; Robert Maynard Hutchins' insistence that democracy requires liberal education for all; Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream to be judged by the content of one's character and not by the color of one's skin; Nichiren Daishonin's call for perceiving the Mystic Truth inherent in all living beings; and Daisaku Ikeda's challenge that we be the highest seat of learning for humanity, the cradle of a new culture

and a fortress for the peace of humankind.

Then we will be able to live together in a great "world house" in peace, respecting the worth and dignity of all human personality as sacred. This is the *raison d'être* for Soka University of America as we attempt to wear democracy's crown in a new century and millennium that will emphasize the greatest ideals of democracy — civilization, civil rights and civility. With this realized hope of being the change you wish to see, President Daniel Y. Habuki of Soka will join the celebrated royal company of President David Star Jordan of Stanford, President William Rainey Harper of Chicago and President Benjamin Few of Duke. *Honoris causa* to kosen-rufu (or world peace) — when the grand idea of democracy envisioned in the Declaration of Independence blossoms for everybody around the globe. 🌀

1. DuBois, W.E.B., (1868–1963) American sociologist.
2. Whitehead, Alfred North, (1861–1947) British mathematician and scientist.
3. Hutchins, Robert Maynard, (1899–1977) American educator and university and foundation president.
4. Harding, Vincent, American historian and professor at the Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver.
5. Williams, Roger, (1603?–83) British colonist, founder of Rhode Island and pioneer of religious liberty.
6. Adams, Samuel, (1722–1803) American political leader and signer of the Declaration of Independence.
7. Thoreau, Henry David, (1817–62) American writer and transcendentalist.
8. Garrison, William Lloyd, (1805–79) American journalist and reformer.
9. Debs, Eugene V., (1855–1926) American political activist and socialist.



Dr. Linus Pauling attends SGI President Ikeda's lecture at Claremont McKenna College as a commentator in California in January 1993.

Seikyo Press

Recollections

OF MY MEETINGS WITH LEADING WORLD FIGURES

BY SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA

The Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall, which was dedicated on the campus of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo on May 2, 2001, was the result

of four meetings between President Ikeda and Dr. Pauling. President Ikeda recalls their friendship in the following article.

Dr. Linus Pauling — Nobel Laureate in Chemistry and Peace

Once, several years ago, Dr. Linus Pauling told me that he had continued to work for the peace movement because of his wife, Ava Helen. “I felt

compelled,” he told me, “to earn and keep her respect.” In that simple statement, I heard the voice of Dr. Pauling’s spirit. He wanted to do the right thing as a human being. That was what he had



Byron Cohen

Linda Pauling-Kamb and Dr. Linus Pauling Jr. unveil a bronzed bust of their father, Dr. Linus Pauling, at the dedication ceremony on May 2 of Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall at Soka University of America in Aliso Viejo, California.

always fought for. He wanted his wife, the person who knew him best, to respect him. As long as he had that, he was afraid of nothing.

“Are you or are you not a communist?” This was the question that would be put to him at a state senate committee hearing that he had been summoned to appear before. In the 1950s, McCarthyism swept across the United States — a storm of anticommunist hysteria and witch-hunts. Dr. Pauling, a standard-bearer for world peace, opposed the U.S. government’s position on the necessity of nuclear weapons. The authorities used subpoenas as a means of intimidation.

Of course, Dr. Pauling was not and never had been a communist. He was a humanist and a peace activist. “The enemy,” he said, “is neither the Soviet Union nor America. The greatest enemy is war itself.” His stance was absolutely correct, but the government was not inclined to accept it. Dr. Pauling refused to state under oath before the committee that he was not a communist, because he didn’t believe the government had a right to interfere in an individual’s private beliefs. But if he continued to refuse, he would be given a citation for contempt.

What did Dr. Pauling do? On the day he was to appear before the committee for a second time, he took the bold step of holding a news conference right

beforehand and declaring to the gathered reporters that he was not a communist. Since he had already publicly announced his position, it would have been absurd for the committee to ask him if he were communist. Nor was it then possible for them to cite him for contempt. He bested the authorities with his wits and fought back against their insidious machinations.

But the persecution continued, taking new and different forms. It extended even to his family. When it was announced that he had won the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1954, the

authorities at first refused to issue the passports he and his wife needed to attend the award ceremony. He was subpoenaed and threatened time and again. He was also pressured by his university and forced to resign from his post.

The age of madness eventually passed, however, and when it was gone, Dr. Pauling’s reputation as a man of outstanding achievement and integrity remained. When he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1962, he said: “I believe that there is a greater power in the world than the evil power of military force, of nuclear bombs — there is the power of good, of morality, of humanitarianism. I believe in the power of the human spirit.”¹

Dr. Pauling is known as the father of modern chemistry. The British journal *New Scientist* has called him one of the twenty greatest scientists of all time alongside Newton, Darwin and Einstein. He is the only person in history to have received two unshared Nobel Prizes — for chemistry and for peace.

I first met Dr. Pauling in February 1987. Though he would soon be eighty-six, he had come all the way to our newly opened Soka University Los Angeles (SULA) campus (now Soka University of America, Calabasas). Rain had fallen earlier, but the

sky was clear when he arrived. The fresh greenery sparkled like gems. Dr. Pauling had traveled some 500 miles by plane and car from his home to get there. “I’m happy,” he said, “to cooperate in any way that I can for the sake of world peace.”

Though he was a great scholar and scientist, he was completely unaffected. In fact, he listened eagerly to what I had to say, even though I was young enough to be his son. He was a person of immense and embracing character. I met him four times, and each of those occasions is engraved in my memory like a scene from a film. I am very proud that we were able to see the publication of our dialogue, *A Lifelong Quest for Peace*, before he passed away.

How did Dr. Pauling become the genius that he was? Was he a child of privileged circumstances?

Dr. Pauling was born in 1901, the first year of the new century. His father died when he was nine. As a boy he was sickly, as was his mother. He had two younger sisters. He had no choice but to go to work, but he also wanted to study. He attended high school, but because of an error in school records, he never received his diploma!

Although he gained admission to a university, he was so poor that he didn’t even have enough money for regular meals. He had a donut for breakfast, skipped lunch, and ate at a cheap diner in the evening. “I was always hungry,” he recalls. He had many part-time jobs while in college, doing any work he could find — he chopped firewood, worked as a kitchen hand and cleaner, and also worked as a road paving inspector for a construction company.

One day, his aunt traveled through a train station near his university. He met her there and she gave him two dollars. “Those were the most important two dollars I had ever received,” he recalled. Yet even in these straitened circumstances, he continued to send money home to his mother. No matter how trying or disadvantageous his situation was, he always remained optimistic.

What makes for genius? Is it curiosity? Concentration? Determination and perseverance? At one of our meetings, I jokingly asked Dr. Pauling if there was some medicine that could make us smarter. He thought about it a moment, and then he said:



Dr. Linus Pauling with his wife, Ava Helen. Dr. Pauling said he continued to work for the peace movement because he “felt compelled to earn and keep [Ava’s] respect.”

“The only way is effort and more effort, really putting our minds to work until it hurts. And when it comes to children, we must give them the self-confidence that they can do anything if they try hard enough.”

The twentieth century has been a century of war and science. One estimate puts the number of those killed in wars or revolutions during the twentieth century at more than 167 million — more than the entire number killed in such conflicts throughout human history up to the end of the nineteenth century.² That is the equivalent of 4,575 people a day for the last 100 years.

For what purpose do we have science? For what purpose does government exist? The world lacks a “philosophy of value” that delves into the true purpose and meaning of things. This is the fundamental problem we face at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

But Dr. and Mrs. Pauling never forgot the all-important question of purpose. They always took



Gregory Nakasoji

On behalf of the Pauling family, Dr. Linus Pauling Jr. expresses appreciation to Soka University of America and its founder Daisaku Ikeda for the hall named after his parents, Ava Helen and Linus Pauling at the dedication ceremony on May 2.

action to minimize the suffering of their fellow human beings.

During World War II, they sheltered a Japanese-American in their home and were criticized and attacked for their stand. As soon as they learned of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they threw themselves into the peace movement. “I am fighting,” said Dr. Pauling, “for those who cannot fight as hard as I.”

In 1993, I gave a speech at Claremont McKenna College near Los Angeles. Dr. Pauling, ninety-one at the time, served as commentator, and in his remarks he declared that acting in the spirit of “No. 9”—that is, the ninth of the Ten Worlds, the state of Bodhisattva—is the true duty of all human beings.

Let me share an episode that took place when Dr. Pauling first visited Japan in 1955. After finishing a lecture at a certain university, he was walking with some other professors to his next appointment when they came upon a gate that was locked. The gate was

in a fence about five feet high. The other professors made to make a detour, but Dr. Pauling used a trash can standing nearby as a stepladder and blithely hopped over the fence.

The others with him were shocked for a minute. Dr. Pauling, the main guest, had gone ahead, leaving them there. What could they do but follow suit and hop over after him? Dr. Pauling has always been this kind of person, a person who leaps lightly over the artificial fences that humanity builds.

When he was told that he was a scientist and should not express political opinions, he countered that that was wrong. All human beings, he firmly believed, have a responsibility to participate in political debate. It is very important for the people to exercise their power to keep political leaders on the correct path. People’s movements are absolutely necessary, he concluded.

In our last talk [in 1993, a little more than a year before he passed away], I suggested that we organize an exhibition on his life and achievements. Four years after his death, the “Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century: Quest for Humanity” exhibition was finally realized [in September 1998], the fruit of the full cooperation of the entire Pauling family, including Dr. Pauling’s son, Dr. Linus Pauling Jr., a world-renowned psychiatrist.

A junior high school student who visited the exhibition wrote, “I now know that there is no such thing as a good war!” In this way, Dr. Pauling’s passionate appeal continues to be transmitted to young people who will shoulder the future of our planet in the twenty-first century. How happy that would have made him!

I can see his face now, with his rosy cheeks just like a baby’s. I see him smiling his big smile and saying, “How happy I am! This is a triumph for me and Ava Helen!” Thirteen years after the death of his beloved wife, Dr. Pauling passed away. He was ninety-three. His was a life lived at the forefront of the twentieth century. ❁

1. Linus Pauling and Daisaku Ikeda, *A Lifelong Quest for Peace: A Dialogue*, translated and edited by Richard L. Gage (Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1992), p. 72.

2. According to the calculation of Zbigniew Brzezinski.



SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, ALISO VIEJO

Dedicated to Peace





Four days of bright blue skies graced the ceremonies surrounding the dedication of Soka University of America in Aliso Viejo, California. It is the latest and most impressive example of the Soka Education system founded by Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda (left).

The first event on May 2 was the dedication of the Linus and Ava Helen Pauling Hall, which coincided with the opening of the "Linus Pauling and the Twentieth Century" exhibition, that's on view at SUA, AV through June 10.

More than 2,500 attended the May 3 dedication ceremonies of the university. The new campus, which will begin classes in the fall offering a four-year, liberal arts education, welcomed visitors from all over the world, bringing warm wishes of congratulations. Representatives of Aliso Viejo and many neighboring communities brought resolutions proclaiming May 3 Soka University of America Day. Messages were also received from politicians, scholars and human rights activists around the world, including U.S. President George W. Bush, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and civil rights heroine Rosa Parks.

The founder stated in his message: "It is my hope and desire that an unbroken succession of outstanding leaders will depart from these gates to serve humanity in the 21st century. It is my hope and desire that these waves of world citizens, united and

awakened to a genuine global ethic, will spread without cease into an ever more brilliant future."

On May 4, the university's first public event was a speech by the distinguished dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College, Dean Lawrence Carter Sr.

In his lecture titled "Growing Into Democracy's Crown," Dean Carter praised President Ikeda as the founder of SUA. "For the sake of democracy envisioned by our forefathers, for the sake of civilization as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi, and for the sake of





Above and below, the atrium in Founders Hall.



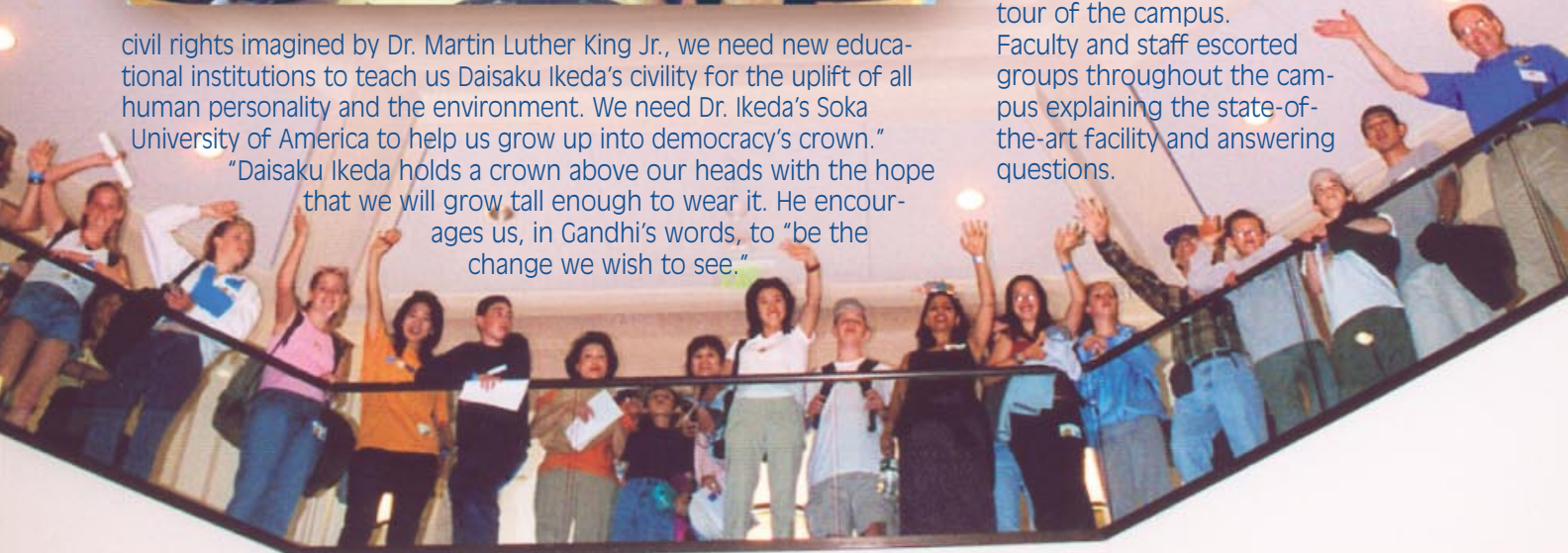
At the opening of the "Linus Pauling in the Twentieth Century" exhibition.



Friends, neighbors and supporters, many with their families, came to SUA on May 5 for an open house and guided tour of the campus. Faculty and staff escorted groups throughout the campus explaining the state-of-the-art facility and answering questions.

civil rights imagined by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we need new educational institutions to teach us Daisaku Ikeda's civility for the uplift of all human personality and the environment. We need Dr. Ikeda's Soka University of America to help us grow up into democracy's crown."

"Daisaku Ikeda holds a crown above our heads with the hope that we will grow tall enough to wear it. He encourages us, in Gandhi's words, to "be the change we wish to see."





The May 3, 2001 dedication ceremonies of Soka University, Aliso Viejo started with an entrance procession (above left) and included performances by local school children, Native American blessings (below right) and numerous messages and proclamations from various politicians and dignitaries from around the world. A chorus sang Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" as doves were released by Founders Hall. Students of the first class starting this fall (below far right).





In his message to the dedication on May 3, the founder Daisaku Ikeda states:
I have asked that the following principles will serve to guide SUA in its endeavors.

- 1) Foster leaders of culture in the community.
- 2) Foster leaders of humanism in society.
- 3) Foster leaders of pacifism in the world.
- 4) Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity.





SUA is . . .

- The inspiration of Daisaku Ikeda, president of Soka Gakkai International, a lay Buddhist organization dedicated to peace, culture and education in 165 countries
- A private, non-profit, four-year liberal arts college opening August 24 to 120 freshman students
- A nine to one student-faculty ratio
- An international campus open to top students of all nationalities and beliefs
- Planned to grow to about 1,200 undergraduate and graduate students
- Initially offering a BA in liberal arts with emphasis on humanities, international studies and social and behavioral sciences
- Where all students concentrate on a foreign language and participate in an international internship and study abroad (included in tuition)
- Equipped with computer ports in all buildings,





A campus tour led by faculty visits the biology lab.

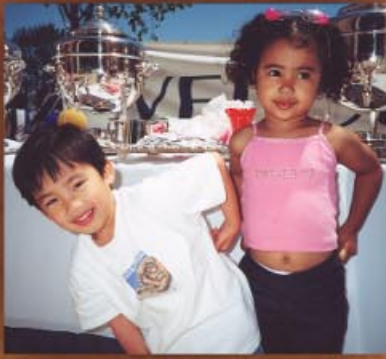


- residence-hall rooms and outside gathering areas (3,800 ports on campus)
- A 225,000-volume-capacity library
- 18 buildings (first phase) with about 750,000 square feet
- Where future phases will include additional academic buildings, residence halls, a music hall and fine arts facility, research institutes and a major performing arts center
- Starting tuition for fall 2002 school year at \$17,000 (room and board will be an additional \$7,500) and need-based financial aid is available



The Athenaeum Reception Center for conferences and dialogues.





Pasqual Olivera and Angela del Moral perform at May 4 celebrations.



Students!

Deadlines for 2002 applications: Early Admission — October 1, 2001 and Regular Admission — January 15, 2002. For more information visit the SUA web site: www.soka.edu or by phone at (888) 600-SOKA

Upcoming Open House and Family Tour Dates (all are 9 am to noon): August 4, September 29, December 15, 2001 and May 11, 2002.



“My Fortune Is Your Fortune”

BY SIOBHAN BOLAND, SAN FRANCISCO

I was fifteen when I first heard about Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo. My mother approached me, asking if I would ever be interested in attending. SUA did not appear to be the place that would support my goal at the time for a degree in cinema. My mother, determined that I would attend, simply smiled, said OK and continued to chant for me over the next several years.

My education has been interesting to say the least, spent entirely in the San Francisco Unified School District. Though often frustrating, attending overcrowded, under-funded, bottom of the barrel public schools taught me a lot more about the real world than one might think. It made me very passionate about education in general and ingrained in me a deep appreciation for the ideals of Soka education.

By the beginning of my junior year in high school, my career goals had broadened and I became interested in attending a school whose ideals were still fresh and unsullied. I decided that I wanted to be a member of the first graduating class of Soka University of America.

I am honored to say that I am now officially a member of the first class of SUA, AV. However, the road to getting there was more difficult than I expected.

In the last few weeks before I received acceptance



Siobhan Boland (center), with her mother Kim Royse and friend Bryan Hornbeck at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo.

from the university, my life was in the world of Hell. I had become consumed by fear, doubt and fundamental darkness. I agonized over the painful prospect of leaving my home and all the friends I had made on the San Francisco State University Swim Team, afraid I would lose those friendships forever. I no longer wished to attend Soka University. This would not have been a problem, had I not been accepted to the university. But I had been, and so my struggle began.

In addition to my internal struggles, my father, though willing to support me financially, was concerned that SUA was a brand new, unaccredited university. Because of this, I constantly worried about the cost of attendance despite my prayers and my mother's that I would attend SUA on a full scholarship, having zero debt upon graduation.

I also feared that SUA would not be able to support my dream of becoming a competitive swimmer. I worried since there were so few students, the opportunities to train and compete would not be available, despite the fact that SUA has an Olympic-sized swimming pool and Southern California is well known for producing very talented swimmers.

My university and swimming life in the previous months had become very exhausting and my Buddhist practice suffered greatly. When the season

ended, I returned as always to the basics of consistent faith, practice and study, increasing the amount I chanted and throwing myself into the San Francisco Area March 16 Buddhist activity. In retrospect, although it was a painful struggle and I faced a great deal of fear, it was a fairly simple problem. I realized that I lacked confidence in my determinations, in the founder Daisaku Ikeda's vision, in Soka University and in the Gohonzon.

However, confidence was something I knew I could tap within my life through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Chanting for success was the key, as always. So over spring break, I treated myself to three hours of chanting every day and planned a visit to the SUA campus to bolster my confidence. Well, it worked! By the end of April, I could say without hesitation that I was going to Soka University of America.

During that trip I met with the university's vice president, Eric Hauber. While I was still somewhat undecided, Eric conveyed that, although he would love for me to come to SUA, he was completely supportive of my decision whatever it would be. He did not try to pressure me or sell Soka University in any way. His trust in me was exactly what I needed to trust in myself. To be honest, Eric didn't need to sell the university, because when I got there the university sold itself. As we approached the site and I saw the dome of Founders Hall, I became overwhelmed with emotion. As we toured the campus, I felt as if I never wanted to leave.

I continued to practice vigorously and the following week received my financial aid offer. It was an offer I couldn't refuse. I received an academic scholarship that covered my entire tuition and my books for the year. The only loan I would assume was for housing, which incidentally was non-interest bearing and could be paid off in installments during the school year. The cost of housing for a year at SUA is comparable to what my father was willing to pay for a semester of housing at SFSU.

On May 3, 2001, I attended the dedication events for Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo. The ceremony included an Acjachemen Nation American Indian song and blessing, an African music and

drumming performance, a choir of fifth-grade boys and girls, and much more.

Most touching and memorable was a speech delivered by Dr. Lawrence Carter Sr. of Morehouse College (see page 11). His connection to President Ikeda and enthusiasm about Soka education were so genuine and heartfelt. His spirit filled the room, permeating the hearts of everyone there, I'm sure.

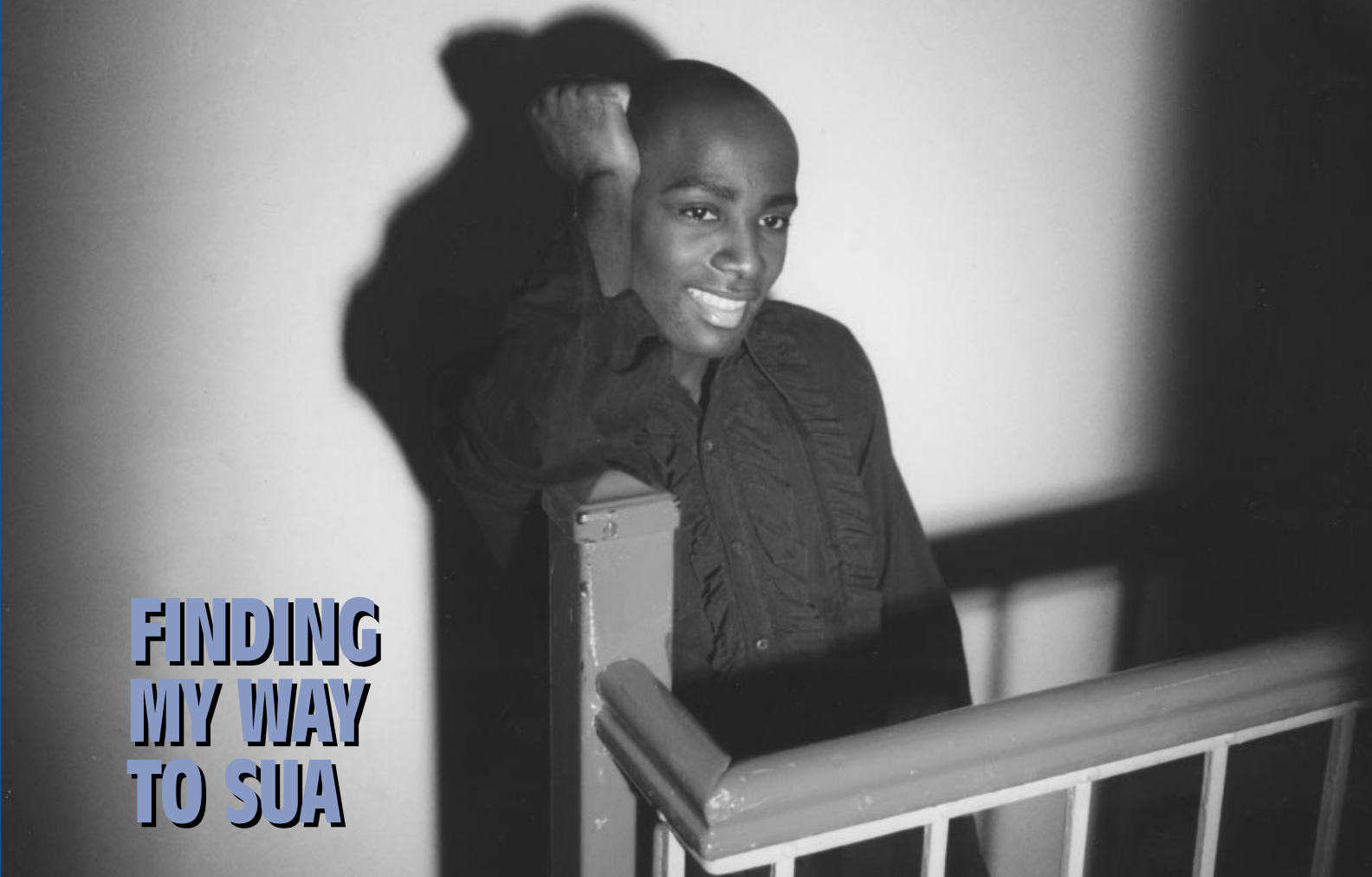
And as if that weren't enough to confirm that I had made the right decision, immediately after the ceremony the hundreds of people in attendance were led to a fountain in front of the university where a choir sang "Ode to Joy" as a flock of doves was released! The grandeur of that moment impressed upon me forever that I was certainly attending the most prestigious university in the world.

At a reception later in the day, I met SUA's athletic director, Keith Shackleford. He outlined the school's possibilities for a swim team, as well as training options with two or three of the best clubs in the country, which were within a half hour of the SUA campus.

Also at that reception, I had the opportunity to meet and bond with my fellow classmates. I feel these friendships are pure and kind and unassuming. I can't wait for school to start!

Thank you to the SGI-USA members of my district, who have been supportive. I'd like to thank everyone who encouraged me to stay, to go, and to challenge myself in this struggle. Because your words were from the heart, they were exactly what I needed to hear. I would especially like to thank a certain pioneer member of the SGI-USA, Saiko Lewis, who refused to accept my decision to turn down a Soka education, and waged a struggle for me as though it were her own.

Most of all I want to thank my mother, Kimberlie Royse, who chanted for eight years for me to attend SUA. Mom, my fortune is your fortune and this dream would not have been possible if you had not supported me with your prayers and actions. I owe you everything and your prayers are a force to be reckoned with. I couldn't be happier than I am right now. Finally, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the SGI organization, which I hope to repay by the contributions I make while attending Soka University, and later in society. ☸



FINDING MY WAY TO SUA

Rowena Husbands

BY NKOSI KRESS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

The moment I heard about Soka University of America, I knew I would study there one day. Having been born into a family that practices Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I'd heard about and seen tapes of the various Soka schools, but never imagined attending college on such a campus as the one in Aliso Viejo, California.

When I graduated from high school in 1996, I pursued a professional career as an actor, singer and dancer for several years. I began with Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and eventually was promoted into Ailey II, a junior dance company. After touring, I auditioned for "The Lion King" on Broadway and made the final cut. I was completely blown away. The Gohonzon continues to amaze me every day.

While performing intensely on Broadway I

received information about Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo and immediately applied for early admission. I kept chanting and was determined that I'd achieve my goal, no matter what. When my life-condition began to sway I'd refer to *For Today and Tomorrow*, where SGI President Daisaku Ikeda writes: "Even in times of hardship, the important thing is for each of us to determine that we are the star, protagonist and hero of our lives and keep moving forward. Putting ourselves down and shrinking back from the obstacles looming before us spell certain defeat. Through making ourselves strong and developing our state of life, we can definitely find a way through. As long as we uphold the Mystic Law throughout our lives, we can break through any impasse and surmount any obstacle. We will also be able to lead all those who are suffering to happiness" (p. 209).

Although I emerged from the mud just as a lotus

into an amazing arena as a professional performer, I felt as if there was something missing from my life. I'd originally received a scholarship to a private college in Chicago and intended to begin classes in the fall directly after graduating from high school, but I wasn't 100 percent sure I was ready to commit, so I moved to New York to fulfill my dream of performing. I had no idea how protected I was and fortunate my circumstances would be.

Eventually, if my desire to perform waned, I'd apply to college. Well, when I reached Broadway I hit a serious wall. After a couple of years, I'd had enough of the performing world. What was I thinking? This was how I made my living to support myself? Though I got fed up with the politics of show business that constantly plagued me, in fact it was great to understand and confront this reality at such a young age. This was an inconspicuous benefit before my eyes. After a year and a half of performing in "The Lion King," I began to plan my next step in life. I knew, without a doubt, it was time to go to school.

I began chanting three hours a day on June 27, 2000, my birthday. I had just turned twenty-two. I began applying to various schools and realized Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo would be the best choice. The application process was not an easy task because I'd been out of school for several years. Although my heart was set on getting in, I focused on chanting for the best thing to happen for my life.

I was anxious and nervous. Since I applied for early admission, when December rolled around I got

butterflies. Would I be rejected or put on a waiting list? Mind you, I'd visited SUA, AV for a campus tour on October 7, 2000, so I was familiar with the environment. I absolutely loved the landscape.

I was able to overcome my doubts and was successfully accepted into Soka University of America! I will be making an imprint on history by joining the first freshman class and learning from such a phenomenal staff and faculty. Being the first early admission student for the Northeast Zone makes me want to carry out my mission even more. I plan to study behavioral sciences to become either a psychotherapist or an art therapist.

I am determined to lead a doubt-free life starting today and promise to get straight A's at SUA to encourage every single human being I come in contact with. I'm so excited and can't wait for classes to start! It will be an arduous task but I'm up for the challenge.

To the future students of SUA, I'd like to say never doubt the Gohonzon. I waited four years for this huge benefit. Don't give up; there is always a way to victory!

Mom, this one's for you! 🌸

ASK THE AUTHORS

A dialogue about the new book

“The Buddha in Your Mirror”

Living Buddhism: There are other introductions to Nichiren Buddhism, why write another one?

Martin: The SGI-USA doesn't have an introductory book in the public arena. When Middleway Press was first formed, we recognized *The Buddha in Your Mirror* would be one of the first books to get on the shelves of Barnes and Noble, Borders and other bookstores.

How many times has someone asked us if there was a book they could read to learn more about our practice and we didn't have a good answer? Yes, we have *The Winning Life*, but it's very brief. SGI President Ikeda's detailed explanation, *Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death*, is currently out of print. Moreover, *Unlocking* and Richard Causton's book, *The Buddha in Daily Life*, while both excellent, can be a bit difficult for the first-time reader. In a sense, those are the second and third books an interested person might read.

We wanted to create a book that starts from scratch and from the perspective of where the reader is. I think we've accomplished that task with *The Buddha in Your Mirror*.

Hochswender: The challenge was to make a narrative that would appeal to people with zero knowledge of our practice, yet still be interesting to people who had experience in the practice. I hope we have some success on both levels. This is a book that the longtime Buddhist practitioner can enjoy and use to enrich his or her own practice, as well as a book that can be given to friends and associates as



Jean Prichard

The co-authors (from left: Woody Hochswender, Greg Martin, Ted Morino) of *The Buddha in Your Mirror* have nearly 100 years of combined experience practicing Nichiren Buddhism.

an introduction to this wonderful thing we do.

Morino: I feel the time has come that many more people should benefit from an encounter with Nichiren Buddhism, just as I did decades ago in Japan. To me, writing this book was a way of paying back my debt of gratitude to Nichiren Buddhism and a number of people, including, of course, President Ikeda, who guided me on the correct path.

Living Buddhism: What will people find in this book that they won't find in other books on Nichiren Buddhism?

Martin: Actually, it's what they won't find that is more pertinent. They won't find a lot of complicated theory. *The Buddha in Your Mirror* is written not with the intention of explaining all about Buddhist theory. Rather, it is written from the perspective of what people are interested in and struggling with. It is eminently practical. We explain how to chant, how to sound out the words, and encourage readers to start right away, even while they're still reading the book.

In a sense, it's more like a discussion meeting for guests rather than a beginners-level study meeting.

Hochswender: This book moves quickly from an overview of Buddhism in America and the history of Nichiren Buddhism to the nuts and bolts of our practice. It places Buddhism in the context of contemporary society and makes the argument that Buddhism is indeed a religion for the new century. Eventually, of course, it unfolds an eminently reasonable methodology for dealing with everyday problems. There are problem-solving chapters on happi-

ness, health, relationships and death. Experiences of members are interspersed throughout.

Living Buddhism: Who was the target audience you had in mind in writing this book?

Hochswender: We certainly focused on non-Buddhists or people who were perhaps interested in Buddhism but had never practiced. For this reason, some members may find it a little odd that we, in essence, “back in” to our discussions of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and the Gohonzon. In a Buddhist meeting, naturally, we give guests the concept of chanting first, then fill them in on the history later. However, for the book, it was decided that we would give them a strong grounding in the Buddhist tradition before placing Nam-myoho-renge-kyo within that tradition. It was also felt that lengthy discussions of the role of the Gohonzon in our practice would be problematic from the standpoint of readers who had never seen or even heard of it. Nevertheless, we feel that *Mirror* will be a powerful tool for members and a great way to introduce people to Nichiren Buddhism.

Martin: For many people, there is no radical

change of thinking associated with practicing Buddhism. Rather, they find that in many ways Buddhist philosophy matches what they were already thinking. In fact, there is a body of research that indicates that there may be more than 40 million adult Americans who are already “proto-Buddhists,” people already thinking as Buddhists but probably don’t know it. For many of them, reading *The Buddha in Your Mirror* will be an experience of coming home, of finding a place both new and familiar at the same time.

Living Buddhism: How will this book help people?

Morino: Since life-affirming statements abound in this book, even people who are not familiar with Nichiren Buddhism will get a good feeling from reading it. In addition, of course, if readers of this book decide to try chanting, it means they will get some immediate result by doing so. It is my hope that people will get closer to the correct Buddhist practice that is prevalent in the SGI. It is also my hope that people will learn something about what kind of person Daisaku Ikeda is, who is quoted several times.

About the Authors

Woody Hochswender, a writer and 25-year Buddhist, has worked as a reporter for *The New York Times*, an editor and columnist for *Esquire* and *Harper’s Bazaar*, and a section editor of the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner*. His first “real” job, landed after many, many hours of chanting, was as an assistant copywriter for Avon Books in 1975. He had been working as a mechanic before receiving the Gohonzon. He currently writes and lives with his wife, Cynthia, and their eight-year-old daughter, Kate, in a 200-year-old colonial house about 100 miles north of New York.

Greg Martin’s senior year in high school in the late ’60s began his eye-opening to the world. His next four years at Rutgers was a shocking, head-spinning awakening of drugs, politics and philosophy. He began practicing Buddhism in 1971 after attending an introductory seminar at the university.

In quick succession, he gave up drugs, got married, graduated from college, had two children and got a real job. For the past three decades, he has been both seeking to master Buddhist practice and teach it at the same time. He lives in Westchester, California, with his wife Momoyo. They are expecting their first grandchild.

Ted Morino began to practice Nichiren Buddhism as a high school student in Japan, where he became friends with Soka Gakkai members his age. After moving to the United States, he has for much of the past 30 years been involved in translating and writing about Nichiren Buddhism for an American audience. After 38 years of practice, he feels the greatest result has been that he has become truer to himself. Currently editor-in-chief of the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism*, Morino lives in Tustin Ranch, California, with his wife Cindy.

Living Buddhism: What was it about Nichiren Buddhism that was the most challenging to explain?

Hochswender: It was difficult to explain the Gohonzon without being able to show it and it was certainly a challenge to try to teach people how to chant without being there (as in a meeting situation) to actually coach them on pronunciation and rhythm. I also found it quite daunting to explain the Buddhist view of the afterlife or reincarnation, especially the notion of one's karma surviving intact into the next lifetime. This is not something that comes easily to the Western mind.

Morino: It can be said that the conclusion of Nichiren Buddhism is very simple, and his Buddhism is indeed powerful and relevant. Yes, it is a religion, but it may be more adequate to say that it is a way of living. How to make that clear through this book was a challenge.

Living Buddhism: What hurdles were there in addressing stereotypes about Buddhism?

Hochswender: We endeavored from the very start of the book to dispel the idea of Buddhism as a hard-to-understand, monastic religion. We felt it was crucial to demonstrate that modern Buddhism was grounded in logic and reason, and required no big lifestyle changes on the part of the practitioner. We definitely wanted to bring the image of Buddhism down from the mountaintops—and onto the streets where we live.

Martin: *The Buddha in Your Mirror* explains that the practice of this Buddhism brings the mountaintop into each practitioner's living room; that the Buddha is not some saint or sage whom we, the grasshoppers of the world, beseech for some mysterious wisdom; that each person possesses the Buddha nature and there is a readily accessible method for manifesting that life-state amid everyday reality.

The commonly held idea is that the journey to enlightenment—across the sea of suffering or up the difficult mountain—is not only difficult, but also nearly impossible for anyone other than saints and sages. We explain that the history of Buddhist thought has been based on the search for the “great vehicle” that can take not just a few, but all people on that voyage across the sea or to the mountain top. The chanting of Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and prac-

tice in the SGI, we explain, is that “great vehicle.”

Living Buddhism: What do you feel is Buddhism's greatest appeal?

Martin: It works! It is also practical and accessible. When we first sent a manuscript of the book to the publicist we hoped would represent our book, we didn't hear from her for a couple of weeks. Then she contacted us, saying that she'd been chanting two hours a day on her daily commute and that “miracles” were happening. She also told her brother and father, and they are chanting too, along with others in her office. She's just recently subscribed to the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* and is connected to a district in her area.

This is what we had hoped for. To inspire people to try chanting on their own, gain experience and contact us to find out more. I was so pleased to hear of this response from one of the very first non-members to read the book.

Hochswender: Buddhism is reason. Buddhism makes sense. The more you read about it, the more it seems to be suited to our skeptical modern age. Buddhism never requires the individual to believe in something that has already been undermined by science, or to follow absolutist moral codes devised from an earlier era.

Morino: To me, the greatest appeal of Nichiren Buddhism is that it enables me to go to my ultimate force within anytime I please. I can pull out this force anytime I want; Nichiren describes it as “the roar of a lion.” It's such a happy thing that you have a place to return to within yourself, which I learned through Nichiren, who says: “Realizing that you are originally a Buddha is equal to tapping the greatest joy. Chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is the greatest of all joys” (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 788).

Living Buddhism: What are your long-term goals for the book?

Martin: Promoting the book has two goals. We, of course, hope that it will become a popular book for our members to recommend as an introduction to Buddhist practice. We hope it will be promoted by word of mouth. To accomplish that, we will be holding book-signings in bookstores in major cities around the country and doing print, radio and tele-

vision interviews; all with the intention of getting the word out about this book.

Promoting *Mirror* is also an important way for us, the authors, to introduce President Ikeda's books to the American public. We will use the opportunities that we will have as authors of *Mirror* to speak to people about the books of President Ikeda. Our hope? That *Mirror*, together with *For the Sake of Peace* and *The Way of Youth*, will attain bestseller status.

Hochswender: It is my determination that this book gets into the hands of all the people who can benefit from it. I sincerely hope that many thousands of people will read it and pass it along to their friends and co-workers — exposing a whole new segment of our country to Nichiren's vision for world peace. In that sense, it could become the ultimate book for introducing others to the practice — that would make me very happy!

Morino: I would like to see it become a perennial seller. I would be gratified if this book would continue inspiring people to practice Nichiren Buddhism for many years to come.

Living Buddhism: What was your overall experience in working together to write this book?

Morino: Through participating in this project, I wanted to make sure that we were solid in presenting the doctrinal basis of Nichiren Buddhism. I will continue to practice Nichiren Buddhism to my best ability to prove its credibility. Working together with two great co-authors, Woody and Greg, was quite a learning experience. It was such an honor to work with them.

Martin: It was great and it was difficult at the same time. Writing and editing a book "by committee" was challenging. At the same time, the process was very good and the quality of the result testifies to that. Each of us wrote the first draft of several chapters. Then we discussed the chapters together and with our editors one-by-one, arguing and disagreeing at times but finding the best way to express things through the process. Then it was read by several others and further edited. Of course, as writers we develop certain attachments to our own ways of expression, but having the critical eyes of many others reviewing the text was very constructive. I am certainly very happy with the result and able to rec-

ommend it with confidence and pride.

Hochswender: It was so interesting sharing ideas with Greg and Ted, as well as with our editors, Joel Drazner and Dave McNeill. They are the best! Even after the book was finished, I was still learning profound things about the practice from these guys that I wished I could have included in the text! Oh well, I'll just put them in the next book! ☸

How to Order

The Buddha in Your Mirror, like all Middleway Press books, is available at your favorite neighborhood bookstore or on-line at www.middlewaypress.com.

Why aren't Middleway books available at SGI-USA community centers? First, we hope it's easier to buy our books because they are sold in regular bookstores and on the Internet. We want our books, as well as our philosophy, to be more widely spread in society and to be stocked on bookstore shelves for the browsing customer to see and be inspired by. For that to happen, we ask that you support us by making a little extra effort to buy them through your neighborhood bookseller. The more you do, the greater the chance a chain reaction will be started that will ensure that books on Nichiren Buddhism and by SGI President Ikeda are standard items in all bookstores and libraries for the benefit of all who happen upon them.

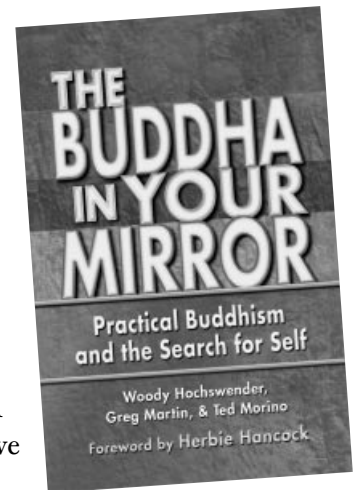
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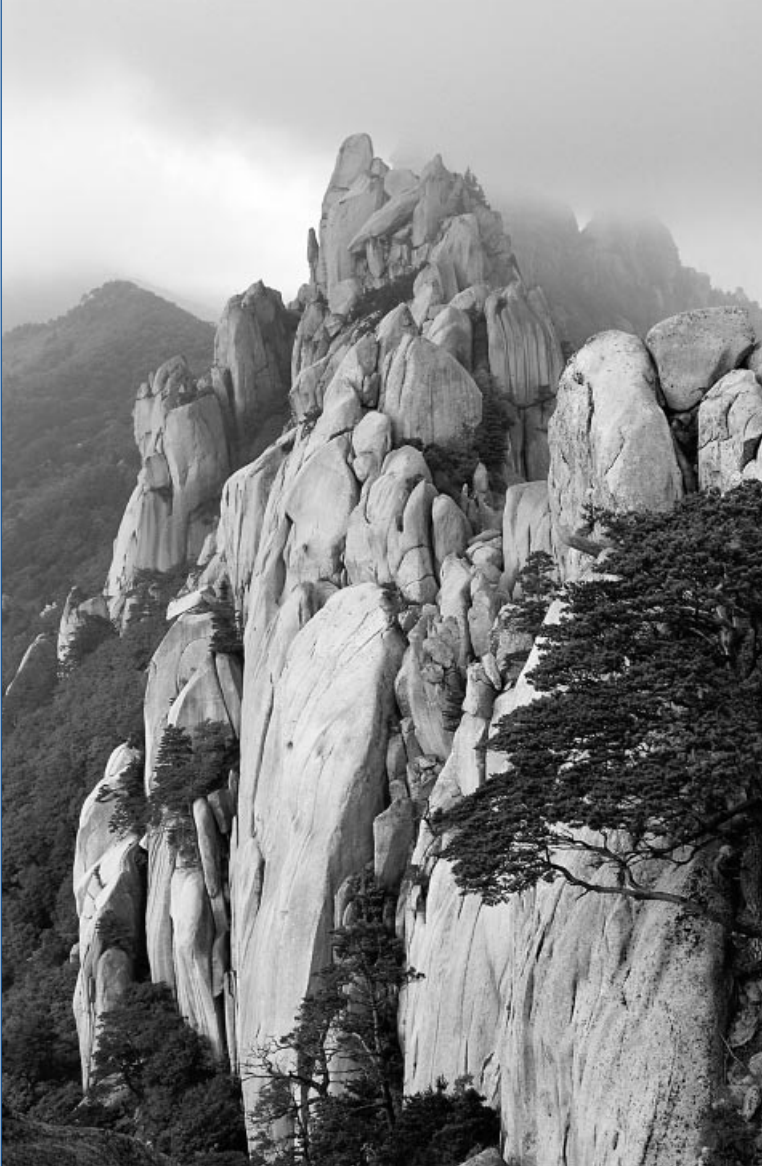
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Brent Bear/ Corbis

Sorak Mountain National Park, South Korea.

SGI President Ikeda's Essay Series
A RECORD OF MY LIFE

My First *Visit* **TO SOUTH KOREA**

BY SGI PRESIDENT DAISAKU IKEDA

The Republic of Korea — Land of the Morning Calm where the *mugunghwa* blooms.¹ Great cultural benefactor that long ago transmitted Buddhism and a system of writing to Japan, Japan's closest neighbor.

It was after 4:00 p.m. on September 21, 1990, when my Korean Air flight from Tokyo Narita International Airport touched down at Seoul's Kimpo International Airport, thus beginning my first visit to South Korea.

From the car as we headed toward our hotel, we caught a glimpse of the mighty Han River with its

proud and eternal flow. The sky towered high above us. Autumn is known to be the most beautiful season in South Korea. Though already late September, it was still quite warm.

An Exhibition of Masterpieces of Western Art in Seoul

In less than an hour, we arrived at our hotel, situated atop a hill. We would stay for only one night, as our departure was scheduled for the following day.

The purpose of this visit was to attend the open-



Saito Press

The Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, established in November 1983. The paintings in the “Masterpieces of European Oil Painting” exhibition, which were viewed in Seoul, South Korea, in September 1990, are part of the permanent collection of the museum.

ing of an exhibition of masterpieces of Western art from the permanent collection of the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum [founded by President Ikeda]. We flew back to Japan almost immediately following the ceremony, which took place at the Ho-Am Art Gallery of the Joong-Ang Ilbo building in Seoul, arriving in Fukuoka that night. It was an intense itinerary.

I had originally planned to be there for three days, but Korea had been hit by the worst typhoon in more than a decade and the Han River had overrun its banks, resulting in severe flood damage. Japan had also been struck, causing my departure to be postponed by a day. However, though the trip promised to be quite exhausting, my spirit was too deep to be daunted.

I had waited a long time for this day, and I was ready. I was determined to use all my strength, slight though it might be, toward developing cultural exchange between

South Korea and Japan. This was a vow I had cherished since my youth, a promise I made as a boy.

It takes only two hours to fly from Narita to Seoul. Shortly after takeoff, the majestic form of Mt. Fuji came into view. It was as if I could hear the voice of my mentor Josei Toda calling out: “But where are the young flag bearers? Can you not see Fuji’s summit?”² Wherever I go, whether in Japan or around the world, Mr. Toda is always with me.

Struggling Alongside My Mentor

Memories of the days forty years earlier when I struggled alongside my mentor amid harsh trials as we listened to the tragic news of the Korean War came flooding back to me.

President Toda’s business had hit difficult times, and everyone else had deserted him. The situation was rough, but at twenty-two I stood by and protected him

without retreating a single step as he fought his lonely battle. It was at the height of this intense period that the news came of war breaking out on the Korean peninsula.

Though independence had been restored to Korea after Japan’s defeat in the Second World War,³ the country continued to suffer. With the division of the peninsula at the 38th parallel into two new countries — the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) — antagonism mounted, and on June 25, 1950, they plunged into the chaos of war.

In my diary entry for that day, I wrote: “War finally broke out between North and South Korea. Anxious that it might trigger another world war. The world moves, moment by moment. The planet Earth has already become like a small battlefield or a stage. Is humanity to be plunged again into a whirlpool of grief and suffering, loneliness and torment?”⁴

My diary entry two days later reads: “World crisis looms. Will it come to that? Must people steel themselves to do battle to the end? I yearn for peace. The flames of war must not spread. My resolution is as firm as Mount T’aishan. I have nothing to fear.”⁵ These were my youthful thoughts just as they were, but I think they convey the somber mood of the time.

In August of that year it was decided that President Toda’s business would suspend operations.⁶ At the same time, President Toda resolved to step

down from his position as Soka Gakkai general director.

The turmoil in Korea was heightening. Foreign troops from seventeen countries had been dispatched to join the fighting in a land that — taking the combined area of both North and South Korea — was smaller than Honshu, the largest of Japan's four main islands. There were untold casualties. Including those countries that did not have a direct hand in the fighting but were there in a supporting role, the total number of countries involved came to more than twenty.

In May 1951, as the flames of war jumped higher, President Toda expressed his thoughts about the conflict as follows: "I do not intend to speculate about the outcome of the war nor to argue in favor or against any given policy or ideology. All I know is that because of this war, people have lost their husbands and wives and are left searching for children and parents.

"Many young people have died without even knowing why. And I am certain many elderly people have also been killed as they proclaimed their innocence."⁷

President Toda was always most concerned about those who were sad and suffering. He consistently put his own troubles aside. Even at the time of his inauguration as second Soka Gakkai president (in May 1951) and the formation of the young men's division (in July 1951), his sole prayer was to send the light of peace of Buddhism to Japan's neighbors

and the other countries of Asia. Upholding the ideal of global citizenship, Mr. Toda adamantly opposed Japan's narrow-minded nationalism and arrogance, keeping his gaze ever-focused on the future of humankind.

Today there are SGI members throughout Asia and in 148 countries and territories.⁸ And the efforts of members living in South Korea to contribute to society are a model for the entire world.

The people of South Korea rose up from the devastation of the Korean War and accomplished an economic revival so remarkable it has been hailed as the "Miracle of the Han River." How my mentor must rejoice at the wonderful recovery and rebirth achieved by the Korean people.

The Taebaek Mountains

The epic novel *The Taebaek Mountains* — a towering work describing Korea's modern history — is currently being translated into Japanese and published in ten volumes. It has elicited a strong response in Japan.

In South Korea, the book has become a runaway bestseller with sales exceeding five million, and is a must-read for students and young people. The book's author, Cho Jeong Lae, is one of South Korea's leading writers who has received numerous prizes for modern literature, Korean folk literature and fiction. Last autumn, Mr. Cho sent me an autographed copy of the first volume of the Japanese edition of his book to

commemorate its publication.

How deep must be the scars that were left on the Korean people by Japan's barbarous invasion of their land. Why, though united by race, did they have to suffer the tragedy of division?

Addressing these issues, Mr. Cho's novel is a masterpiece that shines with his integrity, conveying his love for the people and his absolute condemnation of the reckless abuse of power.

As a token of my deep appreciation, I sent Mr. Cho a collection of photographs and poetry of mine. On the inside cover I inscribed a Korean phrase which says that a wonderful idea has been conveyed wonderfully.

I immediately received a kind letter of thanks from Mr. Cho in which he related his impressions of the anthology I had sent him, calling my photography and poems "life-affirming." It is Mr. Cho himself who has consistently looked upon those who have survived this tumultuous century with a warm, profound, life-affirming gaze.

The Korean Script

Setting foot in Seoul and taking in its vibrant streets, filled with rows of modern buildings that seem to fuse beautiful tradition with modernity, I felt I had landed in a "sea of Hanguk."⁹ A Japanese person visiting Seoul for the first time is at once taken aback and somewhat lost to find himself surrounded by such foreign script in a place so close to home. I imagine the expression

“sea of Hangul” was coined to express such a feeling.

Both Korea and Japan were recipients of Chinese-character culture. And later on they each produced unique scripts of their own: Hangul in the case of Korea and *kana*-syllabary in the case of Japan. Hangul was created in the mid-fifteenth century by a group of scholars assembled by Sejong the Great (1397–1450), the fourth king of the Yi (Choson) dynasty.¹⁰ It is an outstanding achievement of which the Korean people can be very proud.

The Japanese scholar of Chinese literature Yoshimi Takeuchi¹¹ said of Hangul: “Since it is written with combinations of sound elements or ‘phonemes,’ you can tell how something is supposed to be pronounced far more easily than with Japanese or any European language.”¹² He also credited it with being “the newest script in the world, and one of the most logical.”¹³ One scholar goes so far as to say that if beings from outer space were to visit Earth, Hangul would probably be the first script they could understand.

The Japanese had tried to eradicate Hangul when they annexed Korea. In their extreme arrogance, the Japanese imperialists attempted to completely wipe out this treasure of humanity, which had been in use for hundreds of years. They prohibited the teaching of Hangul in 1938, banned the use of the Korean language in schools and aggressively enforced a movement for the universal adoption of Japanese.

Scholars working to compile an authoritative Hangul dictionary were arrested on charges of violating the Peace Preservation Law,¹⁴ and subsequently tortured and driven to their deaths in prison.

A Yearning for Friendship with Korea

My father was once drafted into the army and stationed in Seoul. That was during the most tragic and dark time in the history of relations between Korea and Japan. He was a seaweed farmer from the Omori coast in Tokyo. Though a person of few words, once he had set his mind on something, he was absolutely unwavering.

I have memories of my father teaching me some Korean words when I was in elementary school. “*Nara*”— that means ‘country,’” he told me. “‘*Gyeran*’— that means ‘egg.’” He also wistfully remarked: “The view at night in Seoul is the most beautiful in the world. It’s a million-dollar skyline.” Though Korea was the only foreign country he had ever visited, I think that by calling it the most beautiful in the world he wanted wholeheartedly to convey to his children just what an incredible place he thought it was.

He had a remarkably humanistic way of thinking for the time and was indignant about the cruel and condescending treatment that the people of Korea suffered at the hands of the Japanese. His words, so filled with anger, are

deeply etched in my mind. I think it was then that a yearning for friendship with Korea began to grow in my heart.

An Exhibition of Seventy-four Western Masterpieces

The Joong-Ang Ilbo newspaper, the Samsung Foundation of Culture, the Ho-Am Art Museum and the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum sponsored the exhibition of masterpieces of Western art shown in Seoul on my first visit to Korea. South Korea’s Ministry of Culture, the Korean Broadcasting System and the Japanese Embassy in Seoul also supported it.

The Joong-Ang Ilbo building, where the exhibition was held, is located near the Namdaemun Gate, a structure representative of architecture from the Yi dynasty. The oldest surviving structure from that period, the gate is two stories high and sits atop a foundation of granite. It proudly communicates a sense of Korea’s past glory.

The exhibition opened in the Ho-Am Gallery of the Joong-Ang Ilbo building, where it remained on display for one month. It was then shown for another month at the Ho-Am Art Museum in Yongin City, Kyonggi Province.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the exhibition’s official opening was performed by General Director Shin Hyun Hwak of the Samsung Foundation

of Art, Minister of Culture Lee O-Young, Director Kim Dong Ik of Joong-Ang Ilbo, Director Lee Kyung Sung of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Director Han Byong Sam of the National Museum of Korea, Professor Kim Won Yong of Hallym University, Ambassador of Japan Ken'ichi Yanagi, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Min Bok Ki and Advisor to the Samsung Foundation of Culture Chu Un Hwa.

The exhibition consisted of seventy-four items selected from the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum's permanent collection of Western art, which had never before been loaned overseas. It provided a comprehensive introduction to Western painting from the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century to the present.

The works included such examples of the best of European art as Ruben's *Constantine's Marriage*, Goya's *Portrait of Don Sebastien Marie Gabriel of Bourbon-Bragance*, Millet's *The Goosegirl*, Corot's *Pensive Girl*, Manet's *Promenade*, Monet's *Water Lilies* and Renoir's *Young Woman in Red Dress*.

In a letter to an earnest believer and her child, Nichiren Daishonin says of the Lotus Sutra, "Loaded with a hoard of rare treasures and carrying a hundred or a thousand passengers, it can sail all the way to the land of Korea" (WND, 613).¹⁵ In accord with this passage, I felt there was profound significance in the realization of my own visit to Korea,



SGI President Ikeda attends the opening of the "Masterpieces of European Oil Painting" exhibition at the Ho-Am Art Museum in Seoul, South Korea, September 1990. This exhibition was the realization of the SGI president's dream to foster cultural exchange between South Korea and Japan.

Seikyo Press

bringing with me artistic treasures and taking an initial step toward repaying a debt of gratitude.

One week before my departure for Seoul, I welcomed Chairman Lee Kun Hee of the Samsung Group to the Seikyo Shimbun building in Tokyo. Citing the Korean saying that a path begins with a single step, I suggested that the upcoming exhibition of paintings would be an important step in opening a path of cultural and popular exchange between our countries. Mr. Lee replied, "With its initiation, the task is already half completed."

The Greatness of President Makiguchi and President Toda

I spoke with Mr. Lee about the humanistic philosophy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first Soka Gakkai president, and President Toda, and shared how I came to be Mr. Toda's disciple. I told him: "Peace is my prime point and friendship

is my belief. Culture is a necessary weapon for achieving these ends."

Mr. Lee remarked that there are three types of people: those who live to eat, those who live to contribute to society, and those whose mere existence is of tremendous value. If I may be permitted to elaborate, this third type describes those whose existence transcends any boundary of nationality or race and whose spiritual light illuminates all humanity.

President Makiguchi and President Toda were two such individuals. But in a country of small-minded nationalism, which went so far as to annex Korea and which upheld an ideology similar to that of the Nazis in Germany who perpetrated the Holocaust in an attempt to wipe out the Jewish people, these great men "whose mere existence was of tremendous value" were suppressed and persecuted as criminals.

Mr. Makiguchi and Mr. Toda were arrested and imprisoned on charges of violating the Peace



Brent Bear/ Corbis

The city of Seoul is a unique blend of tradition and modernity. A view of downtown Seoul, with the East Gate landmark in the foreground. East Gate was once an entrance to Seoul when it was a walled city.

Preservation Law and for *lèse-majesté*.¹⁶ Mr. Makiguchi died in prison, and Mr. Toda was robbed of his freedom for two years until just before Japan's defeat in the war. They had been persecuted as enemies of the state. Even after his release, Mr. Toda continued to be defamed and criticized.

They were so great that it may just be that the tiny country of Japan was too small a vessel to contain the water of compassion and wisdom welling forth from their lives. The general knowledge of the age and society at the time was simply too narrow and immature for their greatness to be understood. From that standpoint, it is only natural that they were persecuted and slandered.

But now, people who truly understand their spirit are appearing in countries neighboring Japan as well as around the world.

Forging a Network of Humanity

During my childhood and youth, I met many Korean residents living in Japan. These were people who had been driven from their homes in Korea by Japanese oppressors, and had experienced all kinds of persecution and discrimination living in a foreign land. Also, their children were born and grew up in Japan. Given what we have learned from the history of Korea-Japan

relations, the most natural course for Japan to follow from a humanistic standpoint is to take care of and treat these people with the utmost respect.

A very bright Japanese-born Korean from the first graduating class of Soka University [in Japan] sent me a recording of South Korean folk songs. In response, I sent her a poem I had composed to express my appreciation:

*Listening to the songs of friends
the dark night shines with the
light of happiness.*

This young woman was deeply pained by the history of Japan's persecution of her country, and by the terrible treatment suffered by her

parents and compatriots at the hands of Japanese. As we spoke one spring day on the Soka University campus amid blooming cherry trees and forsythia, I presented her with a photo of the university, on the back of which I wrote: “Originally, people were not separated by national boundaries; borders were created by human hands at some point in time. Let us never forget that we have the mission to transform the world into a place of beautiful human solidarity that goes far beyond manmade borders.”

On that first trip to Seoul, with the hopes of many people held firm in my heart, I set out to begin a new dialogue aimed at forging such a network of humanity.

Art Is a Treasure to Be Shared by All Humankind

At a commemorative reception that followed the ribbon-cutting for the exhibition in Seoul, I delivered the following remarks: “Korea is a great cultural benefactor of Japan. Since ancient times, just how fresh and rich has been the brilliant culture with which this ‘Land of the Morning Calm’ has illuminated Japan. We hope that this first overseas showing of our collection of Western paintings will serve as a small repayment of our enormous debt of gratitude.”

Among the works in the exhibition was Monet’s *Water Lilies*, a masterpiece from the later years of this great Impressionist. I went on to share my thoughts on a discussion I had with the French art

critic René Huyghe (1907–97) regarding this painting, and concluded my remarks saying: “I believe that the exchange of culture — the sharing of humanity’s wonderful treasures — stimulates a profound resonance of the spirit in the depths of people’s hearts that expands a fresh force of vitality, brilliant like a new dawn.

“It has been my dream since childhood to someday visit Korea. In that sense, I am filled with deep emotion to be taking this first step toward the development of friendship with your country, embraced in the broad spirit of friendship of all gathered here today. I am determined to work wholeheartedly to build a path of culture between our countries.”

The Importance of Cultural Exchange

That day I met Samsung Foundation of Culture General Director Shin Hyun Hwak for the first time. In addition to serving as prime minister of South Korea in 1979, Mr. Shin has held a number of important posts, including minister of rehabilitation, minister of health and social affairs and minister of the economic planning board. He has made enormous contributions to South Korea’s development.

Born in 1920, during his impressionable early years he saw his country being heedlessly trampled by the Japanese. I imagine he had many unpleasant experiences.

Nevertheless, in his remarks at the reception as the representative

of the exhibition’s sponsors, Mr. Shin stated: “It could be said that culture expresses the spiritual connection between ethnicity and nationality in any given age. However, that is not limited to one particular ethnic group or nation; it penetrates the hearts of people everywhere, eventually becoming a new foundation for the humane treatment of all.

“Japan and Korea are geographical neighbors who share a long history and have engaged in numerous cultural exchanges. Despite this fact, however, until now a genuine spirit of sincerity has not been shown and instead misunderstanding has arisen.

“I therefore hope that this exhibition will in some way stimulate genuine exchange between our countries. I believe that carrying out such exchange will be crucial in enabling our countries to maintain mutual goodwill, as well as contribute to enriching the lives of many.”

As I listened to Mr. Shin’s speech, I was moved by his magnanimous spirit and his unswerving focus on the future of Korea-Japan relations.

Creating Memories with Soka University Exchange Students

On the evening before the event, a gift I will never forget was delivered to my hotel. It was from three Soka University students studying in South Korea at the time who had learned of my visit. The package consisted of

Korean citron tea, a ceramic teacup and a tape recording of Korean folk songs, and was garnished with a sprig of Japanese pampas grass. The three students were all members of the Soka University Korean Club.

I savored the tea that they had sent with deep appreciation. To express my gratitude for their sincere gifts, I composed a poem and dedicated it to all three of them.

*How delighted I am to savor the
flavor
of culture and your profound con-
sideration —
wonderful memories created
together with you in Seoul.*

I keenly felt that healthy friendship among the youth of South Korea and Japan was developing.

Expand the Current of Friendship into a Great River

Twenty-four years prior to my first visit, on January 6, 1966, I attended a gathering of Soka Gakkai high school division members at Tokyo's Taito Gymnasium. On that occasion, I spoke about a Korean student named Yu Kwan Sun (1904–1929), who became a martyr in the struggle for Korean independence. Despite being severely pressured and tortured by the Japanese authorities, she did not retreat a single step. In sharing her story, I hoped to

inspire these young people to lead lives of steadfast conviction like this “Korean Joan of Arc,” who fearlessly dedicated herself to the cause of justice.

Spotting a statue of Yu Kwan Sun on that trip to Seoul in 1990, I placed my palms together in reverence. Seventy years had passed since she had died a martyr. In that time, the light of her noble life had come to shine with increasing brilliance.

She had been cruelly robbed of her future. Yet her vibrant youth continues to emit an eternal glow, imparting courage and hope not only to the people of Korea but to the Japanese as well.

For the sake of the future and generations to come, it is the duty of we who have witnessed the tragedy of the twentieth century to expand this current of friendship between Korea and Japan into a mighty river like the Han that never ceases its flow.

That first trip to the Republic of Korea was extremely brief. There wasn't even time to visit the SGI-Korea Culture Center and meet with the members. I sent them my sincerest prayers, however, and determined wholeheartedly to realize another visit.

The return trip from Seoul to Fukuoka took just an hour and a half. Our countries are so close — truly neighbors. As we soared above the Sea of Genkai separating Japan and the Korean peninsula, I vowed to work to bring them even closer — for Korea has been a cultural benefactor to Japan, and is like an older sibling. ☸

Footnotes:

1. *Mugunghwa*: Rose of Sharon, the national flower of Korea.
2. Lyrics from “Song of Comrades” (Doshi no Uta), in which Mr. Toda expressed his hopes for the appearance of young people to whom the mission of kosen-rufu could be entrusted.
3. Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910, and continued to control Korea as a colonial possession until it was defeated in 1945.
4. Daisaku Ikeda, *A Youthful Diary: One Man's Journey from the Beginning of Faith to Worldwide Leadership for Peace* (Santa Monica, CA: World Tribune Press, 2000), p. 36.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The company that Mr. Toda ran fell on hard times in 1950, and went out of business on August 22 of the same year. Working under his mentor, Mr. Ikeda worked hard to put the firm's outstanding obligations into order and meet the demands of creditors.
7. *Toda Josei Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Josei Toda) (Tokyo: Seikyo Shimbunsha, 1983), vol. 3, p. 74.
8. As of June 2001, the number is 165.
9. Hangeul: the Korean alphabet.
10. Yi (Choson) dynasty (1392–1910): Yi Song Gye established the kingdom of Choson (Korea) in 1392.
11. Yoshimi Takeuchi (1910–77): Noted for his formidable achievement in the study and translation of modern Chinese literature, particularly the writings of Lu Xun. He was also one of the few scholars in Japan to voice support for Mr. Ikeda's 1968 proposal calling for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China.
12. *Takeuchi Yoshimi Zenshu* (Collected Writings of Yoshimi Takeuchi) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1981), p. 258.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
14. Peace Preservation Law: Enacted in 1925 and completely revised in 1941, this law was used to suppress thought in the name of protecting the Japanese “national polity” and preserving peace. The law provided for harsh punishment of persons found to be in violation, including the death penalty.
15. Editor's Note: All quotations of Nichiren are from the newly published translation *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin* (abbreviated as WND) (Tokyo: Soka Gakkai, 1999), unless otherwise stated. The number indicates the relevant page number.
16. When Japan was under militaristic rule, actions deemed disrespectful toward the imperial family or Shintoism were treated as crimes.

Living My "RIGHT LIFE"



BY JAMES LECESNE, NEW YORK CITY

When I became a Buddhist in 1984, I didn't understand the significance of what I was doing. Though someone may have mentioned the idea of realizing my Buddhahood or the possibility of achieving a state of true happiness or the likelihood that I might discover my "true nature," or find wisdom, I wasn't listening. Like many people, I accepted Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism because I desperately wanted to upgrade the circumstances of my life. For nearly ten years I had been struggling as an actor and writer while holding onto some vague notion that I would someday make a sig-

nificant contribution to the world through my work. But at thirty-four, I felt that time was running out. If I didn't show some actual proof very soon, it would be too late. I needed a change.

Within a year of beginning to chant Nam-myohorenge-kyo, my life had indeed changed. Many of my dreams were in the process of being realized and I felt that I was on my way to living the life I had always imagined for myself. I had just completed my first professional writing assignment at Radio City Music Hall; I was about to star in my own one-person show off-Broadway; and I was in a relationship that I considered stable and nurturing. It was an exciting time, one that seemed full of promise.

That's when I decided to stop chanting. The

decision was purely practical. I told myself that the physical strain of doing eight shows a week was too much, and felt that chanting would have to wait. I convinced myself that Buddhism wasn't really responsible for my improved conditions, and reasoned that things would have turned out the same way whether I had been chanting or not. Perseverance, fate, hard work — these were the elements that had caused my life to happen — not Buddhism. At the time, I never stopped to consider the connection between my practice and the improved conditions of my life. I was blind to the fact that chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo every day had brought about a change just as I had hoped it might. Of course, looking back on it all today, I can see that the real reason I stopped chanting was that my true nature was about to be revealed, and I wasn't quite ready.

Two months after I stopped chanting, my show unexpectedly closed, my relationship ended and I was literally out on the streets looking for a job and a place to live. It was a difficult time for me, one that caused me to blame myself as well as others for the sudden downturn of my fortune. Though I always kept the Gohonzon with me as I traveled from one apartment to the next, I never chanted in front of it and certainly didn't recognize its potential power. I was similarly blind to my own potential at the time.

Seven years passed.

Then one afternoon, while I was complaining about my life over coffee with my friend Eve, she suggested that we go back to her apartment and begin chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

I told her the whole story, and explained why I didn't see much sense to the practice. In my mind, it was simply proof that you had to be careful what you prayed for because it only led to disappointment. She then pointed out the one obvious fact that I had failed to consider during the previous seven years: when I was chanting my life seemed to improve, but when I stopped my life got more difficult. Eve suggested that I might want to try chanting again, as an experiment, just to see if things improved. This way I could test the law of cause and effect using chanting and my own life.

It was as if someone had diagrammed the most basic mathematical equation to me, an equation that had always been there, had always been true. But because I lacked the basic wisdom to add it up, the simple law of cause and effect had remained hidden from me, a mystery in the midst of my own life.

I went home that afternoon and immediately re-enshrined the Gohonzon. It was a matter of days (three, to be exact) before my life began to respond. Opportunities presented themselves with miraculous speed, and those little mystical connections began to happen more frequently. It was as though I had plugged into some kind of electrical current and my life was now receiving a sudden jolt of juice. Opportunities to write and perform started to come my way. I began running workshops at a drop-in center designed for people with life-threatening illness, and was soon offered a job there. For the first time in seven years I recognized my own "right life."

But that was just the beginning.

One morning while listening to the radio, I happened to hear a report about teenage suicide. I was astounded to learn that more than thirty-three percent of reported suicides in this country are related to homosexuality. My immediate thought was, "Why isn't anyone doing anything to convince these young people that their lives are valuable? Why isn't anyone reaching out to remind them that they are perfect just as they are?" Then I began to remember my own difficult adolescence, the pain of feeling ashamed and different, the awareness that I lived slightly on the outside of everything just because of my sexual orientation.

From the time I was a very young boy I knew that this difference was an essential part of who I happened to be. It wasn't something I had chosen; it was simply who I was. It influenced the way I perceived the people, places and things around me, and also the way in which I allowed myself to participate in the world at large. It was, in fact, part and parcel of my true nature. I could no more divest myself of my homosexuality than I could deny the color of my skin or refuse the fact that I was born. It hasn't always been easy to accept this difference, but at the same time it has contributed to my ability as an

artist, a lover — even as a Buddha.

In his writings, Nichiren Daishonin defines reality as “the true nature of all phenomena.” One of the most astonishing benefits of being a human being and a Buddhist is that I have been given the opportunity to discover for myself the true nature of this phenomenon. I have experienced this through chanting Nam-myohorenge-kyo and by asking myself what it is about me that is unique, what must I do in this world that has never been done before, and how can I manifest the most perfect expression of my self? Chanting has enabled me to bring forth this reality from the depths of my life, not only so that I can perceive it, but so that others can perceive it as well.

The day I heard that radio report I sat down and wrote a theater piece. It was about a thirteen-year-old boy named Trevor who, through a series of diary entries, begins to recognize his sexuality and feel his difference in the world. Despite rejection by his friends, misunderstanding by his parents, and an unsuccessful attempt at suicide, Trevor triumphs and chooses to live another day.

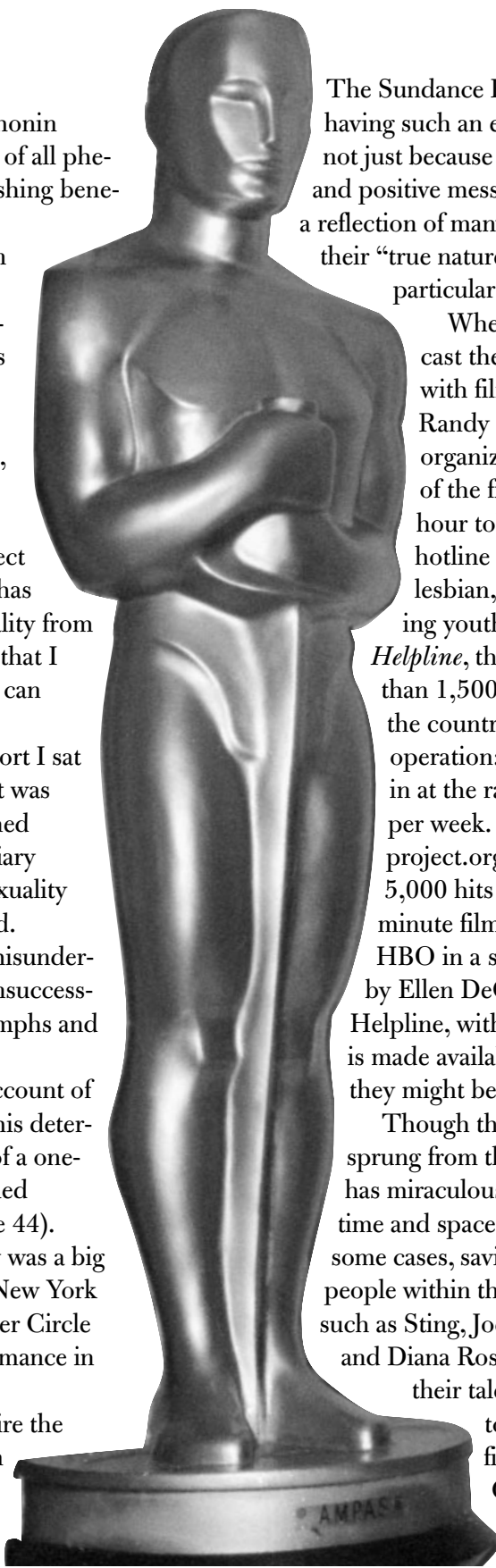
This humorous and moving account of one gay boy’s coming of age and his determination to survive became part of a one-person show that I performed called “Word of Mouth” (see photo page 44). Presented off-Broadway, the show was a big success, and I was awarded The New York Drama Desk Award and The Outer Circle Critics Award for best solo performance in New York in 1995.

“Trevor” then went on to inspire the making of a short film, which won the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short, as well as awards at The Berlin, The Hamptons and

The Sundance Film Festivals. “Trevor” was having such an enormous impact on people, not just because of its timely subject matter and positive message, but also because it was a reflection of many people’s struggle to reveal their “true nature” and to value their own particular difference in the world.

When HBO decided to broadcast the film in 1998, I worked with filmmakers Peggy Rajski and Randy Stone to create a non-profit organization and begin operation of the first (and only) national 24-hour toll-free suicide prevention hotline (800-850-8078) for gay, lesbian, transgender and questioning youth. Named *The Trevor Helpline*, the hotline received more than 1,500 calls from teens around the country in its first two weeks of operation; and calls continue to come in at the rate of approximately 150 per week. The Web site (www.trevor-project.org) averages approximately 5,000 hits a month, and our sixteen-minute film is now shown regularly on HBO in a special presentation hosted by Ellen DeGeneres. The Trevor Helpline, with its national 800 number, is made available to anyone who feels they might be in need of it.

Though the story of Trevor may have sprung from the depths of my own life, it has miraculously reached out to span both time and space, touching others, and in some cases, saving lives. We’ve enlisted people within the entertainment industry such as Sting, Jodie Foster, Martin Scorsese and Diana Ross, who generously gave their talents, money and support toward the making of this film. And celebrities such as, Gillian Anderson, Joy Behar, Drew Carey and Margaret Cho have helped



Beltmann/Corbis

us to raise money for The Trevor Helpline by appearing at benefit performances in both Los Angeles and in New York City.

When I first started chanting in 1984, all I knew was that I wanted to change my life. Perhaps I also wanted to change myself. But the Buddhism of the Daishonin has taught me, first hand, that no one needs to change who they are in order to be a Bodhisattva of the Earth or to realize him- or herself as a Buddha in this life. By embracing every aspect of our true nature we can turn the very things that threatened to poison our lives into medicine — not only for ourselves, but also for others. In my case, the shame, confusion and frustration I once felt about being openly gay in the very public world of show business was transformed through my Buddhist practice into something beneficial, something to celebrate and something I cannot imagine living without.

In his letter titled “The Essentials of Attaining Buddhahood,” Nichiren Daishonin writes: “Is it not

the meaning of the sutra and the commentary that the way to Buddhahood lies within the two elements of reality and wisdom? Reality means the true nature of all phenomena, and wisdom means the illuminating and manifesting of this true nature. ... When this reality and wisdom are fused, one attains Buddhahood in one’s present form” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 746).

Certainly this should encourage each of us to continually strive not only to identify our true nature, but also to develop the wisdom to see that nature manifest in the world. I have learned that I don’t ever have to change or deny who I am to make my dreams a reality. I have everything I need to become a Buddha in this world — in my present form. ☸



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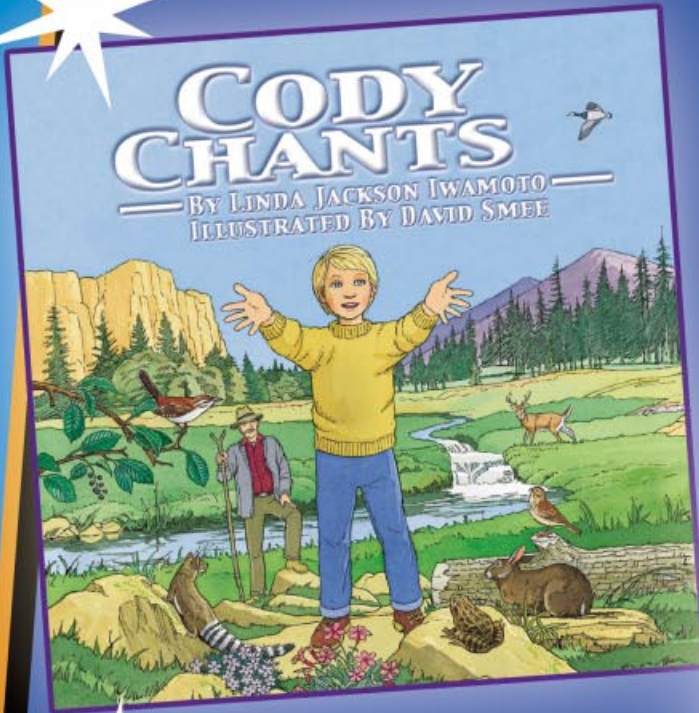
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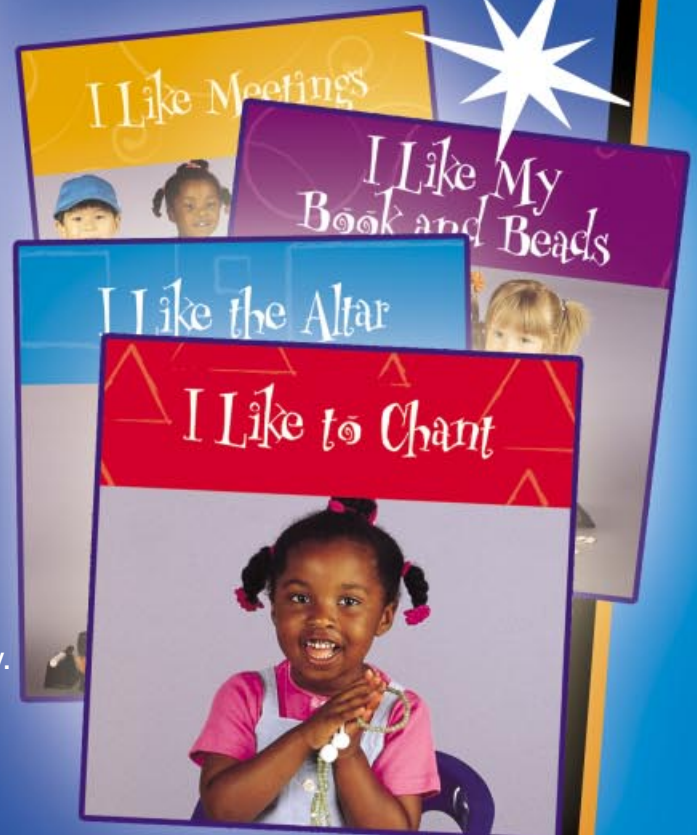
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By Linda Jackson Iwamoto
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I Like To Chant

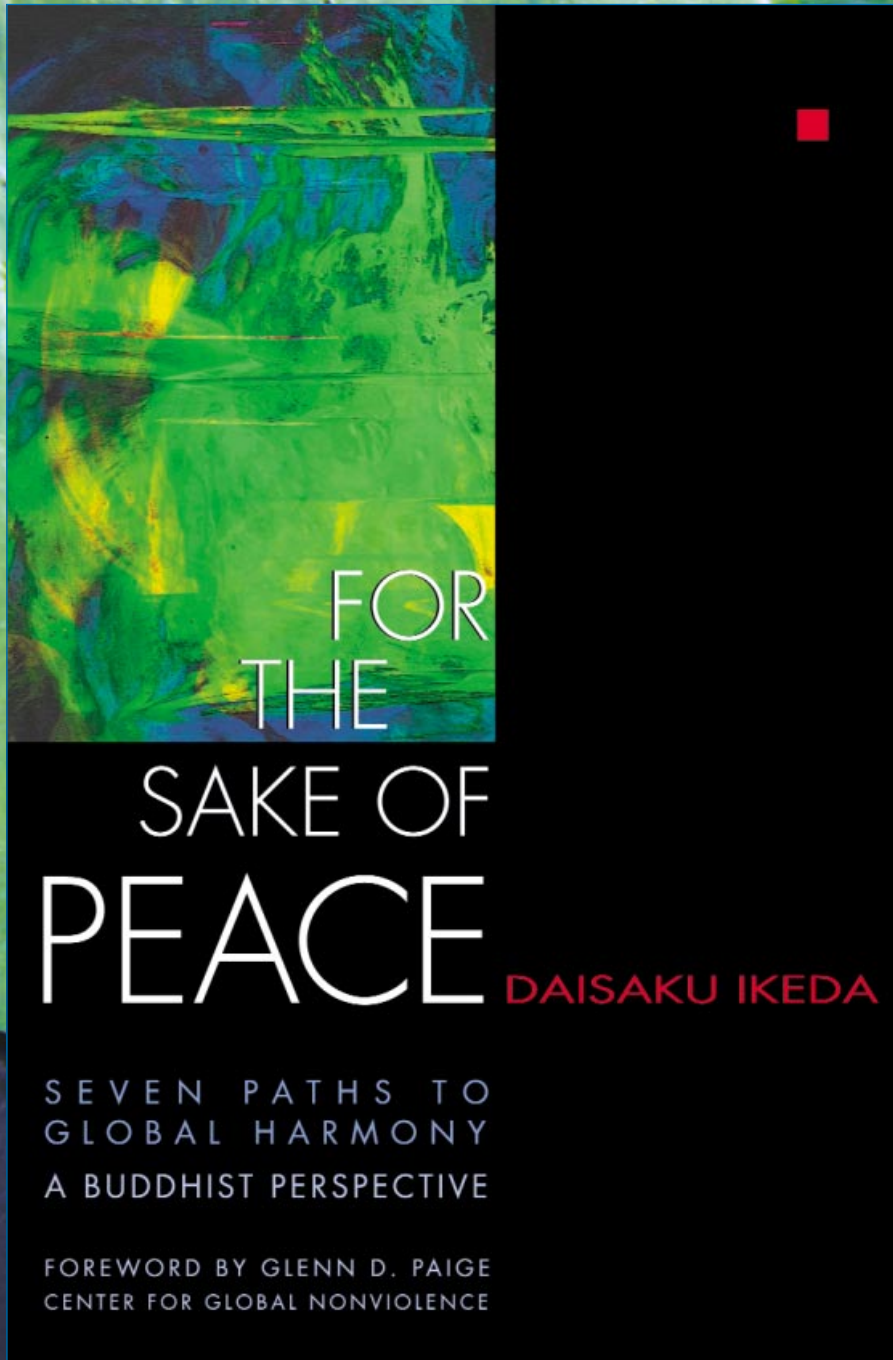
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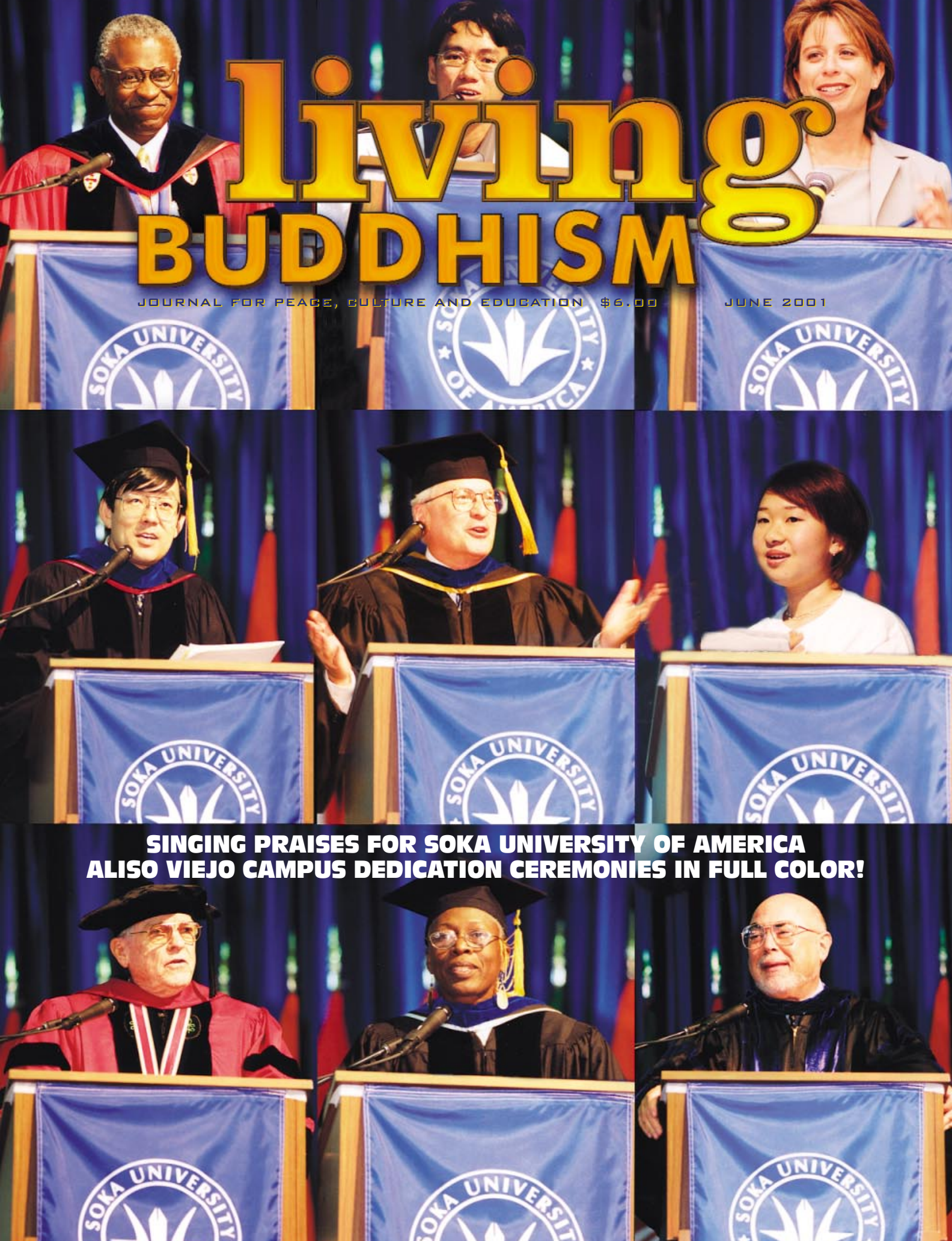
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An architect's drawing of renovations to the World Peace Ikeda Auditorium scheduled to be opened in 2001.

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.